



League Links

January 2024

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Are You Ready For 2024?

Happy New Year to all of our members and supporters. Our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy will be a tall order for 2024, but we have no doubt that our dedicated members will do their best to satisfy these goals. Several initiatives in 2024 include:

- Townhall Grants are back! The 2024 version of educating voters about the new voting rights following the passage of Proposal 2 in 2022, and then codified with legislation in 2023 will be needed as most of our Michigan voters experience early voting for the first time. A shorter presentation will be available this year too, because we've listened to your feedback and know that voters are most interested in early voting, the permanent absentee ballot list and absentee voting improvements like more drop boxes. Watch for information about the grant which will

be posted on the [LWV Only page](#) of our website by January 25.

- Observation of election certification (a/k/a Board of Canvassers) will be big in 2024! We encourage all of you to sign up for a shift to observe the post-election process, starting with the February 27 presidential election. This is now a LWV mainstay, and our Michigan democracy partners depend on our oversight and our reports of irregularities. Information about signing up for the February 27th election will be sent out to the local presidents/leaders in mid-February.
- A Communications Network meeting featuring LWVUS speaker Luana Chaires with a tutorial on using *League in Action*, a branded League texting tool, will be held on February 7 at 2:00. All LWV members are invited. Please sign up using the link furnished on the calendar on [the LWV Only page](#) of our website.
- More election inspectors, observers and challengers will be needed all over Michigan this year. Nine days of early voting means 9 more days of staffing. Remember that working as an election inspector, a/k/a poll worker, is the best tutorial about Michigan elections that you can find. And a bonus – you get paid! You can sign up with your local clerk or through the [Secretary of State](#). Remember that a Michigan voter can work anywhere in Michigan- you aren't restricted to your home community. Election observers and challengers will also be needed and we partner with Promote the Vote for their excellent training. If you're interested in observing or challenging, contact Bailey Rechler at brechler@promotethevote.com.

Denise Hartsough and Paula Bowman
LWVMI Co-Presidents

Preparation for LWVUS Convention is Underway

Washington D.C. will be the site for the hybrid LWVUS Convention from June 27-30. **Any** member can attend the Convention, whether you are a voting delegate or not. We hope **all** of our Leagues will be represented. Preliminary costs as well as how many delegates your League is allowed can be found on the [2024 Convention page](#). Registration is not yet open, but the information on the page will help you start planning.

Program Planning for the next 2 years of LWVUS advocacy comes from us – the grassroots members. League Program is how we support our mission through education and advocacy. All League action, advocacy, and education efforts are based on League positions and League principles. Information for Leagues on how to hold a program planning meeting as well as the final survey that needs to be turned in from each League [can be found here](#). Please also visit the Program Planning section of our [LWV Only page](#). There you will find the 3 notices LWVMI has received about concurring with other states' positions (2) as well as adding Climate Change to the program. Because the LWVMI state board is not taking up Program Planning until its February meeting, none of these 3 issues are endorsed yet by LWVMI.



LWVMI's MICRC Team – Not Resting Yet!

As a result of the federal court order to redraw some of the districts in Detroit, LWVMI's wonderful, dedicated team of observers is again observing daily meetings and issuing reports. Led by Sue Smith, who is a statewide expert on Redistricting, we have 8 other trained League members from across the state who volunteer a great deal of time to monitor the MICRC. They are:

David Allen, Marquette County League
Cathy Brockington, Holland Area League
Denise Hartsough, Kalamazoo Area League
Donna Hornberger, Grand Traverse Area League
Judy Karandjeff, Lansing Area League
Marian Kromkowski, Leelanau County League
Margaret Leary, Washtenaw County League
Fran Wallace, Manistee County League

Since September 2020, Team members have observed every MICRC meeting and Public Hearing, sending their written reports to other members of the team. In addition to observing the Commission, they have participated in numerous training sessions and assisted Communities of Interest in their part of the state. In November, Team members also observed the six-day trial in the Western District Federal Court re the Constitutionality of 13 House and Senate district maps.

LWVMI is grateful for their vigilance and dedication to this once-a-decade occurrence which is now in its 4th year.

-Paula Bowman

Tutorials for Nominating Committees

Now is the time for local League Nominating Committees to start their work..... our Annual Meetings will be here before you know it! Sue Smith, former LWVUS Nominating Chair, and current LWVMI Nominating Chair, is holding a tutorial for all Michigan nominating committee members on **February 6 at 7:00 pm** and on **February 21 at 7:00 pm**, there will be a DEI training for nominating committees. These are excellent opportunities for committee members to start their 2024 work. Links for these two meetings will be posted on the [LWV Only page](#) of the LWVMI website as soon as they are available.

Voter Service Updates

Final Update: Town Halls and Election Promotion Grants

Prop 2 Town Halls: Total grant funds expended: \$9,300

- A total of 21 local Leagues facilitated 65 town halls with 1270 attendees: 48 in-person, 10 virtual and 7 hybrid.
- The town halls were concentrated in the state's lower peninsula, with ten in the northwest lower peninsula and one in the upper peninsula.
- Over half of the participating Leagues offered multiple presentations; Flint and Oakland conducted the most with 11 and 10 town halls, respectively.
- A total of 15 of the 21 participating Leagues extended an invitation to city/township clerks, with 10 clerks accepting the invitation.
- Six Leagues indicated they posted their town hall recording on a website, cable TV, and/or YouTube channel.

Election Promotion Grant: Total grant funds expended: \$35,523.11

- A total of 25 out of Michigan's 33 local Leagues participated in the Election Promotion Grant, producing 190+ election-related activities and events, with 13 Leagues holding 6 or more.
- A number of partnerships with marginalized communities and underprivileged populations included the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Black Wall Street, Voces, PROACTIVE, the Burma Center, Latin Americans United, Lenawee Pride Festival, Disability Network of Southwest MI, Community Action House Food Club (for low-income families), Nation Outside (prison and judicial reform advocacy) and LGBTQIA+ communities in Washtenaw County.
- The election-related activities included supplies for tabling events, voter registration drives, and candidate forums as well as League banners, tablecloths, lawn signs, and marketing. There were also some unique actions, such as *Make Your Voting Plan* palm cards, a digital billboard, raffle gift cards, a three-panel display board, logoed cup sleeves (for local coffee shops), and a tent for outdoor tabling events. Big-ticket items included advertising in local newspapers and radio spots, a billboard, videographers, venue rental fees and event sponsorships.
- Finally, the local Leagues learned that election-related activities during an off-year helped set the stage for efforts in 2024. Also, the general comments concerning the grant's ability to help the local Leagues develop resources, foster partnerships, and establish credibility and goodwill (both tangible and intangible) is, as one League put it, "the gift that keeps on giving."

A very special thanks to those local Leagues who participated in these two grant programs. We are pleased the funds were available and you were all very creative in your use of the funds!

Associated Press Voter Turnout Pilot Project

The Associated Press (AP) is asking our help to get voter turnout information to them. The information shared about voting will help the AP refine its voter turnout data models throughout the day before the polls close. That helps them know how far along they are in tabulation after polls close and helps with accurate and timely race calls. They are also aware that we have a large number voting absentee, plus we have 9 days of early voting starting this year. However, they are still anxious to have us provide whatever information

we can.

The project involves the following:

- Voters on Election Day get their vote number from the poll worker and the time they voted.
- Voters call the AP's Election Call Center at the toll-free number provided. The voter reports their name, the name of the county and precinct, the time voted, and their voter number.
- Poll workers call AP a few times throughout the day and provide the number of voters so far at their precinct.

You can volunteer to participate in this project by sending an email to the AP with your name, your municipality and your precinct number to MITurnout@ap.org. Reid Magney, the project coordinator, will then confirm your participation and send you detailed instructions shortly before the election.

Voter Services Network Meetings

The next Voter Services Network meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** This meeting will focus on training of the updated Town Hall presentation on voting rights. There will also be other updates provided. Those who wish to attend can use the following link to register. Once registered, you will receive confirmation of the registration and how to enter the meeting.

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kdeqrqjMvH9L2zF6YSGxOmCQS_gRQmat7

In the meantime, if you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Judy Florian
VP for Voter Services
jflo@comcast.net

Advocacy Update

Michigan Legislature

The House and Senate returned on January 10, 2024 and have posted their calendars through June. The Legislature usually meets Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Michigan is one of nine states with a full-time legislature.

Laws that have been enacted in 2023 that do not have a specific date in the law or were not given immediate effect will take effect on February 13, 2024. Major bills that passed in 2023, will take effect on February 13th and were supported by LWVMI include: Climate Change, Earned Income Tax Credit, Firearm Safety, Reproductive Choice, and Voting Rights.

The major change this year is the composition of the MI House. The House is 54 D - 54 R until special elections are held for the two vacancies. According to the rules, Democrats keep control in the House. After the special election

on April 16, 2024 and certification of the elections, the Michigan House will return to 110 members. The Senate is still 20 D–18R.

State of the State

The Governor will deliver the State of the State on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 7 p.m. It is available on television live throughout the state.

New Department of Lifelong Education, Achievement and Potential

On July 11, 2023, Governor Whitmer issued an Executive Order 2023-6 effective December 1, 2023, creating the MI Department of Lifelong Education, Achievement and Potential (MiLEAP) that governs childhood education, higher education, and education partnerships. August 8, 2023, the State Board of Education asked the Attorney General for a formal opinion if this violates the separation of powers in the MI Constitution.

Ballot Proposals

Proposals approved by the Board of Canvassers:

1. Legislative Initiative to expand the Freedom of Information Act to include the executive and legislative branch – circulating petition.
2. Legislative initiative to allow good time credits for prisoners – circulating petitions.
3. Legislative initiative to increase the minimum wage – turned in signatures, Board of State Canvassers deadlocked on the decision of whether there were enough valid signatures submitted.
4. Referendum on PA 38 of 2023 – the extreme risk protection order. Circulating petitions – LWVMI opposes and urges you to decline to sign.
5. Legislative initiative to change the renewable energy siting law recently passed by taking power away from the Public Service Commission. Circulating petitions – LWVMI opposes and urges you to decline to sign.

LWVMI Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy Committee continues to meet to monitor state legislation and will host a legislative update Zoom meeting for all League members on Thursday, March 7, at 7 p.m. Registration information will be sent out prior to the Zoom virtual meeting.

Judy Karandjeff
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy

Action Needed

LWVMI is urging President Biden to shut down Enbridge Line 5. According to Oil and Water Don't Mix, "It's time for President Biden to revoke the presidential pipeline permit and shut down the Enbridge Line 5 crude oil pipeline. An oil spill from this unnecessary pipeline in the Great Lakes threatens the drinking water of 40 million people. If it ever gets built, an oil tunnel in 10 years is not a solution to this urgent threat. He must act now to protect the Great Lakes from Enbridge's damaged, dangerous, old pipelines."

Go [here](#) to send an alert to your members of Congress.

Go [here](#) to sign the petition to President Biden.



Court Orders SE Michigan Redistricting Maps be Redrawn

State Legislative Maps

On December 21, 2023, the Western Federal District Court ruled that maps for the following Districts were unconstitutional under the U.S. Fourteenth Amendment (Equal Protection Clause): State House Districts 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 14; and State Senate Districts 1, 3, 6, 8, 10 and 11 because the MICRC had used race as a primary factor in drawing the maps for these districts.

On January 11, 2024 the Court issued a Scheduling Order for redrawing the unconstitutional House district maps. Since redrawing the boundaries of these districts will affect boundaries of other districts, lines for these other districts may be redrawn as “reasonably necessary.”

The MICRC must submit their draft redrawn House maps to the Court no later than February 2, 2024. An in-person Public Hearing on the draft maps will be held in Detroit on February 15. Times and place will be posted on the MICRC website, [Michigan.gov/MICRC](https://michigan.gov/MICRC).

Public comments may also be submitted through the MICRC portal at [Michigan-mapping.org](https://michigan-mapping.org). In addition to comments on the MICRC’s draft maps, the public may submit their own maps and/or maps showing their Community of Interest.

The MICRC must submit their final maps to the Court no later than March 1, 2024. Alternative maps drawn by the Court appointed Mapping Special Master are also due to the Court by March 1, 2024.

Since the next election for the State Senate isn’t until November 2026, the new maps for the unconstitutional Senate Districts will be re-drawn after April 12, 2024.

New Voting Rights Act (VRA) Consultant Appointed

The Commission’s previous VRA Consultant, attorney Bruce Adelson, resigned December 23, 2023. The Court accepted, with some conditions, the MICRC’s appointment of Mark Braden (who is an employee of Baker-Hostetler, the Commission’s litigation firm) as the MICRC’s new VRA Consultant .

Court Appointed Special Masters

The Court appointed two Special Masters: a Mapping Special Master and a Reviewing Special Master. The Mapping Special Master will draw alternative maps for the unconstitutional House Districts. The Court will consider the alternative maps only if the MICRC does not submit appropriate final maps by March 1.

The Reviewing Special Master will review the MICRC maps and, if necessary, those drawn by the Mapping Special Master.

The MICRC must cover the costs of both Special Masters and their staff. The Commission will be asking the Legislature for another \$3 million to cover these costs as well as other litigation costs.

MICRC Mapping Meetings, January 16-February 1, 2024

The Commission has scheduled 3 weeks of meetings to draw draft House maps. The first week, January 16-18, was virtual. The second week, January 22-26 will be in-person in Detroit and the third week will be virtual. The schedule of meetings is posted on the MICRC website, michigan.gov/MICRC.

Commission Has Three New Members

Three Commissioners resigned on December 31, 2023: Doug Clark (R), MC Rothorn (D) and Dustin Witjes (D). A random drawing was held on January 3, 2024 as prescribed by the Michigan Constitution. Two Democrats were drawn from a pool of 52 Democrats: Elaine Andrade from Imlay City and Donna Callaghan from Farmington Hills. One Republican was drawn from a pool of 54 Republicans: Marcus Muldoon from Lincoln Park.

Next Regular MICRC Meeting

The next regular meeting of the MICRC will be on Thursday, February 8 at 10 am.

Susan Smith
LWVMI Redistricting Chair

Membership Leaders Network

With the anticipated launch of LWV membership changes in January 2025, the Membership Leaders' Network at its January 10th meeting reviewed what has been shared on the LWVUS website about these changes. Among the highlights was the introduction of ChapterSpot, the new League membership platform where persons can join or renew their membership regardless of which League they are joining. The implementation of this centralized membership portal is underway. **A timeline for this year shows that local Leagues will not have to take any action until fall when they will need to set-up an account on Stipe for processing dues payments.** This can be done after the election if that works best for your League. Role-specific webinars for roster managers, membership chairs, and treasurers will be provided in November and December. The change in processes will officially take place in January 2025. For more information, a recording is available for the Membership Leaders' Network meeting, and the LWVUS website (www.lwv.org), League Management section has even more details under ChapterSpot Resources.

As part of the annual roster update this month, LWVUS is asking local Leagues to identify a point of contact (e.g. roster manager) for essential updates about the implementation of these membership changes. Please be sure to respond to that request.

The Membership Leaders' Network will not meet on February 14th. However, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Team is hosting a program about incorporating DEI in member recruitment and the nominating committee process of selecting diverse leadership. For more information about the program see below. All League members are invited. If you would like to be added to the Membership Leaders' Network, contact MerriKay at (moburkey30@gmail.com).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion February Program: Incorporating DEI in Member Recruitment and the Nominating Committee's Work

On **February 21** the LWVMI DEI Team will sponsor a virtual DEI program with presenters from different non-profit organizations, such as the YWCA, which actively engage in DEI to grow their membership and the diversity of their leadership. We will explore with them why their organization focuses on DEI, what diversity characteristics they track, how they address gaps in diversity, how they tackle barriers to participation for potential members, and how they work toward a diverse leadership. More information about our presenters will be shared over the next month. **Save the date for this informative program.**

Following up on our November DEI program about the accessibility of polling locations, Detroit Disability Power has set a date for their first in-depth training session of 2024 about the auditing process, an in-depth look at the questionnaire they developed and used for audits. This virtual program will be held on **January 22 from 4-5PM**. To RSVP for the link, go to: bit.ly/CommunityPollAudits.

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey
LWVMI Membership VP

You're Invited to Hear Dana Nessel

Come join the conversation with the LWV of Livingston County and Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel who will provide updates about election protection, financial transparency from our elected officials and a legal update on water related environmental concerns. This virtual event will take place on **Tuesday, February 20 at 7:00 p.m** Joining us will be LWVLC founding member Terri Wilkerson, to provide us with background information on Line 5 and Stephen C. Brown from the Sierra Club who is an expert on PFAS and excess nutrient problems. Advance questions can be sent to Terri Wilkerson at terri@a3homes.com by **February 10**.

Registration for this event begins at **9:00 a.m. on January 30** through this link: <https://howelllibrary.libcal.com/event/11533571>

For those unable to attend, the meeting will be recorded and posted to the [League's YouTube Channel](#).

Join a Conversation with the **LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY
and Michigan Attorney General,
Dana Nessel

February 20, 2024 at 7:00pm

Register for the ZOOM link here

 HOWELL CARNEGIE DISTRICT LIBRARY



Firearm Safety Network Event

The next Firearm Safety Network meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 13 at 7:00 pm**. Alyse Ley, DO, and Frank Straub, PhD, Directors of MSU's Prevent 2 Protect program will explain their Adolescent Targeted Violence Prevention Project. This is a public forum so please extend an invitation to your friends and family. [Use this link to register](#).

Health Care Reform Educational Presentation February 18 at 1:30pm via Zoom

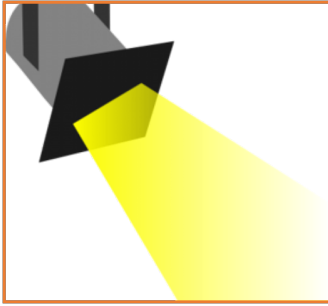
The Washtenaw County League Healthcare Reform Advocacy group will hold an educational presentation on **February 18 at 1:30 pm** on Zoom. All League members across the state are invited to attend.

The featured speaker is Janet Olszewski, MSW. Janet recently retired from a career in health policy, health management, and public health programs, much of it working for the State of Michigan. Janet will speak about the Michigan Public Health Advisory Council's findings on issues of public health, and recommendations for much needed improvements discussed in the 2023 report "[Public Health Call to Action](#)," of which she is a co-author.

Please contact advocacy@lwvashtenaw.org to register to attend.

Local League Spotlights


Congratulations to Pat Donath and Judy Karandjeff of the **LWV of Lansing Area** who were honored at a



Life Member Recognition Luncheon on November 8th. Both Pat and Judy have been active League members including as past presidents of LWVMI. For their milestone, they received letters of recognition from Dr. Deborah Turner, LWVUS president, and certificates certifying 50 years of League membership.

The **LWV of Greater Grand Rapids Area** has implemented a monthly virtual speakers series called [Voices on Vital Topics](#). On January 24th they will hear from Mindy Miner, Chair of the Rockford Sustainability Organization. She will share the committee’s work to create a more sustainable future and ideas that others could implement in their households or communities.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Committee of the **LWV of Grand Traverse Area** is not only monitoring environmental issues with impact in their five-county area but helping inform its members about environmental concerns. LWVGT member, Karen Baker, wrote an informative report for the December Voter called, Microplastics 101. While they are ubiquitous, she offered ways to lessen or eliminate them from clothing by sorting laundry by material to reduce friction, wash clothes in a cold wash and a shorter cycle. Air dry clothes. Wash clothes in a bag designed to catch shedding fibers.

February 27 Presidential Primary: Key Dates	
NOW:	Request a ballot by mail
JAN 18:	First day that you can vote in person with an absentee ballot at your city or township clerk’s office
FEB 12:	Last day to register to vote online (after February 12, you’ll need to register in person at your local clerk’s office)
FEB 13:	Last day to drop your ballot in the mail (after February 13, we recommend returning your ballot in person)
MichiganVoting.org	
FEB 17:	First day of the mandatory early voting period
FEB 25:	Last day of the mandatory early voting period
FEB 26:	If you’re already registered to vote where you live, you can vote absentee in person at your local clerk’s office until 4pm (after that, you must vote at your polling location on Election Day)
FEB 27:	Election Day! Polls are open from 7am until 8pm local time. If you need to register, you can register and then vote at your local clerk’s office until 8pm.
MichiganVoting.org 	

Local Leagues

- Berrien/Cass Counties
- Copper Country ([with Gogebic County Geographic Unit](#))
- Dearborn/Dearborn Heights
- Delta County
- Detroit
- Eastern UP MAL State Unit
- Flint Area
- Grand Haven Area
- Greater Grand Rapids Area
- Grand Traverse Area ([with Crawford County Geographic Unit](#))
- Grosse Pointe

Holland Area
Jackson Area
Kalamazoo Area (with Calhoun County Geographic Unit)
Lansing Area
Leelanau County
Livingston County
Macomb County MAL State Unit
Manistee County
Marquette County
Midland Area
Mt. Pleasant
Northeast Michigan (formerly Alpena County)
Northern Lower Michigan
Northwest Wayne County
Oakland Area
Saginaw County
Tecumseh/Lenawee County MAL State Unit
Troy
Washtenaw County

For more information go to www.lwvmi.org
or check out Facebook pages for state and local LWVs

LWVMI Leadership 2023-2024

Co-President: Paula Bowman (NW Wayne County)
Co-President: Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo Area)
VP Voter Services: Judy Florian (Grosse Pointe)
VP Advocacy: Judy Karandjeff (Lansing Area)
VP Program: Maria Woloson (Oakland Area)
VP Membership: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey (Kalamazoo Area)
Secretary: Carla Barrows-Wiggins (Oakland Area)
Treasurer: Tom Wells (Grosse Pointe)

Directors

Voter Services: Carolyn Vertin (Tecumseh/Lenawee)
Advocacy: Connie Mitchell (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights)
Membership/DEI: Shirley Madden (Manistee County)
Observer Corps: Lynne Kochmanski (Washtenaw County)
Membership/DEI: Cathy McAdam (Grosse Pointe)
League Links: Courtney Winell (Greater Grand Rapids Area)

Calendar

January 2024

January 22: 51st Anniversary of Roe v. Wade Decision
January 25: Voter Service Network | 7:00 pm
January 31: Observer Corps Network | 3:00 pm
January 31: Membership Count Deadline

February 2024

Black History Month



February 5: [LWVUS Member Rights and Responsibilities Webinar](#) | 4:00 pm
February 6: Local Nominating Committee Tutorial | 7:00 pm
February 7: Communications Network | 2:00 pm
February 10: LWVMI Board Meeting
February 13: Firearms Safety Network | 7:00 pm
February 14: LWV's 104th Birthday - Celebrate!
February 19: President's Day
February 20: [LWVUS DEI Webinar](#) | 3:00 pm
February 21: DEI Training for Local Nominating Committees | 7:00 pm
February 21: [LWVUS Framing the Future Office Hours](#)
February 27: Anniversary of SCOTUS Upholding 19th Amendment
February 28: Observer Corps Network | 3:00 pm

All LWVMI meetings are posted on [LWV Only page](#) of our website with links added when available.

Connect with us! League of Women Voters of Michigan

Phone: 517-484-5383

Email: office@lwvmi.org

Website: lwvmi.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lwvmichigan/>

Instagram: [#lwvmich](https://www.instagram.com/lwvmich)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LWVMichigan>

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