



League Links

February 2024

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Unique Opportunity at The Capitol

This past Friday, a few of us travelled to our LWVMI office for an in-person meeting with Stafford Printing, the newspaper publisher who has printed our LWVMI Voter Guides for many years. That meeting, at which we confirmed our relationship for 2024, only lasted for an hour. So we used our time in Lansing well and made a trip to the Capitol.

We had pre-arranged a visit with Andi Brancato, the Introduction and Enrolling Clerk for Michigan's House of Representatives. Andi is a friend of Paula's and has a job that only a bunch of League members would find fascinating. It was a blissfully quiet day at the Capitol not only because it was Friday and the legislature was not in session, but because very few school groups had scheduled Capitol tours this day.

Andi was kind enough to escort us on a walk through the House floor and to visit areas of the Capitol that the public usually doesn't see. We were taken upstairs to the "attic," the space above the House floor, to see where so much modern technology is housed. There is a beautiful blend of historic

preservation and modern computerization that makes this building both functional and stunning.

Our group spent quite a bit of time with Andi in her office as we learned how a bill is hand-delivered to her office by the Sponsor, setting off a meticulous process that is spelled out in the House Rules. Andi's non-partisan office keeps track of the paperwork and procedures from the beginning to the archiving of the final bill – signed or not. Some of Andi's busiest times were the Lame Duck Session before Gov. Whitmer took office, and the very recent 2023 session where so many bills were introduced in October and early November. Long days and even weekend work were the norm during these times. By contrast, Andi's office is relatively quiet these days because the legislature is so inactive.

We had a wonderful day learning about some secrets the Capitol holds, and the traditions that keep our state government humming along. The famous dome is still obstructed by scaffolding as the repairs continue, but we look forward to its reawakening in April.

Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough
LWVMI Co-Presidents



Judy Karandjeff, host Andi Brancato,
Paula Bowman, Denise Hartsough
and Sara Weertz on the House Floor

Program Planning

It is time for local Leagues to review positions for the upcoming 2024 LWVUS convention and submit a Program Planning report by **March 10**. Information about this process and the options can be found on the [LWV Only](#) page of our website. In addition to supporting (or not) the Democracy Agenda recommended by LWVUS, three options have surfaced that warrant discussion:

- Adding [Climate Change](#) as a Program Item
- Concurring with VT language to add to the [Privatization](#) position
- Concurring with WA Position on [Local Journalism](#)

Program planning is an exercise in grassroots power that characterizes the League of Women Voters. We hope you'll participate in this opportunity to make your voice heard.

Maria Woloson
VP of Program



BOCs Are Ready to Roll!

Boards of Canvassers (BOC) are primed for the first 2024 election in most counties (a few have had earlier, special elections). Each 4 person Board will be canvassing the votes cast in their county, and ultimately certifying the election based on the numerical results of the votes. All of this work is open to the public and the League is there to watch this almost-final step of the election process. The BOC program has been fine-tuned over the past few years, and we have a much better sign-up mechanism ([Sign Up Genius](#)) and reporting forms. (Thank you Sara Weertz). Results of shift reports are monitored by the League and our democracy partners, and if there is a problem, it is elevated to the next level of attention.

Please join the BOC observation team in your League. No experience is necessary, and we guarantee you'll learn a lot! All of the information, plus a training video are on the [LWV Only](#) page of our website. Check with your President for the password if you don't have it. The BOC in your county starts work either on February 28th or 29th, and you can sign up now for a shift. Thank you!

-Paula Bowman

Voter Service Updates

Town Hall Grants-2024

We are pleased to once again offer grants to local Leagues for town halls to be conducted from January-May 31, 2024. These town halls will educate Michiganders on their new voting rights based on the passage of Proposal 2-2022. A Power Point presentation and script, along with handouts, is available. A few local Leagues have signed up. **Reminder:** If you have received the materials, but haven't completed the *Know Your Voting Rights Grant Application*, please do so at this [link](#).

Election Worker Survey

We know many of our members work the polls during election season, but we

don't have good data on how many of you are doing this great work! When we complete our grant reports, donors request data on the number of our members who participate in activities. We have created surveys for all 3 elections: Presidential Primary (February 27), August Primary (August 6) and November General Election (November 5). Links to the surveys are included below. The surveys are also available on the LWVMI website, in the LWV Only section. After you complete your election service, please complete the appropriate election survey. We appreciate you letting us know of your participation!

- February 27th Presidential Primary [survey link](#)
- August 6th Primary [survey link](#)
- November 5th General Election [survey link](#)

Early Voting Satisfaction Survey

Promote the Vote (PTV) has developed a satisfaction survey to gather opinions from voters who cast their ballots at an early voting site for the February 27th Presidential Primary. Since this is the first election with early voting, they are anxious to determine voters' opinions on the early voting process. Please complete the survey yourself and/or pass it on to family and friends who participated in early voting. Here is a [link](#) to the survey.

Voter Services Network Meetings

The next Voter Services Network meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. Those who wish to attend can use the link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsde-rqDwpEtVLUyxWNVMM-OC4n0JiRqne>

Once registered, you will receive confirmation of the registration and how to enter the meeting. An agenda will be sent out the Monday before the meeting.

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

State of the State: The Governor delivered the State of the State on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. Whitmer called for the policy goals including:

- [\\$1.4B to build or rehabilitate housing](#)
- [Free pre-K](#)
- [Free community college](#)
- [\\$5000 income tax credit for family caregiver](#)
- [Finish spending road money](#)

- [Tax credits for research and development](#)
- Revive the Good Jobs for MI program
- Rebates for buying a new car

You can read the Governor's entire State of the State address [here](#).

Composition of the MI Senate and MI House: The House is 54 D - 54 R until special elections are held for the two vacancies. Democrats keep control in the House. The Senate is still 20 D–18 R. The House Special Election primary was held on January 30th and Ronald Sanger (R) and Mai Xiong (D) will face each other for election in District 13. In the 25th District, Peter Herzberg (D) and Josh Powell (R) will run against each other. The general election for these candidates will be on April 16, 2024.

Legislative Session: The Michigan House of Representatives with the 54-54 split, in January, according to Gongwer News, passed one bill (HB 4845), to rename a highway; took one other vote on a bill, which got defeated (SB 227); held nine committee meetings, of the nine House sessions scheduled from January 10-February 1 (not counting State of the State day), members were present for just three of them, the rest were called off as no attendance/no voting days.

On February 7, the Senate Oversight Committee held a hearing on SB 669 and SB 679 that would make the Governor's Office and the Legislature subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Also, on the same day, the Senate Elections and Ethics Committee held a hearing on HB 4127 and HB 4128 which prohibit firearms in polling places, within one hundred feet of a drop box, and from absent voter counting boards. We anticipate committee votes in the coming weeks. LWVMI supports these bills.

According to Bridge Magazine, of the 321 bills signed into law in 2023, 142 of them — 44% — took effect on February 13. Another 28 bills signed last year will take effect later in 2024, and five laws approving expanded automatic voter registration options will go into effect June 30, 2025.

State Budget: Governor Gretchen Whitmer presented her budget to the joint House and Senate Appropriations Committee on February 7. The budget includes money to continue the free breakfast and lunch program, fund preschool for 4-year-olds and free community college. The budget information can be found [here](#). The Governor's budget recommendation totals \$80.7 billion, including a general fund total of \$14.3 billion and a school aid budget totaling \$19 billion. Now the House and Senate Appropriation Committees will begin their budget process.

Reproductive Freedom: On February 6, Northland Family Planning Clinic, Center for Reproductive Rights and others filed a lawsuit in the MI Court of Claims challenging three of the abortion restrictions mandating that abortion patients wait a minimum of 24 hours after an appointment before they can receive an abortion; a law forcing clinicians to dispense and patients to consume what the lawsuit called biased counseling before and after the 24-hour waiting period; and a prohibition on qualified advanced practice clinicians providing abortion care. *Northland Family Planning Clinic v. Michigan*.

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 21**, at 7 p.m. Registration information will be in the next League Links.

Judy Karandjeff
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy

The Civility Project March 22 at Noon

We are very lucky to be hosting an hour-long presentation by celebrated journalists Nolan Finley and Stephen Henderson on March 22 at noon. Mr. Finley and Mr. Henderson have been longtime friends, despite their

different perspectives “on pretty much everything.” The one thing they agree on is the importance of their friendship—which includes a healthy dose of disagreement and mutual respect. The two have developed a program that aims to build healthy disagreement and constructive dialogue while teaching people how to build civility in their relationships. Please set aside this date and time so you can join us. The Zoom link will be available soon on the LWV Only page of LWVMI.org.



Observer Corps News

Our LWVMI Observer Corps now has 114 members representing 21 Local Leagues from around the state of Michigan. Recently, our Marquette Observer Corps was highlighted in a local article about observing government meetings in Marquette County. You can read this [article](#) that spotlights the work being done by observers there. This is an excellent story about the importance of our work as observers. It is written by Doug Garrison, a local retired reporter, who now publishes a regular newsletter called, [Word on the Street](#).

Thank you to David Allen, LWV Marquette County, for sharing this information.

Lynne Kochmanski
Observer Corps Director

MICRC Public Hearings on Draft Proposed Maps February 21 and 22 in Detroit

MICRC Posts 10 Draft Proposed House Maps

Nine collaborative maps and one individual map have been posted for public comment on the MICRC [website](#).

Districts Changed from Current House Map

The District Court ruled House districts 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 14 were unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and had to be redrawn.

In addition, adjoining districts 4, 9 and 13 have been changed in nine of the 10 maps. In seven of those nine maps, House districts 2, 3, 5, 6 and 16 were also changed.

The individual map submitted by Commissioner Szetela, changed 17 districts in addition to the seven ordered by the Court.

Public Hearings in Detroit and Virtually, February 21 and 22

The MICRC will conduct Public Hearings on the draft proposed maps in Detroit at the following times and places:

February 21, at Greater Grace Temple, 23500 W. Seven Mile Road
10:00 am – 1:00 pm, 2:00 – 5:00 pm, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

February 22, at Second Ebenezer, 14601 Dequindre Street
10:00 am – 1:00 pm, 2:00 – 5:00 pm, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Speakers must sign up when arriving at the venue.

Those wishing to speak virtually must complete the required form, (on the website) and submit it to the Secretary of State at least one hour before the hearing.

Each speaker will have 90 seconds to advocate for one of the ten maps and to suggest minor changes, if any, to that map.

League members should remember to speak as individuals, not as members of the League.

MICRC Meetings to Select Final Map

The MICRC has scheduled two virtual meetings to deliberate and vote on their final map as prescribed by the Michigan Constitution. The meetings will take place on:

- February 27, 8:00 – 11:00 am
- February 28, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm and 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

Additional meetings could be scheduled on February 29, if necessary, to meet the Court's March 1 deadline.

Approval of the final map requires a yes vote by at least seven of the thirteen commissioners. The yes vote must include at least two Republican commissioners, two Democratic commissioners and two Independent commissioners.

Future Deadlines for House Maps

March 1: MICRC must submit final map to the Court.

March 8: Deadline for Plaintiffs to file objections to MICRC final map.

March 15: Deadline for MICRC to file responses to Plaintiff objections.

March 15: Deadline for Reviewing Special Master to submit his report on

whether Commission's map "lawfully remedies the constitutional violations identified in the Court's December 21, 2023 opinion and order."

March 20: Deadline for both parties to file briefs on the Reviewing Special Master's report.

March 29: Court will approve a "remedial house districting plan".

Future Deadlines for Senate Maps

On December 21, 2023, the District Court ruled the district maps for Senate Districts 1, 3, 6, 8, 10 and 11 were unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and had to be redrawn.

April 12, 2024: Deadline for parties to "jointly submit a proposed timeline for preparing Senate remedial redistricting plan."

Susan Smith
LWVMI Redistricting Chair

Membership Leaders Network

The Membership Leaders' Network has been invited to participate in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Team's program on February 21st. A panel of League members will talk about their experiences with incorporating DEI in member recruitment and the nominating committee process of selecting diverse leadership. A moderated Q&A with the audience will follow. For more information about the program see below. All League members are invited.

The Membership Leaders' Network will meet again on March 13th at 7PM. If you would like to be added to the Membership Leaders' Network, contact MerriKay (moburkey30@gmail.com).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion February Program

LWVMI DEI Team Presents

Incorporating DEI into Membership Recruitment and the Nominating Committee's Work

You are invited to a Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, February 21st at 7PM

Register [here](#) in advance for this meeting. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Closed Captioning will be available.

During this event, the following panel members will discuss their experiences with DEI initiatives in their volunteer activities. A Q&A session with the audience will follow.

Dr. Regena Nelson is a professor of early childhood education in the Department of Teaching Learning and Educational Studies and the Director of the Urban Teacher Residency Program at Western Michigan University. She has served on regional, state, and national boards of several early childhood organizations and serves as a board member for the YWCA as well as the Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community (ISAAC), the most racially and religiously diverse organizing group in Kalamazoo County. Dr. Nelson is also a member of the nominating committee for the LWV of the Kalamazoo Area and the LWVMI.

Patty O'Donnell worked as the Environmental Stewardship Director for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Regional Planner for the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, and the Region Planner for the Michigan Department of Transportation. Among the organizations where Patty volunteers are the Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, LWV of Leelanau County's Equal Rights Advisory Committee, and Old Lesbians Organizing for Change where she is the manager of the End White Dominance monthly Zoom series Planning Group and a member of their DEI Committee. She also serves on the DEI Team for LWVMI.

Cathy McAdam has 20 years' experience in rehabilitation medicine as a medical social worker at Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan. Later as a consultant for her own company, she focused on advocacy for assistive technology and was an advocate for full inclusion of people with disabilities in corporations. Cathy's volunteer activities include chairing the DEI Committee for the LWV of Grosse Pointe, chairing the Leader Dog Committee for the Lions Club and she was recently appointed president of the board of the Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Cathy also serves on the board of LWVMI and its DEI Team.

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.

Register for this event using 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



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



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Firearm Safety Network

The University of Michigan Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention, in collaboration with Michigan Medicine and the University of Michigan School of Public Health, will host a virtual discussion on [February 22, 2024 from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. EST](#) to discuss Michigan's new firearm laws and what they mean for families, firearm owners, law enforcement, healthcare workers, educators and others. Panelists will also discuss the evidence base behind these laws, share additional prevention strategies and give insight into what further research is needed to ensure effectiveness.

Michigan's New Firearm Laws: What You Should Know



April Zeoli, MPH, PhD

School of Public Health
Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention



Patrick Carter, MD

Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention
Michigan Medicine



Justin Heinze, PhD

School of Public Health
Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention



INSTITUTE FOR FIREARM
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PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



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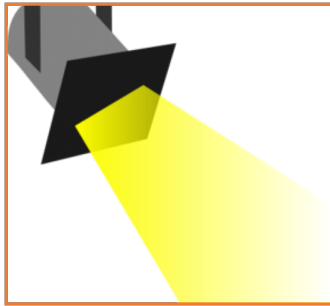
What Is Going On With Michigan's VRA?

All of you are invited to a meeting regarding the Michigan Voting Rights Act, a package of important bills that are being considered by the state legislature this session. At this meeting, you will hear from voting rights advocates about key updates to the legislation, learn how you can advocate for the passage of the Michigan Voting Rights Act and hear about other opportunities to help protect democracy. The meeting is co-sponsored by LWVMI and a number of

our democracy partners.

Despite recent progress on voting rights and access to voting, Black and Brown voters, disabled voters and those whose first language is not English still face barriers to the ballot box in Michigan. Unfortunately, Congress is failing to meet its duty to restore the federal Voting Rights Act following the disastrous Shelby v. Holder ruling by the Supreme Court. We need Michigan to set a new standard for state voting rights. By enacting the Michigan Voting Rights Act, Michigan can become a national leader in safeguarding the right to vote, meeting a critical local need while joining the growing list of states implementing critical protections for voters.

Please [register on Zoom](#) for this virtual meeting on Thursday, February 29 at 3:00 pm.



Local League Spotlights

The LWV of the Jackson Area celebrated League history at its Fifth Annual Friendship Tea with a presentation, “Meet Your Founders.” Two of their members, Ann Green and Martha Petry, took the parts of Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt, women’s rights activists who visited Jackson in whistle stops. Using the actual words of Anthony and

Catt, the reformers engaged the entire audience in waving placards of support before the train whistle sounded for the suffragettes to leave the station.

The LWV of Leelanau County held an educational forum on February 7th entitled, “National Popular Vote: What is it and Why should I care?” Their notable presenters were LWVMI “Wonder Women” Sue Smith and Judy Karandjeff. A recording of this program will be available on the LWVLC website.

The LWV of Mt. Pleasant Area is producing a series of articles on Scams, Misinformation and Disinformation to help voters identify reliable sources of information and not fall for intentional manipulations. The Isabella County Commission on Aging and the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe will assist with dissemination of the information through their newsletters. The LWVMPA has also developed a power point presentation which covers various advertising and propaganda techniques, commonly used logical fallacies, and how to fact-check. These information sources are available to share.

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

February 2024

Black History Month

February 19: President's Day



February 21: [LWVUS Framing the Future Office Hours](#) | 4:00 pm
February 22: [Voter Service Network](#) | 7:00 pm
February 27: Election Day
February 27: Anniversary of SCOTUS Upholding 19th Amendment
February 29: Michigan's Voting Rights Act | 3:00 pm

March 2024

Women's History Month

Deaf History Month

National Foreign Language Month

March 5: [LWVUS DEI Webinar](#) | 4:00 pm

March 7: Anniversary of [Bloody Sunday](#)

March 7: State of the Union Address

March 7: Advocacy Update | 7:00 pm

March 8: International Women's Day

March 9: LWVMI Board Meeting

March 10: [Program Planning Responses Due](#)

March 10-16: Sunshine Week

March 12: Firearm Safety Network | 7:00 pm

March 14: Local & LWVMI Presidents Call | 7:00 pm

March 16: Environmental Network | 4:00 pm

March 21: Advocacy Update | 7:00 pm

March 22: The Civility Project | All Members Invited | 12:00 pm

March 26: Anniversary of SCOTUS [Rucho](#) Arguments

March 28: Voter Service Network | 7:00 pm

March 31: International Transgender Day of Visibility

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>

League of Women Voters of Michigan | 600 W. St. Joseph Street 3G, Lansing, MI 48933

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