



# League Links

## June 2024

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### IN THIS ISSUE...

- Co-Presidents' Message: See You in D.C.!
  - Voter Service Updates: GOTV Efforts
  - Advocacy Updates
  - Redistricting Update: What is a "Fair Map"?
  - Membership Leaders Network
  - Observer Corps News
  - Membership Survey Coming Soon
  - Rally for Reform
  - LWVMI Environmental Network: Upcoming Event
  - Spotlight on Local Leagues
  - LWVMI Leadership
  - Calendar
- 

### See You in D.C.!

We are so proud that 87 Michigan members are attending the LWVUS 2024 Convention at the end of June. Of those, 38 will be travelling to DC to attend in person and 49 will be attending virtually. This is a huge delegation, and it represents the commitment we all have to supporting the mission of the League. Even if a local League could not send a delegate, all Leagues are represented thanks to assignment of the unused voting delegate spots to members from other Leagues.

Just as we do at our local League annual meetings, the voting delegates will elect a new board of directors, pass a budget, make bylaw changes and vote on a new program. Additionally, over 40 workshops are being offered, including one presented by the Grosse Pointe LWV *on Book Banning*. The topics range from advocacy issues to voter reach-out to League governance. Twenty-five of our in-person attendees are participating in "Lobby Day" for a visit to Sen. Gary Peters' office and other congressional representatives.

We guarantee our delegates will return from the Convention energized (but probably exhausted) and ready to help their Leagues do the work that is

necessary in this critical election year. Nearly 700 members will be on the Convention floor, with almost the same number attending online. Being surrounded by League members for an entire weekend will be fun and exciting but will also be a motivating force to do what the League does best – empower voters and protect democracy.

Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough  
LWVMI Co-Presidents



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## Voter Service Updates

### **Get Out the Vote Postcard Campaign**

Our campaign is well underway, with 19 local Leagues who have applied to participate. There are 14 Leagues who have requested a personalized postcard. The elections selected include August and November: 10; August Primary only-2 and November General Election only-7.

Just a reminder: LWVMI will reimburse local Leagues for their printing and postage costs, up to a maximum of \$1,000. Local Leagues will pay the costs upfront and submit receipts for reimbursement. However, local Leagues are not confined to the \$1,000 funding cap and will be responsible for covering their costs beyond the \$1,000 limit.

There is still time to participate. All local Leagues must complete the application (see link below). Once the application is received, we will request your data and also personalize your postcard template, if requested.

[Application Link](#)

We hope you will consider participating in this important GOTV activity. If you have questions, please contact me.

### **Town Hall Grants Project Completed**

A special thanks to the 24 local Leagues who participated in the 2024 town hall grant project. A total of 98 town hall presentations were conducted state-wide (90 in-person, 3 virtual and 5 hybrid). A total of 2284 people engaged in these events, along with 398 volunteers (League members, clerks and others). In addition, 25 clerks accepted invitations to the town hall events. There were a wide variety of locations, including, but not limited to, senior

centers, university campuses, rotary clubs, NAACP, Disability network, churches/temples and other locations with diversity, equity and inclusion populations. The Holland Area League also had their presentation translated into Spanish. Some Leagues invited their local clerks, with many clerks in attendance, another great example of clerk engagement! We are in the process of finalizing payments to those Leagues that participated. The checks will be in the mail soon!! We sincerely appreciate the excellent efforts of our local Leagues to get the word out about our new voting rights prior to the August Primary and November General Election. Great job!!

### **GOTV Text Banking Pilot Project**

LWVMI is working with RelA2ve, Inc. to provide GOTV text banking for the August Primary and November General Election. This text banking tool, called ReachOut, will provide us with contact information from both political parties. Participation would involve a brief training with RelA2ve, along with sample messaging for local Leagues to use in this project. If you are interested in participating, please contact me.

### **Early Voting Experience Survey**

Promote the Vote is seeking voters throughout the state to complete their early voting experience survey. This would include League members who plan to vote and/or be a poll worker at an early voting site during the August Primary. This will provide PTV with information about the early voting sites ahead of November. If you are willing and interested in completing the survey, let me know.

### **Don't Forget to Engage with Clerks**

Clerk engagement is a vital part of our work. As we get closer to the August Primary and November General Election, it is so important to connect with our clerks. We can assist them with finding poll workers for early voting sites and provide Vote411 information. Here is the Vote411 flier created-please share with your clerks.

# VOTE 411

## ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

**VOTE411.org** is the one-stop shop for non-partisan information on elections and candidates.

Read and compare candidate responses to questions on relevant issues.

Find your polling place and find out what will be on your ballot.

*Your education.  
Your healthcare.  
Your community.  
Your future.  
Your vote counts for many things. Take control. Get registered. Get educated. Get out and vote. Learn more at [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org)*

**VOTE411.org** is the nation's premiere online election resource.

The League of Women Voters has added our voter's guide to **VOTE411** so that it can serve as a resource for all Michigan voters.



The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates or political parties.

League of Women Voters of Michigan  
600 W St. Joseph, Ste 3G, Lansing, MI, 48933  
517-484-5383, [www.LWVMI.org](http://www.LWVMI.org)



There is also a sample press release to help recruit poll workers in your community. The release is available [here](#).

### **Voter Service Network Meeting**

There will be **no** Voter Service Network meeting in June due to the LWVUS Convention in Washington, DC. The next meeting will be Thursday, July 25, 7:00 p.m. A registration link is available on the LWV Only section of the website and will also be sent to the Voter Service Network team in early July.

In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact me. Thanks, as always, for the excellent work you do!!

Judy Florian  
VP for Voter Service  
[jflo@comcast.net](mailto:jflo@comcast.net)

## Advocacy Update



The Michigan House and Senate have been busy working on appropriation bills that they hope to pass by the end of June. The Senate and House must pass and give immediate effect (requires two-thirds vote of members) to the appropriations bills if they are to take effect on October 1, 2024.

**MI Voting Rights Act:** The Senate Elections and Ethics Committee met on June 13 and adopted substitutes for Senate Bills 401 – 404. Then they voted to report the bills out of committee with 5 Democrats voting yes and 2 Republicans voting no. The bills will now go to the whole Senate for a vote. LWVMI is sending out an action alert to our members, so watch for it in your email. Action Alerts are also available on the LWVMI website under the TAKE ACTION button. Promote the Vote and many others voiced their support for the package. The analysis of the substitutes is available at [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov).

**Recount Legislation:** On April 18, the Senate voted to support SB 603 and SB 604, clarifying the recount process and sent the bills to the House. On May 21, the House Elections Committee reported the bills with a recommendation to pass to the House. On June 13, the House passed SB 603 and SB 604. The vote was 56-53, and they also voted to give them immediate effect. The bills will now go back to the Senate for final approval. The analysis is available at [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov). LWVMI supports these bills.

**Community Solar Legislation:** On June 13, the Senate Energy and Environment Committee held its first hearing on SB 152 and SB 153. The bills would let residential customers and businesses subscribe to a local project and receive credit on their utility bills for power produced. They took testimony for approximately one hour. You can watch the hearing [here](#). The analysis of the bills is also available at [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov). LWVMI supports this legislation. No date was set for future meetings.

**Ballot Proposal:** Citizens for Local Choice did not submit signatures to repeal the state law moving siting of large-scale renewable energy projects to the Public Service Commission. They said they will try for the 2026 ballot.

The House Calendar was released for the remainder of the year. It shows the House will be in session for the last week of July, another week in August and return in mid-September.

Judy Karandjeff  
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy

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**MICRC: What is a "Fair Map"?**

**Fair Maps**

The desire for fair maps (partisan fairness) has been mentioned in numerous public comments to the Commission as they redraw the Senate maps. The Commission is struggling with what scores on the various measures of partisan fairness would be acceptable for the Senate map they send to the District Trial Court on June 27, 2024.

While it's not possible to get the scores down to zero, lower scores indicate fairer maps. The current Linden Senate map has a mean median score of 1.3% and an efficiency gap score of 1.9%. The scores for the draft proposed maps on those same measures range from 1.0 to 3.4% and .8 to 4.6%.

A commitment to "fair maps" has been the driving force behind LWVMI's redistricting reform efforts since 2011. It was also the motivation for passing the Constitutional Amendment which created the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.

The Michigan Constitution lists seven prioritized criteria for drawing the maps. The partisan fairness criteria is number four in the list and states:

"Districts shall not provide a disproportionate advantage to any political party. A disproportionate advantage to a political party shall be determined using accepted measures of partisan fairness."

#### **MICRC Partisan Fairness Consultant: Dr. Lisa Handley**

Since 2001, the MICRC has relied upon the advice of Dr. Lisa Handley, a political scientist who is recognized as an expert on the issue of partisan fairness. Dr. Handley has presented four acceptable methods for measuring partisan fairness to the Commission.

In redrawing the unconstitutional Senate maps, Dr. Handley has recommended the use of two of those four methods: the Efficiency Gap and the Mean Median. Partisan fairness scores for the 12 draft maps proposed by the MICRC are available on the [MICRC website](#).

#### **Voters Not Politicians Approach for Evaluating Partisan Fairness**

In a June memo to the MICRC, VNP recommended using a different approach to evaluating partisan fairness. The Commission asked Dr. Handley to comment on the VNP approach which she did at the Commission's June 12, 2024 meeting. A copy of her power point presentation is available on the [MICRC website](#) under Meeting Materials for June 12, 2024.

#### **Excerpts from Dr. Handley's Presentation**

"Voters Not Politicians" (VNP) suggests a modified approach to evaluating the partisan fairness of the proposed state senate plans. While they rely on the same partisan fairness measures in their analysis, VNP considers only four election contests in their analysis and they calculate their composite aggregate score on the basis of those four contests. The MICRC composite score is calculated using all 16 statewide elections conducted since 2012 and the results are weighted so that years with more election contests do not contribute more towards the composite index."

"Choosing to look only at close elections and defining "close" as a winning margin of less than 3%, produced a small set of less-than-representative election contests. The choices made by VNP-to focus on only close elections-

resulted in an electorate that is more inclined to vote Republican than a composite score that considers all recent statewide elections.”

“Despite the differences in how the indices were created, the MICRC index (based on 16 elections contests and weighted by year) and the VNP aggregate (based on 4 elections and not weighted) produced very similar rankings of the plans. Based on the ranking of each of the plans on both the mean-median difference and the efficiency gap scores, the two indices agree on five of the top six lowest scoring (fairest) plans albeit in a slightly different order.”

### **Balancing Constitutional Criteria: Partisan Fairness and Communities of Interest**

The Commission has to determine how to balance the Partisan Fairness criteria which ranks number four on the prioritized list with the Communities of Interest criteria which ranks number three.

This is more of an issue now that the MICRC is redrawing the Senate maps to meet the Court’s requirements. The redrawn Senate Districts are no longer spokes of a wheel going out from the center of Detroit into the surrounding communities and counties. Instead, Detroit Districts are primarily contained within the city of Detroit, with a small area extending into the suburbs, but not into Macomb or Oakland Counties. Given where Democrats and Republicans live in Michigan, the resulting districts tend to be Democratic or Republican instead of a mix of both parties, resulting in higher partisan fairness scores.

Secondly, because there are fewer Senate Districts than House Districts, the effect of changing 12 or 13 Senate districts is much greater than changing 12 or 13 House districts. In the case of the Senate maps, most of the proposed maps change 30% of the districts. The resulting partisan fairness scores are much higher than for the current Linden map.

### **Schedule for Court Adoption of Senate Remedial Plan**

- June 24-26: MICRC deliberates on Senate maps
- June 27: Final MICRC Senate map due to District Court
- July 12: Reviewing Special Master submits his report on MICRC map to Court
- July 26: Court adopts a remedial Senate districting plan for 2026 election

Susan Smith  
LWVMI Redistricting Chair

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## **Membership Leaders Network**

The Membership Leaders’ Network met with other interested League members on June 12th to hear a presentation by Nora Pullen from LWVUS about ChapterSpot, the new centralized membership platform for all Leagues across the county, and the unified dues process that will launch in January 2025.

Highlights from her presentation included the following:

1. **There is no action members need to take right now.** In the fall, each local League will need to create an account to process dues payments. The Stripe account will be available for set up in September but can wait until after the election if needed.
2. Training for use of the member portal and the handling of dues payments will be available to League leaders after the 2024 Election. This will include role-specific webinars for roster managers, treasurers, membership chairs.
3. Launch will happen in January 2025. This is when the change in processes will officially take place.
4. **This year you will still renew your membership in the usual way.** Although you will receive an email to log in to the ChapterSpot platform in January 2025, you will not be asked to renew your membership until a year after your most recent renewal. **Local Leagues need to make sure there are expiration dates for all members so this can work appropriately.**

For more specific information about the dues process under the new system and answers to many excellent questions raised at this meeting, check out the recording on the [Membership page](#) (under LWV Operations) on the LWVMI website. If you further questions, LWVUS holds office hours on the third Wednesday of each month beginning at 4PM. ChapterSpot Resources on the LWVUS management site includes FAQa and recordings from previous office hours.

Our next Membership Leaders' Network meeting will be held on **September 11<sup>th</sup>**; a reminder will be sent in late August. If you have membership questions over the summer, please reach out to me at [moburkey30@gmail.com](mailto:moburkey30@gmail.com). Wishing everyone a fun-filled summer!

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey  
LWVMI Membership VP

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## Observer Corps News

Observers mark your calendars for June 26th at 3pm on Zoom. We will have our quarterly LWVMI Observer Corps Network meeting. Our topic will be sharing ideas about how local leagues report out observation notes. There will also be time for catching up on what is happening around the state in the meetings you are observing and discussing preparations for Board of Canvasser observations after the August primary.

Here is the link to register: [Observer Corps Registration Link](#)

Lynne Kochmanski  
LWVMI Observer Corps Director

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## Membership Survey Coming Soon

Later this month, you will receive a Special Edition *League Links* with the 2024 membership survey. This



will look very similar to the 2020 survey focusing on demographic data and should take only 3-4 minutes of your time. The board of the LWVMI is gathering this information about its members to look at statewide representation of those who are doing outreach to voters and how well they represent their communities. We appreciate your participation.



MerriKay Oleen-Burkey  
LWVMI Membership VP

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## Rally for Reform

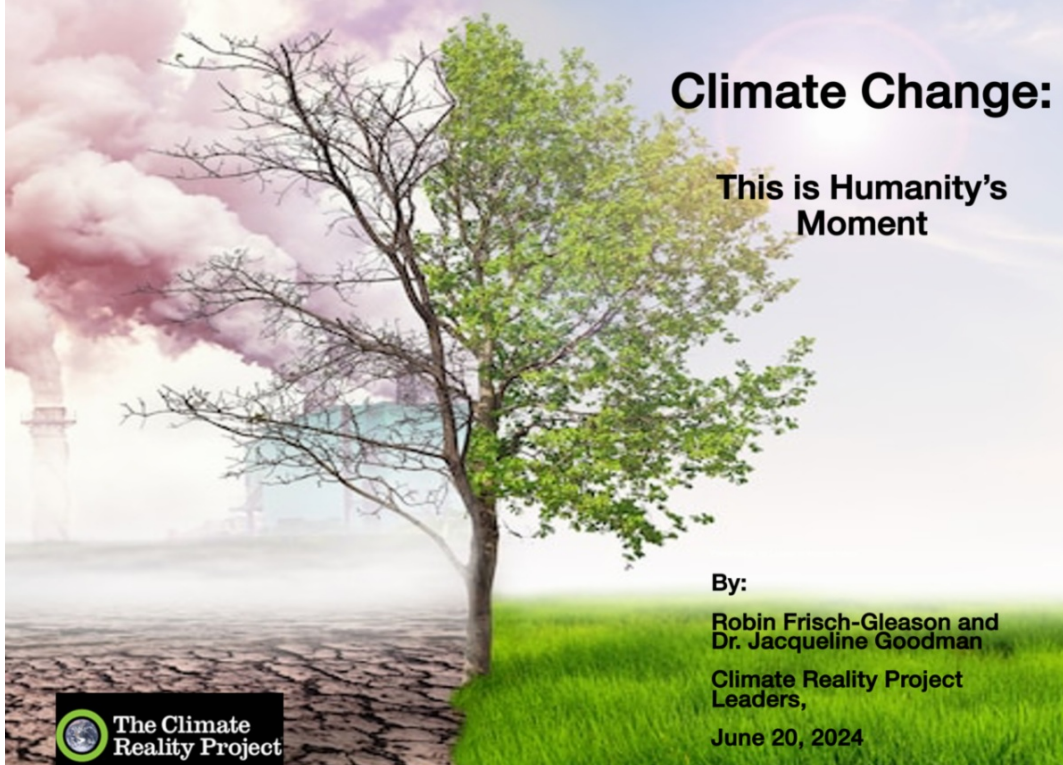
LWVMI Director Charles Thomas, Jr. invites you to amplify the demand for change at a *Rally for Reform* taking place at the Michigan Capital Lawn on June 25 from 11am-4pm. Those fighting for criminal justice want to end mass incarceration, promote fair sentencing laws, support reentry programs and ensure voting rights for all, including those impacted by the justice system. See more information [here](#).

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## LWVMI Environmental Network Event June 20 at 7:00 pm

Join the LWVMI Environmental Network for an educational presentation on **Climate Change: This is Humanity's Moment**. Our speakers will be Robin Gleason, a geologist, educator, polar expert and League member, and Jackie Goodman, an anthropologist, retired professor at Eastern Michigan University, and experienced presenter on climate change. Both are long time members of the non-profit, non-partisan 501c3 group The Climate Reality Project. Register [HERE](#) to attend this event.

If you missed the April meeting on Native Plants, you can view the recording and handouts [HERE](#). Two handouts featured in the video are [Garden Talk](#) and [Native Plant Resources](#).



# Climate Change:

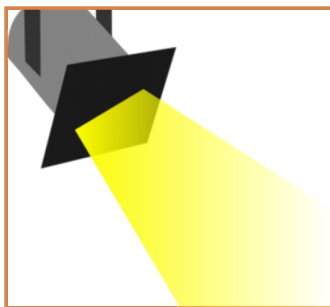
**This is Humanity's  
Moment**

**By:**

**Robin Frisch-Gleason and  
Dr. Jacqueline Goodman**

**Climate Reality Project  
Leaders,**

**June 20, 2024**



## Local League Spotlights

**The LWV of the Greater Grand Rapids Area** is participating in Democracy Block Parties in various precincts throughout the community organized by their friends at PROACTIVE, People Reaching Out And Coming Together Increasing Voter Empowerment. They are engaging as many people as possible to register to vote and participate in the voting process.

**The LWV of Dearborn-Dearborn Heights** was approved to participate in Michigan's oldest Memorial Day parade on Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. In remembrance and honoring those who fought for freedoms, including the right to vote, they had members marching and driving in the parade wearing suffragette sashes.

**The LWV of the Grand Traverse Area**, hosted an interesting program organized by their Program and Natural Resources Committees with Megan Alexander of Carter's Compost, Lindsey Walker of Emmet County Recycling, and Sarna Salzman of SEEDS Ecology and & Education Centers, who discussed all things composting.

## 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  
Lenawee 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  
Troy  
Washtenaw County

For more information go to [www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org)  
or check out Facebook pages for state and local Leagues

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## 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 (Lenawee County)  
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)  
Director at Large: Charles Thomas Jr. (Detroit)

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## Calendar

June 2024

Pride Month

June 17: [Pre-LWVUS Convention Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm

June 19: [Juneteenth](#)

June 20: [Environmental Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm

June 22: Second Anniversary of the [Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization](#) decision

June 23: 52nd Anniversary of Title IX

June 26: [Observer Corps Network Meeting](#) | 3:00 pm

June 27-31: LWV [National Convention](#) in Washington DC



## July 2024

Disability Pride Month

July 1: Anniversary of the 26th Amendment Lowering Voting Age to 18

July 4: Independence Day

July 13: LWVMI Board Meeting

July 18: Local/State Presidents Meeting

July 19-20: Anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention 1848

July 22: [Board of Canvassers Observer Training](#)

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

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### Connect with us!

**League of Women Voters of Michigan**

**Phone: 517-484-5383**

**Email: [office@lwvmi.org](mailto:office@lwvmi.org)**

**Website: [lwvmi.org](http://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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