



**Testimony submitted to the House Elections Committee on December 3, 2024 by
Denise Hartsough, LWVMI Co-President Re: SB 401-404**

Thank you, Representatives, for the opportunity to testify today. I am Denise Hartsough, co-president of the League of Women Voters of Michigan.

The League supports passage of the Michigan Voting Rights Act, Senate Bills 401 – 404. The League of Women Voters of Michigan has 33 local Leagues with members throughout the state. Our mission is to empower voters and defend democracy.

The League of Women Voters believes that voting is a fundamental right of citizens and must be guaranteed.

The federal Voting Rights Act passed in 1965. Unfortunately, its provisions have eroded over the years since, so state legislation is needed.

Regarding Senate Bill 401, the League believes it will provide an appropriate process for complaints made under the proposed Michigan Voting Rights Act. The involved entities must seek a remedy at the local level. From our experience working with local clerks throughout the state, we think this requirement will lead to local resolution of most complaints. For complaints not resolved locally, the bill provides reasonable next steps.

Regarding Senate Bill 403, the League strongly supports the clear definition of thresholds past which translation of election materials into one or more languages other than English is required. As you probably know, the League provides both print Voter Guides and the online guide VOTE411. These offer non-partisan information about voting and candidates. The League is often asked for voter guide information in languages other than English. We appreciate that Senate Bill 403 spells out that translations of election information will be done by the Secretary of State, and that the Secretary of State will post the list of communities with such translations. We also appreciate that the Language Advisory Council will assure citizen participation as the new translation requirements are implemented.

Michigan has a strong election system, dedicated clerks, and conscientious poll workers. The MVRA will assure that our election system continues to uphold the rights of voters into the future.

We urge you to pass this legislation. Thank you.