

League Links

January 2025

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Co-President's Message: Hello 2025!
 - Voter Service Updates
 - Advocacy Updates
 - Membership Leaders Network
 - LWV Membership Portal
 - MICRC Goes Dormant
 - Ranked Choice Voting
 - Building Bipartisan Support For Climate Action
 - LWVUS Federal Judiciary Study - How To Engage
 - Strengthening Our League Network
 - Spotlight on Local Leagues
 - Calendar
-

Hello 2025!

Happy New Year Michigan Members! After a quiet holiday season, our January is already filled with “to do’s.” Here are some upcoming events or responsibilities for all of us:



- Our state convention is in Grand Rapids from May 16-18 this year. There are already convention items on the [LWV Only](#) page of our website, and more will be added when they become available. Hotel and convention registration will be available in mid-February. More details can be found on the January 15th email that went to all members.
- Each League has been sent a unique link to the LWVUS Annual Survey. The link was sent to the president or leader who is listed as the top officer in the LWVUS database. If no one in your League received the link, contact evaluations@lww.org and ask for a new one to be sent. Be sure to give them your League number. Filling out this survey, which is due on February 14, should be a group effort by your Board Members. There are a LOT of good resources, Q & As, and a sample

data tracker on the League Management Site. Once finished, LWWUS will send each League an attractive graphic of your achievements that you can post on social media, in your newsletter or on your website. All of this data is important for the League's visibility and to measure our impact. Please participate.

- The transition to Chapter Spot – the new membership dues platform – is finally here. Officers in each League have been scrambling to get ready for this major change, but members won't see any disruptions. In early February, members will get an email from LWWUS to access Chapter Spot and "claim their membership." Be sure to log on and establish your "profile."

Even though this is a calm election year for many Leagues, there are still plenty of opportunities for us to learn more about the League, the Michigan Legislature and the state of our democracy. Start by reading all the great articles below!

Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough
LWVMI Co-Presidents

Voter Service Updates

Happy New Year to All!

GOTV Text Banking Pilot Project

The results are in! A total of 9 local Leagues participated in our first Text Banking Pilot Project for the August and November 2024 elections. Three types of texting formats were offered:

- Text Party. Members were invited to text during a Zoom session or in person. Many described it as a fun way to have discussions while texting, making it a community effort and great way to build comradery and to get volunteers involved with minimal effort.
- Text on Demand. League volunteers were provided a link to click on the text on their own time. Participating Leagues reported that volunteers liked doing it and most requested an expansion of their voter targets.
- Bulk Text. Due to limited resources and time constraints, some local Leagues opted to have our vendor text their list of voters on their behalf.

Each voter received a message that contained the League logo so the recipients were aware of the source of the text.

In Michigan, a total of 5,553,169 voted in the November 2024 General Election, which was 66% of registered voters. The League contacted 181,940 registered voters and 129,791 (71.33%) voted, which was above the state percentage of 66%. In addition, 14,263 very low likelihood voters were contacted and 4,310 voted.

LWVMI focused on female voters-see voting statistics below:

- 129,024 contacted: 91,926 voted (71%)
- 39,508 under age 35 contacted: 25,901 voted (65.5%)

Here is the breakdown of voter contacts by local League:

- LWV Calhoun County 13,928
- LWV Grand Rapids 30,390
- LWV Grand Traverse 15,544
- LWV Grosse Pointe 27,235
- LWV Holland Area 15,000
- LWV Kalamazoo 24,000
- LWV Lansing Area 14,000
- LWV Lenawee 14,000
- LWV Washtenaw 27,843

A total of 4.3% of voters who were contacted opted out of messages. In addition, 7.5% of the text messages resulted in bad phone numbers, which were removed.

A special thanks to all of the local Leagues who participated. We are reviewing ways on how we may continue text banking for our local elections in 2025. Stay tuned.

Voter Service Network Meeting

The next Voter Service Network Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 23, 7:00 p.m. Please use this [link](#) to register. Once registered, you will receive instructions on how to join the meeting. Looking forward to seeing you there!

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

Judy Florian
VP for Voter Service
jflo@comcast.net

Advocacy Update

End of 2023-24 Legislative Session:

The Michigan Legislature completed its two-year session on December 31. Bills that passed the House and Senate are still being reviewed by the Governor. Also, the Michigan House of Representatives has not sent nine bills that passed to the Governor. In 2023, 308 Public Acts were signed into law, in 2024, so far 190 Public Acts are signed into law.



LWVMI supported or opposed almost 300 bills during the two-year session. LWVMI was very involved in monitoring legislation, attending committee meetings, supporting and opposing legislation, providing testimony, participating in lobby days, working in coalitions, and sending action alerts. Thank you to the members of the LWVMI Advocacy Committee: Tricia Denton, Carolyn Madden, Connie Mitchell, Christina Schlitt, Sue Smith, Sandra Sorini Elser, Maria Wilson, and Ex Officio Denise Hartsough and Paula Bowman.

Highlights of major legislation that became law include:

- **Criminal Justice** – major juvenile justice reforms to Juvenile Diversion Act.
- **Elections** – implementation of Proposal 18-3 and Proposal 22-2 on voting rights for accessibility, security and integrity, and process improvement in our elections.
- **Gun Safety** – extreme risk protection orders, safe storage for firearms, background checks and ban firearms in domestic violence cases.
- **Natural Resources** - Clean Energy & Jobs Act signed on 11/28/23 sets a 100% clean energy standard for Michigan by 2040 and requires 60% of Michigan’s energy to come from renewable sources by 2035.
- **Reproductive Health Care** – implementation of Proposal 22-3 Reproductive Choice to assure reproductive freedom and repeal of old laws.
- **Social Policy** - expansion of earned income tax credit, and equity for mental health and substance abuse treatment.

For a complete list of legislation go to the [Advocacy Section](#) of the LWVMI website.

Of course, the failure of the MI Legislature to pass some major legislation LWVMI supported is very disappointing, but as Susan B. Anthony said, “Failure is impossible.”

New 2025-26 Legislative Session:

On January 8, the 103rd Michigan Legislative Session was called to order. The Michigan Senate and the Michigan House of Representatives adopted rules of procedure. The Michigan Senate has 37 members, 19 Democrats and 18 Republicans and 1 vacancy. No special election has been scheduled by the Governor to fill Senate District 35. Senator Winnie Brinks (D-District 29) is the Majority Leader and Senator Eric Nesbitt (R- District 20) is the Minority Leader.

The Michigan House of Representatives has 110 members, 58 Republicans and 52 Democrats. Representative Matt Hall (R- District 42) is the Speaker and Representative Ranjeev Puri (D- District 24) is the Minority Leader. There are 12 new Representatives and 2 returning Representatives. At this time, committees have not been announced in the House or Senate.

The Michigan House Select Committee on Protecting Michigan Employees and Small Businesses reported two bills, HB 4001 and HB 4002, dealing with the implementation of the 2018 voter-initiated statutes to Raise the Minimum Wage and provide Earned Paid Sick Leave. The first two bills introduced in the MI Senate, SB 1 and SB 2, are a reintroduction of the Freedom of Information Act applying to the Governor’s office and the Legislature. The LWVMI Advocacy Committee will review and make recommendations to the LWVMI Board on this legislation.

Governor Whitmer has scheduled the State of the State for February 26, and in that month will present the proposed budget. All bills from the 102nd legislative session died, and new bills will be introduced in the new session. For more information, go to [Michigan Senate](#) and [Michigan House](#) websites.

Membership Leaders Network

The Membership Leaders' Network met on January 8 via Zoom when we revisited '[League Lingo](#)' and discussed ways for those new to the membership leader role to engage members. If you did not receive the recording and would like one, contact MerriKay at moburkey30@gmail.com.

Our next Membership Leaders' Network meeting will be presented by the LWVMI Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Team and will be open to all League members:

LWVMI Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion February Forum Classism and Voting Rights Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 7:00 pm

Classism is the systemic institutional, cultural, and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign differential value to people according to their socioeconomic class.

The Forum will present some results from the LWVMI Member Survey and how they relate to classism. We will build upon what classism is and how it affects voting rights.

Anyone who needs accommodations please contact Patty O'Donnell at pattytothepines@gmail.com to provide any materials ahead of time. Closed Captioning will be available.

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey
LWVMI Membership VP

League of Women Voters Membership Portal Launches on February 3rd

If your League has taken these final steps, you should be ready for the new membership system:

1. Filled out the [League Info Form](#). This form asks for your League's current dues rate, website, EIN, nonpartisan policy, DEI policy, and bylaws.
2. Ensured that the current roster information is up-to-date in the [Roster Manager Portal](#), particularly email addresses, expiration dates, and your League's officer list. There is still time before January 31st to make any changes to the roster.
3. Signed up for a Stripe account that will be used by Leagues to collect their portion of dues.

The week of February 3rd, all members will receive an invitation to the membership portal from lww@lww.org.

Ranked Choice Voting

LWV Oakland Area supports Ranked Choice Voting and Nonpartisan Primaries as a method for improving our election process. We have created an educational PowerPoint presentation that we wish to share with local Leagues. It is hoped that if statewide ballot proposals on ranked choice voting and nonpartisan primaries happen, LWVMI would support it as an advocacy priority for the 2026 election. We are available during January and February 2025 to present a 40 minute PowerPoint via Zoom to local League boards and/or their entire membership.

Please contact Chris Wiggins or Maria Woloson at LWVOAMI@gmail.com to schedule a presentation. We look forward to the opportunity to share this important information.



Building Bipartisan Support For Climate Action

January 30, 2025 at 7pm

Via Zoom: [Register Here](#)

Please join the League of Women Voters of Michigan Environmental Network and the Michigan Citizens' Climate Lobby for an educational presentation focusing on practical ways to build bipartisanship in partisan times.

Linda Racine, Michigan Co-Coordinator of Citizens' Climate Lobby, will be our presenter. The program will include a short interactive session to practice the engagement and listening skills we need in order to advance our goals and protect our environment.

Contact Sandy Sorini Elser at Advocacy@LWVWashtenaw.org for more information



Citizens' Climate Lobby



MICRC Goes Dormant

MICRC Votes to Go into Dormancy

On December 19, 2024, the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission voted to go into dormancy at the end of their December 19 meeting until such time as they are recalled by the Secretary of State, or until their terms expire in 2030. According to the Michigan Constitution, the Commission would be recalled if either the Commission or its staff were sued. Chairperson Anthony Eid and Vice Chairperson Cynthia Orton were elected to be the contact persons if the MICRC were recalled.

Commissioners will not be paid while the Commission is dormant. The Commission's only remaining staff person, Executive Director Edward Woods, III, will be paid through the end of February 2025 so that he can complete reports, pay bills, etc. Chairperson Eid and Vice Chairperson Orton

will be available to sign documents as needed on a pro bono basis.

Final Reports

The Commission voted to approve and publish the 2024 House and Senate Remedial Commission Report. This report is required by the Michigan Constitution. The 253-page report is available on the website. It includes the remedial House and Senate maps along with an analysis of the maps and of public comments on the two remedial plans.

The Michigan Constitution also provides an opportunity for those who voted against the final maps to submit a Dissenting Report. This report must be made available to the public. It is not subject to review by the Commission.

Rebecca Szetela was the only Commissioner to submit a Dissenting Report. MICRC attorney David Fink expressed some concerns about the Szetela report for two reasons. One, the report went beyond the scope of the remedial maps and two, it included inappropriate personal attacks. The Commission cannot withhold the report but it is not included in the Commission's official report.

CLOSUP, from the University of Michigan School of Public Policy, reported it had completed its interviews of those Commissioners who had agreed to participate. The interviews are included in its "Lessons Learned" report to the Commission. The Commission voted to accept the report for publication.

Depositories for MICRC Archives

The MICRC has approved two depositories for its archives: The State of Michigan's Archives and the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library.

All MICRC materials, including each Commissioner's electronic and paper files, the MICRC's final reports and other reports such as the "Lessons Learned" report prepared by CLOSUP will be archived so that the materials can be preserved and easily accessed by the public.

LWVMI Monitoring Team

The LWVMI Monitoring Team observed and reported on over 200 meetings of the MICRC from September 2020 through December 2024. As a result of the Team's work, LWVMI was able to testify at MICRC meetings on specific League concerns regarding the MICRC's work.

In addition, during that four-year period, Team members met monthly for training on how to draw the maps, how to identify and work with COI's (Communities of Interest) in their area and to discuss various issues related to the MICRC.

League of Women Voters Recognized by MICRC Executive Director
Last August, MICRC Executive Director Edward Woods, III recognized and thanked the League of Women Voters for the important contributions it had made to the MICRC's successful outreach during the map redrawing phase.

Local League members assisted at MICRC public hearings held in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties. Local Leagues in those counties also publicized the hearings to their members and encouraged them to testify on

the maps as individuals.

Susan Smith
LWVMI Redistricting Chair

LWVUS Federal Judiciary Study - How to Engage

Join experienced League members from Michigan on Tuesday, January 28 at 7pm on Zoom to learn how local Leagues can conduct the study and consensus process for a national study.

Hear from Joan Hunault, a member of the LWVUS Federal Judiciary Study Committee, as well as Carla Barrows-Wiggins (Oakland Area), Connie Ferguson (Kalamazoo Area) and Lena Packer (Northwest Wayne County).

Register [here](#).

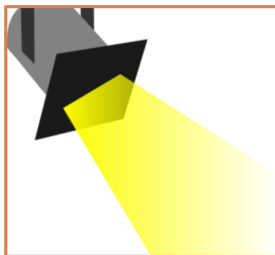
Strengthening Our League Network

Thanks to all the donors who have supported the capacity of LWVMI, the backbone of our network of local Leagues and Units!

The fall appeal letter asked you to consider giving to LWVMI. It has 501c4 nonprofit status, which means donations are not deductible for the donor.

Your generosity exceeded expectations! Donations as of October 31, 2024 totaled \$4541, only 15% of the \$30,000 that we have budgeted to raise during this fiscal year (2024-25). As of December 31, 2024, donations had risen to \$16,205 or 54% of \$30,000!

Thank you! Please continue to donate in support of our State League so it can continue to grow and develop the network of local Leagues and Units! And if you would like to set up a recurring donation, you can set it and forget it at [this link](#) by checking the box for “Make this a monthly donation.”



Local League Spotlights

The **LWV of Leelanau County** had a membership meeting on January 8th featuring Joe DeFors, President of Leelanau Energy and a long-time member of the LWVLC who spoke about “Renewable Energy Today... and Tomorrow.” A video of the program will be available on the LWVLC website soon.

The **LWV of Greater Grand Rapids Area** began its 2025 Voices on Vital Topics Speaker Series on January 14th. Their speakers were Kent County Clerk, Lisa Posthumus Lyons and the Chief Deputy Clerk Robert J. Macomber who discussed the November election process, how Michigan’s new voter laws were implemented and the voter turnout in Kent County.

These were vital topics for LWVGGA members who worked diligently to educate voters about the new voter laws and many get-out-the-vote efforts.

The **LWV of Detroit** and the Detroit Public Library host monthly on-line forums dealing with voting rights, access, and legislation as well as government. The January meeting featured Phil Mayor, Senior Staff Attorney at the ACLU of Michigan, who introduced the role the Michigan Supreme Court plays in State Government. He also discussed important civil rights-related cases the court decided in the past year and their potential impact on Michigan citizens.

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
or check out Facebook pages for state and local Leagues

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)
League Links: Courtney Winell (Greater Grand Rapids Area)
Director at Large: Charles Thomas Jr. (Detroit)

Calendar



January 2025

January 20: Inauguration Day
January 20: MLK Day and Dr. MLK Jr's Birthday
January 21: 15th Anniversary of Citizen's United Decision
January 22: 52nd Anniversary of Roe v. Wade Decision
January 23: [Voter Service Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm
January 28: [LWVMI Study and Consensus How-To](#) | 7:00 pm
January 30: [Bipartisan Support for Climate Action](#) | 7:00 pm
January 31: Deadline for Roster Updates in LWVUS Database

February 2025

[Black History Month](#)

February 8: LWVMI Board Meeting | 9:00 am
February 13: LWVMI Presidents and Leaders Meeting | 7:00 pm
February 14: LWV Turns 105! and Valentine's Day
February 27: Anniversary of SCOTUS Upholding the 19th Amendment

Future Important Dates:

- **March 1:** Due Date for [Bylaws Recommendations and Program Planning Reports](#)
- **April 14:** Consensus Reports Due: [LWVUS Judicial Study](#)
- **May 16-18:** LWVMI Convention in Grand Rapids

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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