



League Links

April 2025

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Thank You Volunteers!

This week is National Volunteer Week. We celebrate all of our League volunteers, who for 105 years have made an impact in protecting our democracy. You have provided hours of selfless work to further the League's mission, and we recognize you for your dedication and generosity. Thank you.

Additionally, it is time to thank our wonderful financial donors, without whom our League would struggle to move forward. We are humbled that so many of you have the confidence in our leadership to support us with a donation. Please see the [attached list](#) of this past year's donors and know that we appreciate each and every one of you.

Denise Hartsough and Paula Bowman
LWVMI Co-Presidents



2025 LWVMI Convention

Our 39th Biennial Convention is almost here. May 16-18 in Grand Rapids is the place to be to find energy and skills to further the League's mission. Dozens of members have been working to make this an enjoyable and educational opportunity for all Michigan members. Please [register](#) prior to May 1 to avoid a penalty.

All convention attendees are invited to attend a pre-convention meeting on May 13, 7:00 pm via [Zoom](#). The link is also available on the LWV Only page of our website. This is not mandatory, but those who wish to learn more about the progression of weekend events and the key decisions on which delegates will be voting will find this helpful – especially if this is your first state convention. The meeting will be recorded and sent out immediately after the event to everyone on the convention registration list.

We can't wait to see you all!



Voter Service Updates

Voter Rolls Purged

According to the Secretary of State's office, approximately 314,000 inactive voter registrations were removed from the state's voter rolls on Wednesday, April 2. These were registrations of voters who had received a cancellation notice based on change of residency and who did not respond to the notice or engage in voter activity in the two federal election cycles after receiving the notice. This cancellation represents the removal of more than 1.1 million out-

of-date registrations under the Benson administration's careful and active voter list maintenance process.

Michigan voters whose registrations were cancelled can re-register at any time, including up to and on Election Day. Voters can also always check their registration status online at Michigan.gov/Vote or by contacting their local clerk.

Key May 6 Election Dates

Many jurisdictions have local elections on May 6. Here are some key dates to remember as we approach Election Day.

- April 21: Last day to register to vote online or by mail to vote in the May 6 Election. (Starting April 22, you'll need to register in person at your city or township clerk's office with proof of residency.)
- April 22: For most voters*, this is the last day recommended to return your ballot by mail to avoid postal delays. (Starting April 23, it is recommended returning your ballot in person to your city or township clerk's office or to a secure drop box in your community.)
- May 4: Last day that communities may offer in-person early voting.
- May 5 at 4 p.m.: Deadline to vote in person, with an absentee ballot, at your city or township clerk's office if you're registered to vote where you live. (After today at 4 p.m., you must vote at your polling place on Election Day.)
- May 6: Election Day! Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time. If you need to register to vote, you can register and then vote at your city or township clerk's office until 8 p.m.

*If you're serving in the military or living overseas, your ballot must be postmarked by Election Day (May 6) and received by May 12 to count.

Board of Canvassers Observation - May 6 Election

There is a modified version of our Board of Canvassers post-election observation program for this relatively small election. We expect the canvass in almost all counties to last only one day. Please let your local President know if you can be your county's observer. The shift report for this observation can be found [here](#).

Key Voting- and Election-Related Laws Effective in 2025

There are some key voting- and election-related laws that will go into effect in 2025. These include:

- Banning of firearms at polling places and other voting-related locations-April 2
- Online voter registration without a Michigan driver's license or state ID-June 30
- Secure Automatic Voter Registration (SAVR)-June 30
- Electronic absentee ballot return for active duty service members-September 1
- Changes to Recount Rules and Processes-April 2

- Expanding the allowable use of ballot on demand machines-April 2
- Changes to Canvasser Eligibility Requirements-April 2
- Changes to the Secretary of State's Procedures for Ballot Petitions-April 2

Detail on each of the above laws can be found in the [attached document](#).

Please note that the effective dates of the laws listed are the legal effective dates. However—practically speaking—laws are not always implemented promptly. If we learn of any delays, we'll update you with the new effective date.

Local Voter Guide Committee

Second Request! I have no volunteers yet for this committee—please consider lending your expertise for this project!! We are forming a committee to review options for local Leagues who want to produce a local voter guide for 2026. Our goal is to develop a common template that all local Leagues can use. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact me at jflo@comcast.net. We are looking for volunteers who have experience with producing a local guide and also those who want to provide input but haven't produced a guide in the past. We welcome your service and ideas!

Updated VOTE411 Bookmark Available

As reported at the last Voter Service Network Meeting, we have a new VOTE411 Bookmark Design for local Leagues. The template contains two color options. You can even have the bookmark personalized with your local League name/logo. Attached are the 2 designs. If you want your League logo attached, please contact Pat Buckner at patbuckner24@gmail.com.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF MICHIGAN

**AN INFORMED
VOTER IS A
POWERFUL
VOTER.**

What's on your ballot?

Election Information You Need

Providing non-partisan,
personalized voting information



"Who is running for office?"

"Where do candidates stand
on my issues?"

"Where is my polling place?"

"Can I vote early?"

"What should I bring with me?"

**BE
INFORMED
VOTE
INFORMED**

**It's so EASY! All you
have to do is type in
your address.**



For trusted Election
Information visit:

VOTE411.org

What is on your ballot?

Use VOTE411.org to

- 1) Register to Vote.
- 2) Learn important
deadlines & election
dates.
- 3) Review your voting
options.
- 4) Verify your polling
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Voter Service Network Meeting

The next Voter Service Network Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 7:00 p.m. Please use this [link](#) to register for the meeting. Once registered, you will receive instructions on how to join the meeting. An agenda will be sent to the Network the week of April 21st. I look 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

Federal:

On April 10, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the SAVE Act. The vote was 220-208. Four Democrats voted with the Republicans to support its passage. The Michigan delegation votes along party lines. The [SAVE Act, H.R. 22](#), is awaiting a vote in the US Senate. LWVUS opposes the bill. You can find additional information on the SAVE ACT [here](#).



LWV has an action alert available to tell your Senators to oppose the SAVE Act. Simply click [here](#) to urge our MI Senators to vote NO on the SAVE Act.

Lots of Michigan's local leagues and their members participated in the April 5 Hands Off! events around the state. LWVUS was a national sponsor of the event.

Michigan:

HJR B, the bill to require verification of citizenship for state elections, is on Second Reading in the MI House of Representatives awaiting action. You can still contact your state representative to express opposition to the joint resolution. It is available on LWVMI's website at the [Take Action button](#).

During the past month, both the Senate and House took spring breaks. When they returned, the MI House Oversight Committee issued its first subpoena for the Department of State to turn over documents related to training of Clerks for the administration of elections. In addition, the House Energy Committee reported two bills that LWVMI opposed- HB 4007 and HB 4283. These bills would amend the Clean and Renewable Energy and Energy Waste Reduction Act to allow electricity generated from reciprocating internal combustion engines (RICE).

On April 17, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed an executive directive instructing the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to compile a report identifying the impact Republican proposed cuts to Medicaid will have on the 2.6 million users in Michigan. Specifically, the report will investigate the potential impact the cuts would have on people's health. You can read the directive [here](#).

The [Michigan Citizen's Guide](#) to State Government 2025-2026 is now available online. It is a comprehensive publication with information about the MI Senate and MI House, how a bill is passed, etc.

On April 18, the Michigan State Board of Canvassers met and approved the 100-word summary for the proposed constitutional amendment sponsored by the Committee to Protect Voters' Rights. The group will now start gathering signatures. The proposal is like HJR B that LWVMI opposed in the Michigan Legislature.

For a complete list of bills the LWVMI is following, go to the [Advocacy 2025 page](#) of the LWVMI website.

Unite and Rise 8.5

LWVUS launches an initiative on May 1 to counter the constitutional crisis our country faces. The League will reach out to voters through advocacy, mobilization, civic education, and engagement.

CEO Celina Stewart and President Dianna Wynn stated:

Unite and Rise 8.5 will engage and mobilize 8.5 million voters between now and November 2026 to protect and preserve our democratic institutions.

The foundational principles that have sustained our democracy — checks and balances, the rule of law, free and fair elections — are under direct and sustained threat. In this extraordinary moment, we cannot proceed with business as usual. All Americans — no matter who you voted for in 2024 — need to come together, stand united, and fight back to save our democracy. We cannot afford to fail the generations to come.

In the meantime, please use and share the action alerts from LWVUS to:

- Ask Congress to carry out its constitutional responsibility
- Support recognition of the Equal Rights Amendment
- Express your reaction to your US Representative's vote on the SAVE Act
- Tell our US Senators to oppose the SAVE Act
- Support restoration and expansion of the Voting Rights Act

The League urges all members to express their views and concerns as individual constituents to their elected officials, whether or not those officials share your views. Keep speaking out!

Membership Leaders' Network

The Membership Leaders' Network met on April 9th for a program organized by the LWVMI Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Team members, Cathy McAdam and Connie Ferguson, entitled, "Energizing Young Voters in League Work." Our guest speaker was Pat Supplee, Ed.D who is the Director of Energizing Young Voters, an initiative of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. She talked to us about her youth focused, youth led and adult supported program that has been adopted by Leagues in other states and how participating youth have transitioned to civic engagement and general League membership. To view the program recording, use this [link](#) and enter passcode ECe?@#a5. Visit the [Energizing Young Voters](#) website for information about this initiative.

We will not have a Membership Leaders' Network meeting in May but there will be several sessions at the LWVMI State Convention on May 16-18 of potential interest to membership leaders. We hope you can participate in convention! The Membership Leaders' Network will reconvene on June 11th.

First Quarter Highlights from Local Observer Corps

Observer Reba Leiding from LWV Grand Traverse Area (LWVGTA) describes a recent advocacy effort which originated from her work as an observer for the Grand Traverse County Commission. Reba noted that at a county commission meeting discussion came up on drafting a new septic system inspection ordinance. She knew the LWVGTA Natural Resources committee had been following the issue at the state level and saw a possible opportunity for advocacy locally with the county. She shared her observation with Ann Swaney of the natural resource committee, who looked into it, checking on League positions and decided to move forward with advocacy. A LWVGTA statement was sent to the county commission in support of septic inspections, which aided in helping the commission move ahead with possible implementation. The process is still ongoing with a public hearing scheduled for later in April and a potential vote in May. The LWVGTA will be speaking at the hearing in favor of the commission proposal, and Reba will be observing closely the meeting in May to follow whether the commission is successful in approving septic inspections at point of transfer.

Observer Regena Nelson from LWV Kalamazoo (LWVKA) describes a very positive collaboration building between the LWVKA observer corps and the local independent news source called NOW Kalamazoo, an online publication read widely throughout the Kalamazoo area. Regena states that in May of 2024 the LWVKA had a presentation from NOW Kalamazoo community outreach coordinator, Reid Williams, who proposed a partnership with LWVKA observer corps and a team of local civically engaged citizens who he hoped to have observer corps members mentor to take notes at government meetings around the Kalamazoo area for articles in NOW Kalamazoo. To build this group of citizen civic minded reporters, "field trips" are scheduled for interested citizens. At these field trips, citizens and league observers talk about how to observe, fill out observation notes, and report out. The goal of NOW Kalamazoo is encouraging civic engagement at the local level, which aligns perfectly with the observer corps. It also provides a great way for the LWVKA to be visible in the community. Interested league members from other local leagues may contact Regena for more information at regena.fails.nelson@wmich.edu.

Lynne Kochmanski
LWVMI Observer Corps Director

Nonpartisan Primaries and Ranked Choice Voting

At the LWVMI Convention, the LWVMI Board will recommend that LWVMI's position on Election Law be updated to clearly define the type of primaries that LWVMI supports and to state LWVMI's support of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for state and local elections. If you'd like information about these topics before the convention, please watch this [video](#) from LWV Oakland Area. The

video is 46 minutes long and was designed for LWV members. A notes version of the slides can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions about these topics or if you would like a live presentation for your League of this LWV-specific presentation, please don't hesitate to contact Chris Wiggins (cwiggins@comcast.net) or Maria Woloson (mywoloson@gmail.com).



Eva Belles' Vote

The following article appeared in a recent issue of Michigan Legal Milestones, State Bar of Michigan Newsletter. Listed below is the complete text of the milestone marker placed by the State Bar of Michigan and the Genesee County Bar Association, 1990.

In April 1888, Eva R. Belles tried to vote in a Flint school board election. Because she was a woman, the election inspectors refused to receive her ballot. Firmly believing she was entitled to vote, she fought that decision up to the Michigan Supreme Court, and won an early victory for women's suffrage.

She retained George H. Durand, former Flint mayor and first president of the Genesee County Bar Association, as her attorney. A provision of the Michigan Constitution gave power to the legislature to provide for a system of primary schools. The legislature set school election voting qualifications in a statute specifying that "every person" meeting certain criteria, including age, property, and parenthood, could vote in all such elections not involving money or tax questions. As mother to Jennie, a school-aged child, and a Flint property owner, Eva Belles met the criteria.

George Durand argued that the "every person" language of the statute, and not the gender restriction found in the Constitution, should control who could vote in school elections. Michigan's Supreme Court agreed, and as a result, women like Eva Belles won the right to vote in certain school elections.

A battle had been won, but final victory for women's suffrage in Michigan would not be achieved until 1918, when the Michigan Constitution was amended to provide full voting rights for women.

The LWVMI Environmental Network Hosts presentation on Implementing the MI Healthy Climate Plan

An Educational Presentation by the EGLE Office of Climate and Energy

May 29, 2025, at 7pm via Zoom

The Statewide LWVMI Environmental Network is excited to host Julia Fields, Deputy Climate Energy Advisor for the EGLE Office of Climate and Energy, which leads implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan.

The MI Healthy Climate Plan lays out a pathway for Michigan to reach 100% carbon neutrality by 2050 to avert the worst effects of the climate crisis, create good paying jobs and build a healthier and more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future for everyone in Michigan.

Please join us for this important look at how Michigan is working to preserve our State and our world for us and future generations.

Register for this meeting and submit questions for our speaker [here](#).

For questions please contact Sandra Sorini Elser at advocacy@lwwwashtenaw.org

MICHIGAN HEALTHY CLIMATE PLAN

May 29, 2025, 7:00pm via [Zoom](#)

Hosted by LWVMI Environmental Network

Speaker: Julia Fields, the Deputy Climate Energy Advisor for the EGLE Office of Climate and Energy which leads implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan.

Register for this meeting and submit questions for our speaker [here](#).

The MI Healthy Climate Plan lays out a pathway for Michigan to reach 100% carbon neutrality by 2050 to avert the worst impacts of the climate crisis, create good-paying jobs, and build a healthier and more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable Michigan for all Michiganders.



Join or Die

Join or Die is a film about why you should join a club — and why the fate of America depends on it.

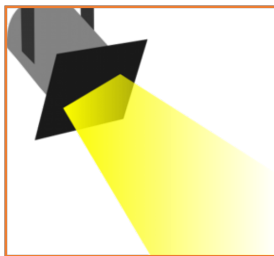
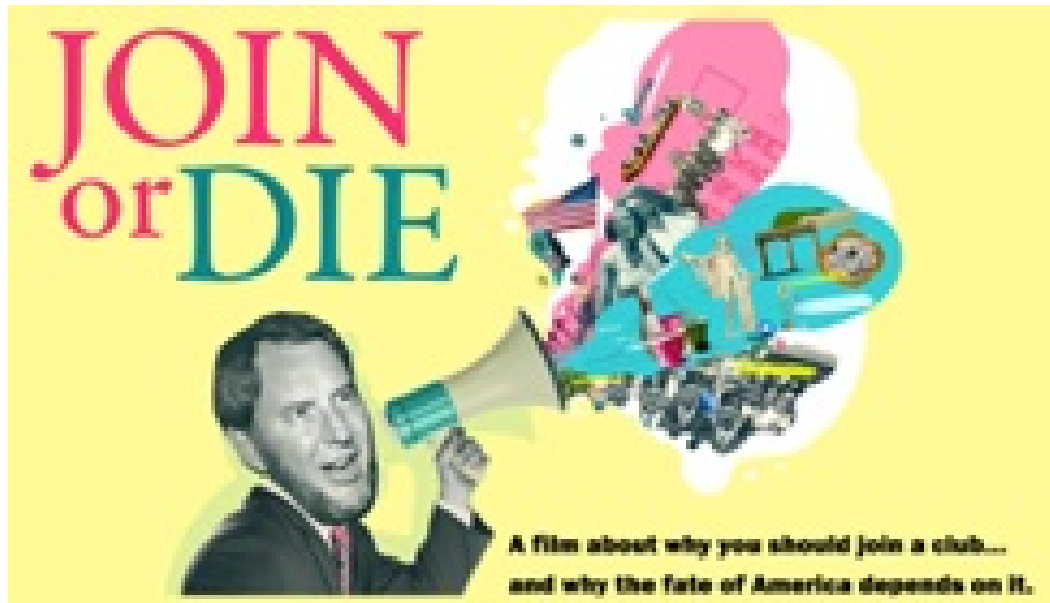
In this feature documentary, follow the half-century story of America's civic unraveling through the journey of legendary social scientist Robert Putnam, whose groundbreaking "Bowling Alone" research into America's decades-long decline in community connections could hold the answers to our democracy's present crisis.

Flanked by influential fans and scholars — from Hillary Clinton, Pete Buttigieg, and Surgeon General Vivek Murthy to Eddie Glaude Jr., Raj Chetty, and Priya Parker — as well as inspiring groups building community in

neighborhoods across the country, join Bob as he explores three urgent civic questions: What makes democracy work? Why is American democracy in crisis? And, most importantly... What can we do about it?

You are invited to a free showing of this documentary hosted by the LWV
Macomb and friends of the Shelby Township Library
52610 Van Dyke Ave, Shelby Township
Saturday, May 3, 2025, at 2:00 PM
No registration is necessary. Bring a friend!

Kathy Poore
LWV Macomb



Local League Spotlights

The **LWV of Greater Grand Rapids Area** held a program from their Voices on Vital Topics Virtual Speaker Series on March 19. Their speaker was environmental activist Anneke van Rossum who discussed the Green Amendment being proposed at the

state level across our country to guarantee Americans the right to clean air, water, land and climate.

The **LWV of the Mount Pleasant Area** honored Ruth Helwig with its Eagle Award for service to the League. They also nominated her for the Mt. Pleasant Chamber of Commerce's highest honor, the Citizen of the Year Award for excellence in service and leadership in the community. Ruth was surprised with this additional honor at the Chamber's 68th Awards banquet on March 1, 2025. Congratulations, Ruth!



The **LWV of Grosse Pointe** held a program in their Democracy Series on April 17 titled, "The Attack on DEI: What We All Stand to Lose." The speaker

was Jay Kaplan, staff attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Michigan, who is at the forefront of legal efforts to ensure the legal rights for LGBTQ+ people are protected and expanded.

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 2024-2025

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

VOTE411: Carolyn Vertin (Lenawee County)

Advocacy: Connie Mitchell (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights)
Observer Corps: Lynne Kochmanski (Washtenaw County)
League Links: Courtney Winell (Greater Grand Rapids Area)
Director at Large: Charles Thomas Jr. (Detroit)

Calendar



April 2025

[Arab American Heritage Month](#)

National Volunteer Month

April 20-26: National Volunteer Appreciation Week

April 22: Earth Day

April 24: [Voter Services Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm

April 30: Last Day to [Register](#) for Convention Without Penalty

May 2025

Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Jewish American Heritage Month

Mental Health Awareness Month

May 5: Last Day to [Submit](#) Grant Reports for Mis/Dis Information Presentations

May 10: LWVMI Board Meeting is **CANCELLED**

May 11: Mother's Day

May 13: [LWVMI Convention Preview](#) | 7:00 pm

May 15: LWV Presidents and Leaders Meeting is **CANCELLED**

May 16-18: [LWVMI Convention in Grand Rapids](#)

May 20: 32nd Anniversary of the [National Voter Registration Act](#)

May 26: Memorial Day

May 29: Environmental Network: [MI Healthy Climate Plan](#) | 7:00 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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