

League Links

May 2025

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2025 LWVMI Convention

What a great Convention weekend we had in Grand Rapids May 16-18! Great speakers, fun events, decisions that met our bylaw requirements and extensive networking. Nearly 170 League members attended and we happily report that almost every local League was represented. Key decisions made by the delegates included:

- Budgets passed for the next 2 fiscal years
 - Changes to our bylaws to eliminate references to Per Member Payment
 - Adoption of the LWV Utah's Medical Aid in Dying position by Concurrence ([now on our website](#))
 - Agreement to work on an update of the LWVMI Election Law position that will focus on methods of primary elections
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- We recognized many "Belle Ringers" (high achievers from Leagues across Michigan) and Lifetime members. We also awarded LWVMI's highest honors to 3 very deserving members: Christina Schlitt received the Belle Brotherton Award, Carolyn Vertin received the Eva Packard Voter Service Award and Nancy Behring was



awarded the Judy Karandjeff
Advocacy Award.

- We elected a new Board of Directors that will take office on July 1, 2025. The new officers elected are:

Co-President: Denise Hartsough, Kalamazoo Area

Co-President: Lynne Kochmanski, Washtenaw County

VP for Advocacy: Sandra Sorini-Elser, Washtenaw County

VP for Membership: Carla Barrows-Wiggins, Oakland Area

VP for Program: Ellen Lafferty, Livingston County

VP for Voter Service: Judy Florian, Grosse Pointe

Secretary: Maria McCarville, Saginaw County

Treasurer: Tom Wells, Grosse Pointe

Directors

Carrie Moon-Dupree, NW Wayne

Courtney Winell, Grand Rapids

Anne Jackson, Washtenaw County

Sheryl Theriot, Detroit

Connie Mitchell, Dearborn/Dearborn Hts.

Tina Pawlak, Holland

Charles Thomas, Jr, Detroit

Dozens of people worked on the Convention to make it valuable to the delegates. We thank all of them, especially the members of the LWV of the Greater Grand Rapids Area. They helped with many necessary tasks, including a lot of behind-the-scenes work, and we are grateful for their time and expertise.

If you attended the Convention and have not yet filled out the evaluation form, you have a few more days to do so. [Click here.](#)

Mark your calendars:

June 25-28, 2026 - LWVUS Convention in Columbus, OH

May 21-23, 2027 - LWVMI Convention in E. Lansing, MI (Kellogg Center)

Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough
LWVMI Co-Presidents



Convention Pictures and Power Points Are Available

[Visit the 2025 Convention Digital Drive](#)

where you can find convention photos as well as the Power Points of many of the presentations. Lots of good stuff here!

Thinking About a New Website?

The Chapter Spot platform is offering a free website to local Leagues. The website is perfect for Leagues who are looking for a no-cost, low-maintenance option. It may not offer as much content as some Leagues are looking for, but it may be just fine for many Leagues, especially because of the zero cost. LWVUS is offering an information webinar about this website option on Wednesday, May 28 at 4:00 via Zoom. [Register for the event here.](#)

Legislative Update

Federal:

SAVE Act: The League continues to monitor the bill that has passed the U.S. House of Representatives and is now in the U.S. Senate. LWV has an action alert available at [Tell your Senators to oppose the SAVE Act | League of Women Voters](#) so that you can urge our MI Senators to vote no on the SAVE Act.

A Big Beautiful Bill: The U.S. House has passed the over 1000 page “budget bill” with a vote of 215-214. According to the Congressional Budget Office’s analysis, it will increase the debt by \$3.8 trillion. [Preliminary Analysis of the Distributional Effects of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#) The bill reduces \$698 billion in federal subsidies for Medicaid, adds a work requirement for Medicaid and reduces federal spending for the SNAP program by \$267 billion. The bill now goes to the U.S. Senate. LWV has an action alert to urge U.S. Senators not to cut Medicaid available at [Tell Congress Not to Gut Medicaid | League of Women Voters](#)

Michigan:

Legislative Update: At LWVMI’s State Convention, the LWVMI Advocacy Committee presented an update. Our PowerPoint and resource handout are available at [Advocacy 2025 | League of Women Voters of Michigan](#)

Citizenship Verification: The MI House of Representatives took a vote on HJR B, the bill to require verification of citizenship for state elections on May 1. The vote to adopt was 58 to 48. All Republicans voted for it. Because it is a Joint Resolution amending the MI Constitution a 2/3rds vote is required, so the motion failed. A motion to reconsider was entered and the resolution remains on the House calendar.

On May 16, the State Board of Canvassers met to consider the second proposed ballot proposal to require verification of citizenship offered by Americans for Citizens Voting – Michigan. The board agreed to the 100-word summary, but the petition had some errors that needed correction. The proposal will be considered again next month.

Energy Bills: LWVMI opposes two set of bills that passed the House and are now in the Michigan Senate Government Operations Committee that would roll back the 2023 Michigan Clean and Renewable Energy and Jobs Act. House Bills 4027 and 4028 would roll back MPSC permitting for large scale wind and solar projects. House Bills 4007 and 4283 would allow fossil fuels used in the UP to be classified as clean energy.

Budget: The Michigan Senate has passed some appropriation bills. The House has not started the budget process. We anticipate the legislature will be working on these bills throughout the summer. The new fiscal year begins October 1, 2025.

Judy Karandjeff,
VP Advocacy



June 14 – NO KINGS Protest

June 14th is a national day of defiance to demonstrate against authoritarianism and to show the world what democracy looks like. LWVUS is **not** an official partner or sponsor of this event.

LWVUS tells us that participation by League members in a June 14th protest is fine, but unless *you know for sure* that the demonstration in your community is focusing on issues only, we urge you to leave the LWV clothing at home. From LWVUS:

If the protest in your local area is focused on policies and issues that impact your community, Leagues may choose to participate. That decision should be made by local and state League boards to assess whether participation helps or hinders your ability to do their work effectively within your own community.

Attending this event can be satisfying, but because we don't want to jeopardize the non-partisanship image of the League, please be cautious about holding signs or wearing clothing that identify you as a LWV member.

Find more information about a No Kings day rally in your community here [No Kings](#)

Speaking of Non-Partisanship.....

LWVUS CEO Celina Stewart has written a



great blog about our challenges to maintain our non-partisanship.

"At our core, nonpartisanship is not just a policy — it's a bedrock principle that defines who we are at the League of Women Voters. As a membership organization committed to empowering voters and defending democracy, we do not support or oppose political parties or candidates. Our focus has always been, and will continue to be, on the issues that matter to our communities: ensuring fair elections, protecting voting rights, and strengthening our democratic institutions.

"In today's increasingly polarized political environment, however, questions sometimes arise about what nonpartisanship truly means, especially during election season and once officials are in office.

"We are Nonpartisan, Not Neutral

Remaining nonpartisan does not mean staying silent. When democracy itself is under threat, voter access is restricted, or misinformation spreads, the League has a responsibility to speak out clearly and forcefully. Our nonpartisan commitment means the League acts based on our policies and principles, not because of political parties.

"We advocate for fundamental rights and freedoms regardless of which political party is in power or which officials are responsible. Focusing on our issues, not affiliations, strengthens our voice and credibility. We hold true to our mission without being beholden to any political agenda.

"Why Nonpartisanship Matters

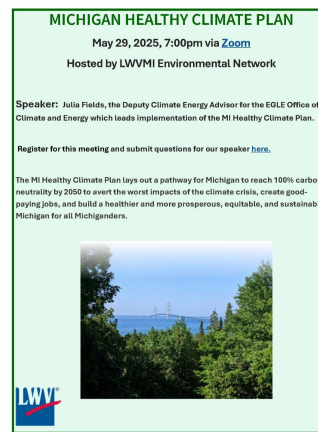
In times of division, maintaining our nonpartisan identity helps build trust across communities. It ensures that we remain a credible, reliable voice for voters — *all voters*. It positions the League to lead efforts that transcend political divides, focused on the American and moral ideals that unite us rather than the partisan battles that seek to divide us.

"Nonpartisanship requires care, consideration, and balance, especially when political tensions are high. But it is essential. It is what makes the League's work powerful, resilient, and enduring. And it will continue to guide us as we navigate the challenges ahead together."

To read the complete blog, including suggestions about engaging with elected officials and working with incumbents running for re-election, [click here](#).

**Michigan Healthy Climate Plan
Program Coming Up on May 29**

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. Our speaker will be 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 May 29th, 7:00 Zoom meeting and submit questions for our speaker [here](#).



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)

Connect with us!

League of Women Voters of Michigan

Phone: 517-484-5383

Email: office@lwvmi.org

Website: lwvmi.org

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