



League Links

June 2025

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FAQs on Unite and Rise 8.5

What is it?

Unite & Rise 8.5 is a LWV movement to build a force of 8.5 million individuals to unite and rise up against the anti-democratic actions of this administration.

Where did the 8.5 come from?

This is the estimated number of voters it would take to bring about change through nonviolent protest. This is based on this finding from the Carr-Ryan Center for Human Rights: *"Nonviolent protests are twice as likely to succeed as armed conflicts...and those engaging a threshold of 3.5% of the population have never failed to bring about change."* 8.5 million is the estimated 3.5% of eligible voters.

What anti-democracy issues is LWV most concerned about?

- The anti-voter SAVE Act, which is now in the Senate.
- Financial gutting of crucial programs like Medicaid.
- Illegal deportations and violation of immigrant rights.

What can we do as League members?

- Respond to LWVUS Action Alerts and share with friends. [Find the alerts](#)

- [here.](#)
- Subscribe to LWVUS and LWVMI social media platforms and share posts.
 - Make sure your friends and family know about the prohibitive Documentary Proof of Citizenship (DPOC) that will be required if the SAVE Act is signed into law or if Michigan voters support the 2026 ballot proposals requiring DPOC in all elections.
 - Call or email your congressional (and state) representatives and let them know your opposition to the reduction of Medicaid support for low-income Americans as well as your disgust with the violations of immigrants' rights.
 - Read more on the Unite & Rise 8.5 Playbook. Links to materials are on the LWV Only page of LWVMI's website. Ask your president for the password.
 - Attend one of the monthly training sessions offered by LWVUS to engage more voters. (Note – Denise and Paula are featured on the July 23rd training).

How do LWV members maintain our non-partisanship while working on Unite and Rise 8.5?

We are non-partisan, not neutral or 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.

Denise Hartsough and Paula Bowman
LWVMI Co-Presidents



A Peaceful Transition of Power

At our recent LWVMI Convention, our delegates elected a slate of 15 Board of Directors and 3 members of the Nominating Committee. We are grateful and proud of these women and men who have stepped up to lead our organization over the next 2 years. They will take office on July 1, 2025.

Now is also the time to say thank you to the LWVMI Board members who are retiring: Judy Karandjeff, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Maria Woloson, Carolyn Vertin and Paula Bowman. All of these members have served with diligence and dedication, and our League is stronger because of their commitment. On behalf of all members of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, we thank them.

Voter Service Updates

VOTE411 Follow-Up from Convention

We had very useful discussions at the LWVMI Convention regarding candidates who knowingly report false information on VOTE411.

Megan Brown, VOTE411 Senior Manager from LWVUS, confirmed that the **VOTE411 ballot pages** include the following disclaimer:

The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any candidates or parties. All responses come directly from the candidates and are unedited by the League. The League does not certify the accuracy of the candidate's statements. The League reserves the right to remove or redact portions of candidate responses that violate state or federal law or the voter guide rules that are provided to all candidates before participating in the voter guide.

LWVUS also suggests that local Leagues include the following language in their candidate invitations to indicate what is and is not allowed in their responses. LWVMI is encouraging our local League administrators to include this language.

By participating in this activity sponsored by the League of Women Voters, a candidate agrees to the following:

- I will not upload false or defamatory words tending to harm another's reputation, business, or means of livelihood.*
- I will not upload copyrighted or other legally protected material without the permission of the owner of such material*
- I will not upload statements that include an incitement of violence, threats to any person or group of people, obscenities, or slurs.*
- I will not upload any knowingly false information.*

If you are in violation of these rules, you will be given the opportunity to update your response to comply with these rules. If you fail to comply, all or part of the statement(s) will be redacted.

August Election Dates

For those who have elections on August 5th in their jurisdictions, please be aware of the following important dates:

	August 5 Election: Key Dates
NOW	Request an absentee ballot
JUNE 26	First day that you can vote in person with an absentee ballot at your local clerk's office
JULY 21	Last day to register to vote online (after July 21, you'll need to register in person at your local clerk's office)
JULY 22	Last day to drop your ballot in the mail (after July 22, we recommend returning your ballot in person)
AUGUST 4 @ 4pm	Deadline to vote in person with an absentee ballot at your local clerk's office, if you're already registered to vote where you live (after that, you must vote at your polling place on Election Day)
AUGUST 5	Election day! Polls are open from 7am until 8pm. If you need to register, you can register at your local clerk's office until 8pm

Voter Service Network Meeting

The next Voter Service Network Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 31, 7:00 p.m. **Note: This is a one-time change from the 4th Thursday due to a schedule conflict.** 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 July 27th. If anyone has any agenda items,

please send them my way.

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

Judy Florian
VP for Voter Service
jflo@comcast.net

Advocacy 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 [here](#) so that you can urge our MI Senators to vote no on the SAVE Act.



“A Big Beautiful Bill”: The Senate Finance Committee has released its new version of the House passed bill. There are changes, but it continues to cut Medicaid and makes changes in the Affordable Care Act. Able-bodied adults without dependents can work, participate in a work training program, enroll in school, or volunteer for 20 hours per week to receive Medicaid. The changes in the Affordable Care Act could result in 4 million out of 25 million people losing coverage. The bill is available [here](#). LWV has an action alert to urge U.S. Senators not to cut Medicaid, and you can take action [here](#).

Michigan:

So far, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives has passed approximately 140 bills to the Senate. The Democratic-controlled Senate has passed approximately 100 bills to the House. However, only 5 bills have passed the House and Senate and been signed by the Governor into law.

Medicaid Budget: LWVMI joined the Protect MI Care coalition of over 260 organizations working to maintain funding for Medicaid. One in 4 Michiganders are in the Medicaid program, approximately 2.4 million people. The Michigan Department of Health & Human Services released [this report](#) highlighting the Medicaid program and the impact of potential cuts. There will be a vigil at the State Capitol on Wednesday, June 25, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. You can sign up to attend [here](#). You can learn more about the coalition [here](#).

School Aid Budget: The Michigan Senate has passed its appropriation bills to the House. The House has passed its appropriations bills for K-12 education and higher education and sent them to the Senate. Negotiations are taking place, and we may see passage of education budget bills by July 1 and others may wait until this fall. The new fiscal year begins October 1, 2025. LWVMI voted to oppose the House-passed school aid budget bill, HB 4577, because it contains \$40.8 million in funding for nonpublic schools. For more detailed information, go to [School Aid](#).

Ballot Proposals: The State Board of Canvassers will meet Friday, June

27. The agenda is not available yet, but we expect they may consider the petition and announcement summary language for Rank MI Vote (Ranked Choice Voting) and Invest MI Kids (raises taxes on people making more than \$500,000 annually earmarked for education). To date, the Board has approved AxMITax to eliminate property taxes, and Protect Voters' Rights which would require verification of citizenship to register to vote. Also, a referendum submitted to the Board of State Canvassers by Voters to Stop Pay Cuts would allow voters to decide whether to keep PA 1 of 2025 that raises the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2027 and increases the tipped minimum wage from 38 percent of the regular wage to 50 percent by 2031. We have a list of ballot proposals submitted to the State Board of Canvassers on our [website](#).

House v Benson Judge Sima Patel of the Michigan Court of Claims ordered the MI House of Representatives and the Department of State to file briefs by the end of June and early July in the ongoing dispute about election training materials. The MI House filed the lawsuit alleging the Secretary of State failed to comply with a subpoena issued to obtain election training materials. "Since the beginning of this saga, Secretary Benson has asked lawmakers to let a court review their request for sensitive election information that, in the wrong hands, would compromise the security of our election machines, ballots and officials," said MDOS spokesperson Cheri Hardmon.

As I end my term as Vice President for Advocacy, I want to thank our hard-working advocacy committee and LWVMI Board of Directors! I look forward to working with the new Vice President for Advocacy, Sandra Sorini Elser.

Judy Karandjeff
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy

Our BOC Manager is Back!

We're happy to announce that Sara Weertz, our sensational Board of Canvassers Observer Program Chair is back! Sara will be organizing the post-election BOC programs after the August and November elections. As she did in the November 2024 election, Sara will again be using County "Leads" to improve communication among the observers. If those who served as Leads in 2024 are willing to do this again, please contact Sara at saraweertz.lwvmi@gmail.com. Training will be provided. If you have an election in your county, watch for the Sign Up Genius to come out in late July.

Membership Leaders' Network

The Membership Leaders' Network met on June 11th when the topic was "Using the Event/Activity Checklist for League Leadership Development." The Checklist is available on the LWVMI Website under Membership Resources. The program was recorded and is available from MerriKay (moburkey30@gmail.com) if you didn't receive it.

The new Network Leader, Carla Barrows-Wiggins, was introduced. If you are

on the Membership Leaders' Network distribution list, you will receive a message from Carla in July with information about the next Network meeting.

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey
LWVMI Membership VP

Local League Advocacy Please Join the Discussion

We hope you were able to join us at the LWVMI State Convention in May where we led a presentation about Local League Advocacy.

We'd like to continue that discussion with monthly or bi-monthly Statewide Zoom meetings of interested local League members who are already a part of or may be forming a Local League Advocacy Committee.

Please contact Christina Schlitt at bcschlitt@gmail.com or Sandra Sorini Elser at sandrasorinielser@gmail.com to tell us about your local League Advocacy Committee or with questions about setting one up.

Email Safety Tips

NEVER click on a link or an attachment in an email unless you are absolutely sure of its safety.

- Look at the actual email address, which is sometimes hard to do on a phone, not the alias
- Are you expecting the email?
- If in doubt, delete the email. It can be replaced if necessary.
- Do an internet search to find the necessary site. Consumers Energy sends me an email with a link to my bill; I don't use the link; I go to their website, sign into my account, and bring up the bill.

Viewing the email content is typically safe. Interacting with the email content (opening files, clicking on links) is not safe.

Carla Barrows-Wiggins
LWVMI Secretary

Program Planning Request

In preparation for the program study approved at the 2025 LWMI Convention, it is important for all members to know that they too, can be a part of this important work of updating our election law position.

At the convention, the delegates approved the following:

To initiate an update of the LWVMI Election Law Position which would focus on Primary Systems with consideration of alternative forms of voting.

We are in the initial steps of recruiting the study committee where the team would: establish the timeline of their work, conduct research on the topic and

develop, then execute the study with the LWVMI leagues.

If being a part of the strengthening of the LWVMI election law position interests you, please reach out to me at president@lwvlivingstonco.org by **July 15**. Thank you to those who volunteered to join the committee at the State Convention; you've been added to our list of interested members.

Ellen Lafferty
VP Elect of Program Planning



Save the Date Renewable Energy in the UP and All of Michigan September 24 at 7pm via Zoom

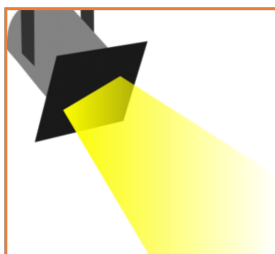
Please save the date for a League of Women Voters of Michigan educational presentation on September 24 at 7pm via Zoom on *Renewable Energy in the UP and All of Michigan*.

The Michigan 2023 Clean Energy and Jobs Act promises 100% clean energy by 2040, and 60% Renewable Energy by 2035.

Join us as we explore how Michigan can get there, and what challenges there are for Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Our speaker will be Douglas Jester, Managing Partner of 5 Lakes Energy. Douglas is a well know speaker specializing in economic analysis and modeling for energy policy and is an expert witness testimony before utility regulatory commissions. Immediately prior to joining 5 Lakes Energy, Douglas served as senior energy policy advisor in the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth. In that capacity, he applied scientific, engineering, and economic principles to the formation and adoption of energy policies for the State of Michigan.

A reminder with the Zoom Registration link will be provided closer to the Program Date.



Local League Spotlights

LWV of the Kalamazoo Area held its annual meeting on Monday May 12th with a guest presentation by Miranda Grunwell of Disability Network of Southwest Michigan. She spoke about disability issues relative to voting and provided examples of ways that voter

services could be improved.

LWV of Northern Lower Michigan held a forum on the 'Health Impacts of Microplastics' on May 14th co-sponsored by their Healthcare Committee and

the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. On June 5th the Healthcare Committee invited a representative from the Health Department of Northwest Michigan to provide an update on access to women's health care services in their area with the closure of Planned Parenthood.

LWV of the Lansing Area held a luncheon meeting on June 18th with guest speakers from the Refugee Development Center and Samaritas focusing on how local refugees and the agencies serving them are faring in these difficult times. This program was open to the public.

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



June 2025

Pride Month

Immigrant Heritage Month

June 19: Presidents/Leaders Meeting | 7:00 pm

June 24: Third Anniversary of the [Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization Decision](#)

June 25: [Observer Network](#) | 3:00 pm

June 25: [Vigil to Protect MI Care](#) at MI Capitol | 6:00-7:30 pm

July 2025

[Disability Pride Month](#)

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

July 4: US Independence Day

July 12: LWVMI Board Meeting | 9:30 am

July 17: Presidents/Leaders Meeting | 7:00 pm

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

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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