



League Links

August 2025

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President's Message

While summer is winding down and for many it is vacation season, the League is mobilizing!

- LWVMI rolled out ***Know What You Sign***, a campaign to educate voters on the many petitions for ballot proposals.
- League volunteers observed **County Boards of Canvassers** after the August Primary to witness that Canvassers conducted the certification process with accuracy and integrity—a practice run for November.
- LWVMI has joined the [NoRedTapeForMI](#) campaign with the Promote the Vote (PTV) Action Committee to advocate against signing petitions requiring Documentary Proof of Citizenship (DPOC) for voter registration.
- LWVMI has created two new statewide networks for local Leagues: **Local League Advocacy**, and **Unite and Rise 8.5 Mobilization Network**.

Find information about joining these efforts by reading further in this issue of *League Links*.

September offers opportunities for even more civic engagement, voter education, advocacy, and democracy resilience.

Thanks to all local Leagues and League members for relentlessly defending democracy by protecting voting rights and by educating and empowering voters!

In League,
Lynne Kochmanski and Denise Hartsough
LWVMI Co-Presidents

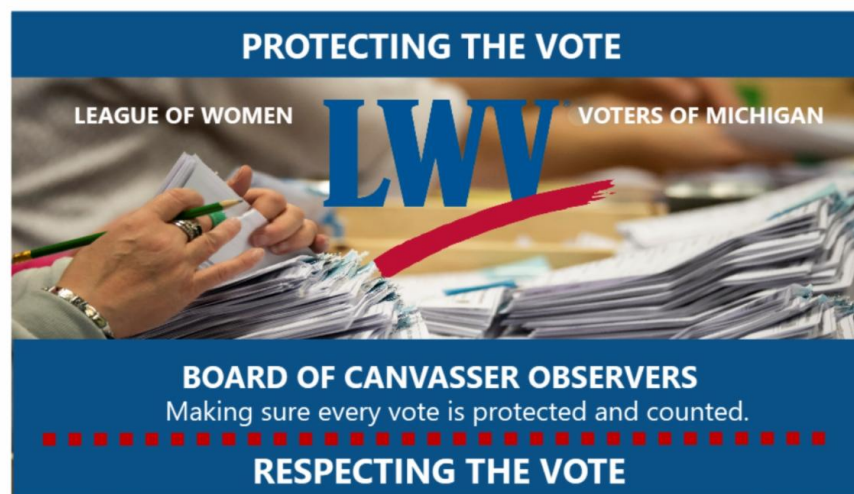
Voter Service Updates

Board of Canvassers Complete Work

On August 5, 2025, approximately 280 cities and townships held elections across 51 counties in the state. Many League members monitored the post-election process for 45 Boards of Canvassers. By law, the Boards must begin the canvass by Thursday, August 7 at 9 a.m. They have 14 days to complete the canvass and certify on or before Thursday, August 19. A total of 18 boards began the canvassing process on August 6; the remaining 27 began on August 7.

All 45 counties certified unanimously, with the final certification by Wayne County on August 15. We had 23 observer leads covering 28 counties, with a total of 40 observers. There were 17 counties that had no observers.

A very special thanks to all League members who observed during this election cycle. Thanks also to Sara Weertz, Project Manager, for her excellent work organizing the observer program. We have an excellent process in place and will provide updates on future meetings/trainings for the November 4 election.



In partnership with Promote the Vote (PTV), we are surveying the level of engagement with our local clerks. A survey was sent to the Voter Service Network, requesting their response to the degree of contact and involvement they may have with their city and/or township clerk(s). To date, we have received 25 responses. I am still awaiting responses from 8 local Leagues. Please complete the survey by August 29, 2025. You can access the survey at this [link](#). Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Voter Service Network Meeting

The next Voter Service Network Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 28, 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 August 25th. 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
VoterService@lwvmi.org

Advocacy Update

In August the LWVMI Advocacy Committee recommended and the LWVMI Board approved the following Advocacy Actions on proposed Michigan Legislation:

August 9, 2025. **Support SB 414 and 415**

requiring insurers and the medical welfare

program to cover group prenatal care. Group Prenatal Care means a series of prenatal care visits provided in a group setting that are based on an evidence based model that may include health assessments, social and clinical support, and educational activities in a family-centered environment and peer-to-peer interaction that helps pregnant individuals support one another during their pregnancy and into early childhood.



August 9, 2025. **Oppose HB4670 and 4671 which would allow a civil action for damages and make having or assisting with an abortion a homicide.**

In addition, the LWVMI Co-presidents sent the following letter to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy:

AUGUST 7, 2025. PLEA TO REJECT ENBRIDGE'S PERMIT REQUEST

The League sent a letter to EGLE requesting that it carefully analyze the Enbridge tunnel project wherein it would surely see that the project would pose risks to the Great Lakes and their bottomlands. [The letter](#) asks that EGLE reject Enbridge's permit request for the Line 5 Tunnel.

To see a full list of our Advocacy Actions to date please visit our website at Advocacy 2025: <https://lwvmi.org/advocacy-2025/>

Statewide Petitions

It is the time of year when sponsors develop statewide petitions hoping to be on the November 2026 general election ballot. [Michigan Compiled Law 168.483a](#) requires a copy of a petition (or amended petition) be submitted to the Secretary of State prior to circulating it for signatures. While it is not required, many sponsors choose to submit their petition to the Bureau of Elections for review of its form. Petitions are considered invalid if they do not comply with all requirements of Michigan Election Law. Also, the sponsor may submit the 100-word summary of the petition to the Board of State Canvassers for approval. More information about this process is available at the Board of State Canvassers' [website](#).

To date, eight petitions have been submitted, and more are anticipated. Constitutional amendments require 446,198 valid signatures collected during a 180-day period by July 6, 2026. Initiatives to create a new law or amend an existing law require 356,958 valid signatures by May 27, 2026. A referendum on legislation requires 223,099 valid signatures by the 90th day following adjournment of the legislative session at which the law was enacted.

The statewide petitions that have been approved by the Board of State Canvassers to date are:

1. AxMITax – a constitutional amendment
2. Protect Voters' Rights – a constitutional amendment
3. Voters to Stop Pay Cuts – a referendum on Public Act (PA) 1 of 2025
4. Rank MI Vote - a constitutional amendment
5. Americans for Citizens Voting – Version 1 - a constitutional amendment
6. Americans for Citizens Voting – Version 2 - a constitutional amendment
7. Invest in MI Kids – a constitutional amendment

The petitions listed above have a long process to complete before we know if any of them will be on the statewide November 2026 ballot. A brief description of these petitions is available at www.lwvmi.org under **Know What You Sign** on the home page.

One proposal will automatically be on the November 2026 ballot. The Michigan Constitution, Article XII requires that every 16 years the question of a general revision of the constitution at a constitutional convention shall be presented to the MI electors.

Know What You Sign!

When Signing a Ballot Proposal Petition



What is said in **PETITIONS** and about them, can be misleading and confusing. Be certain you know exactly what the ballot proposal will do and how it will affect you.

Use the QR code for information about
the 2026 Ballot Proposals.
Or use this link: lwvmi.org



Unite and Rise 8.5 Mobilization Network

On August 6th, 44 members registered for the Unite and Rise 8.5 kick-off. We discussed the purpose of the campaign, the 90-day calendar of actions from August 1 through October 31 and also touched on data collection.

Members of the network received a survey to gauge how often to meet and what local Leagues hope to gain from the network. Those who responded asked for

Our country is in a constitutional crisis. It's time to take our democracy back.

Unite and Rise 8.5 will activate 8.5 million voices through civic engagement, education, and collective power.
8.5 Million Voices. Be One!

WOMEN
DEFEND
DEMOCRACY

LWV

monthly meetings, time to share ideas with other Leagues in small break out groups, along with information from LWVUS/LWVMI about actions local Leagues can take as part of the campaign. We will incorporate these and other suggestions into our network meetings.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, **September 10th at 6pm on Zoom**. The registration link will be sent to all network members and local League presidents. Be sure that your League is represented!

In the meantime, upcoming Civic Holidays offer opportunities for mobilization by local Leagues:

- Disability Voter Registration Week 9/8-9/12
- [National Voter Registration Day](#) (For the first time ever, LWVUS will publish a map on LWV.org with local League events for National Voter Registration Day (NVRD), on September 16, 2025! To feature your League's NVRD events on the map, [fill out this form](#). To register your League as a partner for NVRD, [click here](#).)
- [National Voter Education Week](#) 10/6-10/10
- [Vote Early Day](#) 10/28
- [Election Hero Day](#) 11/3

In addition, here are a couple of NEW actions local Leagues can choose to take and/or uplift during the remainder of August and September:

For individual members:

1. [Click and send a letter](#) to your representatives in support of the VRAA.
2. [Call using this script](#) your US Congressional representative, holding them accountable for their support or opposition to the *One Big Beautiful Bill*.

Lynne Kochmanski
LWVMI Co-President

No Red Tape for MI!

LWVMI has joined the *No Red Tape for MI* campaign of Promote the Vote (PTV) Action.

Red tape is what we'll be tangled in if we sign petitions calling for Documentary Proof of Citizenship (DPOC) for registration and voting.

Say no to petitions from Americans for Citizen Voting and the Committee to Protect Voters' Rights—and warn everyone you know not to sign those petitions.

At [NoRedTapeforMI](#) one can sign a pledge, report a sighting of petitions, and

download social media graphics.

We urge local Leagues, members and friends to post the graphics, focusing on the message No Red Tape for MI. Avoid using “Decline to Sign” as the main message, because several petitions are circulating. Not all the petitions in circulation pertain to DPOC, and LWVMI has not taken a stance on the other petitions.

Any monetary expenditures related to NoRedTapeForMI need to be reported to LWVMI. Local Leagues will receive a form for this purpose very soon. As additional information or opportunities become available about this campaign, we will share that with local Leagues.

NOTE: Keep No Red Tape for MI materials separate from Voter Service activities. In the League we want all voters to feel welcome to register and gain information about voting, so we do not mix Advocacy and Voter Service materials when doing Voter Service.

“We must all come together to defend our fundamental right to vote – for ourselves, for our communities, for our democracy. Join the fight!” --No Red Tape for MI



Respond to LWVUS Action Alerts for Unite & Rise 8.5

As part of the National League's Unite & Rise Campaign, LWVUS is asking all League members- and members of the public - to respond to three Action Alerts.

Follow [this link](#) to the LWVUS Action Alert Page, or follow these individual links:

[Tell Your Representative to Protect Equal Voting Rights](#)

Since the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted the Voting Rights Act (VRA), a majority of states have enacted voting laws that make it harder to vote, with the burden falling hardest on Black voters and other voters of color. We need a fully restored VRA to defend our democracy and protect the freedom to vote.

[Hold Congress Accountable for the One Big Beautiful Bill](#)

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act was enacted in early July. As members of Congress head home to connect with their constituents, it's time for us to let them know how we feel about the bill.

[Reject Anti-Voter Policies](#)

The House of Representatives passed the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, which would require citizenship documentation to register to vote even though voters in every state are already required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering. The SAVE Act would create one more barrier to the voting process, as many eligible voters do not have easy access to the necessary documents.

Sandra Sorini Elser
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy



New LWVMI Email Addresses

For greater professionalism and safety, LWVMI officers and board members now have LWVMI email addresses for League business. If you receive mail from one of these, it's for real—not a scam!

Denise Hartsough	CoPresidentHartsough@lwvmi.org
Lynne Kochmanski	CoPresidentKochmanski@lwvmi.org
Carla Barrows-Wiggins	Membership@lwvmi.org
Sandy Sorini Elser	Advocacy@lwvmi.org
Judy Florian	VoterService@lwvmi.org
Ellen Lafferty	Program@lwvmi.org
Tom Wells	Treasurer@lwvmi.org
Maria McCarville	Secretary@lwvmi.org
Anne Jackson	VOTE411@lwvmi.org
Connie Mitchell	DirectorMitchell@lwvmi.org
Sheryl Theriot	DirectorTheriot@lwvmi.org
Charles Thomas, Jr.	DirectorThomas@lwvmi.org
Tina Pawlak	DirectorPawlak@lwvmi.org
Courtney Winell	DirectorWinell@lwvmi.org
Carrie Moon-Dupree	DirectorDupree@lwvmi.org
Paula Bowman	webmaster@lwvmi.org

Membership Network Notes

Meeting: The first Membership Network meeting of the new term was held on August 13. Going forward meetings will continue to be on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm. I will send out Zoom meeting information to everyone on the Membership Network contact list a few days before each meeting.

The August meeting included introductions, a brief description of the Membership structure, a discussion of goals, and suggestions for programs. We have two projects going forward. I will be leading a group developing a handbook and presentation to help local Leagues with capacity building and bench building. Toward that end, Christina Schlitt will be leading another group to develop information on leadership for local Leagues. We need volunteers who are willing to give a few hours to help with one of these projects.

Celebration: We celebrate Deborah Bunkley who was selected by AARP Michigan as the recipient of the 2024 **AARP Michigan Andrus Award for Community Service**. This distinguished honor is the organization's most prestigious volunteer recognition, celebrating individuals aged 50 and older who make a significant impact through community service.

Finishing Up: If you have questions, would like to volunteer for one of our small projects, or add your name to the Membership Network contact list, please contact.

Carla Barrows-Wiggins
VP for Membership
Membership@lwvmi.org

Local League Advocacy Network Inaugural Meeting September 23 at 3 pm via Zoom

Are you interested in learning how your League can advocate on local issues?"

Would you like to start a local League Advocacy Committee or hear what others are doing?

Or just wondering how Advocacy would work for you and your local League?

Then please mark your calendar for the **fourth Tuesday of the month at 3:00-4:00p starting September 23, 2025.**

All are welcome. We will send a Zoom link in early September with an agenda to all who have contacted us.

The meeting format will begin with introductions, materials of interest, and then a round robin discussion with questions/answers and sharing.

If you haven't signed up already, please contact:

Sandra Sorini-Elser
LWVMI VP Advocacy
sandrasorinielser@gmail.com

or

Christina Schlitt
LWVGTA/Crawford County Unit/LWVMI Advocacy Committee
bcschlitt@aol.com

Celina Stewart's Statement on Mid-Cycle Redistricting

The League of Women Voters does not support a tit-for-tat approach to redistricting. State legislatures redrawing their maps mid-cycle reflects political gamesmanship that erodes public trust in our democracy. Redistricting must be fair, transparent, and rooted in the voices of voters — not partisan retaliation.

Manipulating maps for political gain is a disservice to the people. The League stands for maps that reflect communities, not political calculations. Voters deserve stable, fair representation — not to be used as pawns in a power grab. When politicians rewrite the rules mid-game to protect their control, democracy loses.

The League of Women Voters is ready to fight to ensure fairness for voters, no matter what politicians do for their own gain. We stand ready to protect the voices of all voters because that is what our democracy is built on.

Consider a Donation to LWVMI

In a world where discretionary funds are shrinking, we all

need to take stock of what matters to us and where our money can do the most good.

As a League member, you already know that that League does good work. You have devoted countless hours to defending our Democracy, and it is appreciated.



Underpinning this work are the resources and trainings provided by LWVMI. Without this infrastructure, we would be adrift.

If you are like me and consider the State League a necessity, rather than a luxury, please support the State League's work with a donation to LWVMI. Right now what is needed most are non-tax deductible donations to the operational side of our State League. This allows us to advocate, communicate and keep the organization functioning.

Take a minute to go to LWVMI.org and make a donation today to LWVMI (501c4).

Carrie Moon-Dupree
LWVMI Development Director



**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*.

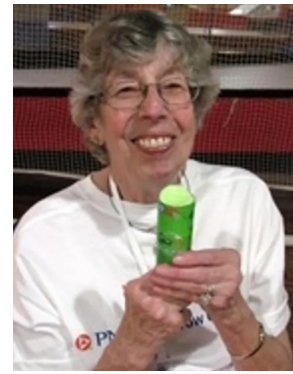
The Michigan 2023 Clean Energy and Jobs Act promises 100% clean energy by 2040, and 60% Renewable Energy by 2035.

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 has provided 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.

On July 16, 2025, former LWVMI State President [Ilene \(Beany\) Tomber](#) passed. Beany was state president from 1971-73. Her board was responsible for moving the state office from Detroit to 202 Mill St. (later changed name to Museum Dr.) in Lansing. She was most proud of her work for juvenile justice. She was always an advocate for children and youth. She was a member of LWV of Lansing Area for over 50 years.



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 2025-2026

Co-President: [Denise Hartsough](#) (Kalamazoo Area)
Co-President: [Lynne Kochmanski](#) (Washtenaw County)
VP Voter Services: [Judy Florian](#) (Grosse Pointe)
VP Advocacy: [Sandra Sorini Elser](#) (Washtenaw County)

VP Program: [Ellen Lafferty](#) (Livingston County)
VP Membership: [Carla Barrows-Wiggins](#) (Oakland Area)
Secretary: [Maria McCarville](#) (Saginaw County)
Treasurer: [Tom Wells](#) (Grosse Pointe)

Directors

VOTE411: [Anne Jackson](#) (Washtenaw County)
Advocacy: [Connie Mitchell](#) (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights)
Observer Corps: [Tina Pawlak](#) (Holland Area)
League Links: [Courtney Winell](#) (Greater Grand Rapids Area)
DEI Team: [Sheryl Theriot](#) (Detroit)
Development: [Carrie Moon-Dupree](#) (Northwest Wayne County)
Director at Large: [Charles Thomas Jr.](#) (Detroit)

Calendar



August 2025

[Civic Health Month](#)

August 18: Anniversary of 19th Amendment Ratification
August 21: Environmental Network Meeting | 11:00 am
August 26: Women's Equality Day
August 28: [Voter Service Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm

September 2025

September 1: Labor Day
September 9: Advocacy Committee Meeting in Lansing | 2:00 pm
September 10: [Unite & Rise 8.5 Network](#) | 6:00 pm
September 13: LWVMI Board Meeting | 9:30 am
September 15: National Hispanic Heritage Month Begins
September 16 [National Voter Registration Day](#)
September 17: Constitution Day
September 18: LWVMI Presidents and Leaders Meeting | 7:00 pm
September 24: [Observer Corps Network](#) | 3:00 pm
September 24: [Environmental Network: Energy in the UP](#) | 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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