



League Links

September 2025

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President's Message

Happy September, League Members!

Many thanks to all the Leagues who participated in National Voter Registration Day on September 16th! It was great to see our local Leagues highlighted on the LWVUS interactive map for that day. We appreciate you signing up, so Michigan could be recognized! October also brings multiple Civic Holidays leading up to the November election. We know local Leagues are hard at work preparing voter guides and VOTE411, candidate forums, along with information about absentee ballots, polling places, early voting, and more.

Please consider engaging in:

- October 6 – 10: National Voter Education Week | Give voters the tools they need to cast their ballots with confidence.
- October 28: Vote Early Day | Make sure communities have the tools to vote early!

- November 3: Election Heroes Day | Thank election workers in your community. They are the heroes who ensure our elections run safely.

LWVMI just released an educational PowerPoint for presentation by local Leagues to inform your communities about the statewide ballot proposal petitions. A tutorial on “Know What You Sign” is set for Monday, September 29 at 7pm. See the Voter Service article below for details.

Remember to keep educational forums separate from League advocacy. If advocating against signing the petition requiring Documentary Proof of Citizenship (No Red Tape For MI campaign), do so separately from voter services work. The DPOC petitions are out there – League members have run into circulators, paid by the signature, who are misleading the public into signing.

Stay tuned for LWVMI’s approach to advocacy on other ballot proposal petitions. Until LWVMI finalizes that strategy, local Leagues should refrain from advocating on any petition except those involving Documentary Proof of Citizenship. Of course, individual members may support or oppose petition campaigns as individuals, just not in the name of the League.

In any civil engagement you undertake, please stay mindful of your safety. You may find the League guidance [here](#).

We deeply appreciate all that YOU do in defense of democracy!

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

Voter Service Updates

Know What You Sign Campaign

We are pleased to announce our Know What You Sign Campaign, which is an opportunity for our local Leagues to educate their communities on the potential ballot proposals for 2026. LWVMI has created a Power Point presentation and script for local Leagues to use. This presentation is for educational purposes only, with no mention of advocacy for or against signing any of the petitions. A second presentation, under development, will address the League’s advocacy positions related to the petitions/ballot proposals.

Local Leagues will receive a grant of \$200 for the first presentation, and \$100 each for up to two subsequent presentations. Maximum grant funds per League or Unit are \$400. Payments will be made in March 2026 if the following conditions are met.

- Eligible presentations must be made between October 1, 2025 and February 28, 2026.
- Presentations must be to the community, and may be either in person or virtual.
- If possible, we ask Leagues to record at least one presentation for viewing on your YouTube Channel or website.
- Consider partnering with other organizations in your community (ACLU,

NAACP, etc.) to expand your reach.

- Seek out local community venues for your presentations (libraries, churches, schools, colleges, clubs, etc.)
- The League or Unit must report its presentation(s) using the KWYS Report Form, which is on the LWVMI website under Members and LWV Only. (Contact your president/leader if you need the password.)
- This grant money comes from the LWVUS Education Fund, so it is important that the presentations be purely educational--with **no** advocacy.
- Because LWVMI needs to report to LWVUS EF about the presentations, the KWYS Report Form requests data and information about the presentations.

If your League offers more than 3 presentations, we ask Leagues to please complete the KWYS Report Form so LWVMI can send full information on the impact of the grant to LWVUS EF.

We will offer a 'run through' of the PowerPoint and script on **Monday, September 29 at 7pm on Zoom**. We strongly encourage local Leagues to either attend the session or view the recording before beginning to give presentations in communities. The recording will be available on the LWVMI website under Members and LWV Only. You may register for the September 29th session [HERE](#).

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



Permanent Mail Ballot List Text Banking Project

LWVMI will participate in a text banking project with RelaA2ve, the organization we partnered with in 2024. The focus of this project is to contact 640,000 voters who voted in 2020 but did not vote in 2024. The goal is to urge these voters to sign up for the Permanent Mail Ballot list. They will automatically receive their absentee ballot, which may encourage them to vote in 2025 and 2026. Currently, 16 local Leagues have signed up to participate. These Leagues are meeting with Bob Chunn, our representative from RelaA2ve, to learn the process and develop their messages. The messages will also contain the local League's logo—having the League's brand on these texts adds credibility to the message.

If you haven't signed up and are interested in participating, please contact me for further information.



Voter Service Network Meeting

The next Voter Service Network Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 25, 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 September 22. If anyone has any agenda items, please send them my way.

In the meantime, if you have questions, don't hesitate to contact me. Please note the change in my email address below.

Judy Florian
VP for Voter Service
voterservice@lwvmi.org
313-402-6786



Naturalization Ceremony Changes

For decades the LWV has offered voter registration to new citizens at naturalization ceremonies. However, new guidance from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) bars groups like the League from providing voter registration at administrative naturalization ceremonies. This change in USCIS policy makes it harder for new citizens to register to vote

and is yet another attack on the immigrant community. Our democracy is stronger with the voices of new citizens. If your League is involved in voter registration of newly naturalized citizens, please check to see if you may continue (judicial ceremonies) or not (administrative ceremonies). You may find guidance from LWVUS [here](#).

New LWVMI Observer Corps Director

We are happy to announce that Tina Pawlak, LWVMI Director from LWV of the Holland Area, is the new LWVMI Observer Corps Director! Tina brings a passion for Observer Corps and an interest in helping expand our current statewide Corps. As we head into 2026, it is more important than ever that our Leagues observe local government bodies and report back to local Leagues. Transparency in government is key to democracy. Welcome, Tina, to your new role!



LWV is Sponsor of No Kings Rally October 18

LWVUS is one of the sponsors of the No Kings Rally on Oct 18 - participate! Here is the latest guidance from LWVUS regarding the rally:

“LWVUS is joining [No Kings 2](#) as a national partner on Saturday, October 18. **LWVUS has decided to become an official partner** for this day of mobilization to stand in solidarity with partners and stand up against hate and authoritarianism. I’ll be attending a No Kings event in my own community. The League has consistently and boldly spoken up in the face of rising authoritarianism. This is an opportunity to put words into action and show up in defense of democracy and as an effective ally. **We encourage Leagues to lean in locally** and participate in activations with partners on the ground in a nonpartisan manner. We understand that we cannot control how other partners show up, and participating in any event comes with some risk. For Leagues who decide to mobilize for No Kings, please utilize our [protest safety guidance](#) and [“How to Organize a Rally in 8 Steps”](#) resource on the League Management Site. If representing the League or wearing LWV shirts (which we encourage), please use good judgment when creating signs and participating in nonpartisan chants. The national staff will have additional guidance in the weeks ahead.”

Dianna Wynn
President LWVUS

State Budget Standoff

The state budget for fiscal year 2025-26 begins on October 1, 2025. Governor Gretchen Whitmer presented the Executive Budget to the Michigan Legislature on February 5. The Executive Budget is available [here](#).

The Michigan Senate passed its budget bills on May 13. A summary of the 20 bills is available [here](#).

The Michigan House of Representatives passed its final budget bill on August 28. A summary of HB 4706 is available [here](#). Three other education bills were also passed by the House, [HB 4576](#), [HB 4580](#) and [HB 4577](#).

The differences between the House passed and Senate passed budget bills are immense. The House passed budget totals \$78.5 billion, and the Senate passed budget totals \$84.5 billion. Governor Whitmer held a [press conference](#) on September 16 and urged the Senate and House to work together to get her a budget as soon as possible to prevent a government shut down.

Some of the Michigan Departments released information about the potential impacts if the House Republican budget bills are adopted. The Secretary of State [noted](#) she would have to lay off more than 400 employees and to close 10% of the branch offices. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Hertel [said](#) the House passed budget would eliminate more than 1,600 positions and result in significant service reductions through loss of programs. House Appropriations Chair Ann Bollin [said](#) they passed a responsible, balanced state budget that “reins in wasteful spending and makes historic investment in the priorities of Michigan families.”

The League of Women Voters of Michigan held the LWVMI State Budget Forum on September 16 moderated by LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy, Sandra Sorini Elser. If you missed it, you can watch the recording on YouTube [here](#). Also, additional materials are on our [lwvmi.org](#) website. Our speakers included Arnold Weinfeld, Associate Director, Institute for Public Policy and Social Research at MSU, Rachel Richards, Director of Fiscal Policy and Government Relations at Michigan League for Public Policy, and Robert Schneider, Senior Research Associate at Citizens Research Council of Michigan.

As we await action in Michigan, we are also watching to see what will happen to the federal budget that also needs to be passed by October 1.

Judy Karandjeff
Member of the LWVMI Advocacy Committee

Membership Network Notes

Meeting: The September Network meeting, held on September 10, was a facilitated discussion of capacity building tips for local Leagues.

After discussing the challenges facing local Leagues and the goal of getting work done without burning out volunteers, we went through steps to help Leagues achieve success, from determining what work is important to developing backup for critical skills.

The capacity building tips were updated to include all the great suggestions from the participants and distributed to the Membership Leaders Network as a PowerPoint presentation.

The October Network meeting (October 8 at 7:00pm) will feature Nora Pullen

with information on using the website and other aspects of ChapterSpot.

Fun Stuff: Cyndi Lauper (YES – That *Cyndi Lauper*!) invited the League of Women Voters to be part of her Girls Just Wanna Have Fun Farewell Tour by providing representatives and materials at her concerts to promote the work we do in empowering voters and defending democracy. Representing and helping the League at her recent concert at Pine Knob in Oakland County were from left to right: Deborah Bunkley from Detroit; Kathy Poore, Debbie Griffith, Shelly Lotocki, & Terry Gibb from Macomb; plus Kimberley Wray-Norman, a helping friend.



Finishing Up: If you have questions or would like more information, please contact:

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

League members are invited to submit poems by October 15 to commemorate 250 years of democracy as of 2026 for an anthology of 100 poems. Organizers of this project are Christy Schwan of LWV Ozaukee & Washington Counties and LWV Wisconsin, and Eloisa Gómez of LWV Milwaukee.

In their words:

As poets, writers, and members of the League of Women Voters, we recognize the power of language to connect people—to stir hearts and minds, and to reaffirm the enduring promise of Democracy. Through poetry, we aim to illuminate its beauty, its fragility, and its strength—especially at a time when we can no longer afford to take its core principles for granted.

For submission guidelines and the link for submission, please contact christy@swancygnet.com.

Consider a Donation to LWVMI

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots organization. That is, we are a group of people who organized around a shared vision, from the bottom up. We are the volunteers who make that vision a reality.



It is also a reality that one of the challenges for the organization is to secure reliable funding for the work that we do. Just like a lawn needs water, seeds and fertilizer to grow, the State League needs operating funds to be a resource to local leagues and to provide the framework for our members to do their work.

Please consider a [donation](#) to LWVMI operations, 501(c)4 to keep our grassroots work going. Your donation does matter. Thank you!

Carrie Moon-Dupree
LWVMI Development Director

Local League Advocacy Network Inaugural meeting Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at 3:00pm Via Zoom

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/ld0_EJaeS16vlj9BEjKn9g

Please join us on Tuesday September 23, 2025, at 3pm via zoom for the inaugural meeting of the Local League Advocacy Network.

All League members are welcome to attend.

The Network will focus on how a Local League Advocacy Committee can

promote participation in advocacy called for by LWVMI and LWVUS, and can foster local advocacy by the Local League.

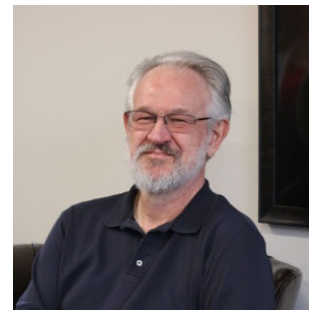
Our Agenda will begin with introductions and follow with brief presentations on:

- Unite & Rise 8.5 Advocacy Actions – Lynne Kochmanski, Co-President
- No Red Tape For Michigan, in partnership with the Promote the Vote – Denise Hartsough Co-President
- Local League Advocacy - Sandra Sorini Elser, Advocacy VP, and Christina Schlitt, Crawford County League President.
- Round Robin discussion of what's going on in your League on Advocacy
- Q&A with network members

Please invite other League members.

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

Please join the League of Women Voters of Michigan Environmental Network for an educational presentation on September 24 at 7pm via Zoom on ***Renewable Energy in the UP and All of Michigan.***



Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/02s6JgBcQDSAnhPfiQlg6Q>

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.

All registrants will receive a recording of the presentation.

Michigan's Con-Con Book

Macomb League member Lynn Liberato has just published a book – ***Michigan's CON-CON 11: Women and State Constitution-making In 1961.*** She tells the



story of the eleven female delegates to the last Michigan Constitutional Convention. Her book will be available November 1, 2025. League members Betsy Cushman (Dearborn) and Christina Schlitt (Grand Traverse Area--Crawford County) authored comments for the back cover. Lynn's father and Betsy's mother were both delegates to the 1961 Constitutional Convention.

Members will receive a 20% discount plus free S&H if they order through Michigan State University Press's [website](#) and use Promo Code **MSUP25**.

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 Service: [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



September 2025

September 23: Local League Advocacy Network | 3:00 pm
September 24: [Observer Corps Network](#) | 3:00 pm
September 24: [Environmental Network: Energy in the UP](#) | 7:00 pm
September 25: [Voter Service Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm
September 29: [Know What You Sign Presentation Educational Presentation](#) | 7:00 pm

October 2025

October 7: Advocacy Committee Meeting | 2:00 pm
October 8: Membership Leaders Network Meeting | 7:00 pm
October 11: LWVMI Board Meeting - In Person at LWVMI Office | 10:00 am

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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