



# League Links

## December 2025

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### President's Message

Rest and renewal are vital to sustaining our efforts to empower voters and defend democracy. We take a break from our League commitments to focus on winter holidays, family, friends, food and just staying warm!

May the season bring whatever best renews you. We all need our strength and determination for the year ahead! May it be a Happy 2026!

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



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## Voter Service Updates

### Clerk Engagement for 2026

As we end the year, it's time to think about our clerk engagement activities for 2026. This is a critical midterm election year and we want to be sure we work with our clerks to assist where needed. Thanks to all who completed our Clerk Engagement Survey back in October. There were a wide range of responses: some of our local Leagues are actively engaged with clerks, others are struggling to get clerks to respond to emails. Co-President Lynne Kochmanski and I attend the monthly Election Official Engagement (EOE) Workgroup, coordinated by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and All Voting is Local.

The goals of this group are to continue to foster relationships with city/township clerks and other election officials to:

- Ensure voters know their rights
- Protect election integrity
- Preserve and expand access to the ballot

By ensuring voters know their rights, the EOE Workgroup will:

- Offer collaboration, when helpful, to ensure that clerks have access to accurate voter education training and resources.
- Work with clerks to uplift timely and accurate voting-related content.
- Review the election websites of various cities and townships for accuracy and promptly follow up to request necessary corrections.

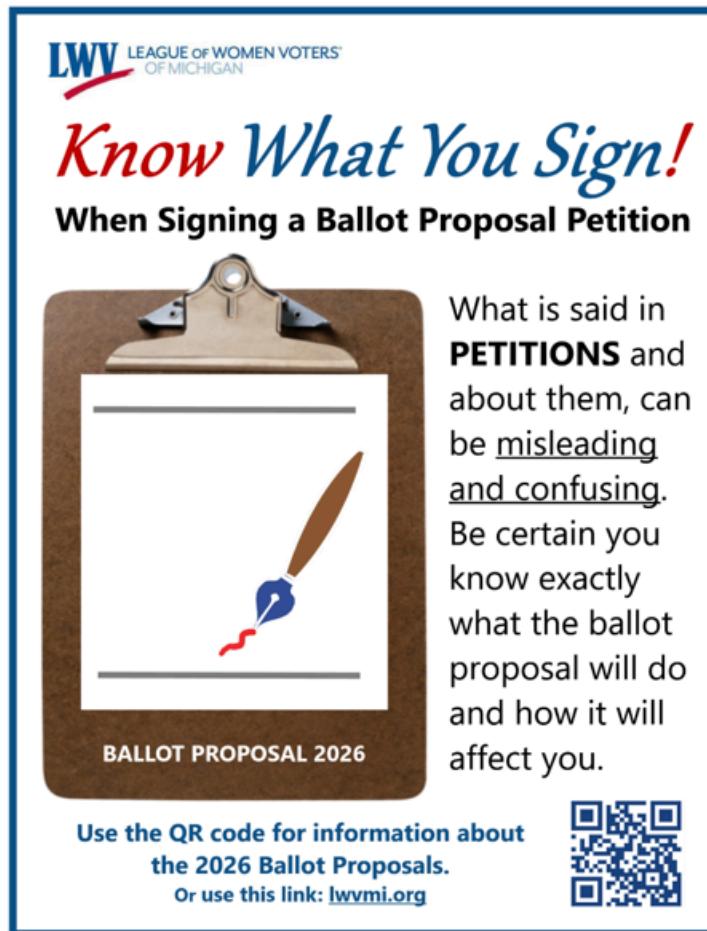
The EOE Workgroup will also begin conducting regional meetings after the first of the year. If you are interested in joining these meetings as they relate to your geographic area, please let me know. In the meantime, Lynne and I will be happy to assist you with your election worker engagement.

### Know What You Sign Campaign

To date, 14 local Leagues have conducted Know What You Sign presentations. If you have not yet submitted your report, you can do so at this [link](#). Each local League will receive a grant of \$200 for the first presentation, and \$100 each for up to two subsequent presentations, with a maximum of grant funds, per League or Unit of \$400. This grant funding is available for those presentations made through February 28, 2026. Payments will be made in March 2026. If you have questions about these presentations, please contact me.

**Note: We have been informed that signature gathering for the Rank MI Vote petition has been paused and will not be pursued for the 2026 ballot.**

Based on the above information, we will be sending out a revised Power Point Presentation and script to all local League Leaders and Presidents, along with those in the Voter Service Network. The petition document on the website will also be updated.



### Board of Canvassers November 4, 2025 Recap

The League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVMI) continued its commitment to safeguarding Michigan's post-election certification process through its Board of Canvassers (BOC) Observation Program. The program ensures transparency, accountability, and public trust by placing trained observers in canvassing rooms statewide and maintaining clear reporting and escalation systems.

The November 2025 election marked the strongest statewide performance in program history. Here is a brief summary:

- 104 observers and 31 Observer Leads monitored canvassing in 50 counties, representing historic statewide capacity.
- Observer composition:
  - 100 League members
  - 4 non-League observers
  - 6 observer buddies
  - 10 individuals signed up but did not observe due to various reasons
- Volunteers submitted 172 Shift Reports totaling 268 observation hours, creating the most comprehensive data the program has produced.

- Improvements in training, communications, and oversight significantly increased reporting compliance and consistency.

The table below provides information on how the program has grown from November 2023-November 2025 (both off-year elections).

Category	Nov. 2023	Nov. 2025	Change
Counties observed	24	50	+108%
Observers	46	104	+126%
Shift Reports	48	172	+256%
Observation hours	211.5	268	+27%

### County Canvassing Overview

- 73 counties held elections
  - 69 canvassed independently
  - 4 merged canvasses with a neighboring county (Isabella, Kalkaska, Montmorency, Oscoda)
- 45 counties (65%) began canvassing Thursday, Nov. 6
- Only Wayne County canvassed over the weekend
- First counties to certify: Bay, Calhoun, Gogebic, Gladwin, Huron, Iron, Lake, Mackinac, Missaukee, Oceana, Ontonagon, and Sanilac.

### Observation Coverage

- 50 counties (72%) were observed in person
  - 19 counties\* (28%) had no observers; certification was confirmed by phone with County Clerks
  - 31 Observer Leads provided oversight

\*Counties with no observers: Alger, Branch, Cheboygan, Clare, Dickinson, Gladwin, Gratiot, Iron, Lake, Marquette, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Presque Isle, Schoolcraft, Shiawassee and St. Joseph.

A debrief meeting was conducted on November 20. In addition, a survey was sent to all observers. Both of these mechanisms resulted in great and thoughtful input from our observers, along with suggestions for next year. A very special thanks to all who observed the canvass. This can be tedious work, and we appreciate the time our members commit to this program. Thanks, also, to Sara Weertz, our Project Manager, for coordinating the logistics of this program! We are on good footing for the 2026 mid-term elections. A final, more comprehensive report will be prepared and issued to the LWVMI board in the near future.



### **Board of Canvassers Work Extended**

After Wayne County certified the November election results, a recount was requested in the Hamtramck mayoral race, where the leading candidate was ahead by 6 votes. The Wayne County Board of Canvassers conducted the recount on December 2. In the end, the challenge was unsuccessful, and the final results showed an 11-vote margin. A special thank-you to Detroit League member Roberta Deering, and Grosse Pointe League members Sue Acton, Dawn Drozd, and Judy Florian for serving as recount observers.

### **Voter Service Network Meetings**

Mark your calendars! Our next Voter Service Network meeting will be held on January 22 at 7:00 p.m. You can register for the meeting at this [link](#).

As we wrap up the year, I send my warmest wishes to you and yours for a happy and safe holiday season. Your hard work is deeply appreciated. You've all accomplished so much!! I look forward to all we can accomplish together as we prepare for the 2026 election season. Take some well-deserved time to rest, my friends!

Judy Florian  
VP for Voter Service  
[voterservice@lwvmi.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvmi.org)  
313-402-6786



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## Unite and Rise 8.5 Mobilization Network Updates

We hope local Leagues are reaching out to begin to build partnerships as 2026 is fast approaching. There have been two excellent webinars for Power Playbook 3. If you have not had a chance to view these, here are the links:

November 18, 2025

[Session 1: Laying the Groundwork: Building Sustainable Partnerships](#)  
(Passcode: v0%3i=S3)

December 16, 2025

[Session 2: National Partnerships for Local Engagement](#)  
(Passcode: E?t8wTLe)

[Power Playbook 3](#) focuses on building strong, intentional partnerships to expand the League's reach and impact. At the center of this is the belief in women's power to transform democracy. Women-led organizations bring lived experience, resilience, and bold leadership that are essential to building durable movements. There is also a commitment to inclusivity as true power grows when diverse voices are welcomed to the table.

Local and State Leagues are encouraged to reach out to the three new national partners LWVUS is now working with: National Council for Jewish Women (NCJW), American Association of University Women (AAUW), and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). If you have these organizations in your local League area, please consider reaching out. If you do not, please reach out to local nonpartisan prodemocracy groups who will help broaden our reach for 2026.

Important upcoming date and registration link:

January 20, 2026 (3pm ET)

[Session 3: Partnering for Voter Engagement Ahead of 2026 Elections](#)

# Unite and Rise!

## Stories of Voter Suppression

A democracy partner organization has asked the League for personal stories of voter suppression, especially those from years past.

Did someone in your family have to struggle to vote in Michigan? Was someone you know unjustly denied access to voting in our state?

If you are willing to share the story, please email [Denise](#) and [Lynne](#). If the person involved is still living, please be sure to have their permission to share their story.

## LWVMI Advocacy Committee Report

The LWVMI Advocacy Committee recommended and the LWVMI Board approved the following actions on Michigan bills and court rules:

### **DECEMBER 8, 2025 | CONCEALED PISTOL LICENSE NOT FOR 18 YEAR OLDS**

LWVMI opposes HB 4586 which would reduce the age for a concealed pistol license from 21 to 18 years old. The bill had a hearing with the House Judiciary Committee on December 10, and LWVMI sent a notice of our opposition.

### **DECEMBER 8, 2025 | SUPPORT NO ARRESTS IN COURTHOUSES**

The League supports Michigan Court Rule 8.115 proposed by the Michigan Supreme Court which would prohibit those attending a court hearing or present for legal business from being arrested for civil offenses (such as alleged immigration violations) without a valid civil warrant issued by a judge. **NOTE: public comment by individuals and organizations may be made [here](#) until December 22, 2025.** The League sent a letter in support to the Michigan Supreme Court.

### **DECEMBER 8, 2025 | NO NEED FOR PARTISAN SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

The League of Women Voters of Michigan opposes HB 4588 which would require candidates for local school board offices to have a partisan affiliation.

### **DECEMBER 8, 2025 | TAX CREDITS FOR PRESERVING FARMLAND WITH CONSERVATION EASEMENTS**

LWVMI supports SB 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690 and 699 – a set of bills confirming that tax credits are available for preserving farmland that is also subject to conservation easements. A hearing was held on December 11, and the League sent a notice of our support to the House Agricultural Committee.

Please contact [Advocacy@lwvmi.org](mailto:Advocacy@lwvmi.org) with any questions.

Sandra Sorini Elser  
LWVMI VP for Advocacy

## Let Voters Vote!

LWVMI is hosting a panel discussion on **January 21 at 7pm** via Zoom to advocate for and educate the public about **LET VOTERS VOTE! Why Proposed Documentary Proof of Citizenship is Needless Voter Suppression.**

Hear experts address:

- Security and Integrity of Voting
- Unnecessary Red Tape of documentary proof of citizenship
- Impact on Voters in Michigan and across the US

Our panelists include:

- Christopher Thomas, former Michigan Director of Elections, who will focus on the Michigan perspective on citizen voting.
- Melanie Macey, Policy and Government Affairs Director at Promote the Vote, who will focus on ballot proposals in Michigan that would require documentary proof of citizenship.
- Valencia Richardson, Voting Rights attorney at the Campaign Legal Center, who will focus on the federal SAVE Act and the federal perspective.

All are welcome.

Register Here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/ZfQFdcF4R32HB7MpzfaA5w>

## *Let Voters Vote!*

**Wednesday  
January 21, 2026  
7pm on Zoom**



**To Register:**



[Or at \*\*www.lwvmi.org\*\*](http://www.lwvmi.org)

### **Why Proposed Documentary Proof of Citizenship (DPOC) Is Needless Voter Suppression**

*Presented by*  
**The League of Women Voters of Michigan**

*All Are Welcome!*

Hear experts address:

- ★ **Security and Integrity of Voting**
- ★ **Unnecessary Red Tape of DPOC**
- ★ **Impact on Voters in Michigan & across the US**

**Panelists**



**Christopher Thomas**  
Former Michigan  
Director of Elections



**Melanie Macey**  
Policy & Government Affairs  
Director at Promote the Vote



**Valencia Richardson**  
Campaign Legal Center,  
Voting Rights Attorney

Questions? Contact [Advocacy@LWVMI.org](mailto:Advocacy@LWVMI.org)

## **LWVUS—Take Action!**

Please take action!

- Tell your Congressional Representative and our Senators to [stop Congress from interfering with the local laws of the District of Columbia](#).
- [Tell our Michigan Senators to oppose the SAVE Act](#), which would require documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) for voting.

LWVUS asks us to send these communications using the Take Action opportunities linked above, even if we have done them in the past. Our elected officials need to know that we are still watching and we still care!

## Observer Corps

The next meeting of the State Observer Corps Network will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 3 pm EST**. Anyone interested in participating in Observer Corps should attend. Email Tina Pawlak at [directorpawlak@lwvmi.org](mailto:directorpawlak@lwvmi.org) for additional information.



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### LWVMI Denounces House Appropriations Committee Vote to Disapprove \$645 Million in Funding for Vital State Projects and Programs

The League of Women Voters of Michigan denounces the abrupt vote of the Michigan House Appropriations Committee on December 10 to disapprove \$645 million in funding for vital state programs and projects.

This sudden political decision made along party lines will defund a broad range of programs and projects relied upon by the people of our state, all without input from the public or other legislators.

**House Fiscal Agency Report.** [This memorandum](#) lists the programs and projects cut. It is still not clear if this is a complete list or if the House Appropriations Committee was fully informed on what it was cutting.

LWVMI's opposition is grounded in League positions:

- **Lack of transparency and public input.** The League of Women Voters supports transparency in government. The House Appropriations Committee decision was made after a closed-door session, on a party line vote, with no discussion or input from committee members, the public, or other legislators. It is still unclear exactly which programs have been cut. This lack of transparency and lack of public input is a cause for great concern. Partisan decisions behind closed doors that take away funds from projects already approved will erode constituent trust in their leaders and the institutions that serve them.

- **Removing election equipment funding.** The League of Women Voters believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. The projects defunded by the House Appropriations Committee included more than \$7 million for upgrades to Michigan's voting equipment. These upgrades are needed to ensure no voting equipment malfunctions, and to ensure the 2026 elections run smoothly so all citizens have a chance to make their voices heard.
- **Removing vital support for children, pregnant women, infants and others in need.** The League of Women Voters supports social programs that provide basic resources for an adequate quality of life for children and families. The RxKids program cut by the House Appropriations Committee provides support to pregnant women, new mothers and infants. Other programs cut provide children with services during child sexual and violent abuse investigations. These cuts will damage the safety net available to our Michigan families.
- **Removing vital Environmental Protection Programs.** The League of Women Voters supports protection of our environment. The cuts made by the House Appropriations Committee to the Clean Michigan Initiative and other programs of the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy will halt essential brownfield cleanup and harm clean energy programs that lower energy costs for our communities.

The State Senate on December 16 voted to restore the blocked funds with bipartisan approval of [HB 4576](#). The vote was 23-13. The bill was returned to the House. House Speaker Matt Hall would need to bring that bill to the House floor for a vote and the bill would need to pass for the funding to be restored. The bill was not put up for a vote before the House recessed for the holidays.

In addition, the Senate sent [a letter to the Attorney General](#) asking if the action in the House to eliminate this funding is constitutional.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan urges the Michigan House to restore funds to all the programs and projects whose funding was cut.

Sandra Sorini Elser  
LWVMI VP for Advocacy  
[advocacy@lwvmi.org](mailto:advocacy@lwvmi.org)

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## Membership Network Notes

At the November meeting it was pretty much unanimously agreed that we should have no December meeting so people could relax, as much as possible, and enjoy the holidays with family and friends. I hope you've been doing that!

**Upcoming Meetings:** Meetings are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm Eastern time. The meetings are recorded so you can check them out (at double speed if you want!) for helpful information (see the lower right corner of the video for "Speed" settings).

**Next Meeting:** January 14, 7:00pm via Zoom. I'll send the Zoom meeting link a few days before the meeting. Among other things we'll be planning what should go on the Membership Google Drive.

**Local League Highlights:** There's always a lot going on around the state.

- **Macomb County's** Youth Engagement Chair visited Chippewa Valley High School to register and preregister students to vote and Centerline High School to speak to Government classes about the history of the League, voter registration, and rank choice voting.
- The **Kalamazoo Area League** highlighted Decline to Sign Training offered by Promote the Vote to learn how to explain to people that the documentary proof of citizenship petitions do not offer any protections over what we already have and would impose significant barriers to many people, especially married women, to voting.
- **Berrien & Cass County** members Val & Mike Schnable joined others in the United Way of Southwest Michigan Annual Rake-a-Difference event to assist those not able to rake their yards or clean gutters on their own. This year 1,541 volunteers served 347 homes across Berrien, Cass, & Van Buren counties.
- **Oakland Area League** hosted speaker Gus Mondalek, Artificial Intelligence Specialist, in November for a program on "Is it AI? Or is it Real News?". The recording can be viewed [here](#). He covered how to get a better idea of fact versus fiction in news reporting and what is happening with AI.

**Finishing Up:** Please join us at the January meeting and if you have questions or would like more information, please contact me at:

Carla Barrows-Wiggins  
VP for Membership  
[Membership@lwvmi.org](mailto:Membership@lwvmi.org)

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### Year End Donation to LWVMI

Yikes! My recycle bin is overflowing with requests for money! Once you get on a list, you are a constantly inundated with appeals. We tend to just tune out the requests when they are constant. The State League does not do that.



LWVMI does an appeal letter twice a year. You should have received the end of year appeal. If it is in your recycle bin and you didn't donate to the State League, there is still time to acknowledge the important work that the State League does for you and your local league. The organizations that I donate to support my values, make a difference and are ethical. LWVMI meets all of my criteria. Does it meet yours? If so, please consider a donation to LWVMI to support those ideals. Just go to [LWVMI.org](http://LWVMI.org) and click that donate button. To those who have already heeded the call, Thank You. We could not do it without you.

Carrie Moon-Dupree  
LWVMI Development Director

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### LWVMI Local League Advocacy Network November 25 Meeting with Jessica Jones Capparell LWVUS Director Government Affairs

The Local League Advocacy Network was excited to host the LWVUS Director of Government Affairs Jessica Jones Capparell at our November meeting.

Jessica provided helpful reminders on:

- Who leads LWVUS public policy work?
- What is advocacy?
- Advocacy vs. Lobbying
- *Impact on Issues and LWVUS positions*  
*Legislative Priorities*
- Federal Action Requests
- Using Positions at the State and Local Levels
- Applying a DEI Lens
- LWVUS Advocacy Resources

You can view the YouTube video of Jessica's presentation [HERE](#).

The Local League Advocacy Network will not meet in December. Our next meeting will be January 27, 2026 at 3pm. Details to follow.

Christina Schlitt and Sandy Sorini Elser  
[Advocacy@lwvmi.org](mailto:Advocacy@lwvmi.org)

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## **DPOC Petition in Your Mailbox? Beware!**

League members in Lenawee County have received in their US Mail a letter from State Senator Ruth Johnson urging them to sign and send back the petition from Americans for Citizen Voting.

This petition would put a documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) requirement on the ballot in November 2026 as an amendment to the Michigan Constitution.

A DPOC requirement is unnecessary and would harm voters. State and federal law already prohibit non-citizens from voting. A DPOC requirement would tangle voters up in unnecessary red tape and make it more difficult for all of us to register to vote and to make our voices heard at the ballot box.

If you receive this mailing, please report it using [the form linked here](#).

And LWVMI urges you not to sign! No Red Tape for Michigan!

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## **Allow Campbell Coal Plant to Shut Down**

This month LWVMI received approval from LWVUS to oppose the U.S. Department of Energy's decision to require continued operation of the J.H. Campbell Coal Plant in Ottawa County. The plant was scheduled to close in May of 2025, but the U.S. Energy Secretary required it to stay open, using authority reserved for wartime or energy emergencies.

The Michigan Public Service Commission chair Dan Scipps said there is no existing energy emergency either in Michigan or with MISO, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, the regional energy transmission organization that includes Michigan, 14 other U.S. states and the Canadian province of Manitoba.

The order to keep operating the Campbell Coal Plant was recently extended by the U.S. Department of Energy.

The cost of continued operation of the Campbell Coal Plant is **\$615,000 per day, with ratepayers bearing the cost.**

The coal plant was due to be replaced with clean energy alternatives at a savings of over \$600 million in energy bills by 2040.

The social media graphics below can be used by local Leagues to notify members and the public of the costs paid by ratepayers for continued, unnecessary operation of the Campbell Coal Plant.



## LWV Saginaw County Candidate Forum

The League of Women Voters of Saginaw County and the NAACP Saginaw Branch hosted a Michigan Senate District 35 Candidate Forum on December 2, 2025, at Delta College, giving voters a chance to hear directly from those running to fill the vacant seat previously held by Senator Kristen McDonald Rivet. Six Democratic candidates, Pamela Pugh, Serenity Hope Salak, Brandell Adams, William Morrone, Chedrick Greene, and Martin Blank, and one Republican, Chadwick Twillman, took the stage to discuss issues including education, civil rights, jobs, housing, and public safety. Three candidates, who had previously confirmed attendance, chose to attend the Saginaw Republican Party forum event that same night. The LWV and NAACP forum drew a large, engaged crowd and offered a civil, informative discussion focused on local challenges and opportunities ahead of the February 3 special primary election.



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## 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](http://www.lwvmi.org)

or check out Facebook pages for state and local Leagues

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## 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)

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## Calendar

### December 2025

December 31: New Year's Eve



### January 2026

January 1: New Year's Day  
January 6: Anniversary of Insurrection  
January 9: Carrie Chapman Catt's Birthday (Founder of LWV)  
January 10: LWVMI Board Meeting | 9:30 am  
January 13: Korean American Day  
January 15: [Presidents/Leaders Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm  
January 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
January 21: [Let Voters Vote! Virtual Presentation](#) | 7:00 pm  
January 21: 16th Anniversary of Citizens United Decision  
January 22: [Voter Service Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm  
January 22: 53rd Anniversary of Roe v. Wade Decision  
January 28: Observers Network | 3:00 pm

All LWVMI meetings are posted on [LWV Only page](#) of our website with links added when available.

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## Connect with us!

**League of Women Voters of Michigan**

Phone: 517-484-5383

Email: [office@lwvmi.org](mailto:office@lwvmi.org)

Website: [lwvmi.org](http://lwvmi.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lwvmichigan/>

Instagram: [#lwvymich](#)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LWVMichigan>

League of Women Voters of Michigan | 600 W. St. Joseph Street 3G | Lansing, MI 48933 US

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