



League Links

February 2026

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Co-President's Message

As we reflect on 106 years as the League of Women Voters, we see these are truly challenging times for democracy.

We see attacks on voting rights, attempts to weaken the checks and balances that protect our system of government, and efforts to discourage or silence civic participation. We see an astonishing disregard for the rule of law.

Democracy doesn't take care of itself. It depends on us showing up, paying attention, and taking action every single day.

In Michigan, the League is organizing, and leading. The League is more visible than ever. Across the state, members are stepping forward, building community connections, and strengthening local Leagues.

The grassroots nature of the League is our strength. The League helps ordinary people become leaders. It's where neighbors become advocates. It's where concerned citizens become educators, organizers, and defenders of democracy.

Our country works best when it works for everyone — when every eligible voter can participate freely and confidently, when our institutions function for the benefit of all and when civic engagement is welcomed, not feared. Thank you for your time, your energy, and your belief that democracy is worth protecting. We encourage you to read through all the articles in this issue of League Links and look for places you can contribute. Also, please take 10 minutes to listen to this year's State of the League message from our national president, Dianna Wynn, via the link below.

[2026 State of the League](#)

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

Voter Service Updates

Know What You Sign Presentations

The deadline is fast approaching to complete your presentations and submit reports for grant funding. **The deadline is February 28.** To receive grant funding, all local Leagues must complete the KWYS Report Form (at this [link](#)) for each presentation. Payments will be processed and sent to local Leagues in March. If you have questions, let me know.

Text Banking Project Update

Thank you to the local Leagues that took part in the 2025 Permanent Mail Ballot list text banking project. We plan to continue this effort in 2026, with the greatest impact expected as election dates approach.

Text banking will resume May 1 for the August Primary and September 1 for the November General Election. One exception: We will begin April 1 for Saginaw and Midland Leagues for the special election-Senate District 35. Bob Chunn, our liaison with RelA2ve, will reach out to the local Leagues that have signed up. If your League has not yet registered to participate — or if you're unsure whether you're on the list — please contact me.



Just a reminder: LWVMI is providing an opportunity for local Leagues to encourage youth engagement in League voter service activities for the 2026 election year. Grant funds are available to offer honoraria to local youth (ages 16-25) who are interested in working with local Leagues in civic engagement and democracy work. Examples are listed below. The amounts listed for honoraria are suggestions only. Local Leagues can determine their own amounts.

- Student Leader of Voter Services — \$1,000
 - (Must join the local League and serve on the board.)
 - Lead high school voter registration drives, coordinate youth outreach, recruit volunteers, and support candidate forums and election observation.
- Voter Registration Drives — \$25 per event
- Candidate Forums — \$25 per event
- Social Media Content — \$500 per year
 - (Must join the local League.)
 - Create civic engagement content for platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.
- Observer Corps — \$100 for 6 months / \$200 for 1 year
 - Attend local government meetings, receive training and mentorship, and submit reports.
- Board of Canvassers Observer — \$50 per event
 - (Must join the local League.)
 - Attend training, key meetings and submit required reports with mentorship from League observers.

Local Leagues are invited to submit a proposal outlining plans to engage youth. **Grant fund amounts are up to \$1,500, with proposals due by April 30, 2026.** Please specify the youth engagement activities your League will focus on, anticipated costs, and plans for May–November 2026. Additional voter service–related ideas beyond those listed above are welcome. Questions? Contact [Judy Florian](#) or [Lynne Kochmanski](#).



Voter Service Network Meeting

Mark your calendars! Our next Voter Service Network meeting will be held on Thursday, February 26 at 7:00 p.m. You can register for the meeting at this [link](#). Only those actively involved in Voter Service work in their local League can attend. An agenda will be sent out the week of February 23.

Judy Florian
VP for Voter Service
voterservice@lwvmi.org

Unite and Rise 8.5

The Unite & Rise 8.5 Playbook 4 for February through April has been released and is filled with important information regarding mobilization efforts. Here is the link to [Playbook 4](#).

Key events for March:

- With immigration enforcement activity increasing in our communities, it can create fear, confusion, and barriers to participation in civic life. Leagues can now review our [civic action toolkit](#) on the League Management Site to learn how to show up safely, lawfully, and in solidarity during ICE activity.
- No Kings - LWVUS is joining [No Kings](#) as a national partner on Saturday, March 28. **Leagues are welcome to lean in locally** and participate in activations with partners on the ground in a nonpartisan manner. For Leagues who decide to mobilize for No Kings, please utilize our [Protest Safety Guidance](#) and [Guidance for Leagues About Nonpartisanship and Partnerships](#).
- Civic Engagement Week - Highlight the importance of civic education and showcase the League's commitment to empowering voters and defending democracy during **Civic Learning Week from March 9 –13, 2026!** Leagues can find daily activities, messaging resources, sample social media posts, and more in our [engagement guide on the League Management Site](#). Leagues can share success stories and pictures at evaluation@lww.org.



Program Planning

A reminder to all local league leaders that **March 10th, 2026** is the deadline for submitting the LWVUS Program Planning survey response. For background information and a link to preview the survey, please refer to [The Leaders Guide to the LWVUS Program 2026-2028](#).

LWVUS is asking local and state leagues to:

- Support or oppose the recommended program: Women Defend Democracy: *Democracy Under Siege*
- Recommend another issue for study or concurrence
- Identify LWVUS positions that they use at the local level

"League Program is the grassroots method by which LWV supports our mission through education and advocacy." LWVUS Program Planning Board

Thank you in advance for providing LWVUS your guidance as they move the League's mission forward!

Ellen Lafferty
LWVMI VP of Program

LWVMI Advocacy Committee Report

The Advocacy Committee has been busy again in February. Here are some highlights:

TAKE ACTION: Tell Governor Whitmer to Protect our Great Lakes and Reject the Line 5 Tunnel Permit.

Use this [link](#) to send a letter to the Governor urging her to use Michigan's authority under the Clean Water Act to reject the Enbridge permit request for its Line 5 Tunnel.

The January 2026 report from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers makes it clear that the proposed Enbridge Line 5 Tunnel will cause permanent harm to the Great Lakes.

The federal government admits the following in its report:

- The Line 5 tunnel would cause long-term, irreversible environmental damage, including permanent wetland loss, lasting harm to wildlife habitat, and increased industrial development in one of the most sensitive places in the Great Lakes.
- Enbridge's proposed tunnel would require removing more than 665,000 cubic yards of bedrock from beneath the Straits of Mackinac, permanently altering the geology of the Great Lakes' most critical connection point.
- The project would adversely affect archaeological sites and a Traditional Cultural Landscape.
- Construction noise, turbidity, and industrial activity could interfere with Tribal cultural and ceremonial practices.
- The impact on treaty rights still remains unresolved "to be determined later."

Michigan's Great Lakes are irreplaceable public resources that demand the highest level of protection. The Great Lakes provide drinking water to 40 million people and support communities across multiple states and provinces.

Indigenous nations have treaty rights and have made their science-based opposition clear. Tourism, fishing, shipping, and communities across the region depend on clean water, not risky oil infrastructure.

Please ask the Governor to use Michigan's authority under the Clean Water Act to protect the Great Lakes by rejecting the Enbridge Line 5 Tunnel Permit.

The LWVMI Board voted to oppose House Bills 5310, 5311 and 5312 requiring all school districts in Michigan to accept applications from out of district students, ending local school board discretion on student enrollment.

January Advocacy Presentation.

Our *Let Voters Vote! Why Documentary Proof of Citizenship is Needless Voter Suppression* Advocacy Presentation on January 21, 2026 was a huge success.

536 people registered and either attended or received the recording.

You can view the recording on the LWVMI website or [here](#). The stand-alone power point can be found [here](#).

Sandra Sorini Elser
LWVMI VP for Advocacy
advocacy@lwwmi.org

LWVUS National Convention 2026

Registration for [Convention 2026: Women Unite & Rise](#) is now open. Visit the event website to register, book your hotel accommodations, sign up for the wares market, access pre-Convention webinar recordings, and more! Early bird registration ends on March 31.

Registration of in-person delegates is \$575 before March 31.

Registration of virtual delegates is \$150, which includes only plenary sessions.

Please check with your local League leadership if you are interested in attending as a voting delegate. Each local League has a number of delegate spots allotted to them based on membership size. Every attempt will be made to accommodate those who wish to attend, though assistance with cost is limited, and at the discretion of local Leagues.

Once local Leagues have decided on who will be attending, please send your lists to communications@lwwmi.org, and cc copresidentkochmanski@lwwmi.org and copresidenthartsough@lwwmi.org.



Peanut Butter & Jelly



In my role as Development Director for LWVMI, I have been trying to think of ways to bring to your attention just how useful the State League is in helping the local leagues do their work. It may sound crazy, but I thought of sandwiches and particularly peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for an analogy. Hear me out before you think I am crazy. Think of the top piece of bread in the sandwich being LWVUS and the bottom piece of bread being your local league. LWVMI is the filling, the peanut butter and jelly so to speak. The middle holds it all together and provides the protein. Together we pack a powerful punch. You use the middle every time you go to the LWVMI website for a resource or attend a webinar sponsored by them or attend a monthly meeting networking with fellow League members. Please consider making a donation to LWVMI so that we never run out of peanut butter or jelly. Click on the donate button on [LWVMI.org](https://www.lwvmi.org) and help keep the pantry full.

Thank you for all you do for the Leagues, giving of your time, your talents and your dollars. Together we can do great things.

Carrie Moon-Dupree
LWVMI Development Director

Election Updates

Michigan

The Senate Elections and Ethics Committee, chaired by Senator Jeremy Moss, met two times in 2025. Meetings were held April 24 and September 10. The committee reported 8 bills.

In 2026, the Senate Elections and Ethics Committee has met once and took up bills to change the date of the primary elections and make necessary changes in other laws. [Senate Bills 691- 698](#) would move the August primary election to May. The committee took testimony, but no vote was taken yet. LWVMI does not have a position on the legislation.

The House Election Integrity Committee, chaired by Representative Rachelle Smith, met 21 times from February through December 2025. The committee's first vote was on reporting [House Joint Resolution B](#), that amends the state constitution to require individuals to provide documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote and to require registered voters to present photo ID or another form of identification when casting a ballot. The resolution failed to pass in the House because it requires a 2/3rds vote in favor to pass. LWVMI actively opposes HJR B that remains on the House calendar. This is like the petitions being circulated by Protect Voters Rights and Americans for Citizens Voting, as well as the federal SAVE Act. The committee took testimony on election integrity at 10 meetings. Twenty bills were reported by the House Election Integrity Committee. In 2026, the House Election Integrity Committee has not met.

Secretary of State Benson responded to allegations made by the Macomb County Clerk that non-citizens were on voting rolls. [On January 29](#), Secretary of State Benson said the department investigated the allegations and found "only

three had any voting history: one was an American citizen who legally cast a ballot, one voted in 2024 and is still under investigation, and the third last voted in 2018, but their voter registration had already been canceled in 2022."

Americans for Citizens Voting [announced](#) they have enough signatures to turn in their petitions to require proof of citizenship in order to register to vote. So far, they have not been submitted. LWVMI urges everyone to [decline to sign](#) this petition.

Federal

The US House of Representatives passed the SAVE Act in 2024, 2025 and with some changes in 2026. According to LWVUS, "the SAVE Act in all of its forms would put up barriers to voting by requiring every single American citizen to provide very specific documents, chiefly by either presenting a passport or an original copy of their birth certificate, in person when registering to vote and anytime they update their voter registration." LWVUS opposes this legislation and has talking points available [here](#).

Also, the MEGA Bill (Make Elections Great Again) was introduced. It has a strict voter id, centralized voter surveillance, guts the Motor Voter Act, bans counting ballots received after election day, bans mailing ballots out statewide, bars federal funding for groups doing voter registration and more.

President Trump [wants mandatory ID](#) when voting changing address etc., proof of citizenship to register to vote and to limit use of mail-in ballots to military, disability, illness or travel.

President Trump also suggested federalizing elections. Governor Whitmer issued a [statement](#) in response.

U.S Department of Justice is in court with Michigan and other states to require them to turn over their [voter information](#). On February 9, a judge [ruled](#) this request is unconstitutional, and it will probably be appealed.

Judy Karandjeff

Membership Network Notes

February Meeting:

At the February 11 meeting Marcelo Betti of Immigration Law & Justice Michigan presented a program on Immigration and the constitutional and legal background of who has authority to control immigration, the rights of citizens and non-citizens, and how the current administration is implementing immigration, detention, and deportation policy. A PowerPoint is available.

Local League Highlights:

This is a sample of local League activities around the state.

- Leelanau County League participated in the Democracy or Dictator protest march in downtown Suttons Bay on January 17 (brr!) and is planning a March 4 program on Sustainable Solutions given by Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities.
- Copper Country League has an active Observer Corps and is active in efforts to improve the Houghton County Jail, participating in public

meetings among other things. They also shared a link for a presentation by Lindsey Cormack on her book *How to Raise a Citizen (and Why It's Up to You to Do It)*: [How to Raise a Citizen](#).

- Kalamazoo League held a Founders' Day Celebration with Susan Rosas, CEO of YWCA Kalamazoo, speaking about how equity, inclusion, and collaboration strengthen our democracy.
- The Oakland Area League hosted a program in January with Professor Kevin Deegan-Krause speaking on *Understanding Accountability: Why It's Important, Why It's at Risk, and What We Can Do About It* and celebrated Black History Month with Charles Thomas speaking on "Value of the Vote." Links for these and other programs can be found [here](#).

Finishing Up:

The March 11 meeting will feature Christina Schlitt presenting information on leadership for local Leagues. More information and the Zoom link will be sent in the meeting announcement to the Membership Leaders Network. Please contact me if you would like to be added to the list.

To contribute your League's highlights or to get additional information on items in this article, please contact me at:

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

LWVUS Action Alert Reminders

Tell Congress to reject the [SAVE ACT Suite of Bills](#), plus here is a link to the [updated talking points](#) for the SAVE ACT Suite of Bills before the Senate.



Tell Congress that federal immigration enforcement has gone too far, [speak up](#).

Census 2030 - Help Now!

Preparation for the 2030 Census is underway, and you can help. Census workers need to know the addresses of homes and apartment buildings constructed in the last ten years.

The federal government will ask the top executives of municipalities for a Local Update to Census Addresses or LUCA. This request will come in mid-2027 and cities need to start now so they can provide the addresses by then. LUCA comes around only every ten years, so it can be easy to miss.

The National League of Cities asks that Leagues remind the top executive of their municipality to begin the update process. For more information, [click here](#).



Local League Advocacy Network February 24, 2026, at 3pm via Zoom

The next LWVMI Local League Advocacy Network meeting will be on February 24, 2026, at 3pm via Zoom.

All League members are welcome. You can access the meeting link [here](#).

The meeting agenda will be:

- Review of work of the LWVMI Advocacy Committee last month-Sandy
- Review the Civic Action Toolkit - Christina
- Q&A from Network members – Sandy and Christina
- Round Robin – Network Members

For questions contact Sandy at advocacy@LWVMI.org

Hope you will join us.

Sandra Sorini Elser, LWVMI VP of Advocacy
Christina Schlitt, LWV Grand Traverse Area

LWVMI Environmental Network February 2026 Report

Data Centers: What Michiganders Need to Know Webinar March 5, 2026 at 6:30pm

Join us for a free educational webinar for Michiganders who want to learn more about hyperscale data centers as they arrive in our communities, presented by the **League of Women Voters of Michigan Environmental Network** and the **Michigan Climate Action Network**.

Register [here](#) and share widely. Open to the public.

This webinar will cover:

- Impact on clean energy goals
- Information about the tech and economic impacts
- How other states are responding
- Policy and community benefit recommendations

Learn from our expert panel:

- Lee Shaver, Senior Energy Analyst with the Union of Concerned Scientists
- Prescott Balch, Retired Technology Executive
- Boratha Tan, Senior Regulatory Manager for the Midwest at Vote Solar
- Chris Gilmer-Hall, Policy Associate with the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition

For questions, please contact advocacy@LWVMI.org

All League Members, Michigan Climate Action Network Members and the Public are welcome.

The **next LWVMI Environmental Network meeting** will be on **February 26 at 11am** via Zoom. We will have a general round robin discussion of what our local Leagues are doing on environmental protection and climate change. The meeting link is available [here](#). All League members are welcome!

For questions contact Sandy at Advocacy@LWVMI.org.

Sandra Sorini Elser
LWVMI VP of Advocacy

Data Centers: What Michiganders Need to Know

Join us for a free Webinar,
March 5, 2026, 6:30 pm



Join us for a free, educational webinar for Michiganders wanting to learn more about the issues surrounding the 16+ data centers proposed in Michigan so far, each of which will consume city-level amounts of energy.

Presented by the **League of Women Voters of Michigan Environmental Network** and the **Michigan Climate Action Network**.

Register here to learn about:

- The impact on clean energy goals
- Understanding the tech and economic claims
- How other states are responding
- The policy and community benefit recommendations

Learn from our expert panel:

- **Lee Shaver**, Senior Energy Analyst with the Union of Concerned Scientists
- **Prescott Balch**, Retired Technology Executive
- **Boratha Tan**, Senior Regulatory Manager for the Midwest at Vote Solar
- **Chris Gilmer-Hall**, Policy Assn., MI Environmental Justice Coalition

Click here to register. All are welcome! Questions? Contact advocacy@LWVMI.org

In Memory of Dottie Haase LWV of Northeast Michigan

The LWV of Northeast Michigan sadly announces the passing of Dorothy (Dottie) Haase on February 2, 2026. Dottie was a force of nature for our League and our democracy. She was full of energy, always positive, kind to all and beloved by all who knew her. If Dottie asked you to do something, you couldn't refuse - not because she was heavy handed, but because you admired her and wanted to live up to her example.

The loss of Dottie is a tremendous loss to our League and to the world. She worked for a better life for everyone, whether it was literacy, voting rights or promoting kindness in our community. Dottie was an exceptional example of a life well lived.

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 2025-2027

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)

Calendar



February 2026

Black History Month

- February 24: [Local League Advocacy Network](#) | 3:00 pm
- February 25: Local League Treasurers Meeting | 7:00 pm
- February 26: Anniversary of SCOTUS Upholding 19th Amendment
- February 26: [Voter Service Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm

March 2026

Women's History Month

Deaf History Month

National Foreign Language Month

March 5: [Data Centers: What Michiganders Need to Know](#) | 6:30 pm

March 7: [Anniversary of Bloody Sunday](#)

March 8: International Women's Day

March 10: [Deadline to Submit Program Planning Survey](#)

March 14: LWVMI Board Meeting | 9:30 am

March 18: Observer Corps Network | 3:00 pm

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

March 25: Communications Network Meeting | 2:30 pm

March 26: Anniversary of SCOTUS [Rucho](#) Arguments

March 26: [Voter Service Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm

March 28: No Kings Rally

March 31: [International Transgender Day of Visibility](#)

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/>



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