



MICHIGAN VOTER POWER CAMPAIGN

*Taking action to make voting convenient and elections
more transparent*



eLetter, Issue #8, May 2011

Justice O'Connor To Keynote Forum at Wayne State University Law School

Retired United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor will keynote a forum at the Wayne State University Law School Tuesday, June 14, that will explore different approaches to selecting Supreme Court judges.

Register for the forum (\$10 registration fee) <http://fs16.formsite.com/lwvmi/JSTFForum/index.html>

The forum is being sponsored by the Judicial Selection Task Force, chaired by Michigan Supreme Court Justice Marilyn Kelly and Senior Judge James L. Ryan of the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Justice O'Connor is honorary co-chair of the task force. The event is part of the Task Force's study of methods of selection of Supreme Court justices in the 50 states, and evaluation of Michigan's unique system of selection of Supreme Court justices.

Justice O'Connor is a proponent of Arizona's system of selection for Supreme Court justices, where a bipartisan nominating committee recommends a pool of qualified candidates from which the governor appoints justices to fill vacancies. Justice O'Connor has been critical of high cost state judicial elections that undermine citizens' trust in the impartiality of their courts.

Former Michigan Chief Justice Clifford W. Taylor will present an alternative perspective, in defense of an elected Supreme Court, as is the practice in Michigan. Hugh Caperton, plaintiff in the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Caperton v. Massey Coal Company*, will offer a first-person account of the case.

Event details:

Tuesday, June 14, 2011
Wayne State University Law School
Partrich Auditorium
471 W. Palmer St., Detroit
9:30 am – 2:30 pm
Registration: \$10 to cover parking and lunch. Register here.
<http://fs16.formsite.com/lwvmi/JSTFForum/index.html>

(Announced by the Michigan Campaign Finance Network. Read the full announcement at WSU Law School's website.) <http://law.wayne.edu/jstf-forum.php>

Legislative Committees Hold Redistricting Hearings

House and Senate Redistricting committees held a series of hearings on redistricting in April and May. The hearings were designed to inform Committee members about redistricting data and legal issues through expert testimony on Census results, national Voting Rights Act, and state redistricting law.



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Although each Committee scheduled one hearing for public testimony, the Committees have not provided any information about their plans for developing maps and when they expect to complete and make them available to the public. On behalf of the Michigan Redistricting Collaborative, LWVMI President Sue Smith and Christina Kuo, Executive Director of Common Cause, called for a more open and participatory process in their testimony before the House Redistricting and Elections Committee.

Smith expressed concern that the current process will be similar to 2001, in which legislation was adopted and promptly signed by then-Governor Engler, without any opportunity for the public to view or critique proposed maps. “The secretive actions only added to public skepticism about the political process,” she said. She cited Iowa and Illinois as examples of states that have a more transparent and participatory process.

Kuo addressed the Redistricting Collaborative’s recommendations to the Legislature:

- Require redistricting plans to be available on the Legislature’s website for 30 days before passage.
- Mandate each chamber to hold at least two committee meetings to receive testimony about the plan.
- Hold four public hearings around the state to allow direct comment by the public on the plan.
- Provide a statement for each district explaining how the boundaries were drawn and how the district has been changed.

“Our request is simple,” she said. “We are asking for meaningful dialogue on an issue that will impact communities for the next ten years. However, for meaningful dialogue to occur, the public must be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the legislature’s redistricting plans.”

Tell your legislators to support an open redistricting process

http://participate.lwv.org/c/8799/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=4170

Visit the Michigan Redistricting Collaborative's website for more information on redistricting in Michigan <http://drawthelinemidwest.org/michigan/>

Michigan Voter Power (MVP) is a project of the League of Women Voters of Michigan. MVP works with other organizations to promote citizen participation and increase transparency in government.

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