



MICHIGAN VOTER POWER CAMPAIGN

Taking action to make voting convenient and elections more transparent

eLetter, Issue #6, October 2010

Voter Guides Available for November General Election

Candidate information for the November Election is now available on the League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVMI) website . The nonpartisan guides include information provided by candidates for US Representative, Governor and other statewide offices, state House and Senate, and pro and con positions on state ballot measures. Printed voter guides, which do not include the state legislative offices, can be requested from LWVMI at office@lwvmi.org or 517-484-5383.

Results of a candidate questionnaire on campaign finance, voting, and redistricting reforms can be found on Michigan Voter Power's web page. State House and Senate candidates were invited to provide their positions on a range of issues including full disclosure of campaign spending, public funding for MI Supreme Court races, early and no excuse absentee voting, and public participation in redrawing legislative districts in 2011. The survey was co-sponsored by LWVMI, AAUW of Michigan, Business and Professional Women of MI, MI Campaign Finance Network, MI Environmental Council, MI Nonprofit Association, and the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section .

October 13th Forum on Michigan Constitutional Convention Forum

Thomas M. Cooley Law School, the League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVMI) and the League of Women Voters of the Lansing Area (LWVLA) are co-sponsoring a Michigan Constitutional Convention Forum on Wednesday, October 13. This forum will feature speakers who support and oppose Proposal 10-1. This ballot proposal asks whether voters support or oppose a convention of elected officials to revise the Michigan Constitution, which would be submitted to the state's voters for their approval or rejection.

A representative from the Citizen's Research Council of Michigan, Eric Luphear will offer an introduction to the issues. After that, former State Representative Lynn Johndahl will moderate a discussion between those who support and oppose the constitutional convention. Public Sector Consultants Senior Policy Fellow, Craig Ruff and former Mayor of Grand Rapids, John Logie will support a constitutional convention. A representative from the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and Cooley Law School Professor, Peter Kempel, will oppose a constitutional convention.

The forum takes place Wednesday, October 13, 2010 from 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. on the 9th floor of Thomas M. Cooley Law School, 300 South Capitol Avenue, Lansing. This event is free and open to the public.

Voter Power in Action

MVP is coordinating with local Leagues and partner organizations to raise awareness and work for reforms to make voting convenient and accessible, reduce the influence of money in Michigan Supreme Court elections, and promote an open and participatory redistricting process.

In one project, participating local Leagues will interview local clerks to assess voter registration initiatives at state agencies, such as Human Services and Community Health departments, and practices that facilitate voter registration. Some clerks will also be asked about barriers to implementing early voting in small communities.



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MVP is also planning to develop educational materials and sponsor events to bring attention to problems with the redistricting process. Redistricting is often used as an opportunity to gain partisan advantage, secure seats for specific candidates, and split natural communities, thereby reducing their ability to be represented. Michigan's Legislature will begin the next redistricting process in April 2011, following receipt of the 2010 Census data, and must complete the redistricting plan by November 1, 2011. Counties will undertake a similar process.

Local Leagues or individuals that would like to participate in these projects should contact Kris Zawisza, LWVMI Project Director, faircourts@lwvmi.org.

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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