



The Michigan VOTER

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Michigan
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UPDATE ON REDISTRICTING

By Judy Karandjeff, LWV of the Lansing Area, LWVMI President and Sue Smith, LWV of Ann Arbor Area, LWVMI Director

As you all know, LWVMI has been involved in redistricting since we started working with the MI Redistricting Collaborative in 2010 in an effort to make the process more transparent and accountable. Since that time, LWVMI has educated voters at over 100 meetings, providing information on the redistricting process and the need for change. In 2011-2012, LWVMI undertook a state study and arrived at our position which supports an independent commission.

On February 24, 2017, Voters Not Politicians, who also does business as Count MI Vote, filed a ballot question committee with Michigan's Secretary of State. Michigan's Campaign Finance Law governs the activities of ballot question committees as well as those organizations that haven't filed a committee.

At the end of June, Count MI Vote/Voters Not Politicians (CMV/VNP) submitted petition language to the Bureau of Elections. Since then, CMV/VNP has submitted several changes to the language. The Bureau is continuing to review the constitutional changes proposed by CMV/VNP's petition. Once that review is complete, the Board of State Canvassers will meet to review the form of the petition language. At some point CMV/VNP will print and distribute petitions for its proposal.

The League and other organizations have decided this is not the right time to form a coalition.

As of today, LWVMI has not endorsed a ballot proposal, filed a ballot question committee or joined a coalition. Therefore, local Leagues cannot participate in CMV/VNP's activities. League members may participate in CMV/VNP's activities as individuals, but not as League members.

Redistricting reform is an important issue. It can help ensure that every vote counts. Along with the ACLU, NAACP and many others, the League has been working for years to increase the transparency, fairness, and independence of how legislative district lines are drawn in our state.

LWVMI is fully committed to a non-partisan approach, which ensures voters are able to make their voices heard in our elections. We have been and will continue to be instrumental in redistricting reform efforts in the state. The League will continue to educate voters on the need for redistricting reform.

We wish CMV/VNP well. We all share a commitment to ensuring voting in Michigan is fair, honest and secure. We will continue to work on this issue on your behalf.

MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

CONVENTION 2017

Paula Bowman, LWV NW Wayne County,
LWVMI Secretary and Convention Chair

Every two years, League members from all over Michigan assemble to work together to strengthen the League by electing a new Board of Directors, passing a budget and establishing a program for the next two years. Representing nineteen local Leagues and the State Board, over 120 delegates, guests and state board members attended the LWVMI Convention in Lansing from May 19 -21. Though the routine business of the League was accomplished as expected, convention attendees also attended workshops, shared challenges and successes with others, shopped at the wares market, bid on auction items, honored their peers with awards and enjoyed the fellowship of so many others with shared values. Highlights included:

- Several new board members were added to the LWVMI Board of Directors (see the back page for your new leadership team), and we said *thank you* to our 3 board members who have completed their service: Patience Drake-Rosenbaum, Judy McDowell and Suzanne Dixon.
- Guest speakers educated us on hot topics of the day: Gilda Jacobs, President/CEO of Michigan League for Public Policy discussed equity issues in Michigan, LWVMI VP Sue Smith provided a Redistricting progress report, the Sierra Club's David Holtz alarmed many of us with his facts about Pipeline 5, Courtney Bourgoin from the Sierra Club discussed the state budget and Chris Hackbarth from the Michigan Municipal League described the dangerous financial conditions of some municipalities and counties as a result of Michigan's lack of ade-

quate revenue sharing.

- A budget was passed that included no increase in the per-member-payment.
- Six different workshops on Saturday led by League leaders were met with enthusiasm.
 - Members were offered a variety of Saturday morning 'table talk' discussion opportunities including "Best League Meetings Ever" to "ERA" to discussions focused on League presidents, treasurers, nominating committees or webmasters.
 - The delegates voted to conduct an update of the current Agricultural Migrant/Seasonal Worker Position regarding whether or not a Michigan resident should be allowed to obtain a driver's license or ID regardless of immigration status.
 - Bids for auction items donated by individuals and local Leagues continued to climb through the weekend, and many members made cash donations in lieu of taking home an item. We are grateful to all of you who made auction and cash donations, since those funds help us keep convention registration fees as low as possible. In the same room, the local Leagues who brought items to sell at the convention enjoyed healthy sales (most sold out!)
 - Local League presidents or designees talked fast in their two-minute allotted time to share unique successes or developments over the past two years in the Roll Call of Leagues.
 - Michigan Radio's Zoe Clark brought smiles to all of us as she shared her political experiences at the Saturday banquet.
 - We honored many members with Belle Ringer awards and awarded four members with LWVMI's highest honors (see

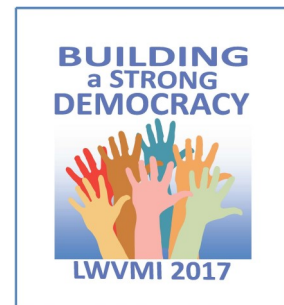
Awards article on page 5).

Though the convention is behind us, we will be carrying out the decisions of the delegates for the next two years.

Most attendees filled out a convention evaluation. Rest assured that those results and your comments have already been shared with the LWVMI Board and the workshop leaders. We also carefully recorded the Directions to the Board and will try to address all the concerns of the delegates.

We are especially grateful to all the Lansing League members who helped at the convention, to the convention planning committee: Camilla Davis, Vina Mikesell, Deborah Bunkley, Linda Curry, Betsy Cushman, Christina Schlitt, Paula Bowman and Debby Starnes, to our "Table Talk" hosts and workshop leaders: Eva Packard, Christina Schlitt, Betsy Cushman, Tom Wells, Ken Manley, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Suzanne Dixon, Linda Hoff, Sue Smith, Connie Ferguson, Judy Karandjeff, Angela Ryan, Tricia Denton and Patience Drake-Rosenbaum.

All those who attended the convention are volunteers, many of whom paid for all or part of the expenses of the weekend. Your participation in this biennial event reinforces the League's mission and renews the pride all of us have in this progressive organization.



OIL AND WATER DONT MIX

Joan Hunault, LWV Lenawee,
LWVMI Vice President Advocacy

The League of Women Voters of Michigan is one of 21 members of the Oil and Water Don't Mix Coalition that sent a letter to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) on June 29, 2017. The letter was sent regarding Enbridge Oil Company's joint application to the MDEQ and the Corps (No. 2RD-DFDK-Y35G) to install 22 anchor supports on the Line 5 pipeline in the Mackinac Straits. The Coalition members are Michigan organizations dedicated to the protection of Michigan's water, natural resources, public trust in those resources, the environment, communities, and the health, safety and general welfare of citizens.

The Coalition organizations are requesting that MDEQ and the Corps take the following actions with regard to Enbridge's joint application:

1. Reject as incomplete due to its overly narrow scope of review;
2. Require a comprehensive review of Line 5 in the Straits that includes an assessment of adverse environmental impacts, risks, and feasible and prudent alternatives;
3. Temporarily terminate the transport of crude oil in the Line 5 pipeline during this comprehensive review; and
4. Hold a formal public hearing given that Enbridge Line 5 occupies publicly owned waters and bottomlands and that the threat of a catastrophic oil pipeline rupture to the Great Lakes are of great controversy and have generated an extraordinary level of public engagement. You have the opportunity to contact

Governor Snyder and your elected officials to voice your concerns. Now is the time to make your voice heard.

For more information go to the Oil & Water Don't Mix website: oil-andwaterdontmix.org and to the MI Petroleum Pipelines website: mipetroleumpipelines.com.



INCREASING THE LEAGUE'S IMPACT, ENGAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Susan K Smith, LWV Ann Arbor
LWVMI Director

This is a critical time in our democracy. The League is needed now more than ever. In order to meet the challenges we face and to take advantage of opportunities for increasing our impact on democracy, we need to strengthen the League at all levels, local, state and national.

The League has embarked on an exciting Transformational Journey to increase our impact, expand our engagement with new individuals and to ensure the sustainability of our organization. Across the country many local and state Leagues are gaining new members and supporters. New individuals are finding the League gives them an opportunity to have a positive impact on our democracy. We are certainly seeing that in Michigan where our membership has increased by more than 50% since January 2016.

Delegates to our 2017 State Convention talked about how to: make it easier to join the League, increase support of local Leagues, find ways to become a more diverse organization and to engage individuals in new ways while keeping our values of nonpartisanship and grassroots empowerment.

In June, President Judy Karandjeff and Vice President Christina Schlitt met with other state leaders from across the country for three days at National Council. In small and large groups, they discussed how the League might change and what role we all would have in making those changes.

More ideas on how we can increase the League's impact, expand our engagement with new individuals and ensure the League's sustainability will be forthcoming. Stay tuned!

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Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization which encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government.

The LWVMI welcomes tax-deductible contributions to the LWVMI Education Fund and encourages interested persons to name LWVMI as a beneficiary in their wills.

2017 Primary Elections

Eva Packard, LWV Oakland Area
LWVMI VP of Voter Service

In Michigan, odd years are lighter election years. Most races on the ballot are for cities and proposals. Most cities are non-partisan and only need Primaries if the number of candidates is more than twice the number of seats available for a race.

In 2017, twelve local League VOTE411 accounts are providing Voter Guides on VOTE411.org for the August 8th Primary for 41 city races and 18 proposals: Ann Arbor Area, Dearborn-Dearborn Hts., Detroit MAL, Eastern Upper Peninsula MAL, Flint Area, Grand Rapids unit, Grosse Pointe, Lansing Area, Macomb unit, Marquette unit, NW Wayne Co., and Oakland Area. Also, LWVMI is providing guides for the two Michigan House Districts with vacancies: #1 (covers parts of Grosse Pointe area and Detroit) and #109 (Marquette plus three other upper peninsula counties).

Candidate forums have been scheduled for races in cities of Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Dearborn Hts., Detroit, Holland and Lansing, plus House District 1.

July 25th was the filing deadline for the November 7th General Election. There will be many more city races and proposals on the ballot and additional Leagues will be providing voter guides.



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Christina Schlitt, LWV Grand Traverse Area, LWVMI Vice President of Membership

LWV now boasts 60,000 members across the US! LWVMI has experienced an amazing 55% increase in membership since January 2016. Local Leagues are actively developing programs and plans to engage all of these new members, as well as their newly energized current members. Local Leagues can find specific tips and tools for engagement: 1) in the monthly Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) "Guidelines" from the LWVUS, 2) helpful links in the bi-weekly newsletter from LWVUS President Chris Carson, and 3) in the materials offered at the membership workshop at the May 2017 LWVMI Convention. Materials abound! Please ask, if you need help finding these tools.



After orientation meetings for new members, many of our local Leagues hold training sessions about topics that interest new members. Current members provide basic information to start, and then new members conduct additional research, and undertake efforts and actions on the topic. Training sessions on voter service activities, candidate forums, planning of events, and calendaring, for example, can be helpful refreshers to current members and also help develop new League leaders. Many new members bring very specific skill-sets that can immediately enhance local League boards and committees. We just need to get acquainted with the new members and then connect to their passions.

A simple first step is to have a conversation and ASK questions: Who are you? What are your interests? What experiences might relate to the League? Why did you join the League? Find out what you have in common. A next step might be a new member survey. Review results and then reach out to engage new members in current League activities or use their skills and energy to develop a program that has been on your League's "to do" list.

Another key to successful member engagement is to assess your League's efforts. Allow some time to pass, and then assess the goals and accomplishments.

Did we meet our goals? Are changes needed? Is a course correction required? Review the original goals and the initial interest. Then review the strengths and weaknesses so far. Determine the successes and expand on them. How are the new members included/engaged effectively? How does this impact our League and our community? How are our events being received by members and by the community? If adjustments are needed, then make them.

This new wave of members and activism is exciting! Make the most of this opportunity, because **LWV is needed now more than ever.**

CONVENTION AWARDS

Belle Ringer awards give local Leagues and the state Board the opportunity to recognize the outstanding achievements of local League members and express appreciation of their efforts. Named after (Florence) Belle Brotherton, the first LWVMI President, each honoree is given a small bell with a tag commemorating the 2017 convention. The members who received awards in each category are:

Membership and Leadership Development:

Paige Nong (Ann Arbor Area)
Leah Bectel (Copper Country)
Cheryl Bukloff (Detroit State Unit)
Shawtee Harris (Flint Area)
Mary Beeker (Grand Traverse Area)
Vicki Granger (Grosse Pointe)
Chris Kuthe (Kalamazoo Area)
Deanna Hanieski (Lansing Area)
Martha Shaver (Leelanau County)
Miriam Epskamp (Manistee County)
Julie Schmidt (Midland Area)
Lara Raisanen (Mt. Pleasant Area)
Barbara Rogalle Miller (NW Wayne)
Ann Edwards (Oakland Area)
Kim Kelley (Troy Area)

Advocacy:

Margaret Leary (Ann Arbor Area)
Elizabeth Ennis (Berrien-Cass Co.)
Barry Fink (Copper Country)
Steve Mintline (Flint Area)
Linda Crandall (Gr. Traverse Area)
Ruth Caputo (Kalamazoo Area)
Patience Drake-Rosenbaum (Lansing Area)
Sue Miller (Leelanau County)
Terry Townley (Midland Area)
Sarah Delia (Mt. Pleasant Area)
Lynda Franklin (NW Wayne County)
Veronica Daly (Troy Area)
Ann Bickford (Oakland Area)

Strategic Planning and/or Fundraising:

Betty Bishop (Ann Arbor Area)
Leslie Dobbartin (EUP unit)
Norma Sain (Flint Area)
Ken Manley (Kalamazoo Area)
Debby Starnes (Lansing Area)
Joan Hunault (Leelanau Co.)
Linda Albee (Manistee Co.)
Sue McCollister (Midland Area)
Kathy Primeau (Mt. Pleasant Area)
Sue Wabeke (NW Wayne Co.)
Christine Tarajos (Troy Area)

Voter Service

John Chamberlain (Ann Arbor)
John Ripley (Berrien-Cass County)
Kathy Flagstadt (Copper Country)
Deborah Bunkley (Detroit Unit)
Linda Stoetzer Carrick (EUP Unit)
Bill and Clara Brooks (Flint Area)
Peg Townsend (Gr. Traverse Area)
MerriKay Oleen-Burkey (Kalamazoo Area)
Sherlyn Hogenson (Lansing Area)
BJ Christensen (Leelanau County)
Marilyn Eipperie (Manistee Co.)
Carole Swinehart (Midland Area)
Ruth Helwig (Mt. Pleasant Area)
Megan Chenoweth (NW Wayne)
Cheryl Rosier (Oakland Area)
Karen Fabian (Troy Area)

Judy Karandjeff presented the League's highest honors to four members at the Saturday night banquet:

The **Helen Milliken Leadership and Civic Empowerment Award** honors individuals who have led the way in providing citizens with information and encouraging informed voters through League work at the state and/or local level. This year's award was given to **Jane Watts** from the Grand Traverse Area League.

The **Maryann Mahaffey Community Service Award** honors an individual for demonstrated outstanding commitment to their community and its citizens and who exemplifies the principles of League and League leadership. This award was first presented in 2007 and is named for a long-time member of the League of Women Voters of Detroit who served on City Council for 31 years. Two members were honored with this award this year: **Sarah Delia** from the Mount Pleasant League and **Rose Marie McQuaid** from the Midland League.

The final award of the evening, the **Belle Brotherton Award**, is named for the first President of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, (Florence) Belle Brotherton. This award honors an individual whose outstanding leadership and significant accomplishments have benefited the citizens of Michigan, inspired others and fostered greater public participation in the democratic process. Recipients of this award have done the most to demonstrate outstanding leadership; have demonstrated significant accomplishments in support of the mission of the League at the local level; have benefited the citizens of Michigan beyond the local level; have inspired others and have fostered greater public participation in the democratic process. This year's winner was **Suzanne Dixon** from the Holland Area League for her outstanding work in the field of Natural Resources.



LANGUAGE CHANGE IN STATE’S AGRICULTURAL/ SEASONAL WORKER POSITION

Vina Mikesell, LWV Leelanau, LWVMI Vice President of Program

At the State Convention, delegates overwhelmingly voted to support the proposal made by the League of Women Voters Leelanau County to study an update of the language in Section 1.B. of the Agricultural/ Seasonal Worker Position.

The current language reads: “Should allow a lawfully present, qualifying person to apply for or secure and renew a driver’s license or obtain an identification card”. The Leelanau League is proposing that a study be conducted to determine whether the identification should or should not be based on immigration status.

At its June meeting, the LWVMI Board voted to ask the Leelanau League to create pros and cons, along with background information about why a change is needed. This information will be sent to each local League, asking them to review the materials and to decide whether or not to concur with a revision by a certain date. Responses will then be sent to the State Board which will decide whether or not consensus was reached by a majority of local Leagues.

If the Board determines there is consensus, the revised position would be adopted by the State Board and would have the same status as any other current LWVMI position.



* *The League of Women Voters is where hands on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. * *

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