



The Michigan VOTER

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Michigan
600 W. St. Joseph Street, Suite 3G, Lansing, MI 48933-2288
office@lwvmi.org
www.lwvmi.org
517.484.5383 Fax: 517.484.3086

Volume 66 No. 2

JULY, 2018

Update on Redistricting in Michigan

Sue Smith, LWV Ann Arbor Area, LWVMI Redistricting Director



We are fighting for redistricting reform in Michigan on two fronts. Leagues around the country are fighting for redistricting reform in their states, but Michigan is the only state that is using both the courts and a ballot proposal. The two actions complement each other since the lawsuit deals with the current maps and the ballot proposal deals with maps adopted after the 2020 Census.

LWVMI Lawsuit Against the Secretary of State: On December 22, 2017, the League of Women Voters of Michigan and eleven individual voters, filed a lawsuit against the State of Michigan in federal court, to end the unfair, partisan gerrymandering of Michigan's Congressional and state Legislative districts. As mentioned above, our lawsuit deals with the current maps that were adopted by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2011. A three-judge panel was appointed to hear our case. The court has ordered a schedule for submitting depositions and expert testimony. Trial has been set for February 2019. Court documents are available at www.brennancenter.org.

Effect of U.S. Supreme Court Decision on LWVMI Lawsuit: According to our legal team, the June, 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Wisconsin and Maryland cases makes our lawsuit, which will eventually go to the U.S. Supreme Court, even more important.

While our lawyers are contributing their time pro bono, there are other expenses for depositions, expert testimony, etc. If you would like to contribute to the Redistricting Lawsuit Fund, you may make a tax deductible donation to the LWVMI Ed Fund either by check or on the lwvmi.org website. Please write/type in that your gift is for the Redistricting Lawsuit Fund.

Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) Ballot Proposal: In 2011-12, local Leagues conducted a state study of redistricting. Our resulting redistricting position supports an Independent Redistricting Commission. We support the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) ballot proposal submitted to the Secretary of State by Voters Not Politicians in August 2017. The ballot proposal would change Michigan's redistricting process. Instead of the Legislature drawing the maps, they would be drawn by an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC).

In December 2017, Voters Not Politicians turned in over 425,000 signatures. Since then, the petition signatures have been certified and the ballot proposal placed on the 2018 ballot.

Article continues on Page 2

MISSION STATEMENT

Empower Voters. Defend Democracy.

"Update on Redistricting" continued from Page 1.

Lawsuit Against the ICRC Ballot Proposal: In April 2018, a group called "Citizens Protecting Michigan's Constitution" filed a lawsuit against the ballot proposal in the state Court of Appeals. The lawsuit claimed the ICRC ballot proposal was unconstitutional under the Michigan Constitution. The group contends the ballot proposal is a revision of the Michigan Constitution which cannot be accomplished by an amendment. The Court of Appeals found in favor of Voters Not Politicians, but Citizens Protecting Michigan's Constitution appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court. The Michigan Supreme Court has ordered arguments on the lawsuit be heard on July 18, 2018.



President's Message

Judy Karandjeff, LWV Lansing Area,
LWVMI President

Tuesday, August 7, is the primary election for Michigan. This is an important opportunity for Michigan citizens to make their voices heard. Not only are we choosing the candidates who represents us in the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, Michigan Senate and Michigan House of Representatives but there are also some important local ballot issues. Please make your voice heard.

LWVMI has had a busy year so far. LWVMI was part of the group that filed the landmark lawsuit against Michigan's gerrymandered elections and the Council of Organizations and Others for Education About Parochialism's lawsuits to stop public funds going to nonpublic schools. We also gathered almost 20,000 signatures to help get Promote the Vote on the November ballot and we continue to support Voters Not Politician's redistricting proposal. We held two regional workshops with over 130 people in attendance. We opposed mandatory Medicaid work requirements and a change to allow concealed weapons in certain gun-free places. We provided testimony on child care regulations and proposed social studies curriculum. And over 50 of us attended the LWVUS convention in Chicago.

Now we begin our work on educating our members and others about candidates through our on-line VOTE411 and candidate forums around the state in preparation for the August primary and November general election. We especially thank Eva Packard, Vice President for Voter Service, for her work on VOTE411.

Your assistance is needed to help in our voter education efforts for the upcoming elections. Please consider volunteering your time and/or donating to help us pay for 100,000 printed voter guides to be distributed throughout the state.



The League of Women Voters and our coalition organizing partners, ACLU of Michigan, the state and Detroit branches of the NAACP and the Michigan League for Public Policy, launched the campaign in January, 2018 to provide comprehensive voting rights to Michigan citizens. Since then, members of the League and our partners, as well as many additional individual sponsors and groups concerned about needed reforms in Michigan's voting laws, collected over 430,000 petition signatures. The boxes of petitions were presented to the Secretary of State on July 9, 2018. Almost all of the Leagues in Michigan worked on collecting signatures, and we are grateful for their role in this process.

In order to have the proposal placed on the November ballot to be voted on by the citizens of Michigan, 315,654 valid signatures are required, so we feel we have an adequate 'cushion' with 430,000+. Watch for League materials in the fall that will help local Leagues promote passage of this important ballot proposal.

Stay in Touch!

Are you on Facebook? If so, be sure to "like" the League of Women Voters of Michigan page. Updates are posted several times a week and it's often the quickest way to see the latest LWV news.



Groups Oppose New Enbridge Line 5 Plan

Edited from Oil and Water Don't Mix Press Release

Enbridge's attempt to rebuild its controversial Line 5 oil pipeline in the Straits of Mackinac through a series of weakly evaluated piecemeal projects that bypass robust environmental review is expected to meet strong opposition from LWVMI along with other citizens groups and federally recognized tribes during a scheduled public hearing in Mackinaw City on July 11, 2018.

Just over three months after a tugboat anchor struck and dented Line 5 in the Straits, the July 11th hearing ostensibly focuses on Enbridge's request for a permit to install 48 new anchor supports for an underwater pipeline that Enbridge has consistently failed to stabilize in violation of its easement agreement with the state. Approving these proposed anchor supports would bring to 198 the number of anchors authorized by the state along Line 5, changing the pipeline's basic design. Enbridge has never publicly disclosed any engineering evaluations of the impact of multiple anchor braces on a 1953 pipeline whose original engineering design didn't contemplate the use of suspended anchors on the lakebed floor. Thus far, Gov. Snyder's administration has agreed to Enbridge's anchor requests while engaging in a backroom deal to keep Line 5 in the Straits. Homeowners near the Straits have filed a formal challenge to a previous anchor permit granted Enbridge by the state.

Enbridge's current permit request follows a previous one for 22

anchor supports that was approved by the state in March. Meanwhile, there is evidence that new anchor supports have damaged protective Line 5 pipeline coatings and are likely altering the engineering of the 1953 pipeline and potentially making it more unstable. At no time in its 65-year history has this dangerous pipeline been subjected to comprehensive environmental review. The 1953 easement agreement requires support structures a minimum of every 75 feet but Enbridge has allowed many gaps, at least one up to 224 feet of unsupported pipe, according to a 2016 Enbridge report. Strong, shifting unpredictable currents in the Straits cause washouts, creating gaps underneath the pipeline. With the installation of new anchor supports, these gaps between the pipeline and lakebed present an additional anchor hazard should a ship's captain deploy an anchor in an emergency and hook the suspended pipe. The threat of unsupported spans and anchor drags will continue until Line 5 is decommissioned and removed.

Enbridge is Michigan's worst water polluter, responsible for more than 1 million gallons of oil spilled in 2010 along the Kalamazoo River and at least 29 spills along Line 5. In May, Enbridge was fined \$1.8 million by the US EPA as part of its Line 6B federal court consent decree for failing to meet its pipeline safety inspection obligations (including 2 locations on land-based portions of Line 5).

LWVMI has urged the state to shut down Line 5. The possible threat of a spill and the permanent damage that could result demand the state to act now.

Advocacy in Two Minutes



Advocacy is a key part of the LWV's mission, but members often find it's time consuming to create a message to their state or national leadership that also reflects the League's values.

So we make it easy for you! When you receive an emailed 'Action Alert' from LWVMI or LWVUS, please take two minutes to click on the link and send an already-prepared message to your legislator. You may dismiss this by thinking that similar messages from multiple League members won't be considered, but this is not true! Legislative offices look at the **number** of messages in support or opposition to a decision, not necessarily the content.

We depend on League members to help us support our mission, so please be part of this easy process.

The Michigan Voter

A publication of the
League of Women Voters of Michigan
600 W. St. Joseph St, Ste. 3G
Lansing, MI 48933-2288
517.484.5383 Fax 517.484.3086

office@lwvmi.org www.lwvmi.org

ISSN 089-1545

Published Four times a year. Subscriptions:
\$12 per year from above address.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to above address.

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.

LWV 53rd National Convention

Christina Schlitt, LWV Grand Traverse Area, LWVMI VP Membership

The League of Women Voters National Convention was held in Chicago June 28-July 1, right near the Congress Plaza Hotel, which is the founding site of the League of Women Voters in 1920.

The fervor of the convention grew throughout the four days with a record number of delegates—more than 1,000—and half of the delegates were first timers. Highlights include the introduction of our new LWV CEO, Virginia Kase, a woman with non-profit experience and totally ready to be engaged with the League's mission.

The delegates overwhelming voted to support the main program: **The Campaign for Making Democracy Work**. This broad umbrella includes “ensuring a free, fair and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on:

- ♣ Voting Rights
- ♣ Improving Elections
- ♣ Campaign Finance/Money in Politics
- ♣ Redistricting”

The usual business details were covered during the plenary sessions



Fifty-Two Michigan members—the most in recent history—attended the national convention. Pictured here are some (sorry for all those who were standing on the right and got cut out!)

that featured bylaw changes and the election of the new board led by **President Chris Carson**. A budget for the next two years was supported by delegates (good news— no PMP increase.)

The **Transformation** process to take the League of Women Voters well into the next 100 years was detailed through information sessions as well as the workshops attended by all delegates. The Transformation process is flowing in a number of ways including the emphasis on **DEI: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**. This is a positive measure to align the membership of the League with members of our communities. The budget reflects the serious attention directed to this carefully planned growth plan by taking dollars from reserve to fund these significant measures. (See 2019-20 budget on LWV.org)

The speakers, as always, provided the in-depth information on the issues of making Democracy work. Topics ranged from battling gerrymandered districts to election watch-dog and reform to the need for LWV to embrace and actively diversify the local League membership.

The banquet Saturday night featured awards recognizing the outstanding efforts and accomplishments by local Leagues throughout the country. **Elaine Weiss** was the keynote speaker and she wrapped us all in the



Michigan members visiting the plaque commemorating the Congress Plaza Hotel as the founding Site of the LWV

history of the suffragist movement and the formation of the LWV. Her book, titled *The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* chronicles the fight to ratify the 19th Constitutional amendment. **Rosie Rios**, the 43rd Treasurer of the United States, was electrifying. She emphasized her support of women in action, noting also that her own activism had brought her success in many areas. Please take the time to go to the LWV.org site to read about the speakers and the books they wrote. It is worth the effort.

LWVMI brought our own positive impact to convention not only for our record number of delegates (52) but by sharing our experiences and expertise and advocacy presented in featured workshops and caucuses at convention this year.

Our members shared the successful results of many of the programs the LWVMI Board has been working on for years and advocacy from one of our local Leagues. The events were led by:

- **LWVMI President Judy Karandjeff** (LWV Lansing Area) presented Michigan's advocacy program in a workshop titled *Advocacy Around the League*.
- **Sue Smith** (LWVMI Board Direc-

tor and President LWV Ann Arbor Area) discussed the redistricting efforts in Michigan led by LWVMI.

- **Vote411 expert, Eva Packard** (LWVMI VP Voter Services and member LWV Oakland Area) shared the details of developing a successful program. Michigan has 27 Leagues and Units participating in the online voter guide.
- **Betsy Cushman** (LWVMI Board Director and member LWV Dearborn/Dearborn Heights) shared successful experiences in the Youth Voter Registration program and encouraged the inclusion of diverse community members.

Convention delegates voted to support the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution) as part of program activities. The Leelanau League, led by **Marian Kromkowski** (LWVMI VP Program, former President LWV Leelanau), along with Leelanau members **Jane Frazee, Joan Hunault, Tricia Denton, Beth Chiles** and **Pat Seiler**, supplemented the action by presenting a resolution that encourages LWVUS to help state Leagues with the passage of ERA in those states that haven't yet adopted the ERA. Additionally, the resolution calls on LWVUS to advocate for legislation in the US Congress that would extend/remove the deadline for state approval of the ERA.

Michigan was well represented at the national level of official capacities. Sue Smith was on the 2016-18 nominating committee, and was elected to chair the 2018-20 nominating committee. LWV Grosse Pointe president, **Tom Wells**, was the budget committee chairperson that helped develop a new budget,

and presented it for support by the delegation. Tom also was part of budget question and answer session to help delegates understand the direction of the 2019-2021 LWV budget.

You can review all of these details by going to the national website, www.lwv.org, and reading the convention workbook. (Click on "League Management" at the bottom of the home page to get to the member section). Speakers' biographies, the budget, bylaws and program ideas to supplement the **Democracy Agenda** are all available there.



Marian Kromkowski presenting the ERA Resolution to the delegates.



LWVMI Opposed Proposed Social Studies Curriculum Changes

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has proposed changes to the K-12 social studies curriculum. The new standards would eliminate any mention of LGBT rights, the NAACP, Roe v. Wade, climate change and "core democratic values."

On June 25, 2018, LWVMI sent testimony to the Michigan Department of Education noting the League's steadfast support for clear language to describe the rights and responsibilities of all citizens. "We urge you to adopt a straight-forward nonpartisan stance. Then our Standards will convey meaning and historical accuracy," said LWVMI President Judy Karandjeff.

Concerned about the elimination of references to core democratic values, Karandjeff continued, "We in the United States of America celebrate democratic values that ensure the continuation of our constitutional republic. Those democratic values guide our ongoing efforts to form a more perfect union.

"As history demonstrates, a constitutional republic can neither flourish nor remain vital absent a clear commitment to democratic values. That is because it is our democratic values—and those values, alone—that deter any tendency toward authoritarianism among our elected leaders, protects and enhances voting rights for all Americans, assuring opportunities for citizen participation."

"Our constitutional republic grows stronger when all of our citizens exercise their democratic values—when they participate at the polls and beyond. These Social Studies Standards, applied by able educators, prepare young people to make their individual contributions in mindful ways. Their importance cannot be over-stated."

The MDE is taking public comments through August.

The League's entire letter to the MDE can be found on the advocacy page of LWVMI's website.



VOTE411 Primary Voter Guide is On-Line

Thanks to the work of LWVMI VP of Voter Service, Eva Packard, LWVMI published 167 primary election races (688 candidates) on VOTE411.org on June 18th. Questionnaires were sent to candidates for all state-wide offices, US Senator and House, and Michigan House and Senate.

We are also grateful to the VOTE411 coordinators in Michigan's local Leagues who worked on local elections and proposals. By the 4th of July, almost all local Leagues had published the local information, allowing voters to view all of the election information for races and ballot proposals on their ballots. Studies show that the League has become the most trusted source of non-partisan election information and we take this responsibility very seriously.

Michigan's primary election is on Tuesday, August 7th. Voters must choose to vote for candidates in the Republican, Democratic or Libertarian parties, and then must limit their choices to that same party. As an 'open primary' state, Michigan voters do not have to be a member of a party in order to vote in that party's primary. Voting for a particular party's candidates in the primary has no impact on a voter's choices on their November election ballot. Additionally, a voter may choose candidates in multiple parties on the November ballot.

Michigan is a gerrymandered state. Because there are so few competitive races, a primary election can be even more important than the general election. The winner of a party's race in a primary is often the expected winner of the November election. The primaries also play a key role in shaping the final platforms of the major candidates in the November election. Voting in the Primary matters!

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

A publication of the League of Women Voters of Michigan. Subscriptions \$12 per year from LWVMI, 600 W. St. Joseph St., Ste. 3G, Lansing, MI 48933-2288. President: Judy Karandjeff (President@lwvmi.org) Editor:

- President Judy Karandjeff—Lansing Area
 - VP Program Marian Komarcowski—Leelanau County
 - VP Advocacy Joan Hunault—Leelanau County
 - VP Voter Service Eva Packard—Oakland Area
 - VP Membership, Leadership Development Christina Schilt—Traverse City
 - Treasurer Denise Hartsough—Kalamazoo Area
 - Secretary Paula Bowman—NW Wayne County
 - Director—Voter Service Support Betsy Cushman—Dearborn/Dearborn Hts
 - Director—Development Deborah Bunkley—Detroit
 - Director—Membership Support Ken Manley—Kalamazoo Area
 - Director—Redistricting Paula Manley—Kalamazoo Area
 - Office Manager Sue Smith—Ann Arbor Area
 - Barb DeLeeuw
- 2017-2019 LWV-MI Board of Directors

League of Women Voters - Michigan
600 W. St. Joseph St, Ste 3G,
Lansing, MI 48933-2288
Office@lwvmi.org
www.lwvmi.org

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 163
Lansing, MI