

***EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY***



**THE
CAPITOL
VOTER**

**OCTOBER
2025**

IN THE OCTOBER CAPITOL VOTER

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LWVLA CALENDAR

Wednesday, Oct. 29 – “Sanctuary Cities,” League membership luncheon, 11:30 am at One North, 1310 Abbot Rd., East Lansing.

Wednesday, Oct. 29 – “Understanding Extremism,” joint event with Michigan Country, 6-8 pm at Charlotte Community Library, 226 S Bostwick St.

Wednesday, Nov. 12 -- Post election debrief and discussion with MIRS reporter Sam Schriber. Watch for upcoming email invitation.

Thursday, Nov. 20 – LWVLA Book Discussion Group, 10 am at Schuler Books Café, Meridian Mall, Okemos.

Monday, Nov. 24 – “Microplastics—Macro Problem,” EAG environmental discussion, 7-8:30 pm at East Lansing Public Library.

See articles below for more information.

Coming in 2026...

Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026, “Jeanette Rankin, First US Congresswoman,” with author Lorissa Rinehart. Membership luncheon, details pending.

Thursday, Feb. 12, “History of Women’s Suffrage,” with MSU Prof. Emily Conroy-Krutz. Membership luncheon, details pending.

From our partners' calendars:

Saturday, Nov. 1 – Lansing Peace Education Center Celebrates 50th Birthday, 7 pm at University Lutheran Church, 1040 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing. Live music and light refreshments. All are welcome.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kathy Ruby Petroni

I think it is fair to say that No Kings Day 2 on October 18 was a success! The latest estimate of the attendance at over 2,500 locations across the country is *5-6.5 million protesters* (see note below). I describe it as a success since it clearly demonstrated that the resistance to the current administration is very much alive. Most importantly, the demonstrations were peaceful. The crowds demonstrated their love for our country and that the resistance is not primarily made up of “Hamas terrorists, illegal aliens, and violent criminals,” as depicted by Karoline Leavitt, the [White House Press Secretary](#).



A local [news station reports](#) that thousands attended the rally at the Lansing State Capitol. I appreciate that there were many LWVLA members in attendance doing their part to show up, even with threatening weather. To those that attended, I value your commitment to **Unite & Rise**. My husband and League member, Tom, attended. He found the crowd was much bigger than No Kings Day 1 and just as warm and peaceful. On October 18, I was just outside of Murfreesboro, Tennessee wrapping up a five-day national agility trial competing with one of my dogs. Fortunately, there was a No Kings Day 2 Rally in downtown Murfreesboro. Because I didn't have a LWV sign, I created one out of an old cardboard box and a dried-out marker. My sign said, “I am not a terrorist.” To my delight, the rally was impressive. There were over 1,000 people lining a major thoroughfare. The crowd was amazingly diverse across so many dimensions. It was

joyous, with American flags and clever signs. Many that drove by honked their horns in support. I only observed one driver that demonstrated clear animosity. This was encouraging given that Tennessee voted for this administration.

With No Kings Day 2 behind us, our focus is on the upcoming November 4 election. The recordings of our forums for East Lansing City Council and Lansing City Council have been very well received, with over 590 and 100 views, respectively. We are gearing up to observe the Boards of Canvassing for Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties to help ensure that our elections are fairly administered.

I hope to see many of you at our upcoming membership luncheon on “Sanctuary Cities” on October 29 at One North in East Lansing. Thank you to those who volunteered to work at the October 25 Souls to the Polls Trunk or Treat event.

Democracy must win,
Kathy

See <https://www.gelliottmorris.com/p/second-no-kings-day-protests-likely>. The most commonly reported estimate is 7 million but the 5-6.5 million estimate is the only one I could reasonably find support for.

VOTER SERVICE UPDATES

Joanne Winkelman, VP Voter Service

Candidate Forums

The League held two successful candidate forums, one for [Lansing City Council](#) at-large candidates and the other for [East Lansing City Council](#). If you missed them and live in either of those locations, the hyperlinks to the taped forums are provided here.

A huge thank you to: Dorothy Engelman, Donna Mullins, Ann Marston, Kathy Petroni, Jill Canny, Linda Melaragni, Susan Chalgian, Sharon Feldman, Bettie Menchik and Elaine Fischhoff for assisting at one or both of the events.

Registration Volunteers

Thanks to Jacqueline Stewart, Kim Peters, Susan Chalgian, Kate Lein, Ann Marie Ryan, Kim Peters and Linda Melaragni for registering voters at one or more of the registration opportunities this fall at the Meridian Farmers Market, Okemos HS, Haslett HS, and/or Lansing Community College. We can always use more volunteers so don't be shy. We will train and partner you with a “veteran.” The League is known for their registration drives and we want to continue that legacy.

Board of Canvassers (BOC)

We always need people to observe the BOC after each election. This year we need volunteers to go in person or view via Zoom the Ingham County Board of Canvassers. Watch for the notice from Voter Services when the Sign-Up Genius is live and please volunteer to watch for an hour or two. BOC notices are sent by Voter Services. If you want to be on the volunteer list, contact Joanne Winkelman.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

Lisa Moore, VP Programs



At the end of September, State Capitol Education Director Emeritus Matt VanAcker hosted a group of LWVLA Members and guests on a tour of the Michigan Capitol. The event began with a lecture about Lansing's involvement and sacrifice in the Civil War, based on his recent book, *Lansing and the Civil War*. At the beginning of the Civil War, Lansing had a population of 3,000 and was the newly designated state capital. By 1865, over 500 men from the capital had enlisted in the fight. Matt introduced us to the valor and personal tragedy of these men and their families through excerpts from their letters home during the war. These letters had many of us surreptitiously wiping our eyes. Following the lecture, we got an in-depth tour of the Michigan State Capitol, the new Heritage Hall, and the new conservation laboratory space where the Civil War battle flags are undergoing a restoration process. It was such a wonderful experience that we hope to repeat it in 2026, again with Matt VanAcker, Director of Save the Flags, hosting.

On Wednesday, October 29, a membership luncheon will include a panel discussion around the topic of "Sanctuary Cities." Panel members Mark Meadows from the East Lansing City Council, Pastor Greg Briggs from Edgewood United Church of Christ, and Juan Martinez, an active advocate for the Latino community, will represent various perspectives. It should be a thoughtful and timely discussion on a complex topic, and we are trying out a new venue as well.

Next month we will offer a post-election debrief the evening of Wednesday, November 12 at One North. The purpose of this event is to celebrate the hard work of getting out the vote and what the results mean going forward. MIRS reporter Sam Schriber has been invited to lead this discussion with members and their guests.

Another evening event will take place on November 24 at the East Lansing Public Library: "Microplastics—Macro Problem." The EAGers have invited MSU assistant professor Dr. Yoorae Noh from MSU's School of Packaging and Heather Sisto of the Michigan Microplastics Coalition to speak on the topic of microplastics in the environment (and our bodies!). Invitations to both events will go out shortly.

We are not planning any events for December. However, we do have two dates in 2026 already booked for membership luncheons! First, mark your calendars for January 21, the date of our luncheon with Lorissa Rinehart, author of the new book *Winning The Earthquake: How Jeannette Rankin Defied All Odds to Become the First Woman in Congress*. Then, on February 12, we will host MSU professor of history Dr. Emily Conroy-Krutz for a membership luncheon on the topic of women's suffrage, when we will also celebrate the League of Women Voters' 106th birthday!

As always, a reminder to check your email from us for detailed flyers on these events. To facilitate organizing, we ask you to register for the events so we can prepare accordingly. It always helps to have enough seats and food prepared!! The registration links will be in

UPDATE FROM THE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Dorothy Engelman

As I reported last month, the LWVLA is partnering with Michigan Country and the Charlotte Community Library (226 S. Bostwick St.) to present “**Understanding Extremism**” on Wednesday, October 29, from 6-8 p.m. This event is also co-sponsored by the [**Community Advisory, Resource and Education \(CARE\) Centers**](#), a two-year pilot initiative established by the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab ([**PERIL**](#)) in strategic partnership with the Southern Poverty Law Center. The mission is to provide tools to communities and local organizations that empower them to recognize, prevent and combat hate, discrimination, supremacist ideologies, and all forms of polarization and extremism.

This event is open to the public and League members are encouraged to attend as we strive to establish more connections with Eaton County. A light supper with a vegetarian option will be provided at 5:30 p.m.; [**registration**](#) is recommended. Please contact me if you’re interested in carpooling: call 435-879-155 or email [**doengelman@gmail.com**](mailto:doengelman@gmail.com).

TEXT BANKING TO HELP GET OUT THE VOTE

Kathy Petroni, President

The week of October 6, the Lansing Area LWV sent out over 6,000 texts to people in the Lansing Area that voted in 2020 but not in 2024. The text read: “League of Women Voters Lansing Area urges you to vote in the Nov 4 election and to sign up for the Permanent Absentee Voter list, so you get a ballot sent to your home for all elections. You can sign up at (with the link provided).” The funding for sending the texts was provided by the LWV of Michigan.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Ann Marston, Co-chair

Welcome to our new members!

Karen Jennings, East Lansing

Marcia Bird, Owosso

Melanie and Robert Mack, Dewitt

Renee Benard, East Lansing

For many current members, it’s time to renew their membership. Since the League of Women Voters-US is administering the renewal process, you may receive renewal reminders from them as well as from the Lansing League. When you renew, you are automatically renewing your membership at the local, state and national levels of the League of Women Voters.

Many thanks to the members who have already renewed their support of the League's important work!

MICHIGAN'S CON-CON 11: WOMEN AND STATE CONSTITUTION-MAKING IN 1961

Kathy Petroni, President

The Michigan Political History Society is holding an event to promote the book ***MICHIGAN'S CON-CON 11: Women and State Constitution-making in 1961***. The book focuses on the eleven female delegates to the 1961-62 Michigan Constitutional Convention (CON-CON); three of those women were iconic LWVMI leaders. The book also documents a very important chapter in LWVMI history.

The event will be held at the Library of Michigan (702 W. Kalamazoo Street, Lansing) on November 5, from 4 - 6 p.m. You can learn more about the event by contacting the author of the book, [Lynn Liberato](#). Editorial reviews can be found on Amazon, which include blurbs from LWVMI members Betsy Cushman (Dearborn) and Christina Schlitt (Grand Traverse Area). The book can be ordered at 20% off (plus free S&H) from [MSU Press](#) with PROMO CODE **MSUP25**.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Donna Mullins

In October, we read *Coming Up Short* by Robert Reich. It was interesting hearing his take on contemporary American history.

We are reading a novel in November and thought that one on a family of Mexican immigrants might be timely because of the luncheon being held on sanctuary cities. ***The Book of Unknown Americans*** by Cristina Henríquez is a deeply moving novel that weaves together the voices of Latin American immigrants striving to build new lives in the United States.



At its heart is the story of the Rivera family, who leave Mexico for Delaware in hopes of helping their daughter Maribel recover from a traumatic brain injury. As they settle into a tight-knit apartment community, they cross paths with the Toro family from Panama—especially their son, Mayor, who forms a tender bond with Maribel. Through alternating perspectives, Henríquez paints a rich tapestry of love, resilience, and the quiet heroism of ordinary people chasing the American dream. This novel is both a love story and a poignant exploration of identity, sacrifice, and the unseen lives that shape a nation.

We meet the third Thursday of the month at Schuler Books. To be placed on the mail list contact [Donna Mullins](#).

The Education Committee met on Zoom and discussed Josh Cowen's paper on "How Can States Make School Voucher Systems More Accountable, Accessible and Transparent?" On October 28, we met with Dr. Cowen to discuss how LWVLA can advocate effectively for public education.

The state has finally passed the education budget for 2025-56. It has good news and bad for K-12 schools. Per-pupil funding rose 4.6%, including for cyber schools, and a one-time allocation of \$124 million was made for Detroit Public Schools' foundation costs. But while Michigan continues to rank in the bottom half of all states for per pupil funding, 10% of the school aid funds (meant for K-12) will go to higher education and 2.5% to community colleges.

Schools with a high percentage of at-risk students can use up to 30% of funds to reduce pupil-teacher ratios in grades K-3. All students, including those in private schools, will be eligible for free school breakfast and lunch programs. Schools can choose to use school safety grants to add cell phone-free school policies. Special education funding was increased, and grants are available for career and technical education.

SPEAK UP ABOUT YOUR ENERGY FUTURE

Elaine Fischhoff, EAG Co-chair

Lansing Board of Water and Light is in the process of developing its 2025 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). An IRP is a best-practice management tool used by utilities to assess future energy needs for customers and determine how best to meet them. An IRP will contain past performance data and predict future demand and supply and relative costs and benefits of alternative electricity sources by making many assumptions about how those elements will actually develop.

The problem is that LBWL's customers have no information as to their current plans for fulfilling its claims past 2028. We only have the 2020 IRP but no information as to what extent that 2020 plan was carried out or the extent to which the assumptions made in 2020 resemble the 2025 reality, let alone what it will be in late 2026, when the new IRP will be adopted and approved.

LBWL claims that its 2025 IRP "will support the ongoing commitment to cleaner energy while maintaining affordable and reliable power for customers." This claim seems disingenuous given that LBWL is in the process of building its third new gas plant in only 12 years—a Reciprocal Internal Combustion Engine gas plant, no less, instead of a more efficient co-generation gas plant. The general manager of LBWL has warned that a fourth gas plant may soon be proposed to supply the large amount of electricity to a potential local battery plant at a rate that is a fraction of what most residential customers pay; residential customers will pay the costs of the new plants even though most of the electricity generated will go to industrial users at very reduced rates.

LBWL claims that it is committed to providing 50 percent clean energy by 2030 and will be 'carbon neutral' by 2040. That's hard to believe, given the minor contribution

that renewable energy makes to its portfolio. Wind and solar generate only 19% of LBWL's electricity. In contrast, coal supplies 26% and gas (methane) 55%. LBWL isn't telling us, but that 50% clean energy may be relying on the Michigan law that includes gas plants with a very high percentage of capture and storage of CO2 emissions as "clean" energy. 'Carbon neutral' means that the amount of CO2 emissions generated is compensated for through projects that remove or reduce an equal amount of CO2 from the atmosphere. These projects can include reforestation or buying renewable energy from third parties. So, LBWL might reach carbon neutrality without building any more renewable sources, instead simply buying the renewable energy. The problem is that LBWL's customers have no information as to the pathway for fulfilling its claims past 2028.

LBWL has offered the public an opportunity for input into its upcoming 2025 IRP at five "open houses" held in July and August this year and through a survey. The open houses were staffed by LBWL employees with data and useful background information provided via PowerPoint presentations on computer screens and posters. No written copies of either the electronic or display information were made available, and the PowerPoint presentations are not on LBWL's website. The open houses made for a good show but weren't a serious effort to help the public offer informed input.

In short, the public has not been given the information necessary to offer any meaningful input for the 2025 IRP apart from being able to make a general demand for more renewable electricity and the means to reduce and use electricity more efficiently. But you can let the LBWL Board of Commissioners hear those general demands by [email](#), with a copy to the [Lansing City Council](#), or by **appearing and speaking for three minutes** at the November board meetings on **Tuesday, November 4, 5:30 p.m. and Tuesday, November 18, 5:30 p.m., at the Board of Water & Light's Headquarters, REO Town Depot, 1201 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. Have a say in your energy and climate future.**

ONE THING

A huge amount of the plastic particles being found in living things are microfibers, the largest percentage of which are from synthetic textiles (followed by tires). One load of laundry can generate up to 9 million microfibers. So do the planet a favor and consider installing a filter on your washing machine. Begin your search [here](#).

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK

All committees would welcome new members. Contact the chairs for more information.

VOTER SERVICE: Contact [Joanne Winkelman](#)

K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Contact [Bettie Landauer-Menchik](#)

ENVIRONMENT ADVOCACY GROUP: Contact [Ellen Link](#) or [Elaine Dierwa Fischhoff](#)

OBSERVER CORPS: Contact [Sharon Feldman](#)



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