

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE
CAPITOL
VOTER**

**FEBRUARY
2025**

IN THE FEBRUARY CAPITOL VOTER

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- Moving Toward a World Without Waste
- Protect Our Great Lakes

LWVLA CALENDAR

Tuesday, February 25 – EAG program on Green Investing. 7 to 8:30 pm via Zoom. “Go Green to Get Green”, with speakers Henry Shilling and Tom Stanton. [Register here](#) for link to attend.

Wednesday, March 12 – League Luncheon. LWVLA President Kathy Petroni and Donna Mullins will present on “Disinformation.” 11:30 am to 1 pm. Stay tuned for further details.

Tuesday, May 13 – LWVLA Annual Meeting. Watch for updates.

Week of 05/11/25-05/17/25, Schuler Books Days. Purchases at Schuler's Books will benefit the LWVLA; start your shopping list now.

May 16-18, LWVMI State Convention. To be held in Grand Rapids. Stay tuned for details.

Sunday, May 30 – LWVLA tabling at Lugnuts game . 5:30 pm.

See articles below for more information.

From our partners' calendars:

Wednesday, February 26 – Meridian Twp. webinar on EV's . 7 pm via Zoom. The Meridian Energy Team will host the Electric Vehicle Owners Forum in a discussion of the pros and cons of EV's and answer questions. You must [register here](#) in advance for the link.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kathy Ruby Petroni

"The dismantling of our sacred democracy on full display for the world is one of the most horrific events in modern-day politics," said Celina Stewart, CEO of the LWV of the United States (LWVUS).



I am confident that we are also horrified. Most of us are struggling with how to counter the overreaching actions of the newly elected executive branch that are threatening our democracy, with no effective pushback from Congress. Please know that your LWVUS and the 50 State and District of Columbia League chapters, which represent over one million members, have sent a letter to Congress urging them not to abandon their duties and authorities under Article I of the US Constitution and to assert their right of oversight.

The letter addresses the most notable recent executive branch actions that are causing or very likely to cause significant harm to millions of Americans. This list includes pausing distribution of congressionally allocated federal funds, dismantling federal agencies without proper congressional oversight, attempting to end birthright citizenship, the creation of an unofficial "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE), and the summary removal of 17 inspectors general (IG) without the required congressional notice.

As a retired CPA and an emeritus accounting professor, I am particularly disturbed by DOGE and the removal of the IGs. To find fraud and abuse, which is the preferred first step towards improved efficiency, one should rely on IGs and a team of experienced independent accountants. I also well appreciate the need for regulation of our financial institutions and capital markets by government agencies that are properly staffed and funded (e.g., Securities and Exchange Commission and Consumer Financial Protection

Bureau) for us to have a well-functioning economy.

You can find the full letter [here](#). We can all be proud to be members of the League, which provided a clear and well-articulated letter demanding congressional action. It is the cumulation of these types of efforts that will hopefully work to preserve our democracy.

As I mentioned last month, membership transactions are now handled at the national level. The rollout of the new system has been rough. If you have trouble with the system, please be patient. National will get it sorted out, but they have much on their hands. Most of our members do not have to worry about paying dues again until fall 2025. I am sure by then the system will run smoothly.

We are beginning to plan for our annual meeting, which will be held on Tuesday, May 13 at the Eagle Eye Golf and Banquet Center in East Lansing. Please mark the date on your calendar. More information will follow.

Democracy must win,
Kathy

VOTER SERVICES: SAVE ACT AND HJR B

Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough, LWVMI Co-presidents

Please be aware! The US House of Representatives and the Michigan State House have **voter suppression** measures before them. The federal SAVE (Safeguard American Voter Eligibility) Act and Michigan House Joint Resolution (HJR) B propose documentary proof of citizenship requirements for voter registration or re-registration after a move or name change. The SAVE Act applies to federal elections. and HJR B applies to state elections.

It may seem intuitive that such proof be required—only citizens may vote. However, the specifics about what suffices as documentary proof are either not spelled out (HJR B) or contradictory and burdensome (SAVE Act). And the documentary proof of citizenship must be presented in person. No more registering by mail or online. No more updating one's registration online. No more League voter registration.

Proponents claim these measures are needed because non-citizens are voting. Actually, non-citizen voting is very rare. A Heritage Foundation study found only 68 cases in the US in the past 40 years, the majority of those involving lawful permanent residents (green card holders) given bad advice by election workers. More details [here](#).

When Kansas had a law requiring documentary proof of citizenship, over 31,000 voters were disenfranchised—[including veterans](#)--before the law was declared unconstitutional. In Arizona, a tangle of [proof of citizenship laws](#) threatened to block 47,000 voters from voting in 2024.

The SAVE Act passed the US House in the 2023-24 session and is up for a vote again in the 2025-26 session. Read more [here](#).

HJR B is a proposal to put an amendment to the Michigan Constitution on the ballot. It would need to pass both the State House and Senate by a two-thirds majority to go on the ballot for a vote by Michigan citizens. Another way it could reach the ballot is by petition drive. Read the text of the resolution [here](#).

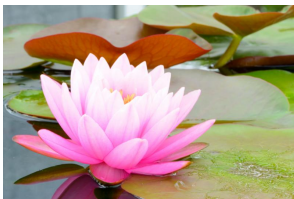
What can you do?

- Use the LWVUS [action alert](#) to make your voice heard at the federal level.
- Watch League Links for updates about HJR B.

And breathe, find joy, and take care of yourselves so we can continue to empower voters and defend democracy!

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

Lisa Moore and Donna Mullins, Co-chairs



Between things that are scheduled and things we are planning, this is shaping up to be an interesting year for us!

Our first two membership luncheons demonstrated the League's commitment to the earth. Buffet luncheons were offered served with compostable place settings in an effort to go "zero-waste." Considerable credit for this goes to Elaine Fischhoff, Kathy Petroni, Ellen Link and Camilla Davis. They did the research, shopping and packing to make it happen. We love our planet!

A presentation designed by LWVMI on "Disinformation" is planned for our membership luncheon on March 12. "Disinformation" is false or misleading information created on purpose to benefit the creator, not the consumer. We'll cover the types of disinformation, how to recognize it when you see it, and how to combat it. Information on where and how to purchase lunch will be coming soon.

Also in March, we have a second presentation about how to address the dangers of extremism. It will probably be held in the last third of the month and this time **will be presented in person**. This information is being offered by The Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab (PERIL) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). They are launching Community Advisory, Resource and Education (CARE) Centers in Michigan and Georgia. Modeled after the German mobile advisory units, CARE Centers will provide on-site trainings, support and resources to those impacted by hate, discrimination and supremacist ideologies, as well as target groups susceptible to radicalization. And they are starting their important work with us!

The first ZOOM training presented in January left participants wanting more information. You need not have attended the first presentation to attend the second. The March presentation will include practical tips for engaging extremist threats. Updates on time and locations will be emailed to you.

April brings us Earth Day! We'll have an exciting evening program focusing on environmental issues like recycling, waste and much more that will be open to the community. The April membership luncheon will focus on refugee/immigrant services in

our community and how they've been affected by recent cuts. We're also planning an event at the Capitol. Dates are still being determined. Watch your emails!

Speaking of those pesky emails. The times demand that we respond quickly to threats to democracy and opportunities to address them. You will be getting a few more missives from us, LWVMI and LWVUS. If time allows, please open these.

We are working on plenty of things for the future: field trips, fabulous speakers and subjects, profound ideas as well as community and laughs. If you'd like to help us as we organize these efforts, [let us know](#).

Another possibility: Fun exhibits at The Henry Ford Museum in March

We were hoping to arrange a League bus expedition to The Henry Ford in March but in the end we didn't think we had enough time to promote it adequately. Still, we think members may be interested in taking a trip to Dearborn. Here's a rundown on what's happening at the Ford:

- [“We Shall Overcome: The 60th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act”](#)—This temporary display explores the 60th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. Remember the history of the voting rights push in Selma, Alabama in spring 1965 through original *Life Magazine* issues, rare promotional cards for Black mayoral candidates, and court orders issued against key leaders.
- [“With Liberty and Justice for All”](#)—Explore the proud and often painful evolution of American freedom, from the Revolutionary War through the struggle for women's suffrage, in this groundbreaking exhibit.
- **Story Stroll | “Yusra Swims”**—Follow the true story of Yusra Mardini, who left war-torn Syria as a refugee, helping to keep a boat afloat in the Mediterranean swimming for hours to make it to shore.

Entry cost to the museum: Seniors (62 and above) \$30.50, Adults \$34, Members are free; \$3 off if you are a member of [Museums for All](#) through a participating museum membership. There is a free 30-minute tour at 1pm.

REMEMBERING BETH MOORE

Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI Advocacy Director

The League lost one of its champions on February 14. Beth Moore, who joined the League of Women Voters in 1968, was always passionate about her love and support for the League. She will be sorely missed.

Some of Beth's earliest memories were watching her family living and dining rooms turned into a local voting precinct. A summer scholarship in 1960 to Northwestern's Journalism School put her in Chicago during the Democratic Convention and this cemented a passion for both journalism and politics. She was a mother and a student at MSU when Dr. King came to speak at MSU in 1965, and she said it was a life-changing moment for her.



She went on to serve on the LWVMI State Board from 1975-77 as Nomination and Election Process and Voting Rights Director, and in 1977 chaired the LWVMI Election Law Study. I met her in 1977, when she welcomed a new transfer member to Lansing. Beth then served as the Lansing League president 1978-79.

One of her major accomplishments was writing and updating the 1995 LWVMI publication, "State We're In." She also served on the LWVMI Advocacy Committee for 8 years, 2012-2020, and was a member of the LWVMI Taxation and Budget Study Committee and the LWVMI Lame-Duck Study Committee.

Beth was co-president of the LWVLA from 2016-2019. She spearheaded VOTE411 initiatives, wrote most of the *Capitol Voter*, and organized study groups, just to highlight a few of her accomplishments. Beth knew the importance for the League to maintain a nonpartisan stance regarding political candidates. As the go-to person whenever this often-misinterpreted position arose, Beth could provide clarity with passion and deep knowledge of the issues.

Through her career in MSU's Extension Services and in the League, Beth always worked to provide educational information so we could better understand the role of government and participate in voter service and advocacy efforts. Her knowledge of these issues was immense.

Her friendship and ability to mentor others will be part of her legacy. And we are so grateful that she passed along her passion to her daughters Lisa, who serves on the LWVLA Board, and Sara, who teaches in Portland, OR.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Camilla Davis, Membership Director

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Vicki Munn, Haslett

New Membership Process Update: LWVUS took over League membership joining and renewal processes on February 1, 2025. From now on, the national League website will be the location where new members join; LWVUS will also manage membership renewals.

To provide information for LWVLA members about these changes, we had a Zoom meeting on February 5, with twenty-seven members joining. Here is the link to the [recording](#) of the Zoom explaining the process. The video is approximately 30 minutes long, followed by very good questions from participants. Please be aware that this transformation is a work in progress, and changes may occur. If/when they occur, we will let you know ASAP.

Donations: Please note that there is a clarification of information in the video about donating to LWV – Lansing Area's Education Fund. This information has been corrected by inserting a new slide in the video, informing donors that checks should be made payable to LWV Education Fund and sent to **LWVLA, PO Box 971, East Lansing, 48826**.

Creating a Profile: In the video, there is information stating that members will receive a link asking them to log in to create a profile. These emails were to go out the week of February 3. Some of our members have received them but many have not. If you get the link and you are not recognized as a member, get out immediately and contact [Camilla](#).

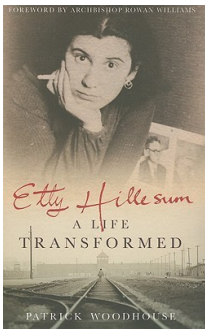
You may also contact [me](#) if you have any other questions.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Donna Mullins

On February 20 the book group discussed *Something Lost, Something Gained* by Hillary Rodham Clinton, a very interesting set of recollections by this experienced diplomat and politician. Written before the election, it sometimes sounded a bit sad. If you missed it, there's a very good 1 hour and 20 minute [interview](#) with Katie Couric and an even friendlier [interview](#) by Clinton's daughter Chelsea. We try to provide such links so people can join the discussion even if they don't have time to read the book.

It's clear that many people enjoy an in-person discussion and we are working to organize that, beginning in March. We hoped to offer something hybrid this month but, in the words of the Smother Brothers, "It's colder than a well-digger's knees out there!" and I'm not leaving the house.



In March we are reading *Etty Hillesum: A Life Transformed* by Patrick Woodhouse (176 pp). This is lifted from the Amazon blurb:

On 8 March 1941, a 27-year-old Jewish Dutch student living in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam made the first entry in a diary that was to become one of the most remarkable documents to emerge from the Nazi Holocaust. Over the course of the next two and a half years, an insecure, chaotic and troubled young woman was transformed into someone who inspired those with whom she shared the suffering of the transit camp at Westerbork and with whom she eventually perished at Auschwitz.

This book was suggested because a Dutch friend of mine sent me a copy of Etty's diary. I became hooked on this very human woman's story. The diary takes a while to read, so I found this shorter book about her life that does a good job at telling her story. Etty is an unlikely hero, and she is a particularly good reminder that we are all capable of heroism. The book is available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle format, with some used copies available through ABE; I bought several on ABE to share with book club members.

[Contact me](#) if you are interested in reading it or attending our discussions.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Bettie Landauer-Menchik, Chair

President Trump is following the recommendations of Project 2025, including the elimination of the Department of Education and the creation of a federal voucher law.

Elimination of the US Department of Education

Cutting federal funds for Title 1 programs would threaten an estimated 180,000 teaching positions that serve about 2.8 million students nationwide. A report from the [Center for American Progress](#) shows that about 5,400 of those teachers are educating about 89,000 students across Michigan.

The report also shows that Project 2025's proposal to eliminate Title I could create staffing shortages, which would lead to higher teacher-to-student ratios in classrooms statewide. Schools in cities like Detroit, where a big share of funding comes from federal sources, as well as in districts in Michigan's rural communities, would reportedly be hit the hardest under the plan.

Creation of a Federal Voucher Law

A federal voucher system would essentially enable taxpayer dollars to flow away from public schools and into private and religious institutions. This policy, championed by Betsy DeVos and her family, could sharply reduce public school funding in school districts that are already struggling. This proposal would deepen the divide between wealthy and low-income schools, according to a recent report from the [National Education Association](#).

Project 2025 aims to create new federal education savings accounts—a form of private school vouchers—modeled after those in Arizona that allow funds to be transferred directly to families. Arizona's program has mostly benefited private school families while siphoning funding from the state's public schools and has since led to hundreds of millions of dollars in budget cuts to critical state programs.

Project 2025 also details a plan to create new federal tax credits to “encourage voluntary contributions” to those savings accounts, which would instead be managed by nonprofit groups.

The most recent (failed) efforts to expand voucher programs in Michigan would reportedly have drained the state's public schools of \$500 million every year—which would also have led to fewer resources and larger class sizes. Josh Cowan, our speaker in May, has shown how voucher programs disproportionately benefited wealthier families, often leaving low-income kids to attend underfunded public schools.

BATTER UP!

Dorothy Engelman, Development Director

Volunteer to cheerlead for the League!

The LWVLA has an opportunity to “hit it out of the park” with an information table at the **May 30** Lansing Lugnuts baseball game and we'd like you to be part of the team!



Susan Chalgian, Joanne Winkelman and Linda Melaragni (the *Managers*) are looking for some fun-loving Leaguers to fill out the remaining positions. You'll have an opportunity to meet other members while telling folks about the LWVLA in a fun, lighthearted setting. We

have 10 tickets, so you can bring a guest to watch the game too!

The *Line-Up* includes being at the stadium at 5:30 pm to be ready for the first pitch at 7:05 pm. You'll have material about the League and upcoming elections to share with Lugnuts fans while cheering on the Lugnuts against the Beloit Sky Carp (how's *that* for a team name?!). The folks who did it last year had a great time and we know you will, too!

Please contact [Dorothy Engelman](#), Development Director, to sign up. You can also call or text me at 435.879.1558.

Let's hit a couple of home runs!

MOVING TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT WASTE

Elaine Fischhoff, EAG Co-chair

We now live in a **traditional linear economy**: we get raw materials, make things, use them, and then throw them away, sometimes summarized as “take, make, waste.”

In contrast, a *circular economy* creates a model of resource production and consumption that maximizes sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, composting, and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible. It's an economic model that moves us toward a world without waste—or as little as possible. It tackles climate change and other global challenges like biodiversity loss, waste and pollution by separating economic growth from the need to use up our finite resources.

The primary targets for achieving a circular economy are usually identified as plastics, textiles, e-waste, food, water and nutrients, packaging, batteries and vehicles, and buildings and construction. The circular economy starts with product designs that optimize durability, ease of maintenance and repair, upgrade capability, and disassembly, and incorporates any standards and opportunities for compatibility. Like the common shaped and sized electric cord plug, the original variety of cords for electronic products are now all becoming C plugs.

Circular economy strategies can be applied at various scales, from individual products and services to entire industries and cities. For example, “industrial symbiosis” is the strategy whereby the waste from one industry becomes the input for another, e.g., car batteries being reduced to their component metals to sell back to manufacturers as the raw materials for new batteries. At the individual level, consumer product symbiosis can be used shirts becoming a new quilt, a set of wool jackets becoming a new rug, or the suet from a cut of beef becoming bird food.

There is an increasing number of ways to learn more about and support the circular economy. The [City of Lansing Sustainability Office](#) offers links to more information and an [interactive map](#) of businesses and organizations in the Lansing area that support a circular economy, as well as a [checklist](#) for individual actions.

PROTECT OUR GREAT LAKES! The Line 5 oil pipeline should be shut down, not encased in a tunnel that would further jeopardize our precious natural resources! [Contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and your senators here](#) to call for a full review of this risky project.

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](#)

League of Women Voters Lansing Area | PO Box 971 | East Lansing, MI 48826 US

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