



*The Voter Newsletter*  
March 2024

*Serving the communities of  
Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe Park,  
Grosse Pointe Shores, Grosse Pointe Woods, and Harper Woods  
Since 1950*

### Calendar

- March 6, 7 p.m.** LWVGP Engage Democracy Meeting at GP Central Library  
**March 12, 7 p.m.** Program: *The Battle for Ideas: Inside Schools and Libraries' Response to Book Bans* at Wayne County Community College District, Mary Ellen Stempfle Center. Harper Woods [Map](#)  
**March 19, 7 p.m.** LWVGP Board Meeting at Grosse Pointe Ewald Library

### President's Message

Greetings to all!

We had an excellent turnout at our February planning session. Dinner was delicious, and the company was even better. We will be meeting monthly to continue to work on our theme this year, **Making Democracy Work**. This includes educating our citizens on the new voting laws, assisting people in registering to vote, and encouraging voting in all our elections this year. At our meeting, we agreed focusing on this year's election is the number one priority. If you couldn't make the meeting, but still want to help, there will be plenty of opportunities in the near future. Our next committee meeting will be March 6. I want to thank Dawn Drozd and her committee for putting together such an important event. I would also like to thank Sue Acton, Joan Richardson, and Julianne Phillips for leading the discussion groups.

Our Voter Services team, Lauri Read and Julianne Phillips, and I met with Senator Kevin Hertel last week. He and his staff were welcoming, responsive, and seemed genuinely interested in the League. The purpose of this meeting was to start a dialogue with our legislators to assist the LWVMI with their lobbying efforts. We are in the process of setting up a similar interview with Speaker Joe Tate.

Senator Hertel informed us of some very important legislation that was enacted this year. Effective February 13, 2024, the following gun restriction laws went into effect:

- **Safe Storage Act:** All guns in a home where minors live (or may visit) must be stored unloaded in a lock box or with a gun lock.
- **Michigan Firearms Act:** Permits will be required for all firearms (with some exceptions), universal background checks will be required.
- **Prohibited Person Ban:** Expands the conditions for not being allowed to carry a gun (for example, if convicted of domestic violence, banned for 8 years).
- **Extreme Risk Protection Act:** Allows law enforcement or family to petition the family court for an order prohibiting a person from possessing a gun if they are a danger to themselves or others. This law allows law enforcement officers, (with a search warrant), to enter a home to search for weapons.

These laws are hardly comprehensive, but they are a step in the right direction. Our advocacy efforts on the state level influenced the passing of this legislation. For more information, please go to the LWVMI website at [lwwmi.org](http://lwwmi.org).

Lastly, I want to thank all of you who contributed to our annual fall drive this past year. Your contributions allow us to continue to do the work of educating voters and protecting democracy.

See you at our next event! Hope you can make it!

Lynne Pierce, President

## **Leadership Changes at LWVUS**

With sadness we report the sudden passing of the LWVUS President, Dr. Deborah Turner on January 28th. Dr. Turner served as the 20th president of LWVUS. She fought for a more representative union while uplifting racial equity in LWV's mission work. In addition, Virginia Kase Solomón resigned as CEO to join the organization, Common Cause. In light of these two vacancies, Sania Irwin steps in as President of the LWVUS Board and chair of LWV Education Fund. Alma Couverthie and Kelly McFarland will serve as Interim Co-CEO's.

## **LWVGP Concurs with Vermont Position on Health Care**

The League of Women Voters of Vermont (LWVVT) is requesting local Leagues across the country to support their request to have a discussion of their privatization position on the recommended agenda for the LWV National Convention in Washington, DC, in June. The League of Women Voters of Vermont believes that the national position on privatization is not sufficient to support the advocacy needed to protect our health care resources. They see two major issues preventing them from achieving League priorities:

- The LWVUS position does not include health care as a public good, even though the LWVUS *Meeting Basic Human Needs* position includes health care as a basic human need for which the government should bear the financial responsibility for those unable to afford it themselves.
- The LWVUS position includes clear criteria for choosing whether to privatize a public good, but the position did not address what should be done if a private entity providing a public good failed to meet those criteria.

Further, the national position was created in 2012. Much has changed and much has been learned since then. So the Vermont League felt the need for a fresh study of privatization and, perhaps, a new state position to supplement the national position.

Based on discussion at our February 13th program planning meeting and corresponding emails from our membership, LWVGP concurs with the Vermont position.

### **February 2024 Program Planning Meeting: Engage Democracy**

Voting is the primary focus for the League at all levels (local, state, and national) in 2024. To do our part, members stepped up on February 13 in a big way at our annual Program Planning Session. Attendees enjoyed a delicious dinner, then formed three groups who brainstormed ideas to ramp up our 2024 voter engagement efforts.

The groups include Voter Registration, Education, and Action (**Get Out The Vote** - GOTV.)

All ideas captured will now be discussed at the first committee meeting on March 6, 7 p.m. at the GP Central Library, where attendees will begin to form specific action plans. The committees anticipate meeting monthly to ensure our League achieves its goals. We encourage more members (particularly new members) to join one of the committees. Please reach out to Lynne Pierce at [lynnepierce@att.net](mailto:lynnepierce@att.net) if you're interested.

### **March Program: *The Battle for Ideas: Inside Schools and Libraries' Response to Book Bans***

Tuesday, March 12, 7 p.m. Wayne County Community College District, Mary Ellen Stempfle University Center, Harper Woods [Map](#)

#### **Speaker Panel:**

- Jessica Keyser, Director, Grosse Pointe Public Library
- Kristen Valyi-Hax, Director, Harper Woods Public Library
- Steven McGhee, Superintendent, Harper Woods Public Schools

Book bans are becoming increasingly common in the US, but what's happening in our own community? This program will feature a panel of experts who will

discuss the impact book bans could have on their communities. They will also discuss challenges they've faced and how they will prepare to address future demands from those who want to ban books. [Register at this link](#). We hope you can attend! \*If you need accommodations, please email [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com).

The pictures below are from our February program.

Sue Stanley and  
Catherine Dumke

Joan Richardson, Lauri  
Kingsbury, and  
Wilhelmina Giblin

President Lynne Pierce  
with Carol Bendure

### **Michigan SOS Jocelyn Benson Visits Grosse Pointe Park**

Grosse Pointe Park City Clerk Bridgette Bowdler organized a press conference on February 15 for Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson to announce early voting. To open the program, Clerk Bowdler thanked everyone involved for their hard work to put in place early voting.

Director of Elections for Wayne County, Gregory Mahar, talked about the difficult, behind-the-scenes work city clerks do in the months before Election Day. Of the 43 municipalities in the county, 42 have city clerks. Wayne County Sheriff Raphael Washington described the work his office has done to ensure dropbox security, including tamper-proof boxes, security cameras, and support for local police and election workers. Grosse Pointe Park Mayor and LWVGP member Michelle Hodges emphasized the importance of voting.

Secretary of State Benson outlined the constitutional amendment passed in 2022 to make voting easier, including at least nine days of early voting. She praised the work of city clerks in Wayne County and thanked all election workers for their dedication to make certain that every vote is counted.

Start a conversation with your family, friends, and neighbors about early voting. LWVGP has great information at: <https://lwvgrossepointe.org/voting-matters/>

#### **LWVMI Voting Rights**

<https://lwvmi.org/voting-rights-defending-democracy/>

#### **Michigan Secretary of State**

Tips to counter mis- and dis-information

[https://www.michigan.gov/sos/-/media/Project/Websites/sos/Resources/Partners-in-Democracy/MDOS\\_ElectionMisinformation.pdf?rev=e0ecc10c5b9949e1a736126278966910&hash=1683AE83AFB902CA3C39EB6597ACF3CD](https://www.michigan.gov/sos/-/media/Project/Websites/sos/Resources/Partners-in-Democracy/MDOS_ElectionMisinformation.pdf?rev=e0ecc10c5b9949e1a736126278966910&hash=1683AE83AFB902CA3C39EB6597ACF3CD)

#### **Early voting**

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/elections/voting/early-in-person-voting>

## Voter Services Report

Director of Voter Services Julianne Phillips is finalizing plans for voter registration activities at our local high schools. Listed below are the schools and some finalized dates.

Harper Woods, Wednesday, April 24, 10:05 a.m.-11:05 a.m.  
Grosse Pointe North, Wednesday, May 1, 7:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.  
Grosse Pointe South, Monday, May 13, 8:15 a.m.-12 p.m.  
University Liggett TBD

We will need many volunteers to help make these events successful and register as many of our students as possible before the November election. Please contact Julianne Phillips at [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com) if you're interested in helping to register our students,

## Advocacy Report

Thanks to everyone who attended the January 30 Advocacy Seminar: *Taking Action in League*.

The group included the following members: Sue Acton, Prudence Cole, Andy Dervan, Diana Domin, Dawn Drozd, Marge Freundl, Kathy Gardner, Wilhelmina Giblin, Vicki Granger, Geri LaPratt, Melissa Levasseur, Carol Lufburrow, Loren Mannino, Liz Martin, Judy Masserang, Julianne Phillips, Lynne Pierce, Margrit Poynter, Julie Rayes, Wendy Saigh, Jaime Rae Turnbull, and Maria Williams,

### **New Study Group - Senior Services**

Prudence Cole chairs this study group examining the pros and cons of a formal local advocacy position on Senior Services. Group members are Sue Acton, Marge Freundl, Vicki Granger, and Jaime Rae Turnbull. Prudence is looking for a few more members with skills in critically examining the topic. Contact: [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com). Please put **ADVOCACY SENIOR SERVICES** in the subject line.

### **DEI Review Study Group Needed**

This is a great opportunity to participate in a short-term study. State and national Leagues have completed DEI reviews. Our current positions need the same. We have guidelines to make your review fast and easy.

**Advocacy Myth:** Advocacy of League positions makes us seem partisan. Our positions at every level - local, state, and national - are reached by gathering facts that support all aspects of supporting or opposing, examining advantages and disadvantages, then presenting conclusions to members for agreement. League lingo for this is *consensus*. Advocating a fact-based position is civic engagement. It is not the same as voicing an opinion.  
- from "League Myths about Advocacy," LWVMI

Our nonpartisan reputation earns us respect and makes us strong.

*What local issues are important to you? Submit your ideas for a study group. Contact: [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com). Please put **ADVOCACY** in the subject line.*

## **Membership**

### **Two Longtime LWVGP Members Pass Away**

We are sorry to report the passing of a long-time member, Aphrodite (Aphie) Roumell on January 2, 2024. Aphie believed in the value of informed voters and also served as an officer in our League. Aphie and her husband George were active in politics and threw legendary fundraisers. She was also very active in the Running and Winning workshop, an interactive leadership workshop for junior and senior girls, which the League sponsored several years ago. Aphie was an important supporter and mentor for members who volunteered for League projects. Her main interest was Alliance Francaise, an international organization that aims to promote the French language and culture around the world. At the January, 2024 LWVGP Board meeting, the Board approved a contribution of \$50 to the LWVMI Education Fund in Aphie's memory.

We are also sorry to report the passing of longtime member Cynthia Warner. She served as our League's Membership Director for several years and was also a part of the LWV studies and programs. Cynthia had moved to the Northville area a few years ago to be closer to her children and grandchildren. A memorial service was held on February 10, 2024.

### **Local League Member Recognized**

Crain's Detroit Business recently honored Notable Women in the Law. One of those recognized was our own Wendy Saigh. She serves as Chief counsel for the Army Materiel Command at the Detroit Arsenal. Wendy provides oversight, guidance and direction to more than 70 Army military and civilian-attorney advisers and support personnel. According to Wendy, her biggest professional win was when she helped develop legal strategies for addressing legacy system issues. This helped the Army save and recover millions of dollars in the form of cost avoidance, contractual and administrative remedies and funding returned to the Army or U.S. Treasury. Her team also established a procurement fraud program, including a mandatory awareness training program, to further maximize and avoid recoveries.

Wendy is a member of our Observer Corps, and also serves the 100+ Women Who Care, Motown Chapter, which contributes to local charities. Congratulations to Wendy on this well-deserved recognition!

**Contact LWVGP!** To reach anyone on the board, with a question or a suggestion, or to volunteer, use the [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com) email address - your email will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

## Board through June 30, 2024

### Executive Board (Elected)

- President: Lynne Pierce
- Vice President Programs: Dawn Drozd
- Vice President Voter Services: Lauri Read
- Secretary: Judy Masserang
- Treasurer: Carol Lufburrow

### On-Board Directors (Elected)

- Director (Voter Services): Julianne Phillips
- Director (Membership): Catherine Dumke
- Director (Membership): Jaime Rae Turnbull
- Director (Program): Joan Richardson

### On-Board Positions (Appointed by the President)

- Advocacy Director: Lauri Kingsbury
- Assistant Treasurer: Sue Stanley
- Communications Director, *The Voter* Co-Editor: Vicki Granger
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director: Cathy McAdam
- Environmental Network Chair: Melissa Levasseur
- Observer Corps Co-Directors: Sue Acton and Liz Martin

### Off-Board Positions (Appointed by the President)

- Finance Review Coordinator: Connie Frey
- Historian: Annie Spence
- Parliamentarian: Judy Florian
- Publicity, *The Voter* Co-Editor, Facebook: Judy Florian
- Vote411 Coordinator: Sarah Coats
- Webmaster: Sue Acton

**Nominating Committee** Laura Larson (chair), Judy Gafa, Julianne Phillips

## LWVGP Mission

The League of Women Voters encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government; works to increase understanding of major public policy issues; and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League is strictly nonpartisan, neither endorsing candidates nor supporting political parties.

The LWVGP, in both its values and its practices, reaffirms its commitment to diversity.

Membership is open to men and women **ages 16 and older**.

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Non-Partisan Policy

**Email:** [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com)

**Website:** [lwvgrossepointe.org](http://lwvgrossepointe.org)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/LWVGP/>

**LWVGP on YouTube - no subscription necessary**  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCloWa1Hw9PPhDvUY\\_2SB30w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCloWa1Hw9PPhDvUY_2SB30w)

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