



The Voter Newsletter
February 2025

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

Calendar

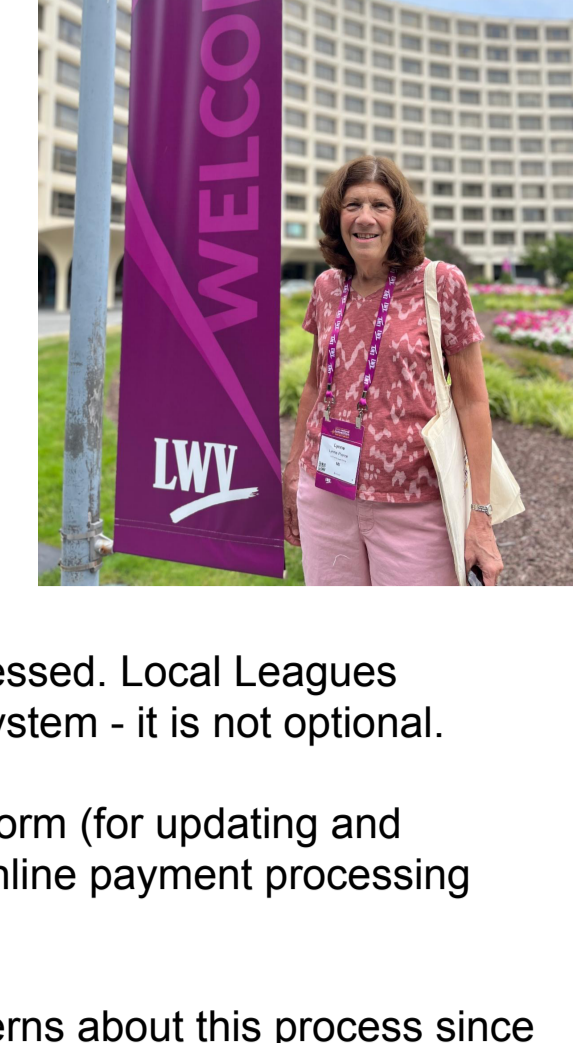
- January 28 - * LWVMI virtual program: Tips for Working the LWVUS Judiciary Study
- January 30 - * LWVMI virtual program: Building Bipartisan Support for Climate Action
- February 4 - Program Planning Meeting, GPW Community Center, 6-8:30 pm
- February 12 - * LWVMI virtual program: Classism, Poverty and Voting, 7 pm
- February 18 - LWVGP Board Meeting, GP Memorial Church, 7 pm
- May 16-18 - LWVMI Convention, Sheraton Airport Grand Rapids

*see LWVMI Virtual Program links below

President's Message

Greetings, Folks!

Happy New Year, Folks! I hope you all had a peaceful holiday season. After the frenzy of activity we all experienced during the election, we needed time to unwind and relax before the new year's activities. Please try to come to our February 4 planning session to take part in planning the agenda for the next few months.



This month the LWVUS will officially launch their new membership/dues payment system as part of their Transformation Plan. This new system will be a major change in the way dues are paid and processed. Local Leagues nationwide are required to participate in this new system - it is not optional.

Chapter Spot is the name of the membership platform (for updating and maintaining the national roster) and **Stripe** is the online payment processing portal that we will use to pay our dues.

Our board of directors has had some serious concerns about this process since we were informed of it last summer. Answers have been slow to come from LWVUS. We assigned a committee to investigate the process. That committee included Catherine Dumke (Membership Director), Carol Lufburrow (Treasurer), Lauri Kingsbury (Advocacy Director), and me. We attended webinars hosted by LWVUS, asked lots of questions, and communicated by email directly with the Chair of the committee. We also did independent research on the information provided to us and feel comfortable moving forward with this process.

Our Roster will already be dovetailed to the new Chapter Spot platform. The Stripe payment processing will go live starting this month. In February, you will receive an email from ChapterSpot, asking you to log in to "claim your membership."

Remember to check your spam folder if you haven't seen the email. This email will allow you to connect your existing membership to the new system. You will need to enter your email address to receive a code. Once you enter the code, you will be logged in. No password is needed. When you log in, you will be asked to fill out a short survey from LWVUS and your local League.

Most of our members will renew their memberships later this year. You will receive instructions on how to renew your membership. See the article below for more information on our new membership system.

That's all for now. Hope to see you at the planning meeting on February 4!

Lynne Pierce, President

February 4th: LWVGP Program Planning Meeting

The League of Women Voters of Grosse Pointe is hosting our 2025 Program Planning Meeting to identify our goals and action steps for the coming year.

Date: Tuesday, February 4, 6 - 8:30 PM
Location: Grosse Pointe Woods Community Center, Garden Room
20025 Mack Plaza Dr.

This collaborative meeting is designed for all members to join in fellowship as we identify ways to impact our community and create a stronger democracy.

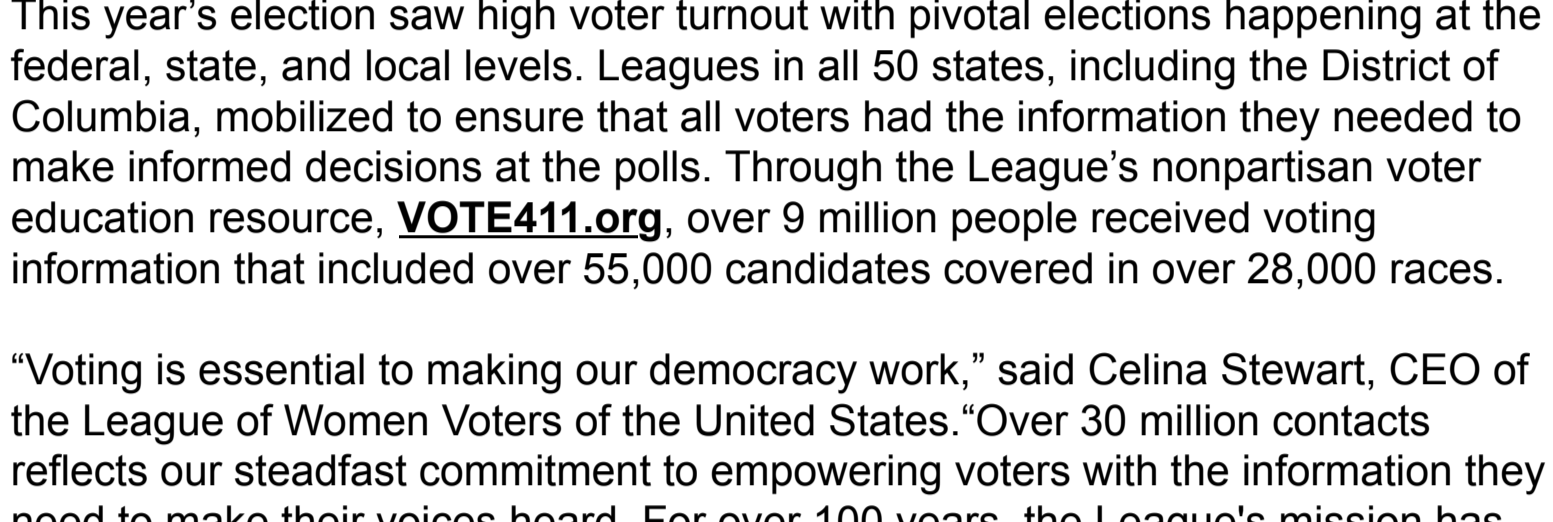
This meeting includes dinner, soft drinks, and dessert. **We ask for a \$15 donation (which must be paid in advance) to defray the cost of the dinner. The registration & payment deadline is Thursday, January 30.** Please send checks, payable to LWV Grosse Pointe to: LWV Grosse Pointe, Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236.

If you want to make a difference and find purpose in 2025, we hope you will register today! To register, use the following [link](#).

Questions? Please contact: Dawn Drozd at drozddawn@gmail.com



2024 ELECTION IMPACT



League Election Impact 2024

The League of Women Voters, a 104-year-old voting rights organization, made a record-breaking 30 million contacts during the 2024 election cycle, providing voters with nonpartisan voting information ahead of Election Day.

This year's election saw high voter turnout with pivotal elections happening at the federal, state, and local levels. Leagues in all 50 states, including the District of Columbia, mobilized to ensure that all voters had the information they needed to make informed decisions at the polls. Through the League's nonpartisan voter education resource, VOTE411.org, over 9 million people received voting information that included over 55,000 candidates covered in over 28,000 races.

"Voting is essential to making our democracy work," said Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States. "Over 30 million contacts reflects our steadfast commitment to empowering voters with the information they need to make their voices heard. For over 100 years, the League's mission has been to protect the freedom to vote and ensure our democracy remains strong."

The League remains committed to fostering civic participation and will continue its efforts to reach even more voters in the future. Visit VOTE411.org to access the comprehensive voter information database and prepare for the upcoming elections next year.

LWVUS Launches New Membership System

As Lynne mentioned in her President's Message, LWVUS is migrating to a new league membership platform that will impact how our members renew their dues. This new system will provide a centralized online portal where any person can join the League or renew their membership. The new membership portal will launch on February 3, 2025.

In the past, LWVGP collected the full dues amount and sent a percentage to the State and National Leagues. Under the new system, dues will be paid directly to LWVUS, who will then send a percentage to State and local Leagues, as indicated below.

- 20% to local Leagues
- 47% to State Leagues
- 33% to the National League

Note: Donations and dues paid together will be treated as dues only. Therefore, if a member wants to make a separate donation exclusively to help support LWVGP's programs and advocacy efforts, members must make a separate payment directly to LWVGP (either by check or via PayPal). This is a significant change with the new system.

Each member will receive an email sometime in February, asking them to log in to the LWV portal and *claim their membership*. The member will be sent a verification code to their email in order to complete the login process.

Dues Structure

- Individual dues are \$75 per year.
- A Pay-What-You-Can option is available for a minimum of \$20 per year.
- Higher dues amounts (\$150, \$250, \$500) are an option for those who wish to pay more.
- Lifetime membership does not change-no dues payment for those with 50+ years of membership.
- Dues payments greater than \$75 are not considered donations.
- The Household and Student membership categories are eliminated.

Dues Payment

Members can renew their dues in three ways.

- Credit or debit card
- Automated Clearing House (ACH) withdrawal from checking account
- Personal Check

For those who do not use the internet or prefer not to use the online system, nothing will change with their dues payment. LWVGP will still reach out to members to remind them when it is time to renew their dues. Payment can be made by check.

We understand this will be a major change for our members and LWVGP. Our Membership Team will be preparing a one-page flyer for members with specifics on this new process. Stay tuned.

Meeting Links to LWVMI Virtual Programs

January 28: Tips for Working the LWVUS Judiciary Study, 7 pm Register [here](#).
January 30: Building Bipartisan Support for Climate Action, 7 pm Register [here](#).
February 12: Classism, Poverty and Voting, 7 pm Join [here](#).

Voter Services Update

Our Your Government Officials (YGO) brochure has been updated to reflect the November 5th election results.

A total of 6,000 have been printed, so we need members to help bundle and distribute them to local clerk's offices, libraries and other community locations.

Please use this [link](#) to sign up to help. If we have filled all the slots, please plan to pickup and deliver some of the 6,000 brochures at our Program Planning meeting on February 4 (registration link in above article).

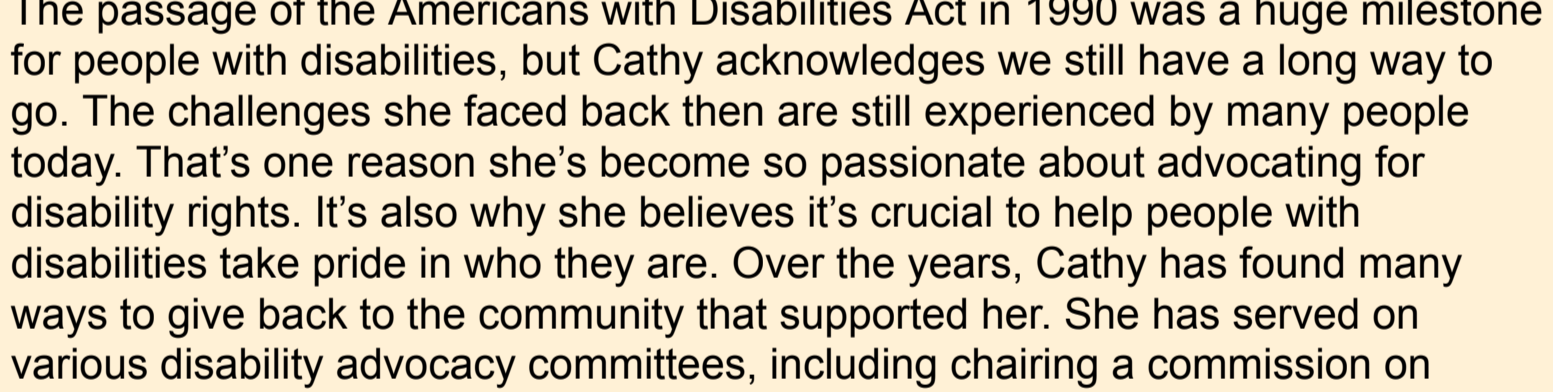
A special thanks to Julianne Phillips and Joan Richardson for taking on this important project!

Membership News

Our current membership stands at 157. Welcome to new member Jenny King from Grosse Pointe Park.

Remembering Flo Rhodes

Long-time League member, Florence "Flo" May Rhodes, of Grosse Pointe and longtime resident of Whitewater, Wis., died on November 28, 2024, at her home, three weeks after celebrating her 90th birthday. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a Bachelor of Arts degree in comparative literature in 1957. Fine member, working with the Running and Winning workshop, Voter Services, and distributing the LWVMI voter guides. Flo was an avid gardener, an excellent chef and baker, a seamstress, a woodworker and expert knitter. Flo's obituary can be viewed at this [link](#).



Member Spotlight

We are pleased to feature Cathy McAdam in our first Member Spotlight column. Cathy is pictured above with her service dog, Betty.

Cathy joined the League in 2019. She is currently Chair of the LWVGP Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, a member of the LWVMI Membership/ DEI Committee, and a past LWVMI Board member. Cathy was recently featured in the January issue of *Uniquely You/Detroit Metro: My Journey as a Blind Woman*, included below are excerpts from the article. We encourage you to read the full article at this [link](#). [Meet Cathy McAdam](#).

Cathy was born prematurely in 1946, weighing only two pounds and seven ounces. Her early days were a battle for survival. Due to the high levels of oxygen she was exposed to in the incubator, her retinas were damaged. As a result, she grew up with very limited vision-2% vision in one eye; she lost all vision at age 18. She went to school with children who had very limited vision, and/or were blind, and learned to read and write Braille. This was one of the most important tools she gained, not only to help her navigate her education but also to help understand her identity.

When Cathy went to Wayne State University, alone and on her own, she finally came to terms with the full reality of her blindness. Living on a college campus changed this reality for her. Being around other students helped her gain more confidence. A major turning point was when she got her first Leader Dog. It was through this partnership that she truly began to develop an increased sense of independence and improved mobility. One of her major accomplishments was her graduation from Wayne State University with a master's degree in social work.

The job search process was daunting, especially when she had to confront the reality of the job market with a disability. Cathy worked at a small inner-city mental health clinic. Later, she spent 20 years working at the Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan, helping people with newly acquired disabilities learn to adapt to change and live more independently.

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 was a huge milestone for people with disabilities, but Cathy acknowledges we still have a long way to go. The challenges she faced back then are still experienced by many people today. That's one reason she's become so passionate about advocating for disability rights. It's also why she believes it's crucial to help people with disabilities take pride in who they are. Over the years, Cathy has found many ways to give back to the community that supported her. She has served on various disability advocacy committees, including chairing a commission on disability concerns.

These roles are very meaningful to her because she is able to advocate for policies and services that directly impact the lives of people with disabilities. Cathy currently serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired (GDABVI), based in Southfield. She is a past president of the Harper Woods/Grosse Pointe Woods Lions Club and Co-leader of the Women's Outreach Network, addressing hemophilia and AIDS.

We are fortunate to have Cathy's expertise. She has provided us with a new and important perspective on how to view our membership activities and serve members in our communities with disabilities. We thank Cathy for her hard work and dedication to this effort.

**** If you have a member that you think should be featured in Member Spotlight, please send the information to the Voter Newsletter Co-Editors, Judy Florian and Vicki Granger at lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com

Lobby Day in Lansing

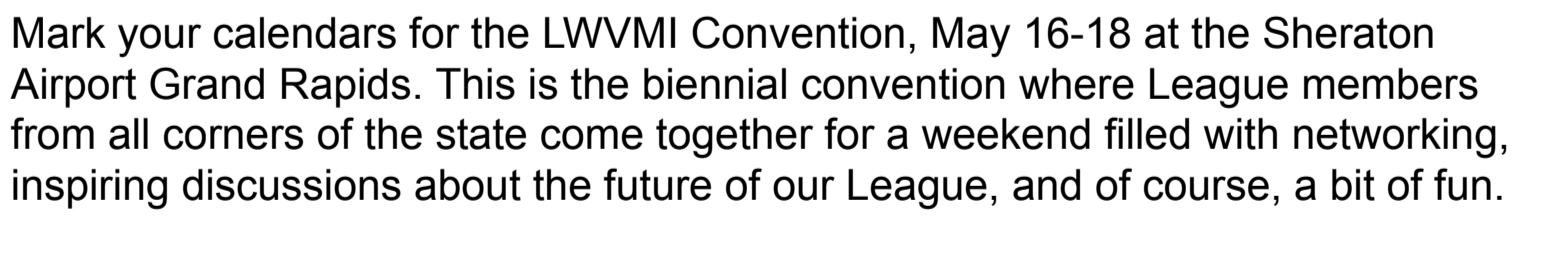
Approximately 200 people gathered at the Michigan Capitol during Lobby Day on December 4, 2024. In addition to League members, the group consisted of democracy partners from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Promote the Vote (PTV), Voters Not Politicians (VNP), Common Cause, and All Voting is Local. The main focus was to visit legislators to encourage support of the MI Voting Rights Act (MIVRA), Senate Bills 401-404.

Judy Florian and Sue Acton (pictured at left) represented the Grosse Pointe League. They had a "drop in" meeting at Speaker Joe Tate's Office. Although they were not able to meet directly with the Speaker, they spoke to staff regarding the importance of supporting these bills and bringing the bill to the floor for a vote during the lame duck legislative session. Sue and Judy also observed the Michigan Senate, which voted on several bills during their session. It was nice to observe young elementary school students visiting the Capitol to see the work done by the Senate during their session.

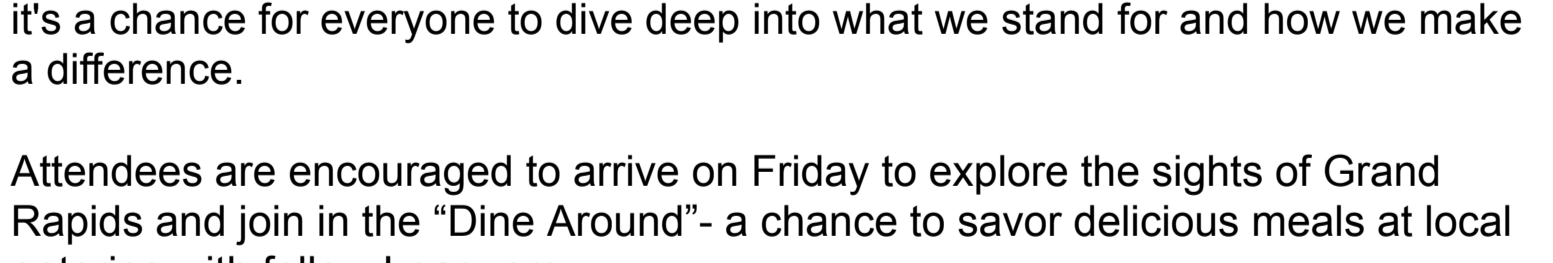
Unfortunately, many bills were left to die on the House floor due to their abrupt adjournment on December 19. Failure to reach consensus or majority severely hampered the lame duck session, disappointing many across the state. Senate bills 401-404, MIVRA, were some of many that never received a vote before adjournment.

2024 Holiday Party

A very special thanks to Melissa Levesseur for hosting LWVGP for our annual holiday party/cookie exchange. A total of 27 people attended the event, with many baking delicious cookies to share!



Carol Bendure, Ceri LaPratt, and Vicki Granger. President Lynne Pierce, Margie Freund, and Cathy McAdam.



Mary Zahler and Mary Jo Johnson. Ray Andary and Melissa Levesseur. Liz Martin, Jaime Rae Turnbull, and Ann Nicholson.

Looking Ahead

Call to LWVMI Convention
Mark your calendars for the LWVMI Convention, May 16-18 at the Sheraton Airport Grand Rapids. This is the biennial convention where League members from all corners of the state come together for a weekend filled with networking, inspiring discussions about the future of our League, and of course, a bit of fun.

Fun fact: Grand Rapids is the proud birthplace of the first League in Michigan. So, LWVMI is excited to let us soak up that rich history and feel the pride of our roots!

Remember, this Convention is open to all members, not just voting delegates—it's a chance for everyone to dive deep into what we stand for and how we make a difference.

Attendees are encouraged to arrive on Friday to explore the sights of Grand Rapids and join in the "Dine Around"—a chance to savor delicious meals at local eateries with fellow Leaguers.

Some folks have dubbed this convention weekend "League immersion" because the learning opportunities are endless! We will provide further information on costs and hotel reservations when available.

Future Events
LWVGP will celebrate its 75th birthday this year! Chair Judy Masserang and her committee, Judy Florian, Margie Freund, Vicki Granger, Julianne Phillips and Annie Spence, are working on plans to help us celebrate. Stay tuned!

Our annual meeting will be held in June. This is the time for us all to gather and celebrate our successful work this past year. Dates and information to follow.

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

Board through June 30, 2025

Executive Board (Elected)

- President: Lynne Pierce
- President Elect: Dawn Drozd
- Vice President Programs: Dawn Drozd
- Vice President Voter Services: Sue Acton
- Secretary: Judy Masserang
- Treasurer: Carol Lufburrow

On-Board Directors (Elected)

- Director (Voter Services): Julianne Phillips
- Director (Membership): Catherine Dumke
- Director (Membership): Margie Freund
- Director (At-Large): Genesee LaPratt

On-Board Positions (Appointed by the President)

- Advocacy Director: Lauri Kingsbury
- Assistant Treasurer: Patti Cardoze
- Communications Director and Parliamentarian: Judy Florian
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director: Cathy McAdam
- Environmental Network Chair: Melissa Levesseur
- Observer Corps Director: Liz Martin

Off-Board Positions (Appointed by the President)

- Finance Review Coordinator: Connie Frey
- Historian: Annie Spence
- Vote-411 Coordinator: Sarah Coats
- Webmaster: Sue Acton

Voter Newsletter Co-editors: Judy Florian and Vicki Granger
Nominating Committee: Vicki Granger (chair), Anastasia Koutsopoulos and Judy Masserang

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

League of Women Voters, Grosse Pointe
32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

Email: lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com
Website: www.lwvgrossepointe.org

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

LWVGP on YouTube - no subscription necessary
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvHwSPFDNo1_2SB3Dw

