

The Voter Newsletter April 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

April 5: HANDS OFF Rally, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1-4 p.m.
April 9: LWVMI: *Energizing Youth for League Work*, Virtual program, 7 p.m.
April 15: LWVGP Board Meeting, 7 pm, GP Memorial Church
April 17: *The Attack on DEI: What We All Stand to Lose*, Virtual Program, 7:30 p.m.
April 23: Voter Registration Drive-University Liggett High School. 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
April 24: Voter Registration Drive-Harper Woods High School 10-11:a.m.
April 28: Voter Registration Drive-Grosse Pointe South High School, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
May 1: Voter Registration Drive-Grosse Pointe North High School, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
May 13: *We the People: Civics in Action*, GP Woods Library, 6:45 p.m.
May 16-18: LWVMI Convention, Sheraton Airport Hotel, Grand Rapids
June 10: Annual Meeting, Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, 7 p.m.



JOIN THE HANDS OFF! RALLY ON APRIL 5th

President Trump and Elon Musk think this country belongs to them. They're taking everything they can get their hands on and daring the world to stop them. On Saturday, April 5, LWV is joining national partners for **Hands Off!** This is a mass mobilization effort, with people taking to the streets nationwide to fight back with a clear message—Hands Off!

We are fortunate to have a Hands Off Rally location very close to us! It will be held at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit from 1-4 p.m. on April 5, 2025. Here is a [link](#) to sign up .

The sign-up provides all the information you need to know, including where to

meet, the length of the walk, places to park, etc. Members or Leagues participating in a rally should refer to LWVUS' protest safety guidance available [on the League Management Site](#).

We encourage you to participate in this demonstration to support democracy and to carry signs that focus on issues, not individuals. And if available, we'd love to receive pictures you take of the event!

If you have questions, please contact Dawn Drozd or Judy Florian at lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com.

There is power in numbers! We hope you will attend!

President's Message

Greetings, Folks!

I was hoping we would have a quiet Spring this year, but with the current administration that appears unlikely. We have been through challenging times before, but every day, we see new attacks on our democracy.

Recently, I watched a video from our new LWVUS CEO, Celina Stewart. I would like to paraphrase her remarks in this message. Celina says that the State of our Democracy depends on our collective power, and we must fight against the forces that undermine the principles of our democracy. Is our Democracy safe? Our democracy is protected by our Constitution. The most important way to make sure our Democracy is working is to VOTE. Of course, this is our mission. We can encourage our families, friends, and neighbors to vote. We can work to reduce barriers to voting. We can SPEAK UP when we see voting inequities. We can work on Election Day. We can observe meetings and the Board of Canvassers. We can work as a census worker to make sure underserved populations are not undercounted. We can point out misinformation and disinformation and set the record straight. As Celina says, "We cannot be a bystander in our Democracy. Too much is at stake. Yes, we are all tired! Take a moment to rest and then re-engage. Volunteer to help! There is much to do!"

You should have recently received a letter from me on behalf of our local League. We delayed our annual Fall finance drive until Spring, realizing that many of you were making financial contributions to campaigns. Now I am asking you to consider generously donating to our local League to help us continue our mission. What we do is vitally important! We can't do it without your financial support. Very little of your dues stays with our local League. Please make sure to send your contribution directly to our League. If you send it to National, we will not receive any of it. Thank you for your support!

Hope to see you at our next event!

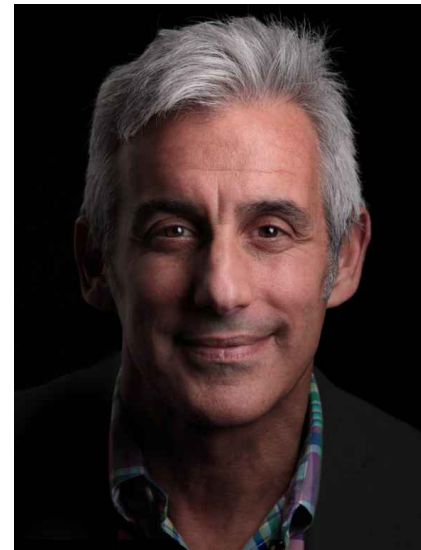
Lynne Pierce, President



April Program-The Attack on DEI

The League of Women Voters has a long history of Advocacy. Our April 17th program, *The Attack on DEI: What We All Stand to Lose*, is the latest in our democracy series. Please join us for this virtual program on Thursday, April 17, 7:30 p.m.

In recent years, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have faced increasing backlash, threatening to undo decades of progress. This presentation will examine the opposition, misinformation, and potential consequences for workplaces, education, and society as a whole. We will explore how weakening DEI efforts ultimately harm everyone, not just marginalized groups, and more importantly, will identify strategies to advocate for inclusive policies that support our democracy. Join us to understand what's at stake and how we can collectively resist the erosion of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Our speaker: Jay Kaplan is a staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan, who is at the forefront of legal efforts to ensure the civil rights of LGBTQ+ people are protected and expanded. Jay is also a frequent speaker on college campuses and panelist at civil rights forums. Jay was honored with the 2006 Unsung Hero Award from the Michigan State Bar and the 2010 Virginia Uribe Civil Rights Award from the National Education Association.

Space is limited so register today!

To register, click [here](#). After registering, a confirmation email will be sent with instructions on how to join the meeting.

March Program on Activism

Forty-six people attended our March 26th program, *Activism 101: Turning Passion into Action*. Sue Acton started the program discussing the actions and organizations we can partner with in our advocacy efforts. Guest speaker Julia Pulver is a registered nurse and leader in the field of health care, patient advocacy and public health. She founded Women Organize Michigan in 2016 and ran for state Senate in 2018. Attendees were inspired and informed on how they can defend democracy and take action for causes they care about. The text below, from the final presentation slide of the evening, sums it up!

Courage

These are frightening times, and frightening times call for active, courageous leadership.

Our enemy is apathy, cynicism and fatalism; the pernicious, authoritarian-friendly belief that we are merely victims of world events rather than active participants in a global struggle for freedom and justice.

Every time one of us—a family member, a community organizer, a representative, a senator—takes a step forward in this fight, a thousand pairs of eyes watch and learn.

Courage is contagious.



Speaker Julia Pulver and Sue Acton.

League members Deb Sloss, Wilhelmina Giblin, Geri LaPratt, and Carol Bendure.



League members Loren Mannino, Ruth Hoover, and Andy Dervan.



LWVMI Convention Update

The following LWVGP members will serve as voting delegates at the LWVMI Convention, May 16-18, in Grand Rapids:

- Susan Acton
- Ray Andary
- Lauri Kingsbury
- Carol Lufburrow
- Loren Mannino

- Liz Martin
- Laura McCourt
- Lynne Pierce

LWVGP will contribute eight items to the Silent Auction. We will also sell *My Future, My Vote* t-shirts at the wares market during Convention.

In addition, two of our members have been nominated for the LWVMI Board of Directors for 2025-27: Judy Florian, Vice President for Voter Service and Tom Wells, Treasurer.

LWVGP March 2025 Board Meeting Highlights

The LWVGP Board met on March 18 at the GP Memorial Church. Here are some reports from that meeting.

- Treasurer Carol Lufburrow reported a total of \$24,753.95 in retained earnings.
- Membership Committee: Jaime Rae Turnbull, who previously served as Membership Director, recently resigned from the Membership Committee due to personal commitments. A special thanks to Jaime Rae for all of her hard work with our membership activities this past year.
- Our membership total is currently 139. Welcome to new members, Kellyanne Ruda (Grosse Pointe), Lynn Sheehy (Grosse Pointe), and Rhonda Word, (St. Clair Shores).
- Programs through the rest of the year have been scheduled as follows: April 17: *The Attack on DEI: What We All Stand to Lose*, May 13: *We the People: Civics in Action* and June 10, Annual Meeting.
- Advocacy Committee:
 - The Federal Judiciary Study Group continues to meet, with an end date of April 14th to report to LWVUS.
 - Cuts in federal funding are adversely affecting communities nationwide. The Advocacy Committee is seeking individuals to serve on an environmental study group to review existing environmental positions.
 - The Money in Politics (MIP) study group continues to gather facts and stories on how MIP influences local elections.

Member Spotlight–Marge Freundl

Marge grew up Downriver and graduated from Nazareth College in Kalamazoo. She is a registered nurse with a Master's in Nursing from Wayne State University. She has practiced nursing in Ohio, Tennessee, and Michigan.

For the past 10 years, Marge has served as a Healthcare Coordinator for a congregation of Catholic religious Sisters living independently across eastern Michigan. Marge's thoughts about this work: "The Sisters have given so much to communities over the years through teaching, healthcare, and social justice initiatives. I am honored to help



them navigate the complexities of medical care when they encounter health challenges.”

Marge joined LWVGP in 2017 after attending a few local League programs. She was quickly pulled into local League activities by member Wilhelmina Giblin, who invited Marge to join the newly created DEI Committee.

She currently serves on our Observer Corps by attending Grosse Pointe Public Library Board meetings. She worked on the Library and Senior Services positions and is currently serving on the committee reviewing the LWVUS Federal Judiciary study. Marge is on the LWVGP Board of Directors, serving as Director of Membership and chairs the Membership Committee. When I asked Marge to tell me her thoughts about League work, she replied “I love belonging to the League. We truly are an army of committed volunteers who work hard to support informed, empowered citizen voters, especially women, and tackle other advocacy initiatives. And, we have fun!”

Marge is a widowed mother of 3, grandmother of 4, and great grandmother of 1. She loves traveling, especially on historical and cultural tours.

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.

Members Meet State Senator Hertel

LWVGP Members Sue Acton, Liz Martin, Ruth Hoover and Carol Bendure attended *Coffee with Senator Kevin Hertel* on March 21. They chose this opportunity as our first chance to question the Senator about League concerns and hear him respond to the community. A total of 35 people attended. Senator Hertel indicated his legislative priorities include budget planning and expressed concern about the uncertainty due to funding cuts, tariffs, reductions in education funding and the potential impact of decreased Medicaid funding. He does not support the House Joint Resolution B, which requires proof of citizenship to register to vote or update voting records. His response: “We already have voter ID laws in MI.”

The Senator also mentioned discussions are ongoing about Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs) for Medicaid mental health, disabilities, and substance abuse. He favors reform, not privatization, of these programs. There is also an opioid policy package working its way through the Senate.

Thanks to our members who attended to interact with Senator Hertel.

Energizing Youth for League Work Program

The LWVMI Membership Committee will sponsor a virtual program titled *Energizing Youth for League Work* on Wednesday, April 9, at 7 p.m. Registration in advance is required. Here is the registration [link](#). After registering, a confirmation email will be sent with instructions on how to join the meeting.

Nominees for LWVGP Board 2025-2027

Two-year positions

- President: Lynne Pierce
- Director of Voter Services: Mickie Verderbar
- Vice President of Program: TBD
- Secretary: Ruth Hoover
- Membership Director: Judy Masserang

One-year positions

- Nominating Committee Chair: Diana Domin
- Nominating Committee Member: Kathy Cernok

Candidate bios and pictures will be available in the May Voter.

Voter Services

One of our major Spring activities are our high school voter registration events. All of our local high schools have confirmed our attendance and we now need volunteers to make it happen! Please use SignUp Genius to select the days/times you are available to work. This is a very rewarding activity and is a great way for the League to connect with our young voters! Use this [link](#) to sign up.

- April 23: University Liggett High School. 9 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
 - April 24: Harper Woods High School 10-11:00 a.m.
 - April 28: Grosse Pointe South High School, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
 - May 1: Grosse Pointe North High School, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
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Eva Belles' Vote

The following article appeared in a recent issue of Michigan Legal Milestones, State Bar of Michigan Newsletter. Listed below is the complete text of the milestone marker (shown above) placed by the State Bar of Michigan and the Genesee County Bar Association, 1990.

In April 1888, Eva R. Belles tried to vote in a Flint school board election. Because she was a woman, the election inspectors refused to receive her ballot. Firmly believing she was entitled to vote, she fought that decision up to the Michigan Supreme Court, and won an early victory for women's suffrage.

She retained George H. Durand, former Flint mayor and first president of the Genesee County Bar Association, as her attorney. A provision of the Michigan Constitution gave power to the legislature to provide for a system of primary schools. The legislature set school election voting qualifications in a statute specifying that "every person" meeting certain criteria, including age, property, and parenthood, could vote in all such elections not involving money or tax questions.

As mother to Jennie, a school-aged child, and a Flint property owner, Eva Belles met the criteria. George Durand argued that the "every person" language of the statute, and not the gender restriction found in the Constitution, should control who could vote in school elections. Michigan's Supreme Court agreed, and as a result, women like Eva Belles won the right to vote in certain school elections.

A battle had been won, but final victory for women's suffrage in Michigan would not be achieved until 1918, when the Michigan Constitution was amended to provide full voting rights for women. The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution passed two years later, in 1920.

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
- 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): Marge Freundl
- Director (At-Large): Gerianne 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 Levasseur
- Observer Corps Director: Liz Martin

Off-Board Positions (Appointed by the President)

- Finance Review Coordinator: Connie Frey
- Historian: Annie Spence
- Vote411 Coordinator: Sarah Coats
- Webmaster: Vicki Granger

Voter Newsletter Co-editors: Judy Florian and Vicki Granger

Nominating Committee: Vicki Granger (chair), Anastasia Koutsopoulos, Diana Domin 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

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Email: lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com

Website: lwvgrossepointe.org

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

LWVGP on YouTube - no subscription necessary
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCloWa1Hw9PPhDvUY_2SB30w

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