

## *The Voter Newsletter* June 2025

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

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### Calendar

**June 4:** New Member Orientation, 1:45 p.m., Virtual  
**June 10:** Annual Meeting, 7 p.m. GP Memorial Church  
**August 26:** Annual Member Picnic, 6 p.m., Neff Park, GP  
**October 5:** LWVGP 75th Anniversary Celebration, 4-6 p.m., Country Club of Detroit

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### President's Message

**ALERT: The LWV has declared our country is in a constitutional crisis!**

What does this mean? It means the League does not believe the country is following the Constitution. This declaration was triggered by the President defying the U.S. Supreme Court order to return the wrongfully detained/deported Kilmar Abrego Garcia and the failure of Congress to intervene. Two branches of government are refusing to abide by the constitutionally mandated orders of the third branch. This will lead to a breakdown of our government.



The League has launched a campaign titled **Unite and Rise 8.5**. The name is based on the evidence-based conclusion that it takes 3.5% of the voting population (8.5 million people) to effectuate change through nonviolent protest. In other words, we must help stop the dismantling of our democratic process. Our local League is putting together an action plan to do our share! Vicki Granger has agreed to lead this effort for our League, with more information to be announced soon. View the LWVUS press release at this [link](#).

A top priority of our national League is to work toward eliminating the Electoral College. In five times during our country's history, the President has been elected by less than a majority of the votes. This is inherently undemocratic. A direct, popular vote ensures the candidate with the most votes from the people becomes President. The League has held this position since 1970, long before the current political turmoil. This is not a partisan issue, but one of fundamental fairness that every vote counts! Our local league will be presenting more information on this

very important issue in the near future.

Let's not forget our efforts in the past election. On a national level, we had contact with over 30 million voters! A total of 9.19 million users were given election information on VOTE411. And we protected 9.38 million people in our litigation efforts. As League members, there is always more work to do. In this "off year," we have local elections; in addition, we are working to better educate our citizens on how our government works and how we can better address issues that matter to all of us.

We have a new committee working to reach young people, an underrepresented and misunderstood demographic of our citizenry. Please see our report from Voter Services about our impact in the schools.

We have our annual meeting on June 10. Please consider coming to learn more about what we have done this past year and where we are heading! See you soon!

Lynne Pierce, President

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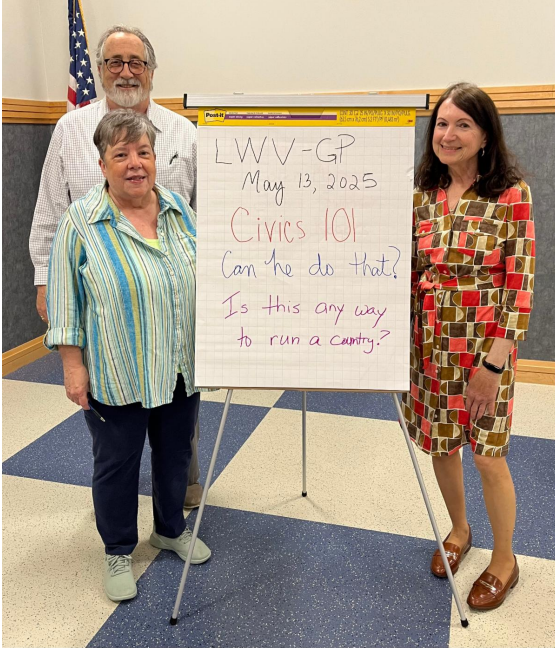
### **Annual Meeting June 10**

We hope you'll join us to celebrate our many accomplishments over the past year, elect a new slate of officers, and learn from Paula Bowman, Co-President of the Michigan League as she shares how our State and National Leagues are leading the way to defend democracy. We hope you can make it because it just won't be the same without YOU! Please register at this [link](#) so we know how many to expect. Looking forward to seeing you on June 10th.

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### **Civics in Action Program**

A total of 43 attended the Civics in Action Program on May 13 at the Woods Library. Interesting fact about our esteemed panel: Kathy Rogers, Loren Mannino and Joanne Swanson-they are all LWV GP members and all were at Wayne State Law School at the same time. They shared their legal expertise to analyze the actions by the Trump



Administration and the many law suits that have been filed, based on these actions. There were excellent questions from the audience, which generated a lot of discussion. Thanks to Kathy Rogers for putting this program together.

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### LWVMI Convention Wrap-up

The LWVMI Convention in Grand Rapids was a huge success! Our local League was represented by the following delegates: Lauri Kingsbury, Carol Lufburrow, Loren Mannino, Liz Martin, Laura McCourt, Lynne Pierce and Ray Andary. Judy Florian and Tom Wells, both LWVMI board members, were delegates for the Michigan League. Our delegates have prepared a summary of the workshops they attended. You can view this information in our blog at this [link](#).

The Convention delegates adopted the following program items:

- **To adopt concurrence of the Utah Position on Death With Dignity:**

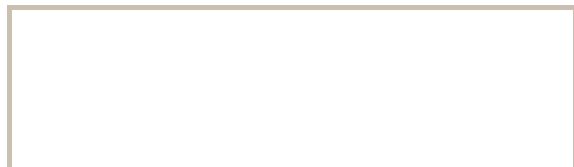
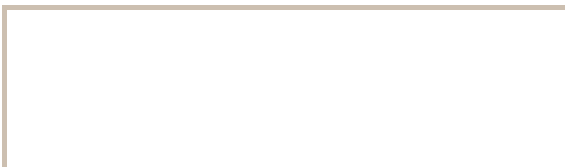
The League of Women Voters (of Michigan) believes that state laws should grant the option for a terminally ill person to request medical assistance from a relevant, licensed physician to end one's life. The League of Women Voters of (Michigan) believes such legislation should include safeguards against abuse for the dying and/or medical personnel. Note: Title to be changed to Medical Aid in Dying

- **To initiate an update of the LWVMI Election Law Position which would focus on Primary Systems with consideration of alternative forms of voting.**

LWVGP members donated 10 items to the Silent Auction to benefit the LWVMI Education Fund. A total of \$5,207 was raised at the auction. Pictures of the donated items can be found on our blog at this [link](#).

LWVGP members Judy Florian, VP for Voter Services and Tom Wells, Treasurer, will continue to serve on the LWVMI board until 2027.

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LWVGP Convention Delegates:  
L to R: Tom Wells (LWVMI), Lauri Kingsbury, Liz Martin, Lynne Pierce, Ray Andary, Laura McCourt, Loren Mannino, Judy Florian (LWVMI) and Carol Lufburrow.



LWVGP members Ray Andary and Lynne Pierce pose with Christina Schlitt, former LWVGP member and recipient of the LWVMI Belle Brotherton Award.

## LWVGP Members Recognized

Four of our members were recognized at Convention as recipients of the Belle Ringer Awards, named after Florence Belle Brotherton, the first president of the League of Women Voters of Michigan. Each local League could nominate one person in each of the four categories.

### Advocacy

Liz Martin: As a new member, Liz chairs our vibrant Observer Corps, has recruited new members, and has provided excellent support to the observers.

### Membership

Cathy McAdam: Cathy has headed our DEI efforts for several years and raised our awareness of how marginalized groups are impacted by our actions or inactions.

### Voter Services

Julianne Phillips: Julianne has worked tirelessly to improve our relationships with all of our local school districts, including highly successful voter registration drives in each of these schools.

### Other

Loren Mannino: As a new member, Loren chaired our Bylaws committee, producing a much-needed, excellent document; he is also a member of our Observer Corps.

See our blog for more information at this [link](#).

## LWVGP May 2025 Board Meeting Highlights

The LWVGP Board met on May 20 at the GP Memorial Church. Here are some reports from that meeting.

- LWVUS has declared a Constitutional Crisis triggered by the President defying the US Supreme Court order to return wrongfully detained/deported Garcia and the failure of Congress to intervene.
- LWVUS has launched their Unite and Rise 8.5 Campaign. This campaign is

based on evidence that shows it takes about 3.5% of the voting population (8.5 million people) to effect change through nonviolent protest. Vicki Granger will lead our local effort.

- President Lynne Pierce encourages all members to sign up for League Updates to get the most updated information about what is happening at the National level. You can sign up at this [link](#).
- Our current membership count is 152. Welcome to new members: Carol Burns (GPC); Barbara Choate (GPC); Janet Deters (GPF); Kathleen Fulgenzi (GPW); Marsha Goan (GPF); Mary Lloyd (Highland Park); Rosanna Marrocco (SCS); Lori Panzenhagen (GPP); Cindy Safran (GPF) and Stefanie Watkins (GPF).
- The board approved the appointment of Kathy Rogers as Acting Program Chair. Kathy will serve in this position until we find a VP of Programs.
- The Observer Corps has activated two new observers: Laura McCourt and Kathy Cernok.

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### Judiciary Study Response Recognized

On Sunday, May 18, 2025, Kimberly Fraser, Chair of the national Federal Judiciary Study Committee, sent her personal thanks to LWVGP “ . . . for your discussion, time and thoughtfulness. . . We were all struck by and appreciative of the seriousness and enthusiasm with which you approached [this] study.” Our response was made possible by committee members Lauri Kingsbury, Chair, Nicole Castka, Marge Freundl, Vicki Granger, Ruth Hoover, and Joanne Swanson. Thanks to all for making this happen! A summary of the committee's work can be found at this [link](#).

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### Membership Directory

Just a reminder: LWVGP is planning to release our membership directory to current members in August before the annual picnic.

Our intent is to provide a full directory of members via email in a PDF document. Members can then print their own copy. **This directory is to be used solely for the purpose of communicating with members of the League of Women Voters of Grosse Pointe for matters pertaining to the League. Members and others may not use this directory for any other purpose.**

Members will have only three options:

1. Publish all of your membership information
2. Publish your name only
3. Do not publish any information

No other options are available.

We still have 50 members who have not completed the survey. A personal email will be sent to them for one last opportunity to complete the release form. If the release form isn't received, we will print all of their information in the directory.

Questions can be directed to Judy Florian, Communications Director at [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com).

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### **Member Spotlight: Mary Zahler**

A native Detroit, Mary attended Guyton Elementary and Southeastern High Schools with LWVGP Life Member JoAnn Kelly. It was JoAnn and her dedication to the League that drew Mary into LWVGP in 2003 when she moved to Grosse Pointe Park.

Mary attended the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, receiving a BA in English and a Teaching Certificate. After teaching English Language Arts and social studies for three years in a Livonia junior high school, she spent 15 years raising her three children. She received her MBA in 1986 from U of M Dearborn and worked in fundraising and

marketing at the Guidance Center in Southgate, retiring after 17 years of service in 2003.

In 1990, she met Jerry Zahler; they married in 2002. He died in 2012, and two years later she met Gary Wilcher while visiting a friend in Florida. It turned out that he had raised his family a mile from where Mary lived, had owned the same sailboat and had kept his boat in the same marina. They have been inseparable ever since, spending winters in Gary's Florida condo and summers in Mary's Grosse Pointe Park flat.

Mary joined the League after seeing the important work that it was doing to educate the public about the importance of educating voters and of having a transparent government. She began her service as an Observer for the Grosse Pointe Public Library, followed by stints as Treasurer, Co-President, and Voter Services Vice President. She currently is a member of the Program Committee.

In addition to the importance of the League's mission, she cites the satisfaction of solid friendships she has formed, the kind where members work together towards a common goal. She is especially appreciative of the assistance Judy Florian gave her when she became the Voter Services Vice President.

For fun, Mary loves being with her family (three children, Jerry's three children, Gary's two daughters, 14 grandchildren, and one great grandchild), hiking in both Florida and Michigan (plans for a northern Michigan backpack and a hiking trip to the Canadian Rockies this summer), reading (currently down to just one book club), knitting (almost finished with a sweater for a granddaughter; thanks for your help Lauri Kingsbury!), doing Sudoku, and working out. She is so grateful for all of life's blessings, including her League experiences.

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### **LWVGP Member Appointed Judge**

Congratulations to member Nicole Castka, who was appointed to the Third Judicial Circuit Court of Wayne County by Government Whitmer. Castka is a solo practitioner focused on criminal defense and earned a JD from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. This appointment fills a partial term (June 30, 2025-Jan 1, 2027) following the resignation of Judge Mariam Bazzi. Nicole also served on our Federal Judiciary Study Committee. Congratulations, Nicole!

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## Stand Strong: Pathways to Support Solidarity and Rights Program

Marge Freundl, Judy Florian, and Gerianne LaPratt staffed the LWVGP table at the April 30 program sponsored by WeGP at the Ford House, *Stand Strong: Pathways to Support Solidarity and Rights*. The event room was nearly full with active listeners for the panel discussion on the current status of LGBTQ, immigrant, and disability civil rights in Michigan and ways to engage in

advocacy. LWV had many attendees stop for information and to thank us for our work.

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## Nominees for LWVGP Board 2025-2027

LWVGP members will vote for new board members at the Annual Meeting on June 10. The following positions are up for election.

### Two-year positions

- President: Lynne Pierce
- Vice President of Program: TBD\*
- Director of Voter Services: Holly Cory
- Secretary: Ruth Hoover
- Membership Director: Judy Masserang

### One-year positions

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

\*We are still looking for someone to serve as the VP for Program. If you are interested, please contact Vicki Granger, Nominating Committee Chair, at [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com). Please put Nominations in the subject line.

Read about our [nominees in this blog post](#) on our website.

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## Advocacy Committee Update

### New! Election Law Study Group

Our state advocacy position was completely revised 24 years ago. At the statewide convention in May, delegates unanimously approved this motion: To initiate an update of the election law position which would focus on primary systems with consideration of alternative forms of voting. One alternative form of voting is ranked choice.

Read the current LWVMI position on Election Law at this [link](#).

Contact L. Kingsbury at [lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com](mailto:lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com) for more information. Please put **Advocacy** in the subject line.

### Take Action!

Tell our Senators to Oppose the SAVE Act!

This bill requires proof of citizenship to register to vote - a certified copy of a birth certificate, passport, or naturalization certificate - and creates more barriers to voting.

Click on this [link](#) to tell our two senators to oppose the SAVE Act.

### **Federal Budget - “A Big Beautiful Bill”**

The U.S. House has passed the over 1000 page budget bill with a vote of 215-214. This bill is now in the U.S. Senate.

The bill reduces \$698 billion in federal subsidies for Medicaid, adds a work requirement for Medicaid and reduces federal spending for the SNAP program by \$267 billion. Click [here](#) to tell our two senators to vote “No.”

According to the Congressional Budget Office’s analysis, it will increase the debt by \$3.8 trillion. Find the report: **Preliminary Analysis of the Distributional Effects of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act** at this [link](#).

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

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## **LWVGP 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)**

- Acting Director (Programs): Kathy Rogers
- 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



## 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](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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