



## Calendar

### February 2021

- 1 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting**  
7pm via Zoom, contact Courtney Winell,  
winell22@hotmail.com
- 9 Calhoun County Unit Meeting**  
7pm via Zoom, contact Sue Rosko,  
lwwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com
- 10 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting**  
10am via Zoom, contact Ken Manley,  
kenmanley@hotmail.com
- 18 National Popular Vote Compact Discussion**  
Led by Connie Ferguson. 5:30-6:30pm via Zoom.  
Contact denise.hartsough@gmail.com for the link
- 20 Founders Day Celebration**  
10am-Noon via Zoom, Keynote speaker Secretary  
of State **Jocelyn Benson**, RSVP to:  
ckuthe57@yahoo.com
- 22 LWVKA Board Meeting**  
6pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey@  
moburkey30@gmail.com
- 24 DEI Committee Meeting**  
6:30pm via Zoom, contact Millie Lambert,  
millielambert3922@gmail.com
- 27 Lame Duck I: Understanding the Issues.**  
2-3:30pm via Zoom. Contact denise.hartsough@  
gmail.com for the link.

### March 2021

- 6 Girl Scouts Celebration**  
Program to celebrate the 19th amendment  
via Zoom
- 20 Lame Duck II: Discussion of the Issues.**  
2-3:30pm via Zoom. Contact denise.hartsough@  
gmail.com for the link.
- 27 Lame Duck III: Discussion and Consensus**  
2-3:30pm via Zoom. Contact denise.hartsough@  
gmail.com for the Zoom link.

## President's Column

*Fran Eckenrode, Co-President*

**A**lready in 2021 we have rung in a new year, welcomed new vaccines, and transitioned to a new federal administration with the first woman and person of color as our Vice President. There is a lot to celebrate as our country moves forward. As we traditionally do each February, LWVKA will celebrate **Founders Day in 2021**. Please plan to join the virtual celebration on Saturday, February 20, from 10 am until noon. Michigan Secretary of State **Jocelyn Benson** will join us live as our keynote speaker. Enjoy chocolate truffles from Kalamazoo's *Confections with Conviction* during the program.

The Founders Day celebration is traditionally an opportunity to invite potential new members to join our celebration and learn more about the League. This year is no different. Please invite your friends, family, and anyone you think might be interested in joining the League. In addition to the live address by Secretary Benson and the chocolate truffles, there will be sessions that highlight the work of the Kalamazoo League with a focus on volunteer opportunities. Learn how you can invest your time and talent. Look for your invitation in email and regular mail. Please RSVP to Chris Kuthe by Friday, February 12.

You will receive a survey by email or mail soon after the Founders Day celebration to obtain member feedback and offer the opportunity to make your volunteer interests known. Please take a few moments to complete your survey and consider volunteer opportunities that the League offers. Want to support League activities with your membership but don't have the time to do more? No worries, your membership is valued and appreciated.

### Read on to learn more details about current LWVKA activities!

- LWVMI is calling upon Local Leagues to participate in a process-oriented study of Michigan Lame Duck Sessions. Read further to find out how to provide your input for this important work. Members can review the study here: [www.lwvmi.org/member/mem\\_studies.html](http://www.lwvmi.org/member/mem_studies.html).
- The Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) is at work to redraw the maps for State and Congressional districts. In January, LWVMI launched an effort to discover and support Communities of Interest as part of the work of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC). Local leagues, including LWVKA, are helping with this effort.
- LWVKA is partnering with *Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan* to create a virtual program for girl scouts of all ages to earn their "Women's Right to Vote" patch. The program will be March 6, 2021.
- *Defending Democracy* is the theme for the League of Women Voters of Michigan's 2021 Convention. The virtual convention will run from 6:30 p.m. on Friday, May 21, through 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 22. The 2021 convention will be fully accessible to voting delegates and non-voting members. Mark your calendar now! ✓

# LWVUS Update

By Paula Manley

There are many helpful resources on the League Management website such as a list of upcoming webinars and recordings of past webinars, as well as toolkits to assist in advocacy. Go to [lwv.org](http://lwv.org) and click on League Management to access these resources.

Are you receiving the bi weekly **League Update** in your email box? The League Update from LWVUS highlights what Leagues around the country are doing as well as actions LWVUS is taking on various issues. To subscribe, simply go to the League Management website at [lwv.org](http://lwv.org).

**Impact on Issues 2020-22** is available on the League Management website. This document helps members understand LWVUS public policy positions which could be used at the national, state, local and regional levels. 

## 2021 Program of Action

Denise Hartsough, VP Program

LWVKA members from Kalamazoo, Calhoun and Kent Counties met virtually on January 23 for Program Planning, that is, to review results from 2020 and to plan League actions for 2021. Thanks to all 26 who participated!

Members focused on the five areas of LWVKA's strategic plan. Please help with the following key actions as you can, contacting the point person(s) listed.

**NOTE:** These actions focus on Kalamazoo County. LWVKA's Geographical Units will have plans of their own. For Calhoun County, contact Sue Rosko. For Kent County, contact Courtney Winell.

**Climate Change.** Convince local units of government (townships, cities) to include the words "climate change" in their work on symptoms of climate crisis. Need: League members who live in townships around the edges of Kalamazoo County. —Ruth Caputo, Aedin Clements

**Voter Access.** Obtain names and addresses of graduating seniors from the seven smaller school districts in Kalamazoo County so their seniors can receive an informative voter registration mailing, just as seniors from Kalamazoo and Portage Public Schools did in 2020. Need: League members with connections to the districts for Climax-Scotts, Comstock, Galesburg-Augusta, Gull Lake, Parchment, Schoolcraft, Vicksburg. —MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI).** Offers League members a virtual DEI learning opportunity. Need: Members who will participate—watch for a notice! —Millie Lambert

**Redistricting.** Support Communities of Interest (COIs) in each county who wish to testify to the Redistricting Commission. Need: Team members to brainstorm and reach out to COIs. —Sue Rosko (Calhoun), Teri Chaplin, Courtney Winell (Kent), Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo)

**Housing.** Provide periodic updates on results of the 2020 Homes for All countywide millage. Need: League member to read the updates—watch the Voter! —Rick Freiman 

## Lame Duck Study & Consensus

Denise Hartsough, VP Program

All local Leagues in Michigan are studying the issue of Lame Duck legislative sessions and offering consensus responses to questions posed by the LWV of Michigan. Delegates to State Convention in 2019 identified Lame Duck for study so that LWVMI may decide—based on responses from local Leagues—to take a position on Lame Duck as a basis for advocacy.

A helpful study guide and PowerPoint are on the LWVMI website: [lwvmi.org/member/mem\\_studies.html](http://lwvmi.org/member/mem_studies.html)

If you do not have access to the internet and thus need print copies of the study guide and/or PowerPoint, please call Ruth Caputo at (269) 207-2815.

You are invited to three Saturday sessions to learn about Lame Duck, discuss its characteristics, and respond to the consensus questions.

**February 27, 2:00-3:30pm**

Lame Duck I: Understanding the Issues

**March 20, 2:00-3:30pm**

Lame Duck II: Discussion of the Issues

**March 27, 2:00-3:30pm**

Lame Duck III: Discussion and Consensus

Watch your email for Zoom links, or email [denise.hartsough@gmail.com](mailto:denise.hartsough@gmail.com) for the links.

If you would like to offer input that will be compiled and shared at the sessions:

- Please complete both sections of an online survey by Feb. 22: <https://forms.gle/HsZJG6tcjtRVVvcj6>
- Or, please complete the questions included in this issue of the Voter on pages 3-4. Send them by Feb. 22 to Ruth Caputo, 10970 Poplar Bluff Court, Portage MI 49024, or scan and email to [rdecann47@gmail.com](mailto:rdecann47@gmail.com). A compilation of input will be shared at the discussion sessions.

Thanks to the Lame Duck Study Team of **Ruth Caputo, Barb Dircks, Lisa Fuller, Allison Hammond, Janet Jones and Linda McDonald!**

If you have questions, please contact me at (269) 599-1801. 



# LWVMI Lane Duck Study— Input from Individual LWVKA Members

If you need paper versions of the Study Guide and PowerPoint, contact Ruth Caputo, 269-207-2815.

Mail your response to the questions below by **Feb. 22, 2021** to: Ruth Caputo, 10970 Poplar Bluff Court, Portage, MI 49024

## Discussion Prompts

Please answer if the following aspects of Lane Duck Sessions are Positive or Negative for our state, or designate Both if you have mixed views.

1. Legislators who are not returning due to either term limits or election loss may push their pet projects.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
2. Legislators who are not returning due to either term limits or election loss may feel desperate to get legislation passed during their tenure, and sometimes lane duck serves as their final effort to get legislation passed for their district.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
3. Legislators who are not returning due to either term limits or election loss may have already been given a conditional offer of employment by another entity and will use lane duck to deliver a win to their future employer at the eleventh hour outside of the public committee process.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
4. Lane Duck sessions provide an opportunity to handle emergency issues. (e.g. public health crisis, financial crisis).  
 Negative  Positive  Both
5. Legislators who are not returning due to either term limits or election loss may no longer have to look at the long-term consequences of their actions; they are looking at their next job and may be voting with that job in mind.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
6. When the power shifts because of the elections, the controlling party may use the lane-duck session as a final effort to push through their agenda and deliver to their donors.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
7. Lane Duck sessions ensure continuity and an uninterrupted capacity to govern or to ensure maximum flexibility when setting legislative policy agendas and priorities.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
8. The regular legislative process may be bypassed (this can happen anytime, albeit with more visibility when in regular session) resulting in a lack of transparency, shortened or eliminated review periods for legislators and the public.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
9. Lane Duck sessions provide an opportunity to tie up loose ends.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
10. A pending bill's content may be replaced or substituted, hence, undercutting any prior review (Vehicle Bills).  
 Negative  Positive  Both
11. Legislators leaving office due to term-limits will never have to answer to the voters for any of the bad policy decisions they make.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
12. There is decreased opportunity for public comment from citizens that may lead to over-reliance on the opinions of special interest lobbyists.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
13. Lane Duck sessions provide the opportunity for passage of good policy bills that had been stalled throughout the term for various reasons.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
14. The volume and speed of bills taken up during the lane duck session may deprive members of the opportunity to thoroughly read, research, and weigh the pros and cons of the bills prior to the vote.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
15. Marathon sessions during Lane Duck can be utilized to drastically reduce the effectiveness of legislators who are present on the House floor for numerous, continuous hours and then voting on issues without proper rest.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
16. Legislation may be pushed through without proper vetting by the committee process and legislative research staff.  
 Negative  Positive  Both
17. Lane Duck sessions provide the final opportunity to finish legislation prior to a new session where all bills must be re-introduced.  
 Negative  Positive  Both

## Consensus Questions

After discussing the aspects of Lane Duck Sessions, please answer the first 8 questions with YES or NO. The ninth question has a different set of answers.

1. Should public hearings, along with the ability for public comment, be scheduled before the enactment of any legislation?  
 Yes  No
2. Should all bills be published and available to the public for a reasonable period before a vote?  Yes  No

Continued on page 4

## Lame Duck Consensus Questions continued

3. Should legislative leaders be allowed to substitute vehicle bills, thus avoiding both the constitutionally required five-day layover rule imposed on new bills, and the customary public hearing in committee?  Yes  No
4. Should a supermajority of 2/3 of those elected and serving be necessary to pass a bill in a Lame Duck Session?  Yes  No
5. Would you support the elimination of Lame Duck sessions if a constitutional amendment were required?  Yes  No
6. Should the Legislature be prohibited from adopting a citizen-initiated ballot proposal before the election, thus keeping the proposed citizen-initiated law off the ballot, only to amend that law during the Lame Duck session after the election in ways that alter the petition circulators' original intent?  Yes  No
7. Should there be only record roll call votes for all bills during a Lame Duck session?  Yes  No
8. Would you support a rule that the bi-partisan Quadrant meet, before the November election, to compile a list of pending bills that may be addressed during a Lame Duck session?  
 Yes  No
9. Rank the level of surprise to learn that both parties have used Lame Duck sessions to pass legislation.  
 Very Surprised  Somewhat Surprised  Not Surprised

*Thank you!*

Mail your response to the questions above by **Feb. 22, 2021** to: Ruth Caputo, 10970 Poplar Bluff Court, Portage, MI 49024 

## Redistricting Commission

*Denise Hartsough, ICRC Monitoring Team*

LWVMI's team of observers has monitored and will continue to watch every meeting of Michigan's Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC). The ICRC is charged with preparing maps for Michigan's Congressional, State House and Senate Districts based on the 2020 Census. The ICRC has hired an Executive Director, Legal Counsel and Communications & Outreach Director, and will next select a mapping vendor.

Communities of Interest. LWVMI's Monitoring Team is helping local Leagues identify and offer support to Communities of Interest (COIs) that would like to testify to the ICRC about their desire to be mapped into a single district.

A COI is a group likely to have common legislative and community concerns based on a similarity and who would benefit from cohesive representation in the legislature or Congress. Examples of COIs include: cities with shared public transit, residents of a single school district, a state's coastal counties.

If you can help identify and support COIs in your county, please contact me at 269-599-1801 or [denise.hartsough@gmail.com](mailto:denise.hartsough@gmail.com). 

## National Popular Vote Compact

*Connie Ferguson & Denise Hartsough*

LWVUS has a position in favor of the National Popular Vote Compact. This is an agreement among a set of states that pledge to have their presidential electors cast their votes for the nationwide winner of the popular vote, no matter which candidate won in a particular state. This is a way around the Electoral College without having to change the US Constitution. If just a few more states join the compact, the set of states will have enough electoral votes to determine the outcome of the presidential election.

Michigan has not chosen to join this compact. When LWVUS asked State and Local Leagues to study the issue (2008-10), LWV of Michigan saw no clear consensus among its local Leagues. Therefore, LWVMI has not advocated that our State Legislature enter the compact.

Much has happened since 2010. Should LWVKA urge the LWVMI Board to reconsider its position of inaction on the National Popular Vote Compact?

Members at the Program Planning meeting decided to hold a separate meeting to discuss this: Thursday, **February 18**, 5:30-6:30pm. Please email [denise.hartsough@gmail.com](mailto:denise.hartsough@gmail.com) for the Zoom link. 

## Founders Day Celebration

*By Chris Kuthe*

You are cordially invited to our Founders Day Celebration on Saturday, **February 20th**, held virtually from 10am-Noon. Please attend and invite a friend who may want to join the League. This will be a free event for all via Zoom. We are pleased to have Secretary of State **Jocelyn Benson** as our keynote speaker. We will be arranging for each attendee to have a two piece box of chocolate truffles from **Confections with Convictions** to enjoy during the program. By now you should have received an invitation in email and regular mail. If you did not, please contact Chris Kuthe at [ckuthe57@yahoo.com](mailto:ckuthe57@yahoo.com) or call or text 269-501-3305. Please RSVP for the celebration by Friday, **February 12th** by mailing the RSVP slip enclosed in your invitation or emailing Chris Kuthe. We will not be able to arrange chocolates for RSVP'S received after February 12th. 

## Special Tributes

In Honor of **Denise Hartsough**

Fran Eckenrode

In Memory of **Yolanda Mitts**

Millie Lambert

In Memory of **Tenho Connable**

Paula Aldridge



# DEI Meetings & Events:

By Millie Lambert

The DEI Committee invites members to explore resources from the LWVUS: [www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-continued-learning](http://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-continued-learning)

The November/December DEI Committee received an update from D. Hartsough regarding the pilot demographics survey. Please complete the State League Democracy Agenda Survey. A discussion about webinars 7 and 8 was held. The committee also discussed the LWVKA Democracy Agenda Survey, reviewed and updated the DEI Action Plan and the Strategic Plan. Our next meeting will be February 24, at 6:30 pm via Zoom. If interested in joining this committee, please notify MerriKay Oleen-Burkey or Millie Lambert.

## February Events to Consider:

Have an event or resource that should be included? Send it to [millielambert3922@gmail.com](mailto:millielambert3922@gmail.com).

*Due to current restrictions regarding gatherings, many events have been cancelled or postponed. Please check with the event sponsor.*

There are several DEI initiatives in the area. Many of them are providing opportunities for the general public to participate. Unfortunately the event information is often not available early enough to include in this newsletter. Please be sure to follow your selected organizations, and consider liking them on Facebook and/or subscribing to the organizations on line.

**Unveiling American Genius:** Open now, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA).

Demonstrates the KIA commitment to an increasingly more inclusive and diverse representation of American artists. The exhibition will explore key stories that women, African Americans, Latinx and other artists have told about our culture, art and history.

**Online Introduction to Systemic Racism** – 2 Days: June 9-10, July 7-8, or Sept. 1-2, 2021. Register now. Cost sliding scale. Contact ERACCE [eracce.org](http://eracce.org)

## Online Video Series:

**How to Foster True Diversity and Inclusion at Work (and in Your Community)** Feb. 8, open hours. Registration required. No cost. Contact [ONEplace@kpl.gov](mailto:ONEplace@kpl.gov)

**How to Be an Upstander Rather than a Bystander** Feb. 15, open hours. Registration required. No cost. Contact [ONEplace@kpl.gov](mailto:ONEplace@kpl.gov)

**Can Beauty Open Our Hearts to Difficult Conversations?** Feb. 22 open hours. Registration required. Contact [ONEplace@kpl.gov](mailto:ONEplace@kpl.gov)

**African American Genealogy – Beginner Basics:** Feb. 11, 6:30-7:30pm, registration required. Kalamazoo Public Library (KPL) on line events. 269-553-7800

**National African American Read-in: Ancient African Civilizations:** Feb. 23, 4–6pm KPL on line events. 269-553-7800

**Urban Fiction Book Club – Married to a Hood Legend: An Urban Standalone.** Feb.23, 6–pm, registration required. KPL on line events. 269-553-7800

**For Colored Girls Book Club – Their Eyes Were Watching God:** Feb. 26, 7–8pm, registration required. KPL on line events. 269-553-7800.

**Page Turner’s Book Club – Caste: the Origins of Our Discontent,** March 1, 6:30-7:30pm, registration required. KPL on line events. 269-553-7800.

**Live Webinar: Know Your Rights** – Feb. 3, 10am–Noon or Feb. 9, 1–3pm, discussing the laws in a variety of areas that protect people with disabilities. Registration required. Disability Network of Southwest Michigan (DNSWM) 269-345-1516 [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org)

**Love Webinar: Disability and the Media** – Feb. 11, 10–11:30am or Feb. 16 1–2:30pm. Workshop will discuss portrayals of disability, how they contribute to stereotypes, and how we can move towards more respectful, authentic representations of disabilities in the media. Registration required. DNSWM 269-345-1516 [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org)

**Webmovie: Becoming Bulletproof** – Feb. 24, 1–3pm. This documentary follows a group of men and women with disabilities who come together to star in leading roles in a new western. Registration required. DNSWM 269-345-1516 [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org)

**Race in America: The 400 Year Journey History Workshop Series** – A virtual five part on demand series. Contact the Society for History and Racial Equity (SHARE) 269-381-9775.

**ERACCE Eliminating Racism & Creating/ Celebrating Equity:** Facebook page lists numerous resources including videos, film lists, articles, book lists, etc.

**Kalamazoo Community Foundation – Anti-Racism and Racial Equity Resources:** provides links to a variety of organizations as well as reading resources, etc.

**League of Women Voters US** – A variety of resources are available at this site including sixteen LWV Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Webinars which are available from March 2019 and continue to be expanded monthly. In addition a DEI Guide is available and What to Ask When Examining your Work through a DEI Lens

**Society for History and Racial Equity** – Resources are extensive and include lists of organizations, books, articles, videos, and websites. 





**GRAND RAPIDS  
MICHIGAN**



## Grand Rapids Unit

By Courtney Winell

Even though this is not an election year, the Grand Rapids Unit of the League of Women Voters will remain quite busy!

We are kicking off our 2021 bi-monthly educational series on Thursday, **February 11th** at 7 pm for a presentation on how African American women, and some men, fought for the right of women to vote in the United States. **Rhonda Craig**, President of the League of Women Voters Detroit, will be our guest presenter. This presentation will walk through the roles of African Americans in the Suffrage Movement in the United States from before the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention through the passage of the 19th Amendment. There will be time for questions following the presentation. We are excited to offer this continuation of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment. Additional information can be found at <http://evite.me/DBDGt4ynTk>.

Grand Rapids LWV members will be participating in the *Communities of Interest* project that is being led by LWVMI to ensure that all communities have an opportunity to be represented as the inaugural Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission draw congressional maps in 2021. If you are interested in assisting with this project, please contact Courtney Winell at [winell22@hotmail.com](mailto:winell22@hotmail.com).

Grand Rapids LWV members participated in the first post-election meeting with members of *Proactive* and other community organizations to discuss ways to continue to move voting rights forward in the community, keep community members civically engaged, and provide educational opportunities for the community. On the heels of such a monumental election with high voter turnout and engagement, we are hoping to keep the momentum going as we move forward. 📌

## Membership Updates

Over the holidays, we were pleased to welcome several new members!

Tiffany Dickinson  
Sarah Lexow  
Barbara Rosene

It's that time of year: We're moving members with outstanding dues to inactive status. They will no longer receive most League communications, including the membership directory (2021 edition coming soon!) and monthly newsletter.

Annual dues are \$60 for individuals, \$90 for a family, and \$10 for students. You may renew online at [www.lwvka.org](http://www.lwvka.org) by clicking the big red "Join" button (a \$2 service fee will be added to your online payment) or by mailing a check made out to LWVKA to: LWVKA, P.O. Box 2106, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106.

Questions about your membership status? Contact LWVKA Membership Chair **Jennifer Snyder**: [jsnydergaardsnyder@gmail.com](mailto:jsnydergaardsnyder@gmail.com), (269) 929-8888 (call/text).

## Calhoun County Unit

By Sue Rosko, Chair

The League of Women Voters of Kalamazoo Area Calhoun County Unit will be celebrating its first year anniversary on February 12! What a busy but fulfilling year we've had! The Unit appreciates the mentoring and leadership of Paula Manley, LWVKA and LWVMI. In addition, webinars and meetings through the Michigan and US Leagues have been most helpful in guiding us. Thank you to our leaders! We are excited to continue to learn and grow.

Now that elections have come to a close, the LWVKA Calhoun County Unit is busy putting together materials for a membership drive in February. We are hoping to gain members from across the county and building a diversity in membership. Four members of the Unit have volunteered to work on the Communities of Interest (COI) project. *Voters Not Politicians* is doing a pilot project with the COI in Calhoun County so we will be working cooperatively with them once our volunteers are trained by LWVMI. In addition, we are focusing on the other projects through Kalamazoo and Michigan. The group is working on SWOT, the Lame Duck Study and studying the various programs offered through the LWVMI. We hope to increase our awareness of and understanding of the various programs and issues. Our Voter Services chair is looking ahead to plans to continue to educate, register, and encourage voters.

Calhoun is excited about Kalamazoo's Founder's Day and hope to engage members and prospective members. We're proud to call ourselves a part of such a strong organization. 📌

**WELCOME**  
*New Members!*

# Program Planning Participants



**A BIG thank you to all 26 who participated and helped review results from 2020 programs and to plan League actions for 2021 during our January 23rd program planning meeting!**



## LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

**Jessica Reiser**, *Chairperson*  
jcreiser@comcast.net

**Susan Atkinson**, *Vice Chair*  
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**Paula Aldridge**, *Treasurer*  
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and legislative  
updates on issues  
facing older adults in  
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