



## Calendar

### October 2021

- 5 Voting Rights Presentations Training**  
via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey@  
moburkey@gmail.com
- 12 Calhoun County LWV Unit Meeting**  
7pm via Zoom, contact Sue Rosko,  
lwwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com
- 13 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting**  
10am via Zoom, contact Ken Manley @  
kenmanley@hotmail.com
- 15 The LWV Lake Michigan Region 2021 Fall**
- 16 Conference and Annual Meeting**  
"Hybrid" event at the Spring House and Spa in  
Porter, Indiana. More meeting details in September.
- 19 MICRC Public Hearing: Radisson Plaza**  
1-3:30pm and 5-8 pm, LWVKA volunteers needed.  
See page President's Column. Contact MerriKay  
Oleen-Burkey, moburkey30@gmail.com
- County Commission Meeting**  
ALPACT (Advocates and Leaders for Police and  
Community Trust) pending presentation.  
See page 4 for details.
- 25 LWVKA Board Meeting**  
6pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey  
moburkey30@gmail.com
- 27 DEI Committee Meeting**  
6:30pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen- Bur-  
key @moburkey30@gmail.com

### November 2021

- 3 MLD\* Zoom Meeting**  
for those on the committee @ 1:00 pm
- 9 Calhoun County LWV 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
- 22 LWVKA Board Meeting**  
6pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey  
moburkey30@gmail.com
- 24 DEI Committee Meeting**  
6:30pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay  
Oleen- Burkey @moburkey30@gmail.com

## President's Column

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

### Election Season

All voters in Kalamazoo County have an election on **November 2, 2021**. If you live in Portage, Kalamazoo or Parchment, you will see members of the city Council or Commission on your ballot. In all parts of the county a transportation millage renewal will be up for a vote. To see a sample ballot and learn more about your candidates or the wording for the ballot proposal go to the League's online voter guide [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org). The print voter guides are also available around the county. A list of locations can be found at the League website: [lwwka.org](http://lwwka.org).

With no incumbents running for Kalamazoo City Commission, a Candidate Forum for the eight City Commission candidates was held on September 23rd, and it can be viewed on the Public Media Network website or Facebook page as well as on the LWVKA Facebook page or website: [lwwka.org](http://lwwka.org). A Candidate Forum for the Mayoral candidates is planned for September 30th, and links will be provided at the same locations.

### Public Hearing on Redistricting Maps

On October 19th, the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) will be holding a public hearing in Kalamazoo at the Radisson Plaza Hotel. This hearing will be one of several held around the state in October to receive public comments on the newly drafted redistricting maps for state house and senate districts as well as Congressional districts. There will be two sessions on the 19th: 1-3:30pm and 5-8pm. The public is invited attend either session.

If you would like to represent the LWVKA as a greeter or computer host at one of two computer stations at these sessions, please let us know at [president@lwwka.org](mailto:president@lwwka.org).

### Review of LWVKA Policies

As the new League year began on July 1st, the LWVKA board reviewed the organization's policies: 1) Nonpartisanship; 2) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and 3) Social Media. We renewed our commitment to follow these policies in the coming year, and we encourage the membership to review these policies as well by going to the League website: [lwwka.org](http://lwwka.org). Remember that the LWVKA is a non-partisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of its members in government. While the League does not support or oppose political parties or individual candidates, it does support issues after careful study and influences public policy through education and advocacy. 

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.





News from  
National

## LWVUS Update

*Paula Manley*

LWVUS is a premiere partner for Vote Early Day on October 23rd. The League is collaborating with numerous organizations including media companies, nonprofits, technology platforms, and election administrators to encourage Americans to vote early.

A webinar on Legislative and Litigation Priorities will be presented on October 20th at 3pm. During this presentation LWVUS will offer guidance on state legislative priorities.

Interested in working on League agenda at the national level? LWVUS encourages members to apply for the LWVUS Board or Nominating Committee. On October 16th at 2pm a webinar on Join National Leadership: Information Session will answer questions about serving on the National Board and Nominating Committee, Applications to serve on the Board or Nominating Committee are due October 29th.

Remember that you may find League resources at [lww.org](http://lww.org) under League Management. If you are not receiving the biweekly League Update, sign up at [lww.org](http://lww.org). 



## LWVMI Updates

### Voter Suppression Ballot Initiative

*Denise Hartsough, VP Program*

Secure MI Vote submitted an initiative petition, a proposed law, to the State Board of Canvassers, which approved the summary's wording of it last week. Signature gathering may commence as soon as Oct. 1.

**The initiative would suppress voting insofar as it:**

- mandates that people disclose partial Social Security numbers when registering to vote.
- restricts options for registered voters to verify their identity. Acceptable forms of photo ID would include a driver's license, state ID card, passport, military ID, tribal ID, or student ID issued by a university, junior college, or community college.
- requires voters applying for an absentee ballot to include their driver's license or state ID number, along with the last four digits of their Social Security number, on their application.
- prohibits election officials from sending or providing absentee applications unless asked.
- spends \$3 million providing free photo identification.

- bans charitable contributions, including volunteer time, to help administer elections.
- allows the Legislature to adopt the law without a vote of the people and block a peoples' referendum vote after adoption.

**Protect voters' rights! DECLINE TO SIGN!**

### React to the Maps in October

*Denise Hartsough, LWVMI MICRC Monitoring Team*

The Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission (MICRC) needs your input about its draft maps in October—this is the month when the MICRC can still tweak its maps. By November, the public will only be able to urge the MICRC to use one or another entire set of maps, that is Set A or Set B for State House districts, for example.

**9/30-10/1** — MICRC will vote on DRAFT maps.

**10/4** — Draft maps available at [michigan.gov/micrc/](http://michigan.gov/micrc/)

**10/11-10/28** — Public hearings, including 10/19 in Kalamazoo at the Radisson, 1-3:30 & 5-8pm

One may testify at a hearing in person or virtually, and provide input at any time via the MICRC's portal: [michigan-mapping.org](http://michigan-mapping.org)

**11/5** — MICRC will vote on PROPOSED maps. Public may comment for 45 days but only yes or no for an entire set of maps.

**12/30** — First date MICRC may vote on FINAL maps.

### County Apportionment Advocacy

LWVKA has urged the Kalamazoo County Apportionment Commission to reconsider its decision to reduce the number of County Commission districts from 11 to 9, based on the LWVUS position in support of redistricting that results in effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities.

The population of Kalamazoo County increased by 4.5% from 2010 to 2020. Creating fewer County Commission districts with larger numbers of residents will dilute the influence of racial and linguistic minority voters, leading to a lack of representation of those citizens.

The League has also called on the Apportionment Commission to reconsider its decision to shift its meetings from 1pm to 5pm. More citizens are able to participate in the evening. Given that the Commission's composition does not include citizens at large or members of minority groups, it is essential that the Commission maximize public input.

The public may attend Apportionment Commission meetings virtually and League members may comment as individuals. The next meeting is October 6 at 1pm. The meeting link is: [us02web.zoom.us/j/84070538666](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84070538666). 

# Calhoun County Unit

By Sue Rosko

With a growing membership we are hoping to involve more members in projects or in using their skill areas to support the LWV mission. A "volunteers needed" google sheet will be sent to members. After our September membership meeting, the leadership team met to prioritize, coordinate, plan projects and organize for next steps. Our focus for the upcoming months will be the voter suppression projects at the LWV local, state and national levels, the MICRC/LWVMI Communities of Interest work, providing voter education related to mis/disinformation to our county, and providing information on voting for the November election

The environmental committee received a positive response from the county's recycling services. They intend to re-open recycling centers later this fall but have been experiencing difficulties getting workers. The Unit voted to share information on the four school bond proposals in the county ballots and to stress the LWV position on education but won't formally support proposals. Being new in the county and cognizant of the strong partisanship that is present in the county, it was decided to

educate on the issues and share the LWV positions on education in general. The new chairperson for clerk engagement for our Unit has reached out to all of our city and township clerks with a note of support, offer of assistance and interest in meeting with each of them. Our legislative interview team has had an informative and helpful interview with Representative Haadsma. Other legislators from Calhoun County have not yet responded.

We have returned to virtual board/membership meetings with the rise in Covid cases, following the LWVMI protocol. At the September Unit meeting, Judy Karandjeff updated the membership on the proposed 39 legislative voting rights bills and status of the petition. Information was shared with membership, on social media and in articles. The Calhoun County Geographical Unit will be taking part in the 2021 *Making Democracy Work Grant* and continues work with Communities of Interest. Partnerships with non-partisan organizations are continuing with the purpose of a shared calendar, assisting with events, and sharing of pertinent information and resources. ✓



21-DAY CHALLENGE:  
**DISABILITY JUSTICE**

United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region  
changethestory.org



## This October...

Save the Date for the October 21-Day Equity Challenge: Disability Justice.

Sponsored by the United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region and Disability Network of Southwest Michigan.

Take the challenge learn about disability from a position of equality and pride.

The 21-Day Disability Justice Challenge will take place throughout the month of October. It is designed to raise your awareness, increase your understanding, and shift your perspective about disability in our culture

To learn more and register for this event follow this link: <https://portal.gkuw.org/comm/SinglePageRegEvent.jsp?EventKeyHex=33383731>

## Membership

By Jennifer Snyder

We are pleased to welcome Lynne Haley of Marshall as our most recent new member!

Help keep our records up to date to receive the latest LWWKA news! Email new contact information to membership Chair Jennifer Snyder, jsyndergaard-snyder@gmail.com. 

Welcome

**NEW**

**MEMBERS!**



In Memoriam for

**Dora Lee Mann**

**1933 -2021**

## Thank You!

Thank you to those who helped with the Kalamazoo City Commission Candidate Forums:

**Gordon Evans**, WMUK-FM,  
Director of Content

**Lucy Waters**, Public Media Network

**Emma Baratta**, WMU WeVote

**Kaitlyn Dexter**, Kalamazoo College K Vote

**Shardae Jones-Chambers**

**Chris Kuthe**

**Denise Hartsough**

**Terry Hluchyj**

**Connie Ferguson**

**MerriKay Oleen-Burkey**

thank  
You

## E.V.E.N.T.S Summary

By Barb Dircks

The EVENTS committee had a great first meeting. It successfully established member's interests and areas of concern. There are many ways to reach out, volunteer and collaborate that support the upcoming political Forums, the advocacy on Kalamazoo County Apportionment Commission and minority representation, and in helping organize collaborations with other organizations in celebration of National Voter's Registration Day. The committee invites anyone interested in participating in such outreach and supporting League activities to join. We hope to build a wider social media presence, going forward and enhance the Voter Registration opportunities as we continue building a working network of partners. 

## National Voter's Registration Day

by Barb Dircks

National Voter's Registration Day is the fourth Tuesday in September every year. First created in 2012, it is a day we celebrate and hope to reach and register all first time voters, encouraging them to take advantage of the right to vote. By the time you read the Voter we will have found a new way to celebrate. The LWWKA is collaborating this year with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in setting up a tabling event at the Town and Country on Portage Rd. the evening of September 28th. We look forward to broadening our outreach and finding partners that share the goal of empowering and educating voters. Everyone's vote is their voice! 

## October 19

ALPACT (Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust), The workgroup developed "Campaign for Criminal Justice Transparency" which seeks to create a publicly accessible County online database containing arrests, criminal charges, and criminal court outcomes, queried by date, type of offense, ultimate conviction, race, gender, neighborhood, length of sentence, plea or trial, dismissal, and other characteristics of interest to the public. Link to Campaign website, The October 19th County Commission meeting will be the next opportunity to present the Open Database Resolution providing it gets put on the agenda. Supporters may be able to call during public comment time. 

# National Voter Registration Day



We also got many thank you's from those who came by:

"How nice to see you doing this!"

"I have already registered, but thanks for asking; it's a good service the League is doing."

"Thanks for doing the Voter Guide. I depended on it every election cycle."

**Many thanks to** Jennifer Snyder, Vivian Abramowitz, Linda Timm and Shardae Jones-Chambers

# Project Connect



League members assisted with a voter registration tabling event during *Project Connect* event at the Fairgrounds on Wednesday, August 25th. It is an annual outdoor event providing all types of services to the underserved members of our community.

**Many thanks to** Jennifer Snyder, Debra Johncock and Shardae Jones-Chambers.

## LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

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Join us monthly for  
informative programs  
and legislative  
updates on issues  
facing older adults in  
our community.

Visit our website or Facebook page for  
meeting details and membership information:  
[www.kcasi.net](http://www.kcasi.net)



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