



The VOTER

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS of DETROIT
QUARTERLY e-NEWSLETTER

After a very busy Summer "break," the Detroit League resumes its' monthly membership meetings, both In-Person and via Zoom: September 19th, October 17th, and November 21st, (no meetings in December.)

Catch up with this Summer's Detroit League highlights and upcoming volunteer opportunities, below.

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COMMUNIQUE

Deborah Lynn Bunkley
LWVDetroit Communications
Coordinator

*Dear Members and
Friends of the League
of Women Voters of
Detroit,*

The LWV-US' August 8th "Poetry and Politics" event held in Detroit was a wonderful success. While the planning brought its challenges, the results were world-class and set a standard that should certainly be duplicated.

We can all take pride in how well the League of Women Voters was represented and how articulately its message was delivered. Hosting representatives from the Oakland Area, Dearborn-Dearborn Heights, and Grand Rapids leagues was also a privilege. Furthermore, having the LWV-US' CEO and President select Detroit, over the four other candidate cities for special LWV-US August 8th Day of Action events, confirms that our work is truly making an impact.

I would also like to highlight that both Click-On-Detroit Channel 4 and CBS Detroit covered the event in real time.

Thank you to everyone for your dedication and hard work.

Poetry and Politics

A Detroit Celebration of the Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act

by Debra Henning

Across the U.S., members of the League of Women Voters came together on August 8 in celebration of the anniversary of the *Voting Rights Act*, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in August 1965. From California to the Carolinas, local Leagues organized events to promote voter engagement, education, and turnout ahead of the midterm elections. In addition to events held nationwide, LWV US hosted [five hallmark events](#) honoring the historical contributions of American cities to the history of the *Voting Rights Act*.

Among the five was Detroit, honored for its history of Black civic leadership and the power of communities to expand access to the ballot. Detroit, where 125,000 participants and spectators joined together on June 23, 1963 in Detroit's Walk to Freedom; where churchgoers raised thousands of dollars to purchase and donate a fleet of 15 "rolling churches"—station wagons used to carpool thousands of boycotters during the Montgomery Bus Boycott; Detroit is where LWV Board President, **Sania Irwin**, and **Celina Stewart**, LWV US CEO, joined League members and community residents on August 8 for a day of Poetry and Politics.

In a tradition that unites the voices of Walt Whitman and Amanda Gorman, Detroit's poet laureate, [Jessica Care Moore](#) and Detroit singer-songwriter, [Audra Kubat](#), along with [Faith Coats](#), winner of InsideOut's 2025 CityWide Poets Scholarship, and [Kamelya Youssef](#), Poet-in-Residence at InsideOut, joined local political activists to bring the power of poetry and activism to the work of building a more inclusive democracy. Sharing their own poetry, Faith and Kamelya gave life to the concept of the poet as a political player. As Jessica and Audra teamed up to lead a poetry workshop, participants transformed letters to an editor or politician into a group poem which captured the issues and passions expressed by the writers, revealing, to the surprise of many, the poet that lives in each of us.

The panel discussion, *Threading the Needle: Power, Politics, Creativity*, brought together activists **Melinda Billingsley** with Voters Not Politicians, **Aja Gaddie** from 1000 Women Strong, and **Elizabeth Whittaker Walker**, consultant and founder of Raymond Whittaker Design to discuss the challenges of community activism and the strategies they use to creatively promote awareness, collaborate, and engage residents in electoral politics.

Kudos to **Gen VanCleve**, LWV Regional Organizer for the Midwest (and a slam poet, herself) who was the creative force behind the event and to the LWV Detroit team who helped LWV-US bring the event together: **Deborah Bunkley**, **Roberta Deering**, **Debra Henning**, **Sonya Pouncy**, **JoAnn Spencer** and **Sheryl Theriot**. Thank you, as well, to [Inside Out](#)

[Literary Arts](#) and to [Source Booksellers](#) for their support of Poetry and Politics. Coverage of the event by Channel Four, [Click on Detroit](#) helped the League of Women Voters promote greater civic engagement and mobilize voters.



L to R **Jessica Care Moore**, Detroit's Poet Laureate, and **Celina Stewart**, LWV US CEO



L to R **Sania Irwin**, LWV US President and **Jessica Care Moore**, Detroit's Poet Laureate, with participants at the Poetry & Politics August 8th event in Detroit





The JACKSON HOME, Greenfield Village at The Henry Ford Museum -- Honoring the home's place in the Alabama activism that secured the passage of the Voting Rights Act. By Rhonda Craig

On September 24, our league had a special tour of the **Jackson Home at the Henry Ford Museum**. In addition to the Museum personnel, we were fortunate to be escorted by the Educator Outreach Specialist (my daughter **Andaiye Spencer**) who was very helpful in getting us to places we needed to go and answering questions. The tour was very informative and the docents were extremely knowledgeable, answering questions with ease. It is always especially poignant to see, in person, objects tied to historical events than to just read about them. It brought the events to life. I believe that everyone was impressed as I was with the tour. Perhaps we can do it again.

Voter Registration of Naturalized Citizens at the Federal Courthouse in Detroit has slowed to half the registrations we had last year this time. We continue to partner and show up when requested, because we are committed to this process and receive praise from our participants about being there. As of September, we have registered 217.

Get Out The Vote Postcard Campaign has gone well. League volunteers came together for two days in June to complete 80% of the postcards. Volunteers met again Sept. 10 to complete the remainder of the postcards. 350 postcards were mailed two weeks prior to the August 4 Primary and 333 postcards will be mailed the 2nd week of Oct. 2026 prior to the Nov. 3 General Election.

In October, Detroit League volunteers will distribute 3,000 printed **Voter Guides** from the LWV Michigan to all branches of the Detroit and Hamtramck public libraries before the November election.

The Detroit League's **Youth Engagement Grant** was approved by the LWV Michigan's committee for \$500 and we have the potential of 8 students to participate. Thanks to Debra Henning for her connection at Detroit Public School Summer Program, we were able to arrange a zoom call with the students to encourage their interest in the



From the desk of
Voter Services
Betty Burdette

program. We currently have one student participating in the program to date, but we have invited them all to the League's Sept. 19 membership meeting.

On September 15, the Detroit League and the Dearborn-Dearborn Heights League were invited to register voters for **National Voter Registration Day** at the Henry Ford Museum (photos below.)

Upcoming voter registration events are planned at the Main Detroit Public Library and voter education speaking events at local churches for October. More information in the events calendar below and coming soon.

Photo below:

Detroit & Dearborn-Dearborn Heights League Members at The Henry Ford [museum] on Sept. 15th, **National Voter**

Registration Day

L to R: **George Cook; Michele Clark; Laura Dudgeon; Connie Mitchell**



VOTING IS CRUCIAL TO OUR RESPONSIBILITIES
AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT NATION.

Today is National Voter Registration Day.

The Henry Ford believes that voting and learning about the election process only strengthen our democracy.

We encourage all people to register to vote and fulfill their civic responsibility.

Scan the QR code below to find out if you are registered to vote!



Wayne County Leagues Take Action

by **Debra Henning**, LWVDetroit Advocacy Committee Chair

In recent months LWV Detroit has joined with all Wayne County Leagues in unified efforts to protect voter rights and to enhance public transportation.

In order to protect the vote of Michigan citizens who would be disenfranchised if "SAVE Act" legislation becomes law, the LWV Detroit joined the three other Wayne County Leagues in support of a Resolution calling for Wayne County Commissioners to take a stand against proof-of-citizenship mandates. Responding to the letters from a coalition of thirty-six organizations, including all Wayne County Leagues, the Commissioners joined a growing list of local governments opposing what advocates have termed the 'Michigan SAVE Act.'

Prior to the August 4th Primary Elections, LWV Detroit, in unison with LWV Northwest Wayne County, LWV Dearborn-Dearborn Heights, and LWV Grosse Pointe, sent a *Take Action* alert urging all voters to become informed about the Wayne County Transit Authority Proposal and to Vote YES in support of the millage proposal. The Transit proposal, which aims to encourage new ridership and the development of a public transit ethos, passed with 67% of voters approving the millage proposal.



Photo above: Detroit League Members attending the LWV-US NATIONAL CONVENTION in Columbus Ohio.
L-R: Roberta Deering, JoAnn Spencer, Melody Harden, Greg Ptucha

LWV 2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION Reports From Detroit League Delegates *Melody Harden & JoAnn Spencer*

Melody Harden:

I attended the LWV's national convention for the first time. It was pretty interesting meeting people from all over the country and learning what got them interested in LWV. The convention had multiple breakout sessions that we divided among the Detroit delegation. I attended sessions on fundraising, a proposal for LWVUS to concur with a local chapter regarding privatizing healthcare, digital media trends, and recognizing harmful norms in white-dominated spaces. The business side of the convention included voting to update the bylaws regarding membership and emergency powers. There were also some amendments that were defeated that included a heated discussion that then involved using the parliamentary rules of procedure to change what determined a quorum for voting purposes. A lot of information was packed into a few days. I learned a lot. I met a few people. And I left with a couple of ideas to bring back to the chapter to explore. It was worth the trip.

JoAnn Spencer:

I had the privilege of attending the League of Women Voters of the United States 2026 National Convention in Columbus, OH June 26-28. It was an honor to have been selected to serve as a voting delegate from the State of Michigan, along with Melody Harden, Roberta Deering and Greg Ptucha. It was an opportunity to meet LWV members from all over the country, to hear what they've been advocating for, and to help determine the League's priorities for the next 2 years. We considered the slate of LWVUS officers, directors, and the nominating committee for 2026-2028, as well as proposed amendments to the bylaws. There were inspiring speeches by incoming LWVUS President Sania Irwin and CEO Celina Stewart. However, what I enjoyed the most were the breakout sessions where there were presentations from various leagues. Members of LWVMN-Edina discussed the city's history from the most anti-Semitic capital of the US (1946) to the creation of various racial & gender justice action committees after the death of George Floyd. Particularly the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (www.ilrc.org) whose Red Card Program helps immigrants assert their guaranteed 4th, 5th, 10th, and 14th Amendment rights. The card is available in over 50 different languages to both citizens and non-citizens. I also learned

about LWVUS' long-standing support for the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC), "a non-partisan agreement among adopting states to award each states' electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the most votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia combined." This is one path to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for the election of the President and ultimately abolishing the Electoral College. Nineteen jurisdictions, with 222 electoral votes, have already passed the NPVIC, with NV, AZ, WI, MI, PA, & NH poised to do so. These states have a total of 48 electoral votes, which would total the 270 electoral votes needed to elect the President. The LWVUS' 2028 National Convention will be in Washington DC. I hope more of us will be able to attend.



September 14, 2026

Message from JoAnn Spencer
Chair LWVDetroit Membership Committee

Greetings Warriors,

First, I'd like to say how much I appreciate everyone's efforts in introducing folks to the work of our League and increasing its' membership.

As of June 1, 2026, we've added the following 12 new members to our roster:

Janine Bauchat, Shunte Sanders Beasley, Michele Clark, Tierra Jones, Madeline Kitt, Sheila O'Brien, Marie Quaker, Dave Robinson, Carolyn Siebers, Sonja Stuckey, Raven Thompson, Marie Vitale

I'd also like to welcome back those who've renewed their memberships as of June 1, 2026. Your commitment is very much appreciated.

Janifer Binion, Cheryl Bukoff, Deborah Bunkley, Betty Burdette, Carolyn Davis, Lillian Dean, Roberta Deering, Pauline Feltner, Melody Harden, Laura Isom, Myra Jackson, Elois Moore, Anne Parker, Greg Ptucha, Susan Slattery, JoAnn Spencer, Fulton Smith, Jr.

LWV DETROIT Upcoming EVENTS & MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 19th MEMBERSHIP MEETING

BOTH IN-PERSON & VIA ZOOM

10:00AM to 11:30AM

Saturday, September 19th, 2026

LWV Detroit Membership Meetings are open to everyone!

Special Presentation by **Eric Lupher**, President, Citizens Research Council of Michigan
SHOULD MICHIGAN VOTERS CALL A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION IN 2026?

In-Person at: The Siena Literacy Center

16888 Trinity St., Detroit

(near where Grand River and McNichols come together on the NW side)

Via Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84291416400>

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LEAGUE / LIBRARY On-Line Forum

with the Knapp Branch, Detroit Public Library

Tuesday, October 13th, 6:00PM

The Need for Transparency in Michigan's Government

Craig Mauger of the Detroit News

(evite coming soon)

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CANDIDATES FORUM

Highland Park Mayoral & City Council Candidates

Tentatively scheduled for

October 17th at 3 pm

To be held, in person, at

Faith Tabernacle Church, 16548 Hamilton Ave, Highland Park MI. 48203.

(more information coming soon)

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The next regular LWVDetroit Board meeting will be held

Tuesday, October 6th, at 6:00PM via Zoom

Board meetings are open to all League Members

contact LWVDETROIT@GMAIL.COM for more information

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See below for two additional events in which LWVDetroit is partnering





MEET YOUR CANDIDATES

Detroit Public Schools Community District CANDIDATES SPEED-DATING DINNER & DIALOGUE



30+ DPSCD CANDIDATES.
5 OPEN SEATS.
CANDIDATES COME TO YOUR TABLE.

Real conversation. No stage. No soundbites.
Detroit voters and their candidates — face to face.



All candidates have been invited.



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2026 · 5:00-8:30 PM

Dinner starts at 5:00 p.m.; program at 5:30 p.m.



Location: IBEW Local 58

1358 Abbott St, Detroit, MI 48226



**Parking Lot and Building Entrance
off Porter St.**



R.S.V.P at Eventbrite only by 9/28/26

Admission is FREE, but reservations are required.

Register online at: <https://bit.ly/4xuc9Ac> or scan this code:



Presented by CitizenDetroit and Detroit Alumnae Chapter · Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

In partnership with:



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.®
Tau Alpha Omega Chapter

Saturday,
Oct. 3, 2026
11 AM - 1 PM
5201 Woodward
Detroit, MI

*Voting Rights Act
19th Amendment*



Middle Class Erasure
Dwight Thomas, Teamsters Local 214 Secretary Treasurer

2026 Voter Education What's At Stake? *Discussion & Tips*



Corruption & Dark Money

Elder Leslie, Director of Faith & Justice
Michigan United



Voter Apathy

Christopher Ford, Strategist & Organizer
Voter Access For All



Save Act & Household Votes

Dr. Liette Gidlow, Wayne State University
Professor of History



FREE! Brought to You By:
The Detroit Public Library (Main Branch) &
Healing Word Artists



Including:
"Just A Bill"
Parody

LWV of DETROIT

...ALL VOLUNTEER...

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OFFICERS & LEADERS

July 2026 - June 2027

Leadership Team:

- Communications Coordinator – **Deborah Bunkley**
 - Facilitator – **Roberta Deering**
 - League Liaison – **Sheryl Theriot**

Secretary – **Rhonda Craig**

Treasurer – **Melody Harden**

Membership Chair – **JoAnne Spencer**

Voter Services Chair – **Betty Burdette**

Directors At-Large: **Janifer Binion, Carolyn Davis, Debra Henning, Anne Kuhn**

LWV of DETROIT COMMITTEE CHAIRS & TEAM LEADERS 2025-2026:

Advocacy Committee – **Debra Henning, Chair**

Budget Committee – **Melody Harden, Chair**

By-Laws Committee -- **Rhonda Craig, Chair**

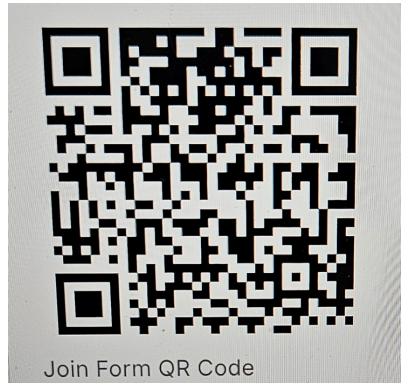
Candidates Forum Team – **Rhonda Craig, Team Leader**

Communications Team – **Deborah Bunkley, Team Leader**

Fundraising Committee – **Anne Parker, Chair**

League/Library On-Line Forum – *Cheryl Bukoff, Team Leader*
Membership Committee – *JoAnn Spencer, Chair*
Nominating Committee – *Anne Parker, Chair*
Observer Corps Committee – *Roberta Deering, Chair*
Speakers Bureau – *Rhonda Craig, Team Leader*
Voter Service Committee – *Betty Burdette, Chair*
Vote411 Team – *Deborah Bunkley, Team Leader*
Webmaster -- *Maria Urquidi*

If you are interested in volunteering for any of these committees or teams, or if you wish to contact any of the Board members or Committee Chairs, please e-mail lwvdetroit@gmail.com and put the topic or Committee name in the subject line. Thank you!



SUPPORT THE LEAGUE!

The League of Women Voters of Detroit represents the geographic areas of the cities of **Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park**, and welcomes members from everywhere!

For more information, visit the League of Women Voters of Detroit's website at:

<https://lwvdetroit.org/>

Join the League of Women Voters on-line at:

<https://portal.lvv.org/>

The **League of Women Voters** is a nationwide, nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. The LWV works to empower voters and defend democracy through advocacy and education. The League neither endorses nor opposes candidates or political parties. Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to everyone.



League of Women Voters of Detroit | P.O. Box 2503 | Detroit, MI 48202 US

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