



The May Voter

A publication of the League of Women Voters
of Dearborn – Dearborn Heights

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Editor: **Betsy Cushman**

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 19, 7 p.m.

Undercroft at Christ Episcopal Church

Democracy and the August 2 Primary

Will you vote?

- **What's on the August 2 ballot in Dearborn & Dearborn Heights?**
- **Why should we try hard to Get Out the Vote?**
- **What information do the Voters need to be energized to vote and what information do they need in the Voter Guide to help them make informed decisions?**

This is the follow-up to the April 21 Panel Discussion on Preparing for the 2016 Elections, and will be held in the same location at Christ Episcopal Church. Thank you to Mary Jo Durivage for making arrangements! All members and friends are welcome!



SAVE THE DATE



The Annual Meeting Will Be Held

Wednesday, June 22, Park Place

5:30 Doors Open • 6 Social/Open Buffet • 6:30 Program

Speaker: **The Hon. Richard Bernstein**

Associate Justice, Michigan Supreme Court



President's Message – Betsy Cushman

Sometimes I dream that our League membership represents all corners of Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, and the great diversity within. I dream that we are in coalitions with diverse organizations which work together and with elected officials to improve our environment, our schools, our justice system, and the efficiency with which we accomplish these changes. Our communities are educating us – students, adults, seniors – about the major policy issues of the day, and we have become informed voters who fully participate in our democracy. Every one of us feels empowered by voting; that our vote makes a difference.

Sigh. We're not there yet, but we, the LWVDDH, are moving in that direction. Our current membership is 95. A year or two ago, it was 56. Our membership is becoming more diverse. We have studied the schools; we have attended and the LWVMI has testified at DEQ hearings to work for better air quality in our area. We will be studying the funding of state government in the coming year, thanks to the outstanding preliminary work being done by a State League Taxation Study Committee. Members can respond to LWV Calls for Action by contacting their elected representatives.

The League works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. We don't decide by emotion, but by careful study and discussion, and that takes time. In our society, time for study and reflection is hard to come by. Our membership growth is exciting, as is the diversity among our new members, and both reflect the recognition in our communities that the League can and does effect positive change, that League of Women Voters membership and involvement is one way to bring about a healthier participation in civic affairs.

As our membership grows, our committees need to grow too. The heart of the League is Voter Education (Voter Service). The great turnout at the general membership meeting on April 21 followed by 8 members driving to Lansing on April 30 for the Democracy Agenda Workshop demonstrate the interest. We want to encourage more people to become politically active, to educate themselves about the candidates and issues on the ballot, and to vote...to talk to their families, their friends, their organizations about the need to become informed and to vote. And yes, to vote in the Primary Election!

Speaking of the Primary on August 2, did you know there are 22 candidates running for 4 seats for non-incumbent Circuit Court judgeships? The Primary will cut this number down to 8 candidates running for 4 seats. Do you want the most qualified judges? The Justice System needs the best! I don't know most of these candidates, but through the Voter Guide, VOTE411.org, their websites, I hope to learn a lot before August 2. I see I have run out of room to say more. That Editor is a stickler. (Which reminds me, we need a Voter Editor.)

Abruptly yours, Betsy

Welcome New Members!

Shirley Sherman
Abdullah Hammoud
Hussein Dabajeh
Mallak Beydoun
Ghida Dagher
Jim Woodyard

Mike & Dalal Sareini
Fatima Nkata
Betty Kohl
Adel Mozip & Amal Gabbar
Judy Buck AAUW
Gloria Trotman



Thank you !

Thank you to all who attended the April 21 Meeting, and to the excellent member panelists, Jackie Washington, Tony Perry and Ghida Dagher. Thank you to Mary Jo Durivage and those who helped with arrangements. Great discussion! A follow-up is planned for May 19.

Speaking of VOTE411.org, thank you to Jennifer Teller and Layla Elabed for attending the helpful State Workshop on VOTE411 in Lansing with me. Jennifer has already posted on VOTE411 (ballot proposals for the May 3 Election).

Thank you to Layla Elabed, Elayne Boismier, Mary Jo Durivage, Judy Carty, Marlyne Kilbey, Ann Crampton, and Jim & EmmaJean Woodyard for attending the Democracy Agenda State Workshop 2 weeks later. Apparently, it was fabulous! (I was on vacation.) We will follow-up on what you all learned!

Thank you to Mona Hammoud and Jennifer Teller for serving as a committee to audit our books from 2014-15. And to Jennifer for agreeing to serve on the Board of Directors!

Preparing for the 2016 Elections – Part 2

On **Thursday, May 19, at 7 pm** in Fellowship Hall (basement) of Christ Episcopal Church, there will be a meeting to follow up on ideas from the April 21:

- Know Your Voting Rights cards (ACLU) in English & Arabic
- PSA Videos to ‘Get Out the Vote’ in the Primary & General Elections, to educate on ‘What’s on the Ballot’ (VOTE411.org), other helpful topics
- Mobilize HFC students & others to go door-to-door to deliver nonpartisan educational information about voting and what’s on the ballot
- Partner with many organizations to inform on topics like “Myths about Voting”, “What’s on the Ballot,” etc.
- Spread the word about VOTE411.org! Bumper stickers, Vote buttons, videos.



League of Women Voters
Dearborn Dearborn Heights

2016 Youth Voter Registration Project

In partnership with



- 736 student voter applications
- 12 high schools
- 42 classrooms
- 6 schools with Registration tables for students to visit
- 23 volunteers
- 25 municipal clerk offices

Enthusiastic students and team members combined to make this a very successful year registering high school students to vote. Over a 2-month period, March 1 to April 25, 2016, the League of Women Voters of Dearborn-Dearborn in partnership with ACCESS in Dearborn visited 12 high schools where we visited 42 classrooms and set-up registration tables in 6 settings.

New this year:

- Giveaway pens with 6 messages about VOTE411.org / voting
- 4 classes in 2 Ombudsman (alternative) high schools; 1 new Cyber School (Westwood Cyber)
- Packets assembled by League members at Henry Ford Village Retirement Village in a one-day marathon
- We began with a 5-minute personal “Why You Should Vote” presentation to empower and enthuse the students, often by a prominent African-American or Arab-American member.
- 1 visit we were helped by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority sisters

We delivered applications personally to Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Detroit and Inkster. The others were mailed weekly as collected. 45% of our students lived in Dearborn, 20% in Dearborn Heights, 12% in Detroit, and 5% in Inkster. The remaining live in Redford, Taylor, Westland, Romulus, Canton, Lincoln Park, Southfield, Allen Park, Livonia, Farmington Hills, Garden City, Waterford, Orchard Lake, Oak Park, Southgate, Novi, Wayne, Belleville, Plymouth, Wixom, and Ecorse.

- 336 Dearborn
- 152 Dearborn Heights
- 86 Detroit
- 39 Inkster
- 12 Redford Township

YVR Project Coordinator was Betsy Cushman with major help from Elayne Boismier, Judy Carty, and Mary Castonguay.
Betsy Cushman, LWV-DDH President (report)

Making Democracy Work



LWV-MI Natural Resources Update

Excerpted from Suzanne Dixon's Report in Lansing April 30, 2016

Pipelines Brief history: An Enbridge pipeline leaked 1 million gallons of heavy crude into the Kalamazoo River in 2010. After safety reports on Michigan pipelines were released, The State of Michigan formed a Task Force, and in May 2015, **LWVMI supported the Task Force's review**, citing the great threat of pollution and the need for the state to intervene in oversight. Enbridge claimed the inspection data was too complex for state investigators to understand, and that interpretation could mislead the public. The state formed a Pipeline Advisory Board, and the Attorney General demanded Enbridge release inspection reports. This is slowly being released at this time. Michigan has a binding agreement with Enbridge to operate the pipeline. In order to shut it down, they must have case.

Enbridge lobbied to introduce legislation to exempt their industry from FOIA requests based on national security. **LWVMI opposed HB 4540**. The exemption for pipelines has been removed from the proposed bill.

Pipelines are generally under the oversight of a federal agency called the Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. Both Senators Stabenow and Peters have been strong advocates for the Great Lakes, and introduced a bill, passed by the Senate, which would increase funding to improve oversight, declare the Great Lakes a high consequence area affording more protection, improve oil spill response plans to address ice cover, and require critical reviews of pipeline age and integrity. On April 19, 2016, Peters and Stabenow called on the State to move quickly to complete a transparent analysis of Mackinac Straights Pipeline 5. State Senator Rick Jones has introduced **SB 880, supported by LWVMI**, to prohibit any new underwater oil pipelines in Great Lakes waters, among other provisions.

The U.S. State Department has authority over international pipelines. 6 pipelines under the St. Clair River (just south of Port Huron) recently changed ownership, and the new company, Plains LPG Services, sought reauthorization for them. 4 have not been used for many years (pipelines not in use are also not inspected), and 2 are nearly 100 years old. This reauthorization could permit oil transport. The **LWVMI urged the State of Michigan** to respond to the State Department during the open comment hearing, and a positive outcome was that the State did oppose the St. Clair pipeline in April. **LWVMI also received LWVUS permission** to respond directly to the State Dept. about our concerns. [Good news on April 28: LPG withdrew its request!]

Fracking LWVMI opposes fracking without strict regulation. We joined LWVUS in October 2015 in a letter to the Science Advisory Board for a reevaluation of their determination on the safety of fracking. LWVUS has supported a moratorium to allow for more study and added protection, but not a ban. LWVMI supported HB 5366-5373 in February which would include full disclosure of chemicals used, notice and hearings, right of local government to set more stringent standards and permitting of large water withdrawals.

The oil and gas industry is primarily regulated at the state level. President Obama recently expressed concern that the state may be too close to industry. That would certainly be true in Michigan. Lease money derived from drilling on state land funds our Natural Resources Trust Fund which buys and protects lands and funds the DEQ.

For more information on this report, and more, go to the LWVMI website at www.lwvmi.org

The League of Women Voters is a national, nonpartisan political organization which encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership is open to men and women citizens of voting age. For information go to www.lwvddh.org or call 313-278-6476.



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We maintain an office at Christ Episcopal Church, 120 N. Military, Dearborn 48124.

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