

## League of Women Voters of Leelanau County

### Advocacy – What You Can Do to Support Migrants in Leelanau County

Prepared by Julie Tarr

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Agriculture and tourism are vital to Leelanau County, contributing significantly to the local economy and community. A significant portion of this workforce comprises migrant and seasonal workers, many of whom have become integral to the community, enriching its cultural fabric and supporting the local economy. The League of Women Voters of Leelanau County has conducted forums highlighting these workers' challenges, including housing, healthcare, and education access. LWVLC's efforts aim to improve the quality of life for migrant workers and ensure a stable labor force for local farms, restaurants, and tourism.

Many in the local migrant community have classifications that allow them to reside in the country for a limited period without granting permanent residency or citizenship. One primary form of temporary status is **Temporary Protected Status (TPS)**, a humanitarian program established by the U.S. Congress in 1990. It provides temporary legal status and work authorization to nationals from designated countries experiencing conditions that make it unsafe or challenging for their citizens to return. Recently, President Trump signed executive orders that reversed protections certain migrants had under prior administrations. Although migrant deportation has been focused in large cities thus far, migrants in our community no longer feel safe, and seasonal workers may not travel to Leelanau County because of fear of deportation.

In a recent forum hosted by the League of Women Voters of Leelanau County, in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of The Grand Traverse Area, attorneys representing migrants urged everyone to know their rights. Primarily, everyone has the right to remain silent, and red cards, which explain that you wish to remain silent and speak to a lawyer, are available online and can be presented to an ICE officer if stopped. Further, anyone fearing deportation should retain the services of a lawyer ahead of time so that they are ready to have a lawyer in case they are detained by ICE.

Following the forum, the League's advocacy committee met and developed several action steps and ways League members and the public can support migrants in our community. These are recommended by the Immigration Law and Justice Network, ACLU Michigan, and other national and regional coalitions working on migrant rights. Please note that you should take these action steps as an individual and not state that you are representing the League of Women Voters.

1. **Phone Calls:** Making personal calls to elected officials can be the best way to get attention on issues that matter. For people comfortable using a phone app, the 5 Calls App is available on the [Google App Store](#) or [Apple App Store](#). People who prefer not to use an app can use the

website (<https://5calls.org/>) and type in their address to get a list of their elected officials. Leelanau County's US Representative Jack Bergman's Traverse City Office phone is 231-944-7633.

2. **Email and Postcards:** If you cannot get through by phone, other options include sending an email or postcard to your representative. Leelanau County's Representative Jack Bergman's email is [Bergman.constituent@mail.house.gov](mailto:Bergman.constituent@mail.house.gov), and the Traverse City office is located at 1396 Douglas Drive, Suite 22B, Traverse City, MI 49696.
3. **In-Person Town Hall Meetings and/or District Office Visits:**  
Getting time with elected officials is a powerful way to share your expectations of your elected officials. It is important to stay informed on bills impacting our local economy, including legislation that would take away school meals, disaster relief, and public health funding. Focus on personal stories about immigrants in Michigan using evidence-based numbers: 6.9% of all Michigan residents are immigrants (about 700,000 people), and just 5% of those people are considered to be out of status and/or here without proper documentation. Another 7% of Michigan's population is second-generation, meaning they have one or more parents who are immigrants. That's almost 14% of our state with a recent immigration story!
4. **Write letters to the editor:**  
Leelanau Enterprise- <https://www.leelanaunews.com/opinion/letters-editor-2>  
Record-Eagle-[https://www.record-eagle.com/site/forms/online\\_services/letter/](https://www.record-eagle.com/site/forms/online_services/letter/)  
Or another news outlet of your choice.
5. **Protests & Petitions:** In addition to participating with the League of Women Voters of Leelanau County (<https://www.lwvleelanau.org>), there are other ways to get involved, including volunteering, attending events, and signing petitions.
6. **Stay Informed:** The League of Women Voters of Leelanau County sends out eBlasts on upcoming events and forums, as well as a monthly Voter newsletter. Join our organization by going to the website above and signing up to receive mailings.
7. **Donate:** Please consider donating to one of the many local organizations that help migrants. Immigration, Law & Justice Michigan provides immigration legal services. Donations can be made directly on its website: <https://www.iljmi.org/>.

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