



## Your Local League Update

September 26, 2020

# Newsletter is back!

### Census

Did you complete your Census? If not, there's still time before a Census worker visits your home. Go to [2020Census.gov](https://2020Census.gov) to let the Census Bureau know some basic information about your dwelling--how many people, their ages and gender, their ethnicity, and whether you rent or own your home. Easy and takes two minutes! The federal government recently announced the Census will conclude September 30, so make sure you and your family are counted and that you let other folks know we're nearing the end. It's important to get an accurate count of everyone--babies, too!--since every person who is not counted means our state loses \$18,000 over 10 years! That's money for healthcare, education, jobs, energy, and more! Let's make sure everyone is counted!

**HEY,  
MICHIGAN!  
YOUR VOICE  
DOES COUNT.**

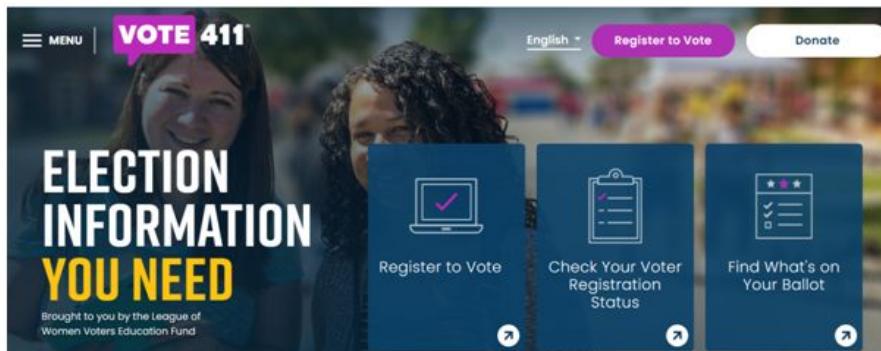
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### Constitution Day goes virtual & expands three counties

Constitution Day is September 17 of every year! League of Women Voters of E.U.P. helped lead the first Chippewa County Constitution day for our community's families and students six years ago. Since then there have been improvements and adaptations to the program to better engage students with the constitution and legal professionals.

This year our celebration will be virtual and available for students in Chippewa, Mackinac, and Luce counties. The movement to foster civic muscles in our youth is growing! Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice McCormack will be the keynote speaker! There will be a Goose Chase, simplified Constitution, legal cases, and numerous activities that teachers may choose. Stay tuned for the after-action report!

## VOTE411 goes live September 19th



Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is a "one-stop-shop" for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific information.

The EUP league is busy updating the VOTE411.org site with local candidate race information for Chippewa, Mackinac and Luce counties. These and all state level races and referenda will be available starting September 19<sup>th</sup>, to coincide with absentee ballot mailings. A series of questions are being sent out to candidates in local races that have competition (two or more candidates running for one position). This will include Chippewa County Commissioners and local township offices up for election this year. Their answers will be included with the ballot information on VOTE411.org.

## Ballot Boxes Near You

There's a lot of news about the United States Postal Service. We are committed to protecting one of America's most invaluable institutions, especially since we're a rural community that depends on our USPS for medicine, veteran's documentation, and that much needed online shopping purchase! But if you are worried about your ballot making it on-time and want to physically see the absentee envelope enter a clerk's box, then we have great news for you!

[This link will help you find where you should drop off your absentee ballot!](#)

Find your township/city and then find your ballot dropbox. Easy!

DID  
YOU  
KNOW

City Hall has a drop box located in the back of the building by the north entrance.

For your convenience you can just pull up in your vehicle and drop off your water bill, tax payment, absentee ballot or parking ticket any time of the day.



## Candidate Forums

Our League is working hard practicing and planning for a Chippewa County Commission candidate forum for voters for the November 3rd election. Stay tuned for a date and link to the forum--it will be virtual, which means you can watch it from home!

We're also working with LWV of Leelanau County to host the 107 house district candidate forum. Stay tuned for Zoom link and date!

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

## Candidate Forums Coming Soon!



## Learning about FOIA

One of our local League members decided to learn more about law enforcement policies in Chippewa County and Sault Sainte Marie Marie. Prepared with questions about policy, use of force, and training topics, she met with the county sheriff and the chief of police. After a heated conversation with the chief of police--he stated in the meeting how he writes and approves police policies and only sends his policy to the city manager as a "courtesy,"--she did a Freedom of Information Act request to learn about police policies in her city. After the FOIA request was denied, we made a statement at the Sault City Commission meeting to stress our commitment to transparency in government and citizens' right to know the policies in their government. The city commission voted to release a redacted version, so we are waiting and looking forward to learning more about police policies in the city. To read the *Sault News* article and their reporting of what each of the city commissioners said during the meeting, [click here](#). To watch the recording of the commission meeting, [click here \(fast forward to minute 32.\)](#).

## State of Michigan league advocacy & actions

### Appeal to Michigan Supreme Court re absentee ballots

The League has asked the Michigan Supreme Court to reverse the Court of Appeals decision upholding the requirement that absentee ballots be received by local clerks by 8 pm on Election Day. That requirement will disenfranchise tens of thousands of voters who exercise their constitutional right under Proposal 3 to vote absentee by mail at any time during the 40 days prior to an election.

### VOTE411 promotion

The state league has been given money from the ACLU to promote VOTE411. They are working on plans to promote the site statewide, to ensure all voters know how to access this non-partisan information about the upcoming general election.

## Bills to help Absentee Voters

The majority of disenfranchised voters in the statewide primary (August 8th) could easily have had their votes counted with small changes in law, preliminary data on rejected ballot numbers show.

Of the approximately 10,600 rejected ballots, more than 8,600 (over 80 percent) were due to signature verification issues or late arrival – issues that could be fixed by bills already introduced in the state legislature. “The data demonstrates that thousands of people who cast otherwise valid votes were not able to participate in last week’s election solely because the Legislature failed to act ahead of the primary,” said Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. “With turnout and absentee ballot numbers expected to double or even triple in November, we could be looking at tens of thousands of Michigan citizens disenfranchised if the legislature again fails to act.” Benson has been vocal in her calls on the Michigan Legislature to take up a series of election reform bills that would provide additional support to clerks and voters ahead of the November election. These include:

- HB 5987 would allow mailed ballots to count if postmarked by Election Day even if they arrive up to two days later.
- HB 5991 would require clerks to contact voters if the signature on the absentee ballot does not match the one on their registration.

If you would like to make your voice heard about these two bills and absentee voting, please email, call, meet with, or write to [MI House Speaker Lee Chatfield](#) and [Senator Wayne Schmidt](#).

## How to join

Are you not a member yet? We'd love to help you become an official defender of democracy helping our community feel empowered to vote! Joining is easy! Volunteering is meaningful to making democracy work. [Join here and join a team of passionate democracy champions.](#)

## How to donate

Your donations help us immensely to deliver valuable voter information and services to communities in the Eastern Upper Peninsula.



We are hard at work conducting public forums that educate voters about the recent changes in our voter laws, hosting virtual candidate forums so that voters can more easily compare and decide on their choices, and writing to new and young voters about how to vote and where to find election information. Through your support of the League's mission, you help to deliver the latest news and information that voters will need for the next election. Your donations help to advise people on how to register to vote, apply for an absentee ballot, and much more.

Your donations empower voters and defend democracy in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. We are so grateful for all your support. Our work could not continue without it.

If you have never donated to us before, but would like to, simply click on our [LWV EUP DONATION FORM](#). All the information you need to process your donation is included on this form. You can mail a personal check or money order, donate through PayPal or arrange for your bank or credit union to send your donation to us through their bill payment service.

*Please note: your gift to the LWV EUP is NOT tax deductible.*

Thank you for your donation!