



Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area
*Serving 60 communities and 27 school
districts in Oakland County, MI*

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Thank You! A graphic of a five-pointed star with a red, white, and blue striped pattern. The word "VOTE" is written in white, bold, capital letters across the center of the star.

2016 – 2017 Issue Three

November - December, 2016

The League of Women Voters Oakland Area Presents:

Shrinking Funding of Local Governments

10:00 a.m., Saturday, November 19, 2016
Bloomfield Township Library
1099 Lone Pine Rd. (just east of Telegraph)

There has been a growing awareness of the severe financial stress faced by many local units of government and of the complex inter-relationship between state and local governments. What are the challenges and how do we continue funding local services such as police and fire, public works, parks and recreation, and roads, with decreased State revenue sharing?

Join us for a panel discussion with:

Robert Kleine, former Treasurer of the state of Michigan and Acting Director, MSU Extension
Center for Local Government Finance and Policy

Judy Karandjeff, President, LWV of Michigan

**Speakers from local governmental units in Oakland County will be discussing
the financial situation in their communities**

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2016-2017

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The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

The work of the League is financed by the dues of members and by contributions from citizens in the community.
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REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT:

As we face the turning back of the clocks, we look forward to continuing the fight we started 96 years ago with the suffrage movement. We face an election that has seen debates that resulted in name calling and attacks on each candidate and not much on discussing the issues that we must face. Our rights have been attacked at all levels. We have seen the environment, energy, water quality, healthcare, voter rights and many issues that the League supports at Local, State and National levels, all become targets of political folly. And so, we fight on.

Our voter registration drives and those of others, have registered more people for this election than any other in recent history. We have provided Candidate Forums, Voter Guides and posted all on VOTE411 and on our website LWVOA.org. We have spoken to seniors and other groups about the issues and how important their votes are. We have sponsored an educational meeting on Regional Transit and have our upcoming program on Government Finance to be held on Nov. 19th at 10.00 am at the Bloomfield Township Library. (See pages 1, 4 and 5) Now, as this election season winds down, we pause for a moment to catch our breath and refresh ourselves for the future.

As this past season has been very busy and brought a toll on our limited resources, I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard getting everything done. I could not name everyone in fear that I would miss someone. So I will try to list the projects. The Candidate Forums and their Moderators, Screeners, Timers and Pages. The Voter Guides online and in print and their proof readers, those who sent out questionnaires to the candidates and entered candidate responses into race guides, provided the race information to our printer for our 76-page printed guide, placed the individual races and printed guide on our website, and mailed it to members and contributors. VOTE411 and the members who transferred all the race information to it and posted it so citizens could find information on candidates on their ballot. The program planners, those who provided refreshments and those who just supported the work of all these wonderful volunteers who work not for joy for themselves, but for the hope that their work will help others.

FOR YOU ALL A VERY BIG AND HEARTFELT THANK YOU!

I would like to wish everyone and very Happy Thanksgiving.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

JERRY BURDEN
PRESIDENT LWVOA

In This Edition:

Government Finance Study

Michigan Leagues are beginning our study regarding updating the current position on taxation and budgeting. On page 4, you will find the complete Study Resource List, and the Consensus Questions are on page 5.

We will hold a consensus meeting on Saturday, January 21, 2017. Details will be in the next Voter.

Announcements

Page 6 includes several announcements regarding league members.

Election Statistics

[Preliminary election statistics from the Oakland County Clerk's office](#) show the following:

- Registered Voters 941,722
- Ballots Cast 677,914
- Voter Turnout 71.99%
- Straight Party Option Used 335,943

[The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement](#)

“Preliminary youth voter turnout estimate suggests that 23.7 million young people, aged 18-29, voted in Tuesday's election, for an estimated youth turnout rate of 50%. Young people made up almost one-fifth of all votes cast in the election.”

The OAKLAND VOTER is the official publication of the League of Women Voters. Articles and Letters to the Editor, with writer's name, address and phone number may be sent to the LWVOA office for consideration.

Editor's Note:

Last week, during the early voting period in Texas, poll workers arrived to find a candidate's political campaign sign blocking the "Vote Here" sign used to direct voters to the polling place. Someone had zip tied it on during the night. A precinct official asked a volunteer to go out and remove it. The poll worker came back with bloodied fingers. The sign had box cutter blades attached all along the bottom of it, with the obvious intent of injuring anyone attempting to remove it.

While reading about this incident, I scrolled to the bottom of the article to read the comments. Rather than simply condemning the incident for the malicious act it was, people were saying that the *opposing* candidate's supporters had in fact placed the sign to generate bad publicity for *their* candidate.



During this election, the limits of decency have been exceeded. There are words that have been spoken that can't be taken back. Friendships, and even family relationships have been strained. By the time you are reading this, it will be over, and nearly half of the country will have a President that they despise. What happens now? How do we mend those fences?

On October 12th, #RepealThe19th was trending on Twitter. Women responded on Halloween by making Suffragist costumes a popular choice. On Election Day, so many women went to the gravesite of Susan B. Anthony to place their "I Voted!" stickers on her tombstone that the cemetery had to extend its hours.

At a time where there is very little faith in government and political organizations, and also in the media, the League of Women Voters remains one of the most trusted organizations in the nation. The time is ripe to grow our ranks. Our mission of Making Democracy work is now more important than ever.

"The strongest democracies flourish from frequent and lively debate, but they endure when people of every background and belief find a way to set aside smaller differences in service of a greater purpose".

~ President Barack Obama.

Kathy Bartley,
Editor

LWV of Michigan

Government Finance Study

(Formerly Taxation and Budgeting)

" Financing state and local government is the focus for this study which seeks to update the current LWV-MI position on taxation and budgeting. As the questions were developed, the committee was cognizant of the state positions on Education and on Intergovernmental relations (Local Government). The consensus questions are organized into three sections: state revenue, state expenditures and state/local fiscal relationships."

Study Resource List:

The titles listed below are the primary sources for the background information that accompanies each of the consensus questions.

Information on Taxation and Budgets:

Citizens Research Council of Michigan, *Outline of Michigan Taxes*, 2016. www.crcmich.org
(Note: This booklet contains detailed information on all of Michigan's 60 state and local taxes.)

Citizens Research council of Michigan, 2013 Tax Revenue Comparisons: *Michigan and the US Average*, Memorandum 1140, May 2016.

House Fiscal Agency, *Road funding Package -Enacted Analysis*, November 16, 2015.

National conference of State Legislatures, *Recent Legislative Action to Change Gas Taxes*, March 2016. www.ncsl.org

Note: All four of the offices listed below have useful resources concerning the state budget process and the state's taxation system

- Michigan State Budget Office, Budget Process 11/11/15 www.michigan.gov/budget
- Michigan Department of Treasury www.michigan.gov/treasury
- House Fiscal Agency, Michigan House of Representatives www.house.michigan.gov/hfa
- Senate Fiscal Agency, Michigan Senate www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa

Information on State/Local Fiscal Relationships

Bean, Mitch and Kleine, Robert, [Michigan's Great Disinvestment: How State Policies Have Forced Our Communities into Fiscal Crisis](#), Great Lakes Economic consulting, April, 2016

Citizens Research Council of Michigan, *Reforming Statutory State Revenue Sharing* Report #388, February 2015 www.crcmich.org

House Fiscal Agency, State Notes, Winter, 2015 – *Distributional Effects of the Decline in Statutory Revenue Sharing* www.house.michigan.gov/hfa

Michigan State University Extension, *Beyond State Takeovers: Reconsidering the Role of State Government in Local Financial Distress, with Important Lessons for Michigan and its Embattled cities*, (8/31/15)

Michigan Municipal League, *Revenue Sharing Factsheet, and The Great Revenue Sharing Heist*, March/April 2014 www.mml.org

LWV of Michigan Government Finance Study Consensus Questions

The consensus questions are organized in three sections: state revenue, state expenditures and state/local fiscal relationships.

State Revenue

- 1) Should LWVMI support measures to ensure revenues that are both sufficient and flexible to meet changing needs for state and local government services?
- 2) Should there be provisions in place to relieve the income and property tax burdens on low income citizens?
- 3) Should safeguards (such as Earned Income Tax Credit) be in place to protect against "regressiveness" of sales and use taxes?
- 4) Should the state impose a sales tax on more services?
- 5) Should "nuisance taxes" (liquor, cigarettes, etc.) be regularly adjusted for inflation?
- 6) Should businesses pay their share of the income, sales and property taxes for services and benefits they use?
- 7) Should business tax credits be reviewed on a regular basis to see if they are achieving their purpose?
- 8) Should the state maximize the use of federal funds to increase revenue for state and local programs?
- 9) Should the impact of fees on low-income residents be considered when establishing the amount of the fee?
- 10) Should transportation taxes and fees be used to pay for maintenance and building of roads and mass transit?
- 11) Should transportation taxes and fees on fuel be indexed to inflation?
- 12) Should hybrid and electric vehicle users pay their fair share of transportation funding?

State Expenditures

- 13) Should the legislative and executive branches of government have equal responsibility for allocating the state's resources?
- 14) Should the proposal, adoption and administration of the state budget be transparent and accessible to residents throughout the appropriations process?
- 15) Should the budget process emphasize performance and outcomes and incorporate accountability through annual executive department evaluation?
- 16) Should Michigan's budget process include a budget review committee in the legislature, supported by a legislative staff similar to the federal Congressional Budget Office?
- 17) Should tax expenditures (exemptions and credits) be reviewed periodically by the legislature?
- 18) Should the distribution of revenue ensure adequate, equitable and flexible funding of public programs?

State/Local Fiscal Relationships

- 19) Should Michigan provide the funding when it requires local units to provide specific services?
- 20) Should the authorized amount of state statutory revenue sharing funds be provided by the state?
- 21) Should local units of government have more options for offsetting the loss of property taxes for tax exempt properties?
- 22) Should local units periodically reappraise the impact of property tax exemptions?

Member Action:



LWVOA is looking for someone to plan and coordinate refreshments for League events occurring typically 2-4 times per year. If you would like to volunteer to be our Hospitality Person, please contact the office.

Lame Duck:

The last scheduled session day for the Michigan House of Representatives is December 15, and for the Michigan Senate, it is December 22. Possible legislation we could see:
Public Employee Pensions
Energy & Electricity
No Fault Auto Insurance
Business Tax Incentives
**Wild Cards*

THANK YOU for once again making the "Voter Guide" available in print form. I just picked up a copy at the library & will be studying it carefully. It's one of the few sources of information I trust. I look forward to browsing "They Represent You" in 2017. Thanks again for all your efforts!
~ A League Supporter

On October 28, LWVOA President Jerry Burden was a guest on the morning talk show *Street Beat* discussing the League's Voter Services and history. Watch a recording [here](#).



Congratulations:

Three members of LWVOA have recently been recognized with awards honoring their commitment to their communities.



Carla Brisbois-Gribbs, who is one of our Forum Moderators and **Mary Howarth**, our current Treasurer and former Rochester Area League President, have both received the **2016 Sunrise Pinnacle Award** given by the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce. This is an award given "to honor the accomplishments and contributions of Rochester region's most visionary leaders, entrepreneurs, nonprofit organizations and businesses".

Deborah Macon received the **George W. Romney Award for Lifetime Achievement in Volunteerism** given by the Detroit Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Deborah has been volunteering with the United Way of Southeastern Michigan for nearly 25 years has been an LWV member for more than 30 years, serving on the LWVMI and LWVOA boards and as a local league President. She will be honored at a National Philanthropy Awards banquet on Nov. 10, at Cobo Center.

Well done!

Sad News:

Former State Representative and long-time League member Jan Dolan, passed away on November 1, 2016.



Facebook Photo

Jan served on the Farmington Hills City Council for 14 years, 2 terms as the Mayor of Farmington Hills, and as a State Representative for 8 years including speaker pro-tem in 1993-94. In the House, Jan was known for being able to negotiate across the aisle. She once said, "I'm an optimist that hopes that everyone works for the betterment of their entire state, not just their little jurisdiction."

Jan joined the League of Women Voters more than 40 years ago, serving in a variety of ways, mainly Voter Service. She was a formidable woman with an adventurous spirit who, on her 85th birthday, went skydiving – something she said was on her bucket list. Her community commitment will be missed by all.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on November 12, at First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, 26165 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills.

**REMEMBERING WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO:
*The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions was drafted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton for the women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York in 1848.***

“When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience has shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.”

<p>Salon Cardon Rita Trebble <hr/> 32352 Woodward Avenue Royal Oak, MI 48073 248.629.7522</p>	 <p>Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce <i>Rochester • Rochester Hills Oakland Township</i></p>	<p>Generous contributors like you.</p> 
 <p>Curt's Service Specialized Auto Repair. Since 1983 <i>Personalized care driven by technology</i></p> <p>14611 West 11 Mile Road Phone 248-545-0500 Oak Park, MI 48237 Fax 248-545-6859 info@CurtService.com • www.CurtService.com</p>		
 <p>Doug Hill Board Member, Region 7 President, REA www.mea.org</p> <p>Michigan Education Association</p> <p>Rochester Education Association 200 East Silverbell Lake Orion, MI 48360 Ofc: 248-874-1832 Fax: 248-377-0520 Email: dhill@mea.org</p>	 <p>Shelton BUICK GMC</p> <p>855 South Rochester Road Rochester Hills, MI 48307 248.651.5500 www.shelton.com</p>	



League of Women Voters® Oakland Area

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A Voice for Citizens,
A Voice for Change

Time Dated Material Enclosed

Calendar of Events



Sat., November 19, 2016
10:00 a.m.

Shrinking Funding of Local Governments
@ Bloomfield Twp. Public Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd.
(See page 1)

January 20, 2017

Inauguration Day

Sat., January 21, 2017
10:00 a.m.

Government Finance Study Consensus Meeting
Details TBA

Sat., February 4 or 18, 2017

State and Local Program Planning Brunch
Details TBA

League Membership Dues are \$65.

If you have not yet paid your dues for this League year 7/1/16-6/30/17, go to www.LWVOA.org and click on **JOIN THE LEAGUE** to print a membership form to use for mailing a check payable to LWVOA to our office - or utilize PayPal to pay your dues online.