



League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area

P.O. Box 3832, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3832



December 2016

Message from the President

Thank you all for the work that you did during the 2016 election, whether that be timing at forums, registering voters, or watching polls. Thank you. Be sure to read the articles in this issue about the huge success of our candidate forums, VOTE411.org, and our poll watching project on Election Day. We worked hard to provide fair, balanced information to voters and then to make sure that they had fair and convenient access to the polls. We can all take a bow and pat ourselves on the back. Good work one and all.



So what is ahead? Two things became very clear during this election. At the national level, once again, a presidential candidate who lost the popular vote won the election. Please see the article below to better understand why this happened and what can be done about it. At the state level, Democrats received more votes in the State House, yet the Republicans still hold a huge majority of seats. Why is this? It's called gerrymandering, manipulating the legislative district lines to the advantage of one party. Check out this article for more details, "[Once Again, Michigan Dems receive more votes in the State House, but Republicans hold onto power](#)," published in the Metro Times on November 16th.

LWVMI is working with a coalition of organizations to make changes in our current system of drawing district lines here in Michigan and LWVUS has long supported abolishing the Electoral College in favor of a direct popular vote method. Unfortunately,

neither of these issues will be easily resolved. It will take time and effort. We will let you know as soon as there is something concrete that you can do to help with either of these issues. In the meantime, talk to your friends, family, and neighbors. Help them understand how these seemingly dry policy issues affect their daily lives and involve our basic understanding of fairness. LWV is committed to making democracy work.

Now is the time to renew your membership if you have not yet done so or if you have joined since July 1st. **You can also make a tax-deductible contribution to our Education Fund** by going to our website and choosing Donate to LWV-AAA.

I look forward to seeing you all at Knight's Restaurant on December 13th for a relaxing dinner with your fellow League members.

Wishing you good health and happiness in the coming year.
Nancy

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Date	Event	Time	Place
Wed, Dec 7	Community Conversation: <i>Restoring Faith in Michigan's Government</i>	<i>Cancelled</i>	Ypsilanti District Library
Tues, Dec 13	Dining Out in December <u>RSVP</u> to Nancy Schewe	6:00 pm	Knight's Restaurant 2324 Dexter Ave Ann Arbor, MI
Thurs, Jan 26	Taxes: <i>Is the State legislature playing fair with local government?</i> A panel discussion.	7:00-8:30 pm	Ann Arbor District Library 343 South Fifth Ann Arbor, MI
Fri, Jan 27	Book Discussion: Sisters in Law <u>RSVP</u> for lunch	Noon - 2:00 p.m.	The Cedars of Dexter Clubhouse 411 Cedars Lane Dexter, MI 48130
Sat, Feb 4	Program Planning Meeting Tax & Budget Study	10:00 am-12:00pm	First UU Congregation of AA 4001 AA Saline Rd. Ann Arbor, MI

Tue, May 16 Annual Membership Meeting* 7:00 pm

*Indicates LWV-members only event

DECEMBER IS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

If you have not already sent in your dues for 2017, now is the time to do it!

You can renew using [PayPal](#) or print a [Membership Form](#), fill it out and mail with a check payable to: *League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area*.

NOTE: Dues are not tax deductible - to make a tax deductible donation, check out our website www.lwvann Arbor.org.

Spotlight on...

The Electoral College - *A relic of slavery?*

The Electoral College again sparked controversy this election as, for the fifth time in the history of the United States, the winner of the Electoral College (and thus the office of the presidency) lost the popular vote, this time by more than 2 million votes.

The Electoral College was created by the framers of the Constitution during the 1787 Constitutional Convention. In deciding to allocate elected representatives according to population, Southern states argued that their populations would not be adequately represented because 40% of their populations were slaves who were considered property, not people. The framers compromised by declaring each slave to be three-fifths of a person and then allocating representatives to Congress accordingly. Under the Electoral College, each state then received a number of electors equal to the number of persons in its congressional delegation (representatives plus two senators).

Today, many consider this system outdated and unrepresentative. Petitions to abolish the Electoral College abound and this month, Senator Barbara Boxer sponsored a bill for its elimination. Senator Boxer's bill is one of more than 700 proposals to amend or eliminate the Electoral College over the last 200 years. CNN reports that, despite much public support, the likelihood of the bill passing is low. Abolishing the Electoral College requires a constitutional amendment, which requires passage by two-thirds majorities in the House and Senate and passage by three-quarters of the states - something we're unlikely to see in a Republican-controlled Congress.

So what about "faithless electors"? In most states, electors are required to cast their

vote according to their state's electoral choice, however, in 21 states this is not the case. In what they refer to as a "Hail Mary" two Democratic electors, P. Bret Chifalo of Washington State and Micheal Baca of Colorado, are seeking to convince 37 Republican electors to abstain from voting for Trump when the electoral college casts their votes on December 19th. Were this to succeed, the House of Representatives would be tasked with choosing a president from among the top three vote-getters. While this is unlikely, the hope is that a record number of faithless electors could help to further energize the movement to abolish the Electoral College.

Where does LWVUS stand on the issue? According to the League's [2010 Convention statement](#): *The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished.*

Sources: [Smithsonian.com](#), [CNN.com](#), [Politico.com](#)

Ann Arbor Votes to Double Mayoral and City Council Terms

On November 8th, Ann Arbor passed a proposal in favor of doubling mayoral and City Council terms from two to four years. The measure passed with 55% in favor. Beginning in 2018, odd-year elections will be eliminated and the mayor and council members will begin serving four-year terms. Elections will be staggered so that half of the council members will be up for reelection each even year. Until then, the mayor and five council members elected in 2016 will serve a two-year term (up for reelection in 2018) and those elected in 2017 will serve a three-year term (up for reelection in 2020).

Sources: [Mlive](#), [The Michigan Daily](#)

Poll Watching

The League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area fielded twenty-four volunteers to observe polling places during the November 8, 2016 election.

Across the city, polls were very busy in the opening hours of the day, with numbers decreasing as the day wore on. This was especially true at the two schools, which each had two precincts voting in the gymnasium. Waits at these schools were around one hour until late morning. Our poll observers saw no incidents of intimidation, but there were several cases in which voter registrations arrived at the clerk's office too late and those people were not allowed to vote. Poll workers were well-trained and helpful. The biggest problems were with optical scanners that stuck and caused backups in the process.

Recommendations made to AA City Clerk:

- Every precinct or polling station should have a greeter at the door to direct voters to the correct line and inform them what the steps will be.
- Very tall signs are needed to direct voters through the process. Current table-level signs are not visible above the crowd. "Step 1", "Step 2" or "Sign in" "Get your ballot" "Submit your ballot" etc. Many voters are uncertain as to the steps.
- A poll worker should be placed at each optical scanner to assist voters in feeding ballots into the machine. Many of these machines need to be replaced.

Viewer Numbers Demonstrate Strong Support for Candidate Forums

Available through CTN, Channel 19

Ann Arbor Ballot Proposal	3270!!!
Board of Education, group A	418
Board of Education, group B	187
City Council Ward 5	135
County Commissioner District 2	115
County Commissioner District 9	46
County Prosecutor	501
County Sheriff	236
Library Board of Trustees, group A	670
Library Board of Trustees, group B	624
State Representative Districts 52	54
State Representative Districts 53	63
State Representative Districts 54	38
State Representative Districts 55	79
WCC Trustees, group A	1515
WCC Trustees, group B	512

Available on League of Women Voters Ann Arbor Area You Tube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXmXQDq2UGntHGjD5-Qr5fw>

U.S. House, 7th District	79
U.S. House, 12th District	392

The "lightning bolt" of the forum season was the number of views for the Ann Arbor term extension ballot proposal debate. Two students from Greenhills School engaged in an Oxford-style debate, moderated by League member John Chamberlin. We did not know what to expect. After the debate, we knew that the students had been spectacular.

Do these numbers attest to the very real interest in detached, impartial and temperate discussions about political issues in a "post-truth" era? **8931 views** seem to indicate that does.

VOTE411.org Sees Record Number of Sessions in 2016

Vote411, the LWVUS voter information site, saw record visits by Washtenaw County voters this election season at 31,407 - more than double the number of visits in 2014 and triple that from 2012. Of these, Ann Arbor (26,073), Ypsilanti Charter Township (1,879) and Pittsfield Charter Township (1,484) residents made up the most visits. The site allows visitors to: register to vote, find their polling place, view and compare candidates and ballot issues, and print out sample ballots. LWV is proud to continue providing this vital resource as part of its effort to contribute to a better-informed electorate!



Lunch and Learn Series Continues

Join us for a discussion of
SISTERS IN LAW:

How Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Went to the Supreme Court and Changed the World'
by Linda Hirshman

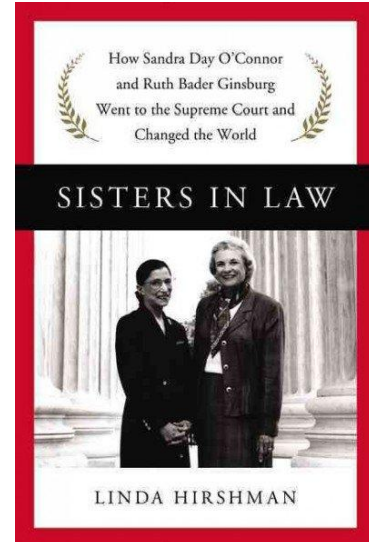
Friday, January 27th

Noon - 2:00 p.m.

The Cedars of Dexter Clubhouse

411 Cedars Lane

Dexter, MI 48130



Soups, salads and sandwiches are available at the Cedars for \$5 - \$10. Please bring cash.

RSVP to [Nancy Schewe](#)

"For anyone interested in the court, women's history or both, the story of Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, their separate routes to the Supreme Court and what they accomplished during the more than 12 years they spent together is irresistible." Linda Greenhouse, [SUNDAY BOOK REVIEW](#), Sept. 14, 2015

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/20/books/review/sisters-in-law-looks-at-sandra-day-oconnor-and-ruth-bader-ginsburg.html?_r=0

The League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area

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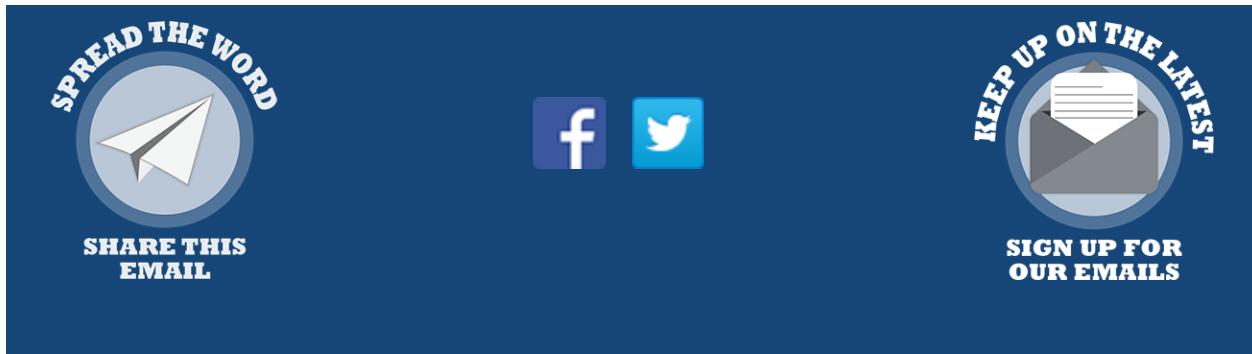
Not a member? Wish to join?

Click here to join [using Paypal](#) or click here for a [mail-in registration form](#).

Visit Our Facebook Page

Mission Statement

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



League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area, P.O.Box 3832, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3832

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