

**League of Women Voters-GTA
Voter Services Committee Meeting
February 22, 2018**

Present: A. Montgomery, L.Crandall, M. Grover, B. Newson, J. Watts, P. Townsend

Welcome: Anne M. was welcomed as the new Voter Services committee co-chair. We are so glad to have her fill this role. Jan Ready was welcomed as an observer of the meeting. She also indicated she would be interested in helping with Voter Services activities.

Anne M. and Peg have recruited the following new members either to join the Voter Services committee or to help with the VS activities: Donna Moore, Irene Cotter, Jessie Mitchell, Jeanne Ramick, Eunice Crockett, and Cheryl Naperala. We look forward to working with them and thank them for their willingness to be engaged with the committee.

LWVMI “Promote the Vote” Campaign: “Promote the Vote” is an effort to expand voting rights for Michigan citizens. A coalition made up of LWVMI, ACLU of Michigan, Michigan League for Public Policy, Michigan State Conference of the NAACP, and others is starting a petition drive to add an amendment to the Michigan Constitution. This amendment would expand voting rights in Michigan, i.e. no reason absentee ballots; the right to vote a secret ballot; provide voters with the right to vote a straight party ticket along with four other delineated voter rights. These additions to the Michigan Constitution would make elections fairer and more secure. 37 states already have enacted similar voter rights improvements. Many Michigan county clerks have asked to have such changes made in order to make our elections more fair and secure.

The coalition’s goal is to collect 400,000 signatures so that at least the required about 319,000 could be verified by mid to late June. Once a no more than 100 word summary of the proposal is approved by the Board of Canvassers, the campaign to get the proposal passed will begin. The estimated cost of the campaign is \$8 million, though costs could be lowered if many volunteer signature collectors are recruited; otherwise, paid petition circulators will be hired.

At the local level, Leagues are asked to set up meetings or parties to share information about the ballot proposal and to recruit volunteers to collect signatures. During the discussion about how the LWVGTA Voter Services committee would provide such an event, the committee decided to set up a general membership meeting that would be advertised and open to the public. Linda and Mary G. volunteered to check out the Workshop Brewing Company and Right Brain Brewery as potential venues. A day during the week of March 19 is preferred for the meeting with a mingling time starting at 5p.m. The informational part of the event would begin at 5:30 and last about 20 - 25 minutes with time after to sign up volunteers to circulate petitions.

Christina Schlitt, LWVMI Membership Chairperson, will be asked to explain “Promote the Vote” along with urging attendees to sign up to collect signatures. League members will man sign up stations. Another meeting will be necessary to train the volunteers who will collect signatures. A

coordinator to handle the passing out and collecting of petitions also is needed to be sure the petitions are being handled appropriately.

Peg will check with Tak Ready, AP Government teacher at West Sr. High, to see if his students would be able to collect signatures. Mary B. will be asked to check on the same possibility for NMC students.

Linda will talk to the Record Eagle about having an article explaining "Promote the Vote" to its readers.

Peg will ask Marian Kromkowski from the Leelanau League when they plan to start gathering signatures.

Mary G. will check with Marian about how LWVLC does streaming on their website so that LWVGTA could do streaming of the "Promote the Vote" event on our website.

Anne M. will contact either the Workshop Brewing Co. or Right Brain Brewery once Linda and Mary G. let her know the best place to hold the "Promote the Vote" general membership meeting. Then, Anne can make the arrangements with the selected venue.

Since Peg will be gone until March 12, please share any information gathered with Anne M. I will stay in touch with her to find out if plans are progressing.

Primary/General Election Forums: The Michigan primary election will be held August 7, 2018. The Michigan general election will be on November 6, 2018. After looking over the federal, state, and local offices up for election, the committee decided to focus forums or interviews on the following offices:

1st District U.S. House of Representatives - (Forum(s) with LWVLC
State House Representative - Forum(s)- depending on number of candidates
State Senate - Forum(s) - depending upon number of candidates
Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners (7 seats) - to be determined
Traverse City Board of Education (4 open seats) - Interviews for later broadcast
District Court Judge - Depends on the number of candidates

Informational Programs on ballot proposals will be determined after July 9 when all proposals must be turned into the Secretary of State's office. Much help will be needed for all these events.

Voter Registration Drives: A Rally For Gun Reform is planned for March 3. The committee decided to do a registration drive at the Workshop Brewing Co. where the rally will end. Anne M. and Bev volunteered to register voters. Peg will get voter registration materials to Anne.

Peg will check with Mary B. about voter registration drives at NMC. She also reported that West Sr. High already has drives planned for the spring and fall. The Long Lake Township clerk sets them up with Tak Ready's help. Peg is waiting for a response from Paige Paul, AP Government teacher at Central High School, to find out if she would like LWVGTA help with spring and fall voter registration. Paige has previously had her students make the arrangements with her guidance.

As in the past, the committee hopes to set up voter registration drives/absentee ballot information drives at retirement communities in the area.

Mary G. will ask Tony Lentych about running a voter registration drive and/or a "Promote the Vote" signature collection drive at Riverview Terrace apartments in Traverse City.

VOTE411: Mary B. has requested help with 411 because of the workload it generates. Linda and Anne S. volunteered to contact candidates and offer information about using 411. A "want ad" for 411 help will also appear in our local League publications.

Recruiting New Members for the Voter Services Committee: Anne M. and Peg have reached out to new members to see if they would like to work on the VS committee. Jan Ready came to this meeting to observe our work and to see where she might like to help. Others who are out of the area for some winter months have expressed an interest in becoming active with the committee. We look forward to working with them also.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be from 12 - 2 on March 15, 2018, and will be at _____

Respectfully submitted by,
Peg Townsend
Voter Services Co-chair