



Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area
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2015-2016 Issue One

September-October 2015

“Policing in the 21st Century”

Saturday, October 10 at 9:30 am

Northwest Universalist Unitarian Church

23925 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, MI.

(Southbound Northwestern service drive and halfway between 10 and 9 Mile)

Panelists:

Sheriff Michael Bouchard of Oakland County

Sheriff Benny N. Napoleon of Wayne County

Moderator:

**Jerry Burden, President of Oakland Area League of Women Voters
and a retired police officer**

A continental breakfast will be served at 9:30 am with the panel discussion beginning at 10:00 am.

Each panelist will give a 10 minute statement. Then written questions from the audience will be accepted.

Registration (due by Wednesday October 7th)

Cost: \$15.00 per person

Name: _____ Number Attending _____

Phone Number _____

Amount Included: _____ Make check payable to LWV Oakland Area

Mail to LWVOA, 725 S. Adams Rd., Suite L-144 , Birmingham, MI 48009

Or **RSVP** by calling office at 248-594-6602 or Email pres@lwvoa.org. Pay at the door.

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THE OAKLAND VOTER is the official publication of the League of Women Voters. It is published six times a year by the LWVOA. Articles and Letters to the Editor, with writer's name, address and phone number may be sent to the LWVOA office.

President's Message

As we come to the end of summer and school starting again, we realize we are starting another election season. This is the time when we are at our best reaching out to our individual communities. But that is not all that is on our plate this year.

We are working with the State League to put forward many town hall meetings and presentations on redistricting now that the Supreme Court has spoken on the case brought by the Arizona Independent Redistricting Board and supported by the LWV Arizona. (See **Detroit News** article later in this Voter.)

We are working with Oakland Community College at several of their locations to provide Voter registration and membership information at open houses held on campus. The Lake Erie Basin and the Lake Michigan Region conferences were in September.

Our Voter Service team has many candidate forums planned and are working on others as we go to press. Please check our website to see a full schedule of candidate forums. If you are able to give 60 to 90 minutes at any of these forums, please contact Judy Bateman or me at any time; we would love to have you join us and learn what League does for our communities.

Our fall luncheon is on the way and planning is completed. The topic this year is **Policing in the 21st Century.** Our speakers will be the Sheriffs of Wayne and Oakland Counties. SEE INFORMATION ON PAGE 1 of this Voter.

And last but not least we have relocated our office. Due to construction in the building we had to relocate to the lower level. This was done over several weeks; Internet and phones had to be moved and the companies scheduled, items packed for moving, shelves taken down and furniture relocated. With the help of our volunteers this came off without a hitch. We cannot thank them enough . Judy and Kim Bateman, Renate and Dick Soulen, Karen DeGrendel, Mary Howarth and the one who guided it all, Sue Abrams.

The new legislature is at work and it is our duty to continue to remain in contact with them. We must support or oppose those items brought before them that League has positions on. As always I would like to recognize ALL of our members for a job well done;

Jerry Burden, President

See Pages 5-7 for information on LWVUS Constitutional Amendment Study and LWVOA Consensus meeting on November 7th.

Records, Archives, and Old Files

Many thanks again for the work of Tera Moon who has been helping us out again, sorting, weeding and archiving all of our records prior to our move down to the lower level of our building. Tera is definitely another unsung hero of LWVOA.

LWVOA FALL FORUMS 2015

All forums are taped for rebroadcast on local Cable with some available to view online. Voter Guides for ALL city races and proposals are posted on www.LWVOA.org.

- Wed, **September 16** 7:00 pm **Huntington Woods Mayor, City Commissioners**
@Huntington Woods City Hall, 26815 Scotia Rd., 48070
- Thur, **September 17** 7:00 pm **Clarkston City Council**
@Clarkston Independence District Library, 6495 Clarkston Rd.
- Thur, **September 17** 7:00 pm **Rochester City Council** . live on TV & online
@Rochester City Hall, 400 Sixth Street, 48307
- Mon, **September 21** 7:00 & 8:30 pm **Rochester Hills City Council , Mayor.** live on TV & online
@Rochester Hills City Hall, 1000 Rochester Hills Dr., 48309
- Mon, **September 28** 7:00 pm **Clawson City Council**
@Clawson City Hall, 425 N Main St., 48017
- Tues, **September 29** 6:30 pm **Bloomfield Hills City Commissioners**
@Bloomfield Hills City Hall, 45 E. Long Lake Rd., 48304
- Mon, **October 5** 7:00 pm **Auburn Hills City Council**
@Auburn Hills City Hall, 1827 N. Squirrel Rd., 48326
- Tues, **October 6** 7:00 pm **Birmingham City Commissioners**
@Baldwin Public Library, 300 W. Merrill, Birmingham 48009
- Tues, **October 6** 7:00 pm **Farmington Hills Mayor, City Council (co-sponsor w COHA)**
@Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 W 11 Mile Rd, 48336
- Thur, **October 8** 7:00 pm **Lathrup Village City Council**
@Lathrup Village City Hall, 27400 Southfield Rd, 48076
8:00 pm Pro/ Con re ballot proposal on term limits for city elected officials
- Tues, **October 13** 7:00 pm **Berkley City Council**
@Berkley City Hall, 3338 Coolidge Hwy, 48072
- Wed, **October 14** 7:00 pm **Southfield Mayor, City Council**
@Southfield Public Library, 26300 Southfield Rd., 48076
- Wed, **October 21** 7:00 pm **Keego Harbor City Council**
@Keego Harbor City Hall, 2025 Beechmont, 48320

Italian American Club Elections

We have been asked to run the election for the Italian American Club in Livonia on **Tuesday, October 20**. We need to man the polls from 11 am to 7 pm and then count the ballots after the polls close. We could use **3 people on the shifts from 12-4pm. From 4pm on, we could use 5 people.** Please contact Linda DePoorter (248-719-4210 or dldepoor@sbcglobal.net) if you can work any of these times. This is a great fund raiser for LWVOA.



REDISTRICTING Education Programs

Sue Smith LWV Ann Arbor Area, LWVMI VP PROGRAM

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision that citizens have the right to decide how Congressional lines are drawn has grabbed the public's attention. See Op-Ed by Sue Smith on Page 5.

We want to build on that interest by conducting a community-based, redistricting education program in the fall. The League has agreed to organize Town Halls and programs for civic organizations in selected areas of the state. Common Cause and other non-partisan organizations have agreed to do the same in other areas.

Local League Presidents were contacted by LWVMI President Judy Karandjeff, Vice President Sue Smith or a temporary staff member to see if they are interested in participating. Funding has been obtained for pass-through grants to participating Leagues. Local Leagues will be given a list of other non-partisan organizations, such as the AAUW, to contact about cosponsoring a Town Hall in their community.

*Oakland Area has arranged the following
Redistricting Town Halls thus far:*

Thur, Oct. 22, 6:30 pm @Waterford Twp Hall Auditorium
5200 Civic Center Drive, Waterford 48329
Kath Maisner, Coordinator

Thur, Oct. 22, 7 pm @Birmingham Unitarian Church
38651 Woodward Avenue, Bloomfield Hills 48304
Karen Linnell, Coordinator. Co-sponsor AAUW

Thur, Oct. 29, 10 am @Fox Run Senior Community
41000 Thirteen Mile Rd., Novi 48337 (Gated Community)
Ann Bickford, Coordinator. Reservations required.

Tues, Nov. 3, 7:30 pm @West Bloomfield Twp Library
4600 Walnut Lake Rd, West Bloomfield 38323
Deb Macon, Coordinator

Tues, Nov 10, 6 pm @Southfield Parks&Rec Bldg, Rm 221
26000 Evergreen, Southfield 48076
Barb Talley, Coordinator

***Additional forums may be scheduled. Check Event
Calendar on LWVMI.org website.***

Detroit News, July 9, 2015

Independent Boards Should Draw Voting Districts

**Column by Susan Smith,
Vice President, League of Women Voters MI**

In today's political environment, many voters will say that they feel disconnected from decisions that are being made by our leaders in Lansing. From political gridlock to out-of-step policies, Michigianians are left wondering where the passion to find compromise and solutions for pressing issues has gone. One key reason very little is getting done stems from the fact we allow our representatives to choose their voters, rather than voters choosing their representatives.

The current system of redistricting, the process by which new congressional and state legislative district lines are drawn, lets elected officials do so to their liking and to the advantage of their political party. It also increases the power of wealthy special interests so that they are able to further rig the system to their own selfish benefit. This effectively, but disingenuously, ignores the will of the majority of voters who believe in compromise and the ability to work together to build a better Michigan for everyone.

Many other states across the country face this problem and some have adopted measures to correct it. In Arizona, citizens decided to implement an independent commission that would draw district lines free of outside influence — a tool that should be considered in Michigan.

Arizona legislators fought against the commission because they said that they should be allowed to influence how lines are drawn, but just last week the United States Supreme Court ruled that such decisions rest with citizens. Not only did the Supreme Court reject the Legislature's argument and find constitutionality in the independent commission, they sent a clear message to the rest of the country that these commissions are tools for voters to make their voices heard.

It is important that we start to make progress on changing how our lines are drawn. Whether it is done through an independent commission or other methods, it's time to take the process out of the hands of politicians. The League of Women Voters will be announcing an education campaign soon to help voters understand how we can change the system to work for us. We will also start to engage opinion leaders on why it is important to return power to Michigan citizens. Independent commissions are a possible first step in doing so.

The Supreme Court's opinion is best summed up by the line, "In so acting, Arizona voters sought to re-store the core principle of republican government," namely, "that the voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around."

Together we can restore our democracy and establish a system where we choose our representatives, not the other way around.

Consensus on U.S. Constitutional Amendment Process

Saturday, November 7, 2015 at 10 am

@Renate Soulen home, 5333 Hickory Rd, Bloomfield Hills 48304

To prepare for this discussion, members are encouraged to review materials provided by the LWVUS Constitutional Amendment Committee headed by Michigan's Pat Donath. Materials can be found at <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/constitutional-amendment-study>.

Especially read the material in the **Constitutional Amendment Study Guide** which provides Background, Foundation Readings (below), the **Consensus Questions**, Points of View and Specific References for the questions. Our National League set a **consensus deadline** rapidly approaching for this study **6 December 1**.

There are two Foundation Readings prepared by the LWVUS Study Committee which provide opposing views about amending the Constitution. Below is the **Synopsis of “Constitutional Amendmentitis,” by Kathleen Sullivan in *The American Prospect* 12/19/2001.**

Writing in 2001, Sullivan notes a flurry of activity, with more Constitutional amendment proposals active then (and now) than at any time since the 1970s. The Constitution is very difficult to amend. Of the 11,000 amendments that have been proposed since the Constitution was adopted, only 27 have actually passed. As a result, the Constitution remains a “relatively pristine document.” Those that have passed have little altered the overall structure of the Constitution.

According to Sullivan: The first ten amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added in one fell swoop by the First Congress and ratified in 1791 as part of a bargain that had induced reluctant states to ratify the Constitution. And the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, which abolished slavery and gave African Americans rights of equal citizenship, were essentially foisted on the southern states by the Reconstruction Congress as a condition of readmission to the union in the wake of the Civil War.

The remaining amendments have tinkered little with the original constitutional design. Four expanded the right to vote in federal elections: The 15th Amendment eliminated racial classifications in voting, the 19th extended the franchise to women, the 24th abolished the poll tax, and the 26th lowered the voting age. Only two tried outright to govern social policy: The 18th Amendment imposed Prohibition and the 21st repealed it. Only two amendments worked significant structural changes in the original constitutional framework: The 17th Amendment provided for popular election of senators and the 22nd imposed a two-term limit on the presidency. And only four amendments were enacted to overrule decisions of the Supreme Court: The 11th Amendment barred suits in federal court by citizens of one state against another state. The 14th recognized the United States citizenship of African Americans, the 16th permitted Congress to impose an income tax, and the 26th lowered the voting age to 18--all in contrast to what the Supreme Court had said the Constitution permitted or required. The remaining handful of amendments were national housekeeping measures, the most important of which was the 25th Amendment's establishment of procedures for presidential succession.

Against this backdrop, the current enthusiasm for amending the constitution is concerning in that “there are strong structural reasons for amending the Constitution only reluctantly and as a last resort.”

1. **Stability.** It has stood the test of time. “If it ain't broke, don't fix it.” Stability is one of the key virtues of having a Constitution in the first place. Amending it too often undercuts that purpose and undermines public confidence in the basic structure of our government.
2. **The Rule of Law.** The Constitution is our fundamental charter of government. It should not be cluttered up with the sorts of directives found in legislation. The point of having a constitution is to establish a separation between the legal and the political realms. The constitution lays down those fundamental political ideals (equality, representation, individual liberties) that place limits on how far any short-term, political majority may go. The Constitution is our higher law. The rest is politics. Too-frequent amendments erode the boundary between our higher law and politics, making support for the Constitution a matter of political preference.
3. **Coherence.** The Constitution was written as a unified document; amendments are piecemeal and can affect other parts of the whole. For instance, a balanced budget amendment could affect taxing, borrowing, and spending currently accomplished by a simple majority vote by imposing supermajorities on these actions, thereby transferring so much power to the minority that they may extort concessions in other areas, with the potential for significant spill-over effects. This is only one example, but it is clear that amendments can create conflicts within the document as a whole and thus have repercussions beyond their specific subject matter.
4. **Generality.** The Constitution is purposefully drafted in general terms. Specifics are to come through judicial interpretation. However, generally worded amendments can be problematic. Either by what it specifies or does not specify, an amendment can have the potential to effect a major change to our fundamental governing document such as a redistribution of powers among the three branches of government. Striking the appropriate balance is incredibly difficult to get right.
5. **The Role of the Court.** We have granted the Supreme Court broad interpretive powers. Constitutional amendments, especially those that overturn Court decisions, undermine respect for the legitimacy of the Court. It also erodes the social benefits of peaceful conflict resolution. Remember that we have amended the Constitution only four times in order to overrule the Supreme Court. The Court itself can squander public respect by so abruptly changing interpretations of the Constitution that they appear more politics than law. But that fact does

not strengthen the case for more readily amending the Constitution. Rather, it illustrates the very pitfalls of constitutional mutability that amendment fever would exacerbate.

In summary, this does not mean that the Constitution should never be amended. But for all the reasons outlined above, there should be a strong presumption against doing so except when changes consistent with the Constitution's broad purposes are unlikely to be enacted by ordinary legislative means.


The second Foundation Reading, [Synopsis of "Constitutional Amendments and the Constitutional Common Law" by Professor of Law Adrian Vermeule written in 2004](#) argues that we should not be predisposed against using the Article V constitutional amendment process. See the link above to Constitutional Amendment Study to read it.

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Calendar of Events

Public Forum

Saturday, October 10, 9:30 am "Policing in the 21st Century" - Sheriffs Bouchard, Napoleon
Northwest Universalist Unitarian Church See Page 1.
 23925 Northwestern Highway, Southfield
 (southbound Northwestern service drive and halfway between 10 and 9 Mile.)
9:30 Continental Breakfast 10 am Speakers Cost: \$15. Reservation required.

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Tues, Nov 10, 6 pm @ Southfield Parks & Rec. Bldg, Rm 221 Barb Talley, Coordinator
 26000 Evergreen, Southfield 48076 (in city Civic Center Complex)

General Election

Tues, Nov. 3, 7 am- 8 pm Election for Cities and Proposals VOTE!
Candidate Forums: See Page 3 or www.LWVOA.org for forum list. Forums available on cable.
Voter Guides: Posted on www.LWVOA.org.

National Studies and Consensus

Saturday, Nov. 7, 10 am at Renate Soulen's house **Constitutional Amendment Study Consensus**
Saturday, Jan. 16, 10 am at Bloomfield Twp. Library **Money In Politics Study Consensus**