



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 297- ELECTION LAW - BUSINESS ENTITY CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS - PROHIBITION

POSITION: SUPPORT

BY: BARBARA SCHNACKENBERG & NANCY SORENG CO-PRESIDENTS

DATE: FEB 18, 2016

In the late 2000s, the League of Women Voters of the United States was involved as a "friend of the court" in two pivotal U.S. Supreme Court cases: *Caperton v. Massey* and *Citizens United v. FEC*. In the latter case, the League argued that corporate spending in elections should not be equated with the First Amendment rights of individual citizens.

While we lost that case at the federal level, Delegate Moon's bill intends to uphold that same principle: that it is the voice of individual citizens, not businesses, that should be expressed in the election of candidates. It is in the spirit of our belief that democracy is strongest when the values and beliefs of citizens are the driving force in elections rather than corporate or business interests that we urge a favorable report on HB 297.