



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

## **TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE**

### **HB 578 - REAL-TIME TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2016**

#### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

#### **BY: BARBARA SCHNACKENBERG & NANCY SORENG CO-PRESIDENTS**

#### **DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2016**

The League of Women Voters supports efforts to disclose information about who is making political contributions, in what amount, and to whom they are made. This is especially important since the Citizen's United decision which has resulted in an explosion of money in politics.

This legislation would require a political committee to file a campaign finance report within 48 hours of receiving any contribution, loan or transfer from another political committee that is \$1,000 or more during an election year. The legislation requires the political committee to identify the name of the contributor and the date and amount of the donation or loan. A fine of \$10 per day (or fraction of a day) would be charged for each day the reporting of such contributions is late. However, the maximum penalty would be \$500. This would not replace any campaign financing reporting requirements that are currently in place. In the Senate Hearing, there was a question about whether the fine was enough of an incentive to encourage compliance. Therefore, you might want to consider structuring the fine to be proportional to amount of the unreported donation.

We believe that, until the Supreme Court or Congress act to bring elections back into the hands of the people, that disclosure is our best course to combat the undue influence of those with deep pockets. Therefore we urge a favorable report on HB 578.