



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SB 459 - CAMPAIGN FINANCE – BALLOT ISSUE COMMITTEES – PROSPECTIVE QUESTIONS

POSITION: SUPPORT

BY: BARBARA SCHNACKENBERG & NANCY SORENG CO-PRESIDENTS

DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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 apply the same reporting requirements to campaigns that are seeking to get enough signatures on a petition to place a question on the ballot that are required of campaign entities that are formed to seek the passage or defeat of a ballot question. If the petition sponsor's ballot issue committee fails to meet the reporting requirements, the Board of Elections may not certify the petition.

Placing a question on the ballot can have major implications for Maryland. The effort to gather the required number of signatures can involve significant expenditures. The public has a right to know who is paying for this effort and how much they are spending on it.

Therefore we urge a favorable report on SB 459.