



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup> OF MARYLAND, INC.

## **TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE**

### **HB 580 Labor and Employment - Maryland Healthy Working Families Act**

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Barbara Schnackenberg and Nancy Soreng, Co-Presidents**

**DATE: March 1, 2016**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League believes that one of the goals of social policy should be to reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Most of us work hard to be self-sufficient and stay out of poverty, yet too many employers make it very hard to juggle work and family obligations by not providing paid sick leave. More than 80% of low wage workers cannot earn paid sick days. Workers without paid sick leave may put off medical care and attend work when ill. Because paid sick days allow workers to address their own medical needs and those of their family without resorting to emergency room use, to seek preventive care, and to remain home when ill rather than risk infecting coworkers, customers and the general public; paid sick leave benefits workers, employers and the general public.

Employers have little to lose and much to gain from granting earned sick leave. Without paid sick days employees come to work unhealthy, lowering levels of production. Paid sick leave benefits employers by reducing turnover. Studies show that workers who have paid sick leave do not abuse it.

More and more states and municipalities are seeing the benefit of guaranteeing paid sick leave. HB 580 only requires employers with 10 or more employees to provide earned sick and safe leave.

The LWVMD, representing 1000+ concerned citizens throughout Maryland, strongly urges the Committee to pass HB 580 out of committee.