



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

**HB 999 - COMMISSION ON INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

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

**DATE: MARCH 3, 2016**

The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes that the primary responsibility for funding public education lies with the state. We strongly support HB 999 Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education which establishes a commission to review and make preliminary recommendations on the findings of the Study on Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State of Maryland. The commission is charged with looking at many issues, for example, the method of counting economically disadvantaged students, the impact of high concentrations of poverty on local school systems, increasing and declining enrollment, expanding publicly funded prekindergarten, local wealth measures, regional cost of education index, reviewing how local districts spend funds, updating funding levels for students with and without special needs, innovative programs for preparing students to be career and college ready and additional or alternative funding models.

The League of Women Voters has studied education financing and supported a foundation program based on a weighted per pupil formula supported from general state revenues at a level high enough to eliminate inequities since the early 1970s. These formulas have required periodic updating. Now that the Study on Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State of Maryland is nearing completion, it is time for a commission that can translate its findings into recommended legislation. The reports from the Adequacy Study should not be allowed to sit on the shelf. The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education would provide the impetus to translate the recommendations into action.

We urge the committee to give favorable report to HB 999.