



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 1164 - ELECTION LAW – CONTRIBUTION TO A CANDIDATE FOR JUDICIAL OFFICE

POSITION: SUPPORT

BY: BARBARA SCHNACKENBERG & NANCY SORENG CO-PRESIDENTS

DATE: MARCH 4, 2016

The League of Women Voters believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know and combat corruption and undue influence.

The purpose of this bill is to make sure that political contributions do not play a role in judicial decisions or actions. If this bill passed, anyone who made a contribution to a candidate for judge (or a campaign fund that is supporting a candidate for judge) would be prohibited from appearing before that judge as an attorney or be a formal part of any case or appeal that is before that judge for the next five years after the judge was elected.

Whether a political contribution to a judicial candidate actually results in corruption or undue influence, is very difficult to discern. This legislation takes the question of whether a contribution impacts judicial decision completely off the table, thus protecting the integrity of the judicial system. Therefore, we urge a favorable report on HB 1164.