



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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

### **SB 973 – CAMPAIGN FINANCE – PUBLIC OFFICIALS – SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS OR DONATIONS**

#### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

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

#### **DATE: MARCH 9, 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. This legislation would codify a practice that has been in place administratively.

This legislation would prohibit a public official (meaning the head of a department, agency, office or any other body of the Executive Branch) from soliciting, transmitting or depositing a contribution or donation for the benefit of a candidate from a person who is subject to the regulatory authority of the public official's governmental unit.

In other words, a public official who is in a position to license, certify or impose statutory civil or criminal penalties on someone, may not seek political contributions from that person. This is important because an agency head may be involved in determining and implementing regulations and other decisions that impact the business entities. A real conflict of interest and an opportunity to abuse power could come into play when a public official is seeking a donation from a business or individual who is doing business with the state and that business is subject to regulations, guidelines, or other decisions determined by or enforced by the public official.

This regulation would eliminate this potential for corruption and therefore we urge a favorable report on SB973.