



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 1230 - CAMPAIGN FINANCE - DEPARTMENTAL SECRETARIES – 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 make it unlawful for a Department Head (Secretary) of the executive branch of the state government to solicit campaign donations from a business entity they regulate or is doing business with the state. A director or an officer of the business would also be prohibited from making a campaign contribution.

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 HB 1230.