



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 538 Campaign Finance – Revisions

POSITION: Support

BY: Lois Hybl and Richard Willson – Co-Presidents

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The League of Women Voters supports all measures that ensure transparency and the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections. We also believe that campaign finance laws must be written in such a way that they are enforceable in order to be effective.

HB 538 would allow the treasurer of a campaign finance entity to "approve" rather than "make" a disbursement of behalf of a campaign but would prohibit the treasurer of a state or county political party central committee from "approving" versus "making" a disbursement. It also states that if a treasurer of a campaign finance entity is temporarily unable to perform the duties of the office, the chairman of the campaign finance entity may approve a disbursement providing they submit a full report to the treasurer within 7 days of giving approval. This communication is important in order to ensure accuracy of campaign finance reports.

This legislation also adds the requirement that campaign finance entities that are liable for civil penalties due to violation of campaign finance rules, must submit bank statements that document all expenditures made during the reporting period with each report. These bank statements must continue to be submitted for 2 years after the civil penalty was imposed on the campaign. Once a campaign has shown disregard for the rules, this extra layer of accountability will help avoid future violations.

We urge a favorable report on HB 538.