



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 344 Election Law – Campaign Finance – Contributions (Prohibiting Pay to Play Act of 2022

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng President

Date: February 8, 2022

The League of Women Voters supports campaign finance regulations that enhance political equality for all citizens, ensure transparency, protect representative democracy from distortion by undisclosed contributions and combat corruption.

This bill would prohibit registered lobbyists from making personal contributions to people holding state-wide offices such as Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller or a member of the General Assembly if they are registered to influence action in the same branch of government to which the candidate seeks election. It would also prohibit the candidate from accepting such contributions. An exception is made for a lobbyist who wants to make a contribution to a legislative candidate who would represent them if elected because the lobbyist lives in the legislator's district.

This bill also prohibits business entities who have large contracts with the state from making contributions to candidates running for state-wide offices. It also prohibits the candidates from accepting such contributions.

Prohibiting making or accepting contributions in circumstances where the contributor has something to gain from the candidate or elected officials would eliminate the possibility that the financial contribution impacted a policy decision or a decision regarding the awarding of contracts. Financial incentives for the office holder should have not have any place in making policy or awarding contracts.

For this reason, we urge a favorable report on HB 344.