



## League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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Testimony to the Senate Election Laws Committee  
March 1, 2000  
Judy Duffy, President

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this committee today.

You have before you a collection of bills dealing with campaign finance reform. While they differ in detail and emphasis, there seems to be a recognition that the current system could stand some repair.

The philosophical argument remains that any changes to campaign finance laws will only result in participants finding new and creative ways to contribute, allocate and spend campaign moneys. While this may be true, it certainly is no rationale to not continually be looking at how the system can be improved.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota has been working on campaign finance issues for nearly 40 years. Over this period the discussions have shifted from campaign spending to contribution limits to full disclosure to fundraising, gift bans and other proposed reforms. What has resulted is a body of law that many find complex and burdensome. However, the State of Minnesota remains the leader in this area and is a model to many states that consider campaign finance reform.

This year, the LWVMN has signed on in support of SF 3040, the so-called "Clean Money Bill." Our position of "support for improved methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process" is embodied in this bill.

As you know, similar bills have already been adopted by the states of Maine and Arizona and may portend a trend toward more comprehensive means to reform our campaign finance system. Voting participation has been on the decline in our country and one of the most cited reasons is that citizens feel it is only the big money interests that decide elections. For this reason the system must be looked at critically with an objective to bring people into the system, not turn them off.

This election year the League will be working hard to inform and encourage voters to take part. Candidates will be encouraged to abide by fair campaign practices and to participate in debates. News outlets will be encouraged to cover the substance of candidates' campaigns. These are all means to increase voter turnout in Minnesota. A serious examination of campaign finance laws with an eye to enhancing citizens' trust in the system would be another positive step in this effort.

Thank you.



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (651) 224-5445 FAX (651) 290-2145

Beth Frasier  
Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action  
1821 University Avenue  
Suite S-307  
St. Paul, MN 55104

Dear Beth,

Thank you for presenting the Clean Money/Elected Officials program at the League's Action Committee meeting last week. I appreciate your sending the flyer on the elections "game." I need to talk to my action co-chair about how to proceed with that project and I will call you about how we might involve local Leagues.

At the January 10<sup>th</sup> Action Committee meeting we will discuss the project. I will let you know about any decisions that are made. We appreciate your taking time to talk with us on an issue the League has long felt is critical to improving the political climate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kay Erickson'.

Kay Erickson  
Action Co-Chair





# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

April 29, 1999

The Honorable Steve Sviggum  
Speaker, MN House of Representatives  
463 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul MN 55155

Dear Mr. Sviggum:

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota applauds your opposition to a relaxation in the gift ban for legislators. Five years ago when the gift ban legislation was passed into law, the League testified several times in support of setting ethical standards for public officials and creating a method of enforcing them. We strongly supported the outright ban on gifts as provided in the 1994 legislation. Last year when it appeared that the conference committee might act to relax the gift ban we sent each member a memo opposing such a move. Our position has not changed.

We know there are provisions in the gift ban that may seem to be only irksome and not of sufficient value to enforce but we would urge that any change consider first public perception and not the convenience of legislators.

Legislators are arguing that it is "rude" to not accept the offering of simple refreshments but it is our belief that the public is always understanding and appreciative of ethical behavior by public servants and finds it easier to comprehend an outright ban rather than estimating the costs of offerings.

We urge you to continue your opposition to this measure.

Sincerely,

Judy Duffy  
President

Carol Frisch  
Vice Pres. Action

March 1, 1999

Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives  
State Office Building  
St. Paul MN 55155

Dear Members:

This letter is to urge your support of H.F. 9. that prohibits a legislator from lobbying to influence legislation fore one year after leaving legislative office.

As you know the League has a long history of efforts to promote open, accessible, responsive and accountable government that encourages its citizens to be informed and to participate as voters and interested citizens in the making of laws.

Recently, the perception has taken hold that government is an activity only for insiders. This perception works against all of our efforts to involve citizens in the business of government. The recent election carried few mandates except for the message that people are tired of politics as usual.

Certainly efforts to build the public's confidence in the business of government should be supported. To emphasize that one not be an "insider" to be active and effective in speaking to legislators should be a clear message. One incremental step would be to pass H.F. 9.

We are encouraged by the bipartisan support for this bill and hope there will also be tripartisan support. At a time when the public is calling for continued government reform, we urge you to avoid the perception of undue influence in legislating by adopting this measure.

Thank you.

Judy Duffy  
President



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 17, 1998

The Honorable Joan Growe  
Minnesota Secretary of State  
Room 180  
State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Growe:

The League of Women Voters has a long standing record of supporting fair voting practices that make it easier for citizens to exercise their right to vote. Therefore, we strongly support SF 2148 which allows for expanded absentee voting. Allowing voters to vote by absentee ballot for any reason is a sound practice and one whose time has come in today's busy society. This bill doesn't change the administration of absentee balloting. Concerns that blocked passage of a similar bill last year have all been addressed, and the League would like to see this bill become law.

Your innovative leadership and watchful administration of the elections process have not only brought about positive changes in the law, but have put into place policies that guard against the election fraud that we see in other states. Minnesota elections traditionally have a high voter turnout and few cases of fraud. We have led the way among states in many areas of democracy, namely election laws such as the "motor-voter" registration, and same day registration. All Minnesotans can be proud of this record.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota commends your effort to make voting more accessible and convenient to the citizens and we support passage of Senate File 2148, expanding absentee voting.

Sincerely,

Judy Duffy  
President

cc - Members Minnesota House of Representatives



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

## MEMORANDUM

TO: THE HONORABLE JAMES METZEN, MINNESOTA SENATE  
303 CAPITOL.

FROM: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA

DATE: MARCH 12, 1998

RE: RELAXATION OF GIFT BAN LEGISLATION

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota holds as one of its core principles the belief that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people. This belief is the basis for our actions. That action supports measures to improve laws that combat corruption and undue influence, and supports the public's right to comprehensive disclosure.

Fours years ago, when the original gift ban legislation was passed into law, the League testified several times before the Senate Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee. At that time we supported setting ethical standards for public officials and creating a method for enforcing them. We strongly supported the outright ban on gifts as provided in the 1994 legislation. We believed then, and continue to believe, that this feature reduces the likelihood that, even with the best of intentions, public officials regard individuals and groups who give gifts, be they large or small, with a different attitude than they would non-givers.

The League's purpose in Voter Service is to encourage citizens to exercise their right to vote, to stay informed and to voice their opinions about issues. Every year we hold workshops on citizen lobbying, on how to contribute to the public policy dialogue. Perception or reality, the public can feel like "second class citizens" when compared to professional lobbyists who are sometimes perceived to "buy their access" to legislators. The gift ban removes the possibility that special consideration is afforded to those who convey gifts.

The Star Tribune published an editorial on May 6, 1997 regarding the gift ban, urging the legislature to keep the ban in place. The editorial rightly states that a relaxation in the ban, even to \$5 per day per lobbyist, "...would raise new questions about legislative integrity...". While we don't presume the intent to do wrong, we are aware of the importance of public perception and it is critical to avoid actions that could shake the public's trust.

Limitation on gifts contributes to increased accountability. This kind of accountability builds on the reforms already in place and helps give the public a window through which to monitor the influence that groups bring to bear on individual legislators. The public is very sensitive to potential undue influence given the climate at the national level. In Minnesota where we have prided ourselves on leading the charge for clean government, let's not be the ones to relax our laws when the public is asking for continued reform.



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony before the Senate Election Laws Committee

February 11, 1998

Testimony by Susan Weisbrod, Government Lobbyist

My name is Susan Weisbrod, and I am representing the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. I am here as a volunteer because I believe in good government and I believe Minnesota has and continues to lead the way in this area. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) supports SF3071, which calls for the disclosure of conduit funds.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) has been working on legislation for improved campaign practices for over 36 years. In 1961, the LWVMN formulated a position in support of:

"the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates."

These positions fit into a League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) statement calling for "action to improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process."

We acknowledge the role of conduit funds because their existence encourages citizen participation by facilitating individual contributions to the candidate of the employee's choice. We believe that since conduit funds exist within a corporation primarily to make it easier for an employee to set aside money to contribute to a candidate, then there should be no opposition to disclosing the total amount contributed to a candidate through the conduit fund. Knowing which corporations have these funds and disclosing the amount of money which passes through them should serve as beneficial public relations for the corporations.

In keeping with the comprehensive disclosure laws which exist in Minnesota now, the corporations and organizations which operate these employee conduits should disclose the amount of money which passes through the fund. Yes, these are individual contributions we are talking about, but because they reach the candidate by way of a check from the corporation, we would like to see these amounts reflected as coming through a conduit fund. The public does have a right to know which corporations and organizations have employee conduit funds and the aggregate amount contributed through the fund. I, as a citizen, as a voter, as someone who has a genuine concern for good government issues have a right to know: which groups have conduit funds and how much money passes through them? We urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for allowing the League (LWVMN) to testify before you today.





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Thank you for allowing the League (LWVMN) to testify before you today.





## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony before Senate Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee

October 3, 1997

Judy Duffy, President, LWVMN

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) has been working on legislation for improved campaign practices for over 36 years. In 1961, the LWVMN formulated a position in support of:

"the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates."

Further studies went on to advocate for the "judicious use of public resources to finance campaigns" and support for campaign spending limits in 1972.

All of these positions fit into a League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) 1973 statement calling for "action to improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process."

In 1993, the Minnesota legislature passed what was then called "comprehensive" campaign finance reform." Limits were placed on sources of campaign fundraising from PACs, large donors, and lobbyists. Emphasis was placed on raising money from small and constituent donors. Recognizing the incumbent advantage, new candidates for state offices were allowed to spend 10% more on their campaigns. Also in 1993, transfer of funds from one campaign committee to another and party caucus fundraisers during the legislative session were prohibited. Public subsidy for unopposed candidates was disallowed. Also for the first time, contribution limits were placed on candidates for local office.

Changes were also made in the law for enhanced public financing for state candidates. The check-off system was retained and a state appropriation was added. Small contributors were also allowed to claim a one-time reimbursement from the state for a contribution to a candidate running for state office.

The LWV considers all of these changes to be improvements to the law. Are they perfect? Have they eliminated opportunities for abuse and corruption of the system? Certainly not and perhaps that is not possible. But when problems are identified and the system is not operating in everyone's best interests, then further changes must be made.

I am sure that over the course of your hearings, this committee will hear many suggestions of where and how this system is broken and needs to be fixed. I will leave it to others to point out the specifics and their recommendations for reform but I will make a few comments.

Just as the U.S. Senate hearings have demonstrated, the explosion of the use of soft money in campaigns has raised serious concerns for those of us who are interested in open, honest, inclusive electoral politics. Unrestricted money intended to be used for party building activities and get out the vote efforts has allegedly found its way into individual campaigns. The widespread use of issue advocacy ads to either promote or defeat candidates without explicitly stating the obvious intent is another widely recognized abuse of soft money expenditures.

Left out of the Minnesota 1993 reform was any restriction on party contributions. This was clearly a compromise that was struck to pass the other measures for public financing, regulated contributions and prohibition of certain practices. In the last election cycle the major Minnesota political parties enjoyed a substantial increase in contributions over previous years. While party building and get out the vote activities are not to be discouraged, the League would support some limits and full disclosure of all contributions to the parties to guard against domination by a few in directing party activities.

In 1993, efforts were made to restrict independent expenditures by allowing the target of such concerted efforts to exceed spending limits to counter claims made by the opposition. The court struck down that provision as a restriction on free speech. This points out the difficulties and considerations that must be made in any reform attempts.

So long as the court equates the giving of money with free speech, limits and restrictions of all kinds will constantly be challenged and must be carefully drafted.. The question of whether more money translates to "more" free speech still has not been settled. Justice Holmes said one cannot falsely cry "Fire" in a crowded theater. Some restrictions are clearly necessary and appropriate. As long as the tobacco industry can "mysteriously" inject a \$50 billion tax credit into the Federal tax bill, care needs to be taken that all laws are passed to the greater public good, not just for those who stand to make profits and win out at the expense of the rest of us.

The idea that we will pass perfect campaign reform legislation is not realistic. As long as individuals can find ways around the laws and use money to win access and influence, it will happen. Our charge is to be vigilant, point out the abuses when we see them and work for a better system. This will always be "work in progress." The League has worked on issues that support the citizens at large for 77 years and specifically on campaign finance since 1961. We won't give up--we will continue to advocate for improved laws that ensure access for all.

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members of the Minnesota Senate  
**FROM:** League of Women Voters of Minnesota  
**DATE:** May 8, 1997  
**RE:** Relaxation of gift ban legislation

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota holds as one of its core principles the belief that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people. This belief is the basis for our actions. That action supports measures to improve laws that combat corruption and undue influence, and supports the public's right to comprehensive disclosure.

Three years ago, when the original gift ban legislation was passed into law, the League testified several times before the Senate Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee. At that time we supported setting ethical standards for public officials and creating a method for enforcing them. We strongly supported the outright ban on gifts as provided in SF 24. We believed then, and continue to believe, that this feature reduces the likelihood that, even with the best of intentions, public officials regard individuals and groups who give gifts, be they large or small, with a different attitude than they would non-givers.

The League's purpose in Voter Service is to encourage citizens to exercise their right to vote, to stay informed, and to voice their opinions about issues. Every year we hold workshops on Citizen Lobbying, on how to contribute to the public policy dialogue. Perception or reality, the public can feel like "second class citizens" when compared to professional lobbyists who are sometimes perceived to "buy their access" to legislators. The gift ban removes the possibility that special consideration is afforded to those who convey gifts.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune published on May 6 an editorial regarding the gift ban, urging the legislature to keep the ban in place. The Tribune rightly states that a relaxation in the ban, even to \$5 per day per lobbyist, "...would raise new questions about legislative integrity...". While we don't presume the intent to do wrong, we are aware of the importance of public perception, and it is critical to avoid actions that could shake the public's trust.

Limitation on gifts contributes to increased accountability. This kind of accountability builds on the reforms already in place and helps to give the public a window through which to monitor the influence that groups bring to bear on individual legislators. The public is very sensitive to potential undue influence given the climate at the national level. In Minnesota, where we have prided ourselves on leading the charge for clean government, let's not be the ones to relax our laws when the public is asking for continued reform.

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members of the Conference Committee  
State Departments Appropriations

**FROM:** League of Women Voters of Minnesota

**DATE:** May 8, 1997

**RE:** SF 1905, Omnibus State Departments Appropriations Bill,  
**Relaxation of gift ban legislation**

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# ALERT

**TO:** Local League Presidents  
**FROM:** Carol Frisch, LWVMN Action Chair  
**SUBJECT:** Campaign Finance Reform Legislation in Congress  
**DATE:** April 17, 1996

Attached is a copy of a press release distributed on April 10 through a press conference at the State Capitol in co-sponsorship with Common Cause and several other organizations. Attendance at the press conference was small; therefore, we encourage you to make use of the release as a model for a letter to the editor of your local paper and to your congressman. Only Congressmen David Minge, a co-sponsor of HR 2566, and William Luther have signed the discharge petition to date.

For your further information, the attached ad is a sample of advertising being run against all sponsors of the Bipartisan Clean Congress Act, including Minge and Republican Linda Smith of Washington. They are misleading and call for supportive responses to HR 2566 in a non-partisan frame of reference. Please make use of these materials in conjunction with the **LWVUS Action Alert** of March 22, 1996 to act in behalf of campaign finance reform.



# NEWS RELEASE



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS  
MINNESOTA

550 Rice Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103  
Phone 612-224-5445  
Fax 612-292-9417

IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 17, 1996

CONTACT: (your name)  
(your phone #)

1919  
A VOICE  
FOR CITIZENS,  
A FORCE  
FOR CHANGE  
1994

## LWVMN URGES CONGRESSMEN TO SIGN HR373 FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The League of Women Voters is calling on all Minnesota's US Congressmen to sign House Resolution 373 to force consideration of campaign finance reform in the United States Congress.

At a joint press conference with Common Cause on April 10 at the Minnesota State Capitol, Carol Frisch, Action Chair of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota said, "The public is deeply disillusioned with the political process. Too much is spent on today's political campaigns. Incumbents have an unfair fundraising advantage over challengers. Special interests have undue influence on the legislative process. We must move campaign finance reform higher on the House agenda. We commend the signers of HR 373 for this effort to force consideration of campaign finance reform legislation on the House floor."

The League of Women Voters supports four essential elements of reform contained in the campaign reform bill:

- New, strict limits on special interest contributions from large contributors and from PACs;
- Voluntary spending limits;
- Reduced-cost ways for candidates to communicate in more responsible ways with the public; and
- New controls on "soft money".

####

congressional campaigns.

RADIO AD -- Washington

ANNOUNCER:

What would you do if you won one of those publishers' sweepstakes?

ED MCMAHON IMPERSONATOR (buffoon voice)

Here's a check for a million dollars! Why not run for Congress?

Ho, ho, ho.

ANNOUNCER:

There are now more than 70 millionaires in Congress, and the number is growing rapidly.

One major reason is because our current system of financing campaigns favors the wealthy.

To make things even worse, our local Congressman David Minge, is supporting a bill which would sharply limit the way average people can participate in politics and government.

His bill, HR 2566, would ban political action by citizens through their union, business, association, or even philosophical group.

So if you think having more millionaires in Congress is good for our country, tell Congressman Minge that they're on the right track.

But if you don't, tell Congressman Minge that average working Americans have the right and responsibility to participate in politics ... every way they can.

MCMAHON VOICE:

Paid for by the National Association of Business Political Action Committees. Celebrity voice impersonated.

-0- 4/9/96

/NOTE TO EDITORS: A copy of the print ad is available./

/CONTACT: Frank Chauvin of the National Association of Business PACs, 703-836-4422/

CO: National Association of Business PACs





THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

May 17, 1995

Dear Member of Minnesota House of Representatives:

The League of Women Voters strongly supports the ethics reform legislation passed in 1994. While the League supports technical adjustments to the current law, we do not support looser restrictions or weakening of the ethics law. The House Ways and Means Committee amended the ethics bill HF 856 to permit officials to accept gifts valued up to \$25. This is a significant reversal of the current law, and is totally unacceptable. This amendment is a step backwards in maintaining and gaining the public trust. It invites abuse or at least gives the perception of abuse and could set a precedent of annual amendments to weaken the legislation.

Please support action on the House floor that would restore the strict limits on gift giving. We appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

KE/nw

# ACTION



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS  
MINNESOTA

550 Rice Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103  
Phone 612-224-5445  
Fax 612-292-9417

TO: LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENTS AND ACTION CHAIRS

FROM: DIANE GIBSON, LOBBYING INTERN

RE: ETHICS REFORM

DATE: MARCH 1, 1995

1919

A VOICE

FOR CITIZENS,

A FORCE

FOR CHANGE

1994

LWVMN Position: Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972)

Please contact your legislators and indicate LWVMN's opposition to SF 628 and HF 856. These bills propose major changes in the 1994 ethics legislation regarding gift bans to state and local government officials.

1. They would allow officials to attend a hosted function if all are invited to attend. Only organizations with large entertainment/lobbying budgets could afford to include all members of an elected body (legislature, county commission, etc.) and so individual citizens and non-profit organizations would still be excluded from wining and dining elected officials as a group or as individuals.
2. Senators may choose to take \$50 a day and Representatives \$48 a day as a per diem for food and incidental expenses. (This is in addition to a \$600 + a month housing allowance for legislators who do not live in the metropolitan area.) The per diem would seem to most citizens a sufficient amount to pay for a meal or a reception to which the legislator has been invited. Many of us are used to paying our way i.e. going Dutch treat when we eat away from home. So, we should be able to expect the same from our elected officials.
3. The lack of collegiality which some legislators bemoan could be remedied by saying "yes" to invitations but just insisting on paying on e's share of the tab.
4. The 1994 legislation has not been in effect even a year so we should not decide to make major changes until we see the "problems" from a long term perspective.
5. Some technical alterations are okay such as allowing \$5 for coffee and doughnuts--a type of wining and dining. We will not oppose this.
6. The attached sample letter is to adapt and then send to your local newspaper. LWVMN is writing to the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Star Tribune. If your legislator is an author, please say so as indicated on the sample letter. Authors are listed at the top of the sample letter.



## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 1, 1995

St. Paul Pioneer Press  
345 Cedar Street  
St. Paul MN 55102

To the Editor:

The League of Women Voters strongly supports the ethics reform legislation passed in 1994. We are disappointed that identical bills in our state legislature have been sponsored that would dramatically weaken this existing ethics law. The Senate bill authors are Majority Leader Roger Moe (DFL, Erskine) and Minority Leader Dean Johnson (IR, Willmar). The House bill authors are David Bishop (IR, Rochester), Edgar Olson (DFL, Fosston), Thomas Pugh (DFL, South St. Paul), Wayne Simoneau (DFL, Fridley), and Gregory Davids (IR, Preston).

Citizens expect their public officials to act ethically. We believe that Minnesota's legislators take their responsibilities seriously to maintain high standards of conduct. Nevertheless, citizens have become cynical about government generally, and state government has become a target of that disillusionment. The 1994 Ethics Reform Law served to restore some of the public trust. Persons with a direct benefit in decisions that public officials make should not give gifts to public officials as such gifts may influence decision making. Whether or not it is true, many members of the public believe that they have less access to government decision makers than people who are paid to affect legislation. A strong gift ban helps to put the public on an even footing with representatives from special interest groups.

While the League supports technical adjustments to the current law we do not support the looser restrictions proposed in these bills. The League believes that the all-encompassing nature of the new exceptions would invite abuse. For example, one proposed exception would permit free food and beverage receptions if all the legislators are invited to the event. Few organizations can afford to invite all the legislators. This would reintroduce enhanced access for large organizations and special interest groups. Citizens expect their officials to behave ethically and be openly available and accessible to all. Maintaining a strong ethics law is necessary to gain and maintain the public trust. Any weakening of the current law would be a significant step backwards.

We encourage you to contact your representative or senator to discuss the proposed legislation.

Kay Erickson  
President



## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony distributed to the Elections Division  
House of Representatives General Legislation Committee  
House File 621  
February 27, 1995

The League of Women Voters has strong positions on facilitating informed citizen participation in the governmental process and the citizen's right to know. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota supports a statewide voter guide to be mailed to every household in the state before the precinct caucus, the primary or "party nominating" election, and the general election.

In 1994 the League of Women Voters of Minnesota prepared 220,000 Voter Guides for the primary and 300,000 Voter Guides for the general election. We were assisted in their distribution by Target Stores. They were very well received by the voters we were able to reach but we are well aware that this is an imperfect method of distribution and a mailing to all households in the state is an essential component of voter education. The voters of Minnesota have shown a strong interest in nonpartisan and unbiased candidate information.

On the basis of our long history of voter education and contact with the voters at election time we would like to make the following recommendations:

1. The materials sent prior to the precinct caucus give very specific and user friendly instructions on how and where to participate in the caucus. This can be a very daunting experience for many citizens. Presently the Secretary of State published a very good guide to the caucus but it suffers from imperfect distribution just as our voter guides do. A mailing to every household would be a significant improvement.
2. The primary election is another source of puzzlement to many citizens. It will be especially important to inform them of changes that will occur with the addition of a third major party, the need to vote for only one party, and the changes that may be made if the primary becomes the party nominating election.
3. We would like to see the candidate information to include constitutional officers, national and state legislators and nonpartisan as well as partisan offices. Many nonpartisan elections generate as much need for information as partisan elections. For instance, voters have a particular interest in information on judicial candidates.
4. It has been our experience that one of the most difficult parts of publishing a voters guide has been the reluctance of candidates to return the information requested of them. You may wish to make the information return a necessary part of running for office.

5. The voters are eager for information on the candidates stance on the issues. The grid that was published in our 1994 Voters Guide was much appreciated by the citizens that received a copy. We would hope that some method of unbiased, nonpartisan questioning could be addressed to candidates for inclusion in the Voters Guide.

It is our belief that an investment by the state in voter education which will stimulate citizen participation in the political process is a much needed and worthwhile expenditure.



## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 1, 1995

St. Paul Pioneer Press  
345 Cedar Street  
St. Paul MN 55102

To the Editor:

The League of Women Voters strongly supports the ethics reform legislation passed in 1994. We are disappointed that identical bills in our state legislature have been sponsored that would dramatically weaken this existing ethics law. The Senate bill authors are Majority Leader Roger Moe (DFL, Erskine) and Minority Leader Dean Johnson (IR, Willmar). The House bill authors are David Bishop (IR, Rochester), Edgar Olson (DFL, Fosston), Thomas Pugh (DFL, South St. Paul), Wayne Simoneau (DFL, Fridley), and Gregory Davids (IR, Preston).

Citizens expect their public officials to act ethically. We believe that Minnesota's legislators take their responsibilities seriously to maintain high standards of conduct. Nevertheless, citizens have become cynical about government generally, and state government has become a target of that disillusionment. The 1994 Ethics Reform Law served to restore some of the public trust. Persons with a direct benefit in decisions that public officials make should not give gifts to public officials as such gifts may influence decision making. Whether or not it is true, many members of the public believe that they have less access to government decision makers than people who are paid to affect legislation. A strong gift ban helps to put the public on an even footing with representatives from special interest groups.

While the League supports technical adjustments to the current law we do not support the looser restrictions proposed in these bills. The League believes that the all-encompassing nature of the new exceptions would invite abuse. For example, one proposed exception would permit free food and beverage receptions if all the legislators are invited to the event. Few organizations can afford to invite all the legislators. This would reintroduce enhanced access for large organizations and special interest groups. Citizens expect their officials to behave ethically and be openly available and accessible to all. Maintaining a strong ethics law is necessary to gain and maintain the public trust. Any weakening of the current law would be a significant step backwards.

We encourage you to contact your representative or senator to discuss the proposed legislation.

Kay Erickson  
President



# ACTION



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS  
MINNESOTA

550 Rice Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103  
Phone 612-224-5445  
Fax 612-292-9417

TO: LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENTS AND ACTION CHAIRS

FROM: DIANE GIBSON, LOBBYING INTERN

RE: ETHICS REFORM

DATE: MARCH 1, 1995

LWVMN Position: Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972)

Please contact your legislators and indicate LWVMN's opposition to SF 628 and HF 856. These bills propose major changes in the 1994 ethics legislation regarding gift bans to state and local government officials.

1. They would allow officials to attend a hosted function if all are invited to attend. Only organizations with large entertainment/lobbying budgets could afford to include all members of an elected body (legislature, county commission, etc.) and so individual citizens and non-profit organizations would still be excluded from wining and dining elected officials as a group or as individuals.
2. Senators may choose to take \$50 a day and Representatives \$48 a day as a per diem for food and incidental expenses. (This is in addition to a \$600 + a month housing allowance for legislators who do not live in the metropolitan area.) The per diem would seem to most citizens a sufficient amount to pay for a meal or a reception to which the legislator has been invited. Many of us are used to paying our way i.e. going Dutch treat when we eat away from home. So, we should be able to expect the same from our elected officials.
3. The lack of collegiality which some legislators bemoan could be remedied by saying "yes" to invitations but just insisting on paying on e's share of the tab.
4. The 1994 legislation has not been in effect even a year so we should not decide to make major changes until we see the "problems" from a long term perspective.
5. Some technical alterations are okay such as allowing \$5 for coffee and doughnuts--a type of wining and dining. We will not oppose this.
6. The attached sample letter is to adapt and then send to your local newspaper. LWVMN is writing to the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Star Tribune. If your legislator is an author, please say so as indicated on the sample letter. Authors are listed at the top of the sample letter.

1919

A VOICE

FOR CITIZENS,

A FORCE

FOR CHANGE

1994



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Steve Kelley  
MN House of Representatives  
417 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Kelley:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

We salute you for "getting it" and hope that the improvements that you worked for can be included at a later date.

Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk





THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Mindy Greiling  
MN House of Representatives  
393 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mindy:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

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Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Todd VanDellen  
MN House of Representatives  
279 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. VanDellen:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

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Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Kathleen Vellenga  
MN House of Representatives  
509 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Vellenga:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

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Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Warren Limmer  
MN House of Representatives  
301 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Limmer:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kay Erickson'.

Kay Erickson  
President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Susan Simmonds'.

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Becky Kelso  
MN House of Representatives  
415 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Kelso:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

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Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Ron Abrams  
MN House of Representatives  
209 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Abrams:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

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Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Mark Olson  
MN House of Representatives  
201 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Olson:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

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Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

M I N N E S O T A

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Dee Long  
MN House of Representatives  
575 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Long:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

We salute you for "getting it" and hope that the improvements that you worked for can be included at a later date.

Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk





THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Pamela Neary  
MN House of Representatives  
429 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Neary:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

We salute you for "getting it" and hope that the improvements that you worked for can be included at a later date.

Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

March 16, 1994

Honorable Jeff Bertram  
MN House of Representatives  
571 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Bertram:

Thank you for your efforts to improve and strengthen the ethics bill by the House on March 3rd. The League believes that legislators should be responsible for disclosing the gifts they receive and we would support a ban on gifts of more than nominal value.

LWVMN has no doubt that legislators in Minnesota are not "bought" by dinners and gifts. However, the legislators that continue to insist upon conducting business as usual have missed the rising resentment of those practices by the public and the perceived lack of access to legislators by those not able to wine, dine and give gifts. They still don't get it.

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Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Susan Simmonds  
Second Vice President for Action

E:S/rk

COPY

Testimony before the  
Senate Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee  
by Jane McWilliams, lobbyist  
February 24, 1994

My name is Jane McWilliams and I am a volunteer member of the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. The League is pleased to have this opportunity to talk with you about S.F. 24.

As we mentioned in our previous testimony before this committee, the League supports setting ethical standards for public officials and creating a method for enforcing them. We support the standards in S.F. 24, which prohibit officials from accepting private compensation for performing public duties, from using information gained from a public position for private gain, and which restrict lobbying activities after an employee or public official has left a public position. In fact, while there may be codes of ethics in place in certain cities and other local governmental bodies, and for state employees, the standards set in this legislation would create uniformity. More importantly, there would be a mechanism for people to file complaints which protects the confidentiality of the complainant and the individual about whom the complaint is filed.

We call attention to the fact that with increased responsibility, increased financial support will likely be needed for the Ethical Practices Board. The bill does not address this. We believe that this is an appropriate role for the Board and that it should be given the resources necessary to be effective.

We support elimination of the lapse of advisory opinions from the Ethical Practices Board as currently stated in law.

We support the strengthened disclosure features of S.F.24 and an outright ban on gifts as provided in the bill. We believe that this feature would reduce the likelihood that, even with the best of intentions, public officials regard individuals and groups who give gifts, be they large or small, with a different attitude than they would non-givers.

We do not think that enactment of stronger measures to assure ethical practices in government is an acknowledgement of wrong-doing. In fact, we think it shows good faith to strengthen the already clean reputation which government in Minnesota rightfully enjoys. That is why we think S.F. 24 will make a significant step toward restoring public trust and ensuring ethical service of public and local officials.

COPY

Testimony before the Elections and Ethics Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
by Susan Simmonds, Vice President - Action  
League of Women Voters of Minnesota  
February 23, 1994

My name is Susan Simmonds and I am Vice President for Action of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. The League is pleased to have this opportunity to talk with you about policies we think will create a more ethical climate in government in Minnesota. We think that H.F. 1863 constitutes a good beginning.

We like the idea of creating a joint committee of the Legislature to exercise leadership concerning ethical issues within the Legislature. However, we wish that there were more concrete detail and direction in the bill specifying the charge to the committee, a provision for due process, identification of where complaints might be brought and a clear standard of conduct in the bill. It isn't clear how this new committee would affect current provisions in the respective rules of the two houses.

We support the measures for accountability in the provision strengthening the reporting requirements for lobbyists. This information will make it easier for the diligent citizen to measure the influence of lobbyists on public and local officials. However, we do not think this measure goes far enough or fully addresses what the citizen wants to know. It should be extended to members of the Legislature as well. Then anyone could find out what a specific legislator has reported without having to read every lobbyist report. Accessibility to information - full disclosure - is as important an ethics issue as is having physical access to a legislator's office.

We would go farther than strengthening accountability. We would support prohibition of gifts to public or local officials. While this seems extreme, our neighbors in Wisconsin have had a similar policy in place for decades. We believe that enacting this feature would reduce the likelihood that even with the best of intentions, public officials regard individuals and groups who give gifts, be they large or small, with a different attitude than they would non-givers.

The League works hard to encourage ordinary citizens to vote intelligently and then to stay in touch with their public officials to hold them accountable. We encourage them to contact officials to let them know how they feel on issues of concern. Whether or not it is merited, the public feels "second class" when compared with people who are paid to affect legislation or rule-making. The prohibition of gifts helps put the public on an even footing with representatives of special interest groups. There would be no perception of a citizen hierarchy. Moreover, it removes any possibility that special consideration will be afforded those who are in a position to convey gifts.

We also think there needs to be a method for persons to file a complaint against a public official who fails to adhere to the code of ethics. This method should protect both the confidentiality of the complainant and the rights of the alleged violator until a careful inquiry has been conducted to determine probable cause. It makes sense to expand the role of the Ethical Practices Board and place this responsibility with that body.

We do not think that enactment of stronger measures to assure ethical practices in government is an acknowledgement of wrong-doing. In fact, we believe it shows good faith to strengthen the already clean reputation government in Minnesota rightfully enjoys.

The public expects its public officials to act ethically and to treat constituents with honesty and respect. We believe Minnesota's legislators and public officials take these responsibilities seriously and maintain high standards of ethical conduct. Nevertheless, citizens have become cynical about government. We think that by passing a bill with stronger measures than those in the current version of H.F. 1863 the House will make a significant step toward restoring public trust and ensuring ethical service of public and local officials.

COPY

Testimony before the  
Senate Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee  
by Jane McWilliams,  
League of Women Voters of Minnesota  
February 8, 1994

My name is Jane McWilliams and I am a member of the Board of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. The League is pleased to have this opportunity to talk with you about ways we think the Legislature can improve its image as an ethical institution.

We believe that the basic ethical responsibility of the members of the Legislature is to honor the trust the public has placed in you for representing their interests in making policy for the State of Minnesota. The public expects its public officials to act ethically and to present a public face of honesty and respect. We believe Minnesota's legislators by and large take these responsibilities seriously and maintain high standards of conduct. Nevertheless, citizens have become cynical about government generally, and state government has become a target of that disillusionment. Today we would like to make some suggestions of ways to restore trust and accountability on the legislative level.

1. The League concurs with the concept recommended by Common Cause Minnesota of setting standards, using them as a way to inform and educate both legislators and the public. We agree that a conflict resolution mechanism should be created to resolve disagreements of interpretation of the standards among legislators. A carefully designed grievance procedure for the public administered by the Ethical Practices Board would provide a constructive vehicle for redress and a logical expanded role for the Board.
2. Financial disclosure and a reasonable limitation on gifts would contribute to increased accountability. This kind of accountability would build on what you have already put in place in election law and should help give the public a window through which to monitor the influence which groups and individuals bring to bear on individual legislators.
3. While last year's session strengthened our election law reform, we believe we still need to reduce the advantage of incumbency so that elections are open and fair. Additional public money for challengers would be one way to achieve this with the continuing goal of always working toward equitable funding of challenger and incumbent campaigns.
4. We also have some concerns about the climate within the Capitol itself, a climate which has alienated and intimidated the public in ways which discourage participation and breed cynicism.



Over the years the League has found that most legislators and committees welcome and encourage testimony from citizens. During the last session, however, we were troubled by a climate of disrespect. The League of Women Voters lobbyists are volunteers representing citizens statewide. Because we are a grassroots organization, we are sensitive to reports that citizen lobbyists, including the League, felt harassed while giving testimony. Inattentiveness by members of committees and lack of control of members by their chair is not an uncommon occurrence.

We all welcome grassroots involvement in helping you make decisions. Ordinary people rubbing shoulders with paid advocates who know how to work the system is a welcome sight. A few suggestions to make the Capitol a more welcoming place include:

1. A public cloakroom (where do the paid lobbyists hang their coats?)
2. Continued effort not to cancel committee meetings at the last minute. Citizens too often have taken time from work, arranged for day care, struggled to use public transportation or find a parking place, searched the halls for meeting rooms, only to find that the meeting has been postponed.
3. Establish an 800 number and publish it to facilitate constituent contacts among people for whom the cost of a call might deter their communicating with you.
4. Establish a clearer communication of events during the Interim. Much important work is done then, and it is very difficult for the public to learn about what is happening. This is an area where the citizen advocate is at a real disadvantage compared to professional advocates who have no impediments to staying on top of legislative activity.
5. Provide required diversity sensitivity training for legislators and staff. Minnesota is becoming more racially and economically diverse. We regard diversity as an enrichment of our community from which we can all benefit.

In summary, by agreeing to a code of behavior and enforcing it, adding further improvements to election law, by polishing up the civility within the Legislature and by improving the already user friendly services, the state legislature can significantly restore public confidence. The League believes that these incremental measures will do more in the long run to keep government accountable than "quick fix" cures like term limits. We look forward to working with this committee on these and other ways toward that important goal.





# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony before the Elections and Ethics Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
by Susan Simmonds, Vice President - Action  
League of Women Voters of Minnesota  
February 23, 1994

My name is Susan Simmonds and I am Vice President for Action of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. The League is pleased to have this opportunity to talk with you about policies we think will create a more ethical climate in government in Minnesota. We think that H.F. 1863 constitutes a good beginning.

We like the idea of creating a joint committee of the Legislature to exercise leadership concerning ethical issues within the Legislature. However, we wish that there were more concrete detail and direction in the bill specifying the charge to the committee, a provision for due process, identification of where complaints might be brought and a clear standard of conduct in the bill. It isn't clear how this new committee would affect current provisions in the respective rules of the two houses.

We support the measures for accountability in the provision strengthening the reporting requirements for lobbyists. This information will make it easier for the diligent citizen to measure the influence of lobbyists on public and local officials. However, we do not think this measure goes far enough or fully addresses what the citizen wants to know. It should be extended to members of the Legislature as well. Then anyone could find out what a specific legislator has reported without having to read every lobbyist report. Accessibility to information - full disclosure - is as important an ethics issue as is having physical access to a legislator's office.

We would go farther than strengthening accountability. We would support prohibition of gifts to public or local officials. While this seems extreme, our neighbors in Wisconsin have had a similar policy in place for decades. We believe that enacting this feature would reduce the likelihood that even with the best of intentions, public officials regard individuals and groups who give gifts, be they large or small, with a different attitude than they would non-givers.

The League works hard to encourage ordinary citizens to vote intelligently and then to stay in touch with their public officials to hold them accountable. We encourage them to contact officials to let them know how they feel on issues of concern. Whether or not it is merited, the public feels "second class" when compared with people who are paid to affect legislation or rule-making. The prohibition of gifts helps put the public on an even footing with representatives of special interest groups. There would be no perception of a citizen hierarchy. Moreover, it removes any possibility that special consideration will be afforded those who are in a position to convey gifts.

We also think there needs to be a method for persons to file a complaint against a public official who fails to adhere to the code of ethics. This method should protect both the confidentiality of the complainant and the rights of the alleged violator until a careful inquiry has been conducted to determine probable cause. It makes sense to expand the role of the Ethical Practices Board and place this responsibility with that body.

We do not think that enactment of stronger measures to assure ethical practices in government is an acknowledgement of wrong-doing. In fact, we believe it shows good faith to strengthen the already clean reputation government in Minnesota rightfully enjoys.

The public expects its public officials to act ethically and to treat constituents with honesty and respect. We believe Minnesota's legislators and public officials take these responsibilities seriously and maintain high standards of ethical conduct. Nevertheless, citizens have become cynical about government. We think that by passing a bill with stronger measures than those in the current version of H.F. 1863 the House will make a significant step toward restoring public trust and ensuring ethical service of public and local officials.

NW file

Testimony before the Elections and Ethics Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
October 26, 1993  
Helen Rudie, League of Women Voters of the Moorhead Area

My name is Helen Rudie; I'm a member of the League of Women Voters of the Moorhead Area and welcome this opportunity to present the League's viewpoint concerning issues of ethics and accountability. Thank you for bringing these hearings to greater Minnesota, and in fact, thank you for responding to citizen concerns by holding hearings on these issues. For many years the League has had a position in support of "responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capacity, and effective performance." The question with which we and you alike struggle is in determining the specifics which insure that quality of government.

The public seems to have become increasingly cynical about the motives and actions of legislators and other public officials and does not believe that they are acting in accordance with commonly accepted high ethical standards. The League regards term limits as a simplistic solution for a complex situation and we have taken a position against them. Rather, the League encourages you to undertake real reform and respectfully suggests attention to three main areas: first, establishing standards of conduct for public officials; second, leveling the playing field so there is equitable competition for public office; and third, adopting internal reforms. I would like to offer the League's suggestions for action in each of these areas.

First, adoption of standards of conduct for public officials. A genuine nonpartisan effort to establish and articulate standards of conduct for legislators, lobbyists, and public officials will have a double reward: first, the very process of defining standards will marvelously focus attention to these issues and allow for genuine dialogue among legislators and with citizens, and second, all concerned, including the public, will understand what behavior is acceptable and what is not. But adopting a code of ethics cannot be the end of efforts to ensure ethical behavior. We support an open and just process to enforce the standards as well as having an annual review and evaluation which is open to the public.

Second main area, campaign finance reform. The League congratulates you for the campaign finance bill which was adopted last session — eliminating "friends of" committees; banning campaign transfers; setting limits on individual, lobbyist, PAC and large giver contributions to candidates; prohibiting unopposed candidates from receiving public money, increasing disclosure by lobbyists and campaigns. However more needs to be done:

- ◆ Even more disclosure should be required in order to improve public confidence both in the election process and in the conduct of the legislature.
- ◆ Public subsidies for first-time challengers to incumbent offices should increase; the present 10% provision is a grossly inadequate sop to assuage public concern and serves mainly to protect incumbents.
- ◆ The Ethical Practices Board needs increased funding beyond the 25% granted last session in order to assure that it has adequate staff and monies.
- ◆ Continued work is needed to find ways that encourage efforts at opening up the election process to minorities and women.

Third main area, internal reforms to the legislative process. You worked on this last session and changed the committee structure to require each committee to look at the funding as well as the development of new projects and services. Our knowledge of and contacts with the legislature bring us to suggest several further internal reforms.

- ◆ A system of rotating committee chairs would not only increase public belief that you act out of more than partisan considerations but would also allow new perspectives and develop new leadership. Third term legislators might well be considered for chairmanships.
- ◆ Sunset internal legislative budgets each biennium in order to avoid undue buildups of power.
- ◆ Improve the climate for citizen contacts with legislators. Let me elaborate on this, an area where I have some personal experience:

When citizens from greater Minnesota take the time and trouble to travel to St. Paul, either on their own or as part of a group's legislative lobby day, they deserve as much consideration as registered full-time lobbyists. If at all possible attend any luncheons they sponsor; be open to individual appointments where they can discuss their concerns, and make every effort to adhere to the appointed time schedule.

Do not postpone hearings without at least a day's notice; there is no better way to build ill will on the part of someone who may have driven in from International Falls. When citizens testify before committees, hearings should begin on time if at all possible, copies of bills and current amendments should be available for everyone not just a select few, and a process should be established for citizens to address grievances if they feel they've been treated unjustly.

Most importantly, eliminate any subtle or overt harassment some citizens have experienced while giving testimony. Witnesses feel frustrated when committee members are inattentive to their testimony, when committee chairs fail to control the behavior of committee members, and when they are subjected to insulting and insensitive remarks --- racial or ethnic slurs, disparagement of those on welfare, belittling those with contrary opinions.

In summary, we applaud your efforts to carry out your responsibility to the citizens you serve but we feel that certain further measures are needed in order to avoid the appearance of disregard for the public's concerns. We suggest that you assure consistency and fairness in the system by adopting a code of ethics and a system of enforcement procedures, continue efforts at campaign finance reform, and make real and substantial improvements in internal conduct of legislative sessions, particularly those measures that foster mutual, respectful contacts between citizens and legislators. Attention to all of these areas will go far in upgrading the public's perceived and real concerns regarding the most recent legislative session. We will welcome and support your efforts to improve the atmosphere between you and your collective constituents, and we are confident you will welcome our further testimony when ethics-related legislation is before you.

Thank you.





THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103  
PHONE (612) 224-5445

**action**

IR HOUSE TASK FORCE ON LEGISLATIVE  
REFORM

TO: LWVs of Eastern Carver County  
St. Cloud  
Buffalo/Monticello Area

An IR House Task Force on Legislative Reform is being active, scheduling hearings on ethics in four places in the metro-central part of the state.

Bloomington - 7 - 8:30, Thursday, January 6, City Hall

Chaska - 7 - 8:30 p.m., January 10, Chaska High School

St. Cloud - 7 - 8:30 p.m., January 20, place to be designated

Rogers/Dayton - 7---8:30 p.m., January 31, place to be designated and time

There may be another meeting early in February and a final one at the Capitol.

The contact person to determine place is Scott Simmonds, House IR Caucus, 296-4272.

We would encourage your League to take part in the hearing in your area. We have several materials that can be used as a basis for testimony and would be glad to fax or mail them to you if you wish. Please contact the LWVMN for assistance. You can call Nancy Witta at the office or Susan Simmonds, Vice President for Action.



## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103  
PHONE (612) 224-5445

# action

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM  
Judy Duffy, 612/429-9703

*April 23*

LWVUS Position: Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know. Combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Background: "The League's position on Campaign Finance reflects continuing concern for open and honest elections and for maximum citizen participation in the political process. League efforts to achieve these goals are based on the belief that a campaign finance system must allow a combination of private and public funding.... The League continues to look for ways to limit the size and type of contributions from all sources as a means of combating undue influence in the election process. The League continues to assess proposals to equalize the use of government services for challengers and incumbents and thus enable candidates to compete more equitably." (Impact on Issues) The above mentioned League positions were some of the principles the Common Cause Task Force established when formulating the so-called Common Cause campaign finance reform bill that is wending its way through the Legislature at this moment. The House version is closer to the Common Cause package than the Senate version which goes much further in setting contribution limits and contributions from special interests. The Senate version prohibits any contributions from either PACs or lobbyists. The League position clearly calls for limits and disclosure not prohibition. There is some question whether this is even constitutional.

We continue to support Campaign Finance Reform however, as a package and hope that the Conference Committee will produce a package more in line with the original Common Cause proposal. The danger now is that the Governor seems to be poised to veto any Campaign Finance legislation that does not also include a provision for a constitutional amendment for term limits. The League strongly opposes the inclusion of term limits in this package. This is a finance bill not an elections bill. Campaign Finance Reform is complex and this bill is the most comprehensive legislation in twenty years. It should not be junked up and held hostage to political maneuvering that is irrelevant to this legislation.

The House version passed on April 8th with support from the following IR representatives who should be thanked and asked for their continued support:

Dave Bishop, Rochester; 612/296-0573; 507/288-7733  
Mark Holsten, Stillwater; 612/28603018; 612/430-2538  
Virgil Johnson, Caledonia; 612/296-1069; 507/896-3838  
Warren Limmer, Maple Grove; 612/296-5502; 612/559-1774  
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Steven Smith, Mound; 612/296-9188; 612/472-7664  
Brad Stanius, White Bear Lake; 612/296-5363; 612/426-2914  
Eileen Tompkins, Apple Valley; 612/296-5506; 612/431-2343

The following DFL representatives should be urged to support the bill when it comes back to the floor from the Conference Committee (they voted in opposition on April 8th):

Tom Osthoff, St. Paul; 612/296-4224; 612/489-9596

Tom Rukavina, Virginia; 612/296-0170; 218/749-5690

Jim Tunheim, Kennedy; 612/296-9635; 218/674-4480

The Senate version passed on April 20th on a straight party line vote with all IRs voting in opposition.

ACTION: Please call all Independent Republican senators and the Governor, 612/296-3391, telling them that we ask their support for Campaign Finance Reform. Other issues need to be considered on their own with full and open public participation. Campaign Finance Reform must be passed this session or our opportunity will probably be lost as we near another election. Voters told us last fall that they were ready to reform the process and this is one opportunity to do so.





THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103  
PHONE (612) 224-5445

**action**

MINNESOTA  
CAMPAIGN FINANCE  
REFORM

TO: All local League Presidents and/or Action Chairs

FROM: Judy Duffy, Lobbyist 612/429-9703

DATE: March 19, 1993

RE: Common Cause Minnesota Campaign Finance Reform Bill HF163

Please call members of the House of Representatives and urge them to vote for HF163 (Sparby, Long, Welle, Grieling) when it comes to a floor vote the week of 3/22/93. It is the so-called Common Cause Campaign Finance reform bill which is a comprehensive reform package. LWVMN helped draft this bill and has made its passage a legislative priority this session. Please see the 2/24/93 Capitol Letter for more detailed information on this bill.

CALLS SHOULD BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Thank you!



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony re  
Campaign Reform Legislation  
presented by Judy Duffy, LWVMN Lobbyist  
February 2, 1993

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota has been pleased to be part of the broad-based task force which has worked on the legislation contained in SF 152, believing that it is a package which is a far-reaching overhaul of campaign finance. We would like to commend the several Senators who have taken the lead on this issue, and we are encouraged by the general activity at the Legislature this session in this important area of campaign reform.

The following proposals are among those which League strongly supports: the ban of "Friends of Committees"; contribution limits to political committees; contribution limits to all candidates including those for local offices; efforts to limit non-campaign expenditures; the ban on unopposed candidates receiving public monies; and the provisions requiring increased disclosure.

We recognize that many of this bill's provisions have implications for the Ethical Practices Board and the expansion of its role in good government processes. To function effectively we expect that the Board will need more money and we urge the committee to consider carefully this issue when making changes in the law.



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

Testimony presented to the  
Senate Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee  
by Judy Duffy, LWVMN Lobbyist  
Tuesday, January 26, 1993

*not given (no time)*

Campaign finance reform appears to be on everyone's agenda this legislative session. The League of Women Voters is encouraged to see the attention being given to improving Minnesota Campaign Finance laws. SF 25 is one of the bills in which the League of Women Voters is interested and will continue to monitor. The efforts to improve disclosure and set limits on contributions is generally something the League supports. There are two provisions within SF 25 however, where we have some questions and would ask your attention. The first issue deals with the Agreement by Candidate, Section 22, Subd. 5.

As a "statewide nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with experience in sponsoring debates at the state and national level" the League encourages debates between and among candidates. However, we would suggest the deletion of the last sentence: "Disputes concerning the scheduling and conduct of debates shall be mediated by the Secretary of State."

*Marty said he will pull sentence*

The League sponsors debates for the education of voters but all procedures are designed to ensure fair and equitable treatment of the candidates as well. We make every effort to avoid disputes with candidates by having established groundrules, criteria for candidate inclusion in the debate, and a format which is clearly outlined before the event. The format is negotiable, if necessary.

The League has worked closely over the years with the Secretary of State's office on voter education projects. We applaud their good work in that area. But have you considered that in a partisan election a partisan office perhaps is not the best means of mediation?

The League encourages citizens to run for office and we support Section 25, Subd. 1C's efforts to make primary candidacies more feasible but the League is concerned that 25% of the vote in a primary election might be unrealistic for candidates to achieve.

We are concerned that candidates seeking to run against an incumbent, or minority and women candidates who may not have party endorsement, will be discouraged from using public funds because of the 25% requirement. That would mean they have to return state funds even if they won the primary with 24% of the vote, for example.

The League of Women Voters understands the desire to distinguish which are the serious candidates, but we would encourage you to reexamine the 25% figure carefully.

Thank you!



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

## Testimony before the Ethics and Campaign Reform Committee of the Senate by Kay Erickson, President January 14, 1993

I appreciate the opportunity to come before you to share the League's perspective on the election process.

As an organization that grew out of the women's suffrage movement, the League's mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. For more than 70 years we have worked to make government at all levels open and accessible.

The League's position on Campaign Finance reflects our continuing concern for open and honest elections and for maximum citizen participation in the political process. League efforts to achieve these goals are based on the belief that a campaign finance system must allow a combination of private and public funding.

The League supports:

- full and timely disclosure of all campaign contributions,
- one central committee to coordinate, control and report all financial transactions for each candidate, party or other committee.
- encouragement of broad-based contributions from the public,
- an independent body to monitor and enforce the law.

We continue to look for ways to limit the size and type of contributions from all sources as a means of combating undue influence in the election process.

We favor curbing the influence of special interests by capping PAC receipts by candidates, setting strict limits and providing full disclosure of soft money payments which circumvent the limits in existing campaign finance laws.

Specifically, we support retaining the current contribution refund program. This encourages more contributions from a broader base of citizens, involving them in the political process.

We support retaining the current checkoff system but would like to simplify the formula for distributing that money in a more equitable manner. Currently the system seems to favor an incumbent in a district which is strongly Democrat or Republican.

We would support a public financing program for candidates who can demonstrate financial support from within their own districts. This would assist viable candidates, challengers and incumbents, in receiving public financing and running campaigns.

We would not support continued public financing of unopposed candidates. We do not believe this is a judicious use of public money.

We support adequate funding of the Ethical Practices Board to efficiently carry out its duties now and for any future duties that law changes would require.

The League is represented on the Common Cause Task Force which is looking at a number of proposals to accomplish these goals.

The percentage of Minnesotans voting in elections is another League concern. While Minnesota has some of the best voting procedures in the nation, including same day registration and "motor voter" which allows voters to register when applying for a driver's license, we will continue to evaluate suggestions like statewide absentee voting without qualification, uniform filing periods, polling places, voting hours and election dates, eliminating the witness requirements and toll free voter information number.

The League supports procedures that simplify the voting process and encourage more people to vote while maintaining adequate safeguards against fraud and abuse.

The League believes that election reform should focus on the citizen. Citizens must feel that their voices count and that it is not only the special interest groups or the wealthy that decide who will take office. We will continue to work for electoral reforms that will reinvolve citizens in the political process.





**THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS**

**MINNESOTA**

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103  
PHONE (612) 224-5445

**action**

**MINNESOTA  
CAMPAIGN FINANCE  
REFORM**

**TO:** All local League Presidents and/or Action Chairs

**FROM:** Judy Duffy, Lobbyist 612/429-9703

**DATE:** March 19, 1993

**RE:** Common Cause Minnesota Campaign Finance Reform Bill HF163

Please call members of the House of Representatives and urge them to vote for HF163 (Sparby, Long, Welle, Grieling) when it comes to a floor vote the week of 3/22/93. It is the so-called Common Cause Campaign Finance reform bill which is a comprehensive reform package. LWVMN helped draft this bill and has made its passage a legislative priority this session. Please see the 2/24/93 Capitol Letter for more detailed information on this bill.

**CALLS SHOULD BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

**Thank you!**





## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103  
PHONE (612) 224-5445

# action

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM  
Judy Duffy, 612/429-9703

LWVUS Position: Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know. Combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Background: "The League's position on Campaign Finance reflects continuing concern for open and honest elections and for maximum citizen participation in the political process. League efforts to achieve these goals are based on the belief that a campaign finance system must allow a combination of private and public funding.... The League continues to look for ways to limit the size and type of contributions from all sources as a means of combating undue influence in the election process. The League continues to assess proposals to equalize the use of government services for challengers and incumbents and thus enable candidates to compete more equitably." (Impact on Issues) The above mentioned League positions were some of the principles the Common Cause Task Force established when formulating the so-called Common Cause campaign finance reform bill that is wending its way through the Legislature at this moment. The House version is closer to the Common Cause package than the Senate version which goes much further in setting contribution limits and contributions from special interests. The Senate version prohibits any contributions from either PACs or lobbyists. The League position clearly calls for limits and disclosure not prohibition. There is some question whether this is even constitutional.

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## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

April 2, 1993

The Honorable Wally Sparby  
MN House of Representatives  
351 State Office Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Sparby:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your sponsorship of HF 163, the comprehensive campaign finance reform proposal offered by the Common Cause Task Force. Your recognition of the importance and need for this legislation and your leadership in carrying it to its passage is very much appreciated.

Twenty years ago, the League participated in a similar task force to assist in drafting Minnesota's campaign reform measures which also were considered a major reform for the time. We are once again proud to be a part of this effort that is now before the House of Representatives for your consideration. This is a major reform of Minnesota's campaign finance laws and we believe it to be timely and necessary.

The League supports HF 163 because it will set limits on campaign contributions from special interests; encourage contributions from many, small givers; encourage new candidates by allowing for earlier public subsidy money; provide for a better distribution of public subsidy to candidates throughout the state; prohibit the transfer of funds from one campaign to another; require candidates to establish one campaign committee; prohibit the use of public money for unopposed candidates; set limits on contributions to candidates for local offices. The authors of HF 163 have also recognized the need for the Ethical Practices Board to receive adequate financing to carry out its current and anticipated new duties and requested the necessary appropriations.

Again, the League of Women Voters of Minnesota thanks you for your work on this bill. We look forward to the House's positive action on HF 163 and it becoming the law for financing political campaigns in the state of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Kay Erickson  
President

Judy Duffy  
LWVMN Representative  
to Common Cause Task Force

E:D/rk



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

## STATEMENT RE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

May 7, 1993

Campaign finance reform has been a legislative priority for the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. We have worked with the Common Cause Task Force to produce a comprehensive proposal for reform in Minnesota this year. The time for improving how political campaigns in Minnesota are waged is now.

While the proposal now before the legislature and the Governor is not perfect, it does contain many improvements that should be enacted into law. It should not be rejected for what it does not contain.

The League strongly supports this legislation because it does reduce the amount of money in political campaigns by lowering contribution limits; sets limits on contributions from political action committees, large givers and lobbyists - those perceived to have the most influence over elected officials - bans caucus fundraising during the legislative session; prohibits the distribution of public subsidy to unopposed candidates; prohibits the transfer of money from one campaign to another; requires all candidates to have only one campaign committee; and limits the amount of money a candidate may carry forward from previous campaigns.

There are several improvements in the current proposal and the League of Women Voters of Minnesota urges its adoption. Voters indicated last fall that they were tired of politics as usual and this is an opportunity to respond to those voters with positive action.

Judy Duffy, Lobbyist  
612/429-9703



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 ROCK STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103  
PHONE (612) 224 5445

**action**

LAST CALL  
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

TO: ALL LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENTS/ACTION CHAIRS  
FROM: KAY ERICKSON, PRESIDENT  
RE: CAMPAIGN REFORM  
DATE: MAY 12, 1993

There are five days until the end of the session and five days to save the campaign finance reform bill.

PLEASE CALL YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES AND TELL THEM TO MAKE SURE THAT THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM BILL BECOMES LAW IN THIS SESSION. Make it clear that the public will hold both the Legislature and the Governor responsible if no legislation on this important matter is forthcoming.

The LWVMN will settle for an override of the Governor's veto. We will also support reinclusion of the independent expenditure provision of the bill to meet the Governor's objection. Our message is simple - GET IT DONE AND GET IT DONE NOW!

This is our number one priority for this session. Let's not let it slip away. Call now. Call often. Make it happen.





THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

550 RICE STREET ST. PAUL, MN 55103 PHONE (612) 224-5445

*Willa*

May 7, 1993

The Honorable Arne Carlson  
Governor of Minnesota  
130 State Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Carlson:

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota urges you to support Campaign Finance Reform. The League participated on the Common Cause Task Force that began working last May to develop a proposal that would address some of the widespread concerns with Minnesota campaign finance law.

While the current proposal perhaps does not contain everything that some of us would like to see addressed, we believe it to be the most comprehensive reform proposal in twenty years and greatly improves the current system. Among the improvements are the prohibition of the so-called "Friends of" committees, the transfer of funds from one campaign to another, sessional fundraising and discontinuing the public subsidy for unopposed candidates. Attempts have been made in this legislation to assist challengers in running campaigns against incumbents by increasing their spending limit by ten percent.

Rejection of this bill for what it does not include does not serve the public interest. Voters indicated last fall that they were tired of politics as usual and this is an opportunity to respond to those voters with positive action.

The League asks you to sign this important legislation making much needed improvements to Minnesota's campaign finance law.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Judy Duffy, LWVMN Representative to  
Common Cause Task Force on Campaign Finance Reform

JD/rk

June 2, 1993

The Honorable Arne H. Carlson  
State Capitol  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

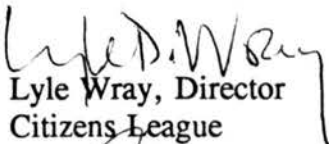
Dear Governor Carlson:


Thank you for signing the campaign finance reform bill. We believe this is a great step forward for Minnesota. Now we are writing to you to request a meeting between our four non-partisan groups and you. We remain concerned about three matters.


1. You and members of your staff have made remarks to the media indicating that you felt the work of the Common Cause Campaign Finance Task Force, on which all of our organizations had a representative, was partisan in that it favored the DFL. We disagree with this characterization and wish to assure you we remain committed to our non-partisan principles. We want to be sure that you are personally well-informed of our intentions and actions.
2. As organizations concerned with ethics in government and campaign reform we concur in your judgment that further discussion and action is important for our state. Your plan to appoint a task force chaired by someone of the caliber of Justice Amdahl is a promising beginning. We would like to know more about the scope and purpose of the task force. Our experience and expertise are available to you, and we hope that we will be invited to participate as members of the task force which can address the issues we have identified both individually and collectively.
3. While the legislation passed this session is a major step forward, it neither meets your earlier stated concerns nor ours. We would like to discuss further possibilities for financially encouraging competitive campaigns. We look forward to working with you to continue the process of promoting reform that is in the public interest of our citizens and our state.


We will call in a few days to ask you to set a date for our joint meeting.

Sincerely,

  
Lyle Wray, Director  
Citizens League

  
Brian Rusche, Executive Director  
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition

  
Jim Ketcham, Chair  
Common Cause Minnesota

  
Kay Erickson, President  
League of Women Voters of Minnesota