



League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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LWV PRINCIPLES AND POSITIONS THAT APPLY TO THIS ISSUE

- Participation of informed and active citizens
- Government accountability and effectiveness
- Encourages responsible government that is responsive to the will of the people
- Dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches
- Freedom from undue influence on elections
- Representative government
- Open meetings - adequate notice

STANDARDS FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE

Representation

- Does the structure of the unicameral legislature ensure that all citizens are represented in a fair and equitable manner? Does it provide effective democratic representation?

Accessibility and Responsiveness

- Do the operations of a unicameral legislature provide citizens an adequate opportunity to participate in the legislative process?
- Will the simplified structure of a unicameral legislature allow for a more informed citizenry?
- Will citizens have sufficient access with fewer elected representatives?
- Will fewer elected representatives in the unicameral legislature be able to adequately respond to constituents and provide constituent services?
- Will a unicameral legislature increase the influence of lobbyists and special interest groups?
- Given the dispersion of the population in the State, does the size of the unicameral legislature effect the accessibility to legislators?

Accountability

- Does a unicameral structure provide sufficient checks and balances during the legislative process?
- Is there sufficient ability to catch and correct legislative error?
- Does the structure of the unicameral legislature provide sufficient opportunity for citizens to hold legislatures accountable for their actions?

Distribution of Power

- Does the structure of the unicameral legislature result in a reasonable and acceptable distribution of power within the legislature?
- Does the unicameral legislature change the balance of power between the branches of government?

Effectiveness

- Assuming Minnesota would retain partisan designation of its representatives, would this negatively impact the effectiveness of a unicameral legislature?

The Solution "fits" the problem

- Is changing the fundamental structure of government the most effective method of fixing the problems identified in Minnesota's bicameral system?

LWVUS Positions Relevant to the Study of a Unicameral Legislature
(Taken from Impact on Issues 1998-2000)

Government

In the summary of this position (page 3), the following are included in the list of items that describe the position and pertain to this study:

- ▶ Promote and open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive;
- ▶ Assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making.

In the Statement of Positions (pages 7 and 8) the following are listed and pertain to this study:

“The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen’s right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.” Adopted June, 1984

“The League of Women Voters of the United States believes in the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The League is convinced that individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged.” Adopted March, 1982

LWVMN Positions Relevant to the Study of a Unicameral Legislature
(Taken from Program for Action 1997-1999)

Government

Section II, Government (page 13) includes the following which pertain to this study:

Organization of Government: Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota and Legislature and Executive Branches.

Detail includes

- ▶ “Legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess.” (1995, 1968)

Section III, Initiative, Referendum and Recall (page 13) includes the following which pertain to this study:

Detail includes:

Support of:

- ▶ The continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory);
- ▶ The continuation of compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments;

Opposition to:

- ▶ direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes;
- ▶ optional and compulsory referendum on statutes; no agreement on petition referendum on statutes;

In addition:

History of State Action:

Amending the Constitution: The 1947 LWV State Constitution study showed the need for change the amending process. Ratification of a constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of all those voting in the election. Thus a voter who fails to vote on the amendment automatically casts a "no" vote. LWVMN believes that the requirement for ratification should be changed to a majority of those voting on the question. In 1974 LWVMN supported a constitutional amendment allowing amendments to be passed by a 55% majority of those voting on the question; the amendment was defeated by the voters.

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Right to know

LWV PRINCIPLES THAT APPLY TO THE UNICAMERAL ISSUE

- *Representative government active and informed* ✓
• Active Participation of citizens
- Government accountability and effectiveness ✓
- ~~An Informed Public~~
- ~~Fair competition for candidates and~~ freedom from undue influence *on elections* ✓
- Encourages responsible government that is responsive to the will of the people ✓
- Dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches ✓
- *Open meetings, adequate notice*

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The Solution "fits" the problem

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Efficiency

- Is a unicameral system more efficient in terms of speed and/or cost reduction?

Other Considerations

- Does a unicameral system encourage or discourage people's desire to run for office?

League of Women Voters of Minnesota Reasons for Opposing Unicameral Legislature
January, 2000

I. Government Accountability and Effectiveness

- A unicameral legislature does not provide sufficient checks and balances within the legislative process. There are fewer points in a unicameral system for corrections to occur. The reduced number of hearings in a unicameral system provides fewer opportunities for citizen input. Opportunities to catch legislative errors are also reduced. The slower, more deliberative process of a bicameral legislature is more likely to produce good legislation.
- A unicameral system does not automatically bring about a decrease in lobbyists' influence. A unicameral legislature, with only one house to lobby, may be more vulnerable to lobbyists and single interest groups. The complexity of a bicameral system makes it more difficult for lobbyists to affect legislation, since they need to influence the committees of two houses, which may have majorities in different political parties.
- In Nebraska, Initiative and Referendum provides an additional mechanism for citizen check on the legislative process. Minnesota does not have Initiative and Referendum. LWVMN opposes Initiative and Referendum.

II. Dynamic Balance of Power between the Executive and Legislative Branches

- A unicameral legislature would alter the current balance of power between the executive and legislative branches, concentrating power in the executive. A single house would reduce the potential for legislative review of departments in the executive branch.
- A powerful governor, dealing with only one house, could more easily dominate a unicameral system. LWVMN believes that a "three-legged stool" made up of the governor, the House and the Senate (the bicameral structure) provides a more balanced structure than a "two-legged stool" (unicameral system).
- A unicameral system provides fewer checks and balances between the branches of government. In a unicameral system, a governor's veto can be overridden by action in only one house, rather than requiring action by a second legislative body.
- A unicameral system also provides the potential for domination by one party, particularly if the governor and the majority in the legislature are from the same party. Representation of minority viewpoints may be lost with such a situation.

III. Responsible Government that is Responsive to the Will of the People

- In sparsely populated areas, citizens have less easy access to their legislators. A unicameral legislature would exacerbate this problem. The size of legislative districts outside the metropolitan area creates a disparity in the ease with which citizens can contact their legislators.

Unless a unicameral legislature included substantially more members than either of the current houses, the unicameral system would further limit the accessibility of legislators to citizens in sparsely populated areas.

- Elected officials in rural areas may be responsible for geographically larger in a unicameral system.
- A unicameral legislature would be less likely to represent the complexity of interests and diversity of all Minnesota residents. Fewer representatives and only one legislative body may not adequately represent minority and regional views and interests. In a bicameral legislature it is possible to have a different majority in each house, making the legislature responsive to a broader political spectrum. The importance of protecting political diversity outweighs the possible benefits of simplification, easier understanding and tracking of bills

IV. Representative Government

- In a unicameral system, representation for all Minnesotans would be cut in half. Instead of having both a senator and a representative, each citizen would have only one.
- Those citizens who hold minority views may find it more difficult to be represented in a unicameral system.
- Although both house and senate districts are now based on population, the two smaller house districts within one senate district may have quite different constituencies. Having two representatives helps assure minority representation.

V. Additional Points

- Restructuring the legislature carries an unacceptable risk of unintended and unknown consequences. The proposed change could create more problems than it solves.
- There is no assurance that the unicameral system would actually be cheaper than a bicameral system, or save money, as some proponents have suggested.
- Some people believe that government should be run like a business. Although it could be argued that the administrative branch might benefit from a more business-like approach, the legislative process differs fundamentally from a business in its mission, and therefore should not be similarly organized.
- The ballot question likely will ask voters to decide at most three issues: changing the legislature from bicameral to unicameral, the number of legislators, and the length of legislators' terms. Unless the number of legislators and lengths of terms are included in the Constitutional amendment, these decisions will be made by the first unicameral legislature. Similarly, the rules and procedures by which the unicameral body would operate will be established by the first

unicameral legislature. Voters have no guarantee that the organizational elements and procedures discussed before the vote will become law.

- What works in one state may not be effective in another. While legislative rules and procedures in other states may be worth examining while considering reforms in Minnesota, the unicameral system in Nebraska (the only state which now has a unicameral Legislature) should not be used as a model. Nebraska is a less populous, more rural state than Minnesota, and does not have half its population concentrated in one metropolitan area. Also, Nebraska legislators are elected without party designation, a system unicameral proponents have not proposed for Minnesota.
- There is no assurance that changing the structure of the legislature would end abuses of good legislative practice, such as excessive closed-door negotiations and game playing with the legislative process.
- Restructuring to a unicameral legislature is a disproportionate response to the stated problems. The current legislative system may be flawed, but is not broken (as evidenced by the state's consistent ranking at or near the top on numerous indicators, high quality of public services and ethical performance of elected officials). The perceived flaws are not serious enough to warrant so radical a solution as restructuring the government.

*what's huge problem no huge outcry
conf comm - make own rules
acct. - ind*

Date: February 3, 2000
To: Local League Presidents
From: Jane McWilliams, Unicameral Committee Co-Chair
Re: Talking Points on LWVMN Unicameral Position

1. What is the LWVMN Position?

LWVMN opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house.

2. How did LWVMN arrive at the position?

Statewide committee studied issue through reading and hearing presentations by advocates and opponents. It provided background information for members in September and December issues of LWVMN's *Voter*. The committee and members applied current positions and principles of the League in evaluating the unicameral system. Members were provided opportunity to express support or opposition to restructuring legislature. Return rate: 423 members responded representing 37 local Leagues. Seventy four percent opposed restructuring, 20 percent supported, and 6 percent were undecided. The board took the recommendation of the committee and the member response under consideration in formulating the League's position.

3. What are the League's reasons for opposing unicameral legislature?
(See enclosed information.)

4. What can be done to correct problems with present system?

Some possible reforms:

- a. Reduce authority of conference committees by using joint committees more and conference committees less.
- b. Change legislative rules on conference committee appointments, authority and procedures to assure maximum representation among legislators and clear and enforceable rules.
- c. Impose deadlines and lie-over requirements on conference committee reports to assure legislators time to study and become acquainted with contents. For example, require a 2-day layover between passage out of committee and floor vote on conference committee reports. Enforce these.
- d. End of session crush could be prevented by ending the practice of concentrating most decisions in a few bills brought out for passage late in the session. Set and adhere to committee deadlines. Rely on earlier finance projection to make this possible.
- e. To increase deliberative process, make better use of interim study committees. Increase participation by taking study committees out of Capitol into districts and permitting citizen testimony.
- f. Restrict what bills can come to floor during the last 5 days of the session, namely, conference committee reports.

5. But aren't conference committees the crux of problem with the bicameral system?

The conference committee often improves legislation after initial passage because it forces legislators to listen to critics, re-examine their positions, and consider compromise with other views. This encourages compromise before final passage. A conference committee provides opportunity for concluding debate on pivotal issues in a bill by legislators with the greatest expertise and involvement in the issues. Mistakes made in the earlier stages of bill development, particularly those caused by the "hurly-burly of Minnesota's traditional process of open floor debate and amendment can be corrected in conference committee. (A unicameral legislature might find it necessary to limit scope and complexity of floor amendments because there would be no chance for correction.)

In response to criticism in the late 80's, joint rules regarding conference committees were altered. Nowadays, conference committees mostly operate in public; they engage in public debate, take public testimony on disputed issues, and, by necessity, conduct some negotiations in private. Conference committees actually open the legislative process by providing a forum for public debate and testimony on issues after initial floor action on bills. They focus public attention on the final negotiation on these issues among key legislators, executive officials and interest groups. Without conference committees, the public would have no chance to be heard on crucial floor amendments. Final negotiations on contentious issues would shift from relatively open setting to private meetings prior to floor action.

6. What about "Let the people decide"?

The League strongly believes in representative government. The people elect their representatives to discuss, deliberate and decide public policy issues. A proposal for a constitutional amendment is no different. Discussion, deliberation and decisions are expected from our representatives. Using the argument to "let the people decide" defers the discussion, deliberation and decision to a forum driven by election politics. It is our position that the *merits of the issue* be discussed and decided in the legislative forum. We think a unicameral legislature is a bad idea and see no reason to defer that decision.

Let the People Decide?

Why this issue should not be placed on the ballot

The legislators have a responsibility to debate the issue - not just whether it should be on the ballot or not. The issue should be scrutinized on its own merits. Legislators are elected to make informed decisions.; the American legislative process was not designed to allow legislators to opt out if the issue were highly politicized.

This country was founded on the principle of representative government. At that time there was concern that a tyrannical majority might emerge and push for unwise action. Legislators (cooler heads) were a way of avoiding hasty decisions by that tyrannical majority, just as the system of checks and balances were a way to help guarantee that wise laws were made. Sending this issue directly to the people ignores the thinking of the country's founders. Having the people decide on an important issue worked for town meetings in the 18th and 19th Century, when there was a small group of citizens who were informed on the issue, could discuss it, and then vote. That is not the voter situation in 2000. (In other words, the people would not be appropriately informed or have the opportunity for discussion among themselves.)

It might pass - Allowing the issue to be placed on the ballot in November is, in effect, a vote of support for a unicameral legislature. The League of Women Voters opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house.

While the LWV supports compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments, the current proposals for the constitutional question as it appears on the ballot don't fully explain to the voters how the unicameral legislature will function. Without a proposal for how the unicameral will be structured, the voters, in essence, will be voting for a concept rather than a plan. If voters cast a vote for a change in the structure of the state legislature without knowing how it will function, they might be buying a "pig in a poke". If you put it on the ballot and then call for discussion among the public, without knowing how the unicameral will look - there is still nothing to discuss.

The problems that a Unicameral Legislature would "correct" haven't been identified and the argument hasn't been made that a Unicameral would be the only and/or best solution. This vote-- this issue-- will affect Minnesotans for generations to come. The issue should be carefully considered not just because someone wants a change, but as the best solution to a defined 'problem'. So, unless a problem is identified and it is proven that a Unicameral is the best solution, the issue should not appear on the ballot in November.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house.

Restructuring the legislature carries an unacceptable risk of unintended/unknown consequences.

Restructuring to a unicameral legislature is a disproportionate response to the stated problems.

Fewer representatives and only one legislative body may not adequately represent minority and regional views and interests. The importance of protecting political diversity outweighs the possible benefits of simplification.

In sparsely populated areas of the state, the problem of less easy access to legislators would be exacerbated by a unicameral system.

A unicameral legislature does not provide sufficient checks and balances within the legislative process. Single, special interest groups could more easily dominate the process. The slower, more deliberative process of a bicameral legislature is more likely to produce good legislation.

A unicameral legislature would alter the current balance of power between the executive and the legislative branches, concentrating power in the executive branch.

There is no assurance that the unicameral system would save money. There is a very real possibility that a reduced legislative body would require more staff and longer sessions to accomplish necessary legislative tasks. The workload is not reduced. An unintended consequence could be a shift in power to staff (nonelected) from the legislators (elected).

The legislative process differs fundamentally from a business in its mission, and therefore should not be similarly organized.

Improvements can be made to the current system by changing the rules of the legislature. For example conference committee abuses can be addressed by strictly enforcing current legislative rules or enacting new operating rules. Legislative rulemaking and adherence to those rules would influence the operation of a unicameral legislative system just as surely as current rules and adherence influence the operation of the bicameral system.

Voters cannot make an informed choice if they are voting for a concept without a plan.

Report of the Unicameral Legislature Committee
1/26/00

The Unicameral Legislature Committee, established to examine the issue of a unicameral Legislature and to present its findings to the LWVMN Board, finds that current League positions and principles can be used to take action and recommends that the League of Women Voters of Minnesota oppose restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house.

The committee recommends the adoption of the following resolution: "Resolved, that the League of Women Voters of Minnesota oppose restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house."

Kay Erickson, Chair

On behalf of the committee I move the adoption of the resolution just read.

Background:

At its August meeting the LWVMN Board established the Unicameral Legislature committee to examine the issue of a unicameral legislature and to recommend a course of action for the League. Sixteen Leaguers from the metro area and greater Minnesota (Red Wing, Northfield, Duluth, St. Peter, and St. Croix Valley) have met at least monthly since September.

At the November Board meeting we reported that it was the committee's decision and the board agreed to have a position in time to affect the 2000 legislation session. At that meeting the Board instructed the committee to include a way for local Leagues and local League members to weigh in with their input. The December Voter was devoted to the unicameral issue with a tear off for members to send in to their local Leagues. Local League boards were asked to review the results and send them on to the committee. The results showed that the members who responded overwhelming opposed a unicameral system for Minnesota:

423 (19%) of 2219 members responded.

Of those responding: 74% Oppose
 20% Support
 6% Undecided

Responses came from: 4 of 6 state units
 37 of 42 Local Leagues
 1 nationally recruited member
 7 Members at Large

Leagues and state units not responding were: Rock County, Moorhead, St. Peter, Brooklyn Center, Mankato, Wayzata/Plymouth, Brooklyn Park/Osseo/Maple Grove.

85% of Local Leagues/State Units participated. Survey results are attached.

The committee's work has included:

1. Hearing feedback from the League's regional meetings on the Unicameral Committee's process.
2. Listening to Rep. Mindy Greiling, a unicameral supporter, and Bill Brady, chair of Opponents of a UniCameral House (OUCH) debate the issue at a committee meeting.
3. Hearing from Tom Todd, Legislative Analyst from House Research
4. Researching the issue through: newspaper and magazine articles, House Research reports, and Tribune of the People by Royce Hanson; watching tapes from Common Cause Nebraska; attending and listening to audio tapes of Citizens League and Minnesota Women's Consortium meetings and researching pending bills
5. Researching League positions and principles that apply to this issue
6. Researching reforms in the present system (recent reforms and what could be changed), and developing standards by which any system should be judged
7. Writing articles for the September and December Voters
8. Developing a process for local League and member input:
 - Encouraging local Leagues to hold meetings on the issue, in some cases providing a speaker/moderator
 - Providing packets of information through the Board Memo
 - Developing a tear-off for the December Voter for members to mail to their local Leagues; asking local Leagues to send them on the LWVMN with their comments

Should the Board adopt the recommendation, the committee is ready with Communication and Action plans. The committee has scheduled two additional meetings, Feb. 5 and 19.

Rationale:

The committee has prepared the attached "Reasons" for its recommendation.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

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

March 9, 2000

Dear Member of the Minnesota House of Representatives::

The League opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house. When it was determined that this would be an important issue in this session of the legislature a statewide League committee was convened to study the issue through reading studies and hearing presentations from advocates and opponents. Subsequently the committee furnished each member of the League information on the unicameral legislature with arguments from both proponents and opponents. Members then convened in local units to discuss the proposal and forward their conclusions to the state league as a recommendation for state action. The overwhelming response was opposition to a unicameral legislature. In light of member response, the statewide committee's recommendation and in accordance with League principles and current positions, the state board of directors of the **League of Women Voters formally adopted a position of opposition.** This has been an intense and thoughtful process.

Democracy was never meant to be efficient. It was established to give voice to the people through their elected representatives who would deliberate and carefully craft laws. The deliberation that occurs in a two-house system while repetitive can assure that differing viewpoints will be aired and measured. Reform can be accomplished without tossing out our entire system.

The League opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house for the following reasons:

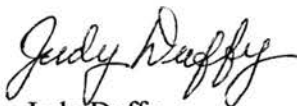
- ◆ Restructuring the legislature carries an unacceptable risk of unintended/unknown consequences.
- ◆ Restructuring to a unicameral legislature is a disproportionate response to the stated problems.
- ◆ Fewer representatives and only one legislative body may not adequately represent minority and regional views and interests. The importance of protecting political diversity outweighs the possible benefits of simplification.
- ◆ In sparsely populated areas of the state, the problem of less easy access to legislators would be exacerbated by a unicameral system.
- ◆ A unicameral legislature does not provide sufficient checks and balances within the legislative process. Single, special interest groups could more easily dominate the process. The slower more deliberative process of a bicameral legislature is more likely to produce good legislation.

- ◆ A unicameral legislature would alter the current balance of power between the executive and legislative branches. The governors who favor the proposal give a clear indication that it would be far easier for a governor to negotiate with one set of legislative leaders rather than two.
- ◆ There is no assurance that the unicameral system would save money. There is a very real possibility that a reduced legislative body would require more staff and longer sessions to accomplish necessary legislative tasks. The workload is not reduced. An unintended consequence could be a shift in power to staff (nonelected) from the legislators (elected).
- ◆ The legislative process differs fundamentally from a business in its mission and therefore should not be similarly organized.
- ◆ Improvements can be made to the current system by changing the rules of the legislature. Legislative rulemaking would influence the operation of a unicameral legislature just as current rules influence the operation of the bicameral system. For example, it is possible to reduce the authority of conference committees by using joint committees more and conference committees less. Legislative rules on conference committee appointments, authority and procedures to assure maximum representation among legislators and clear enforceable rules can be adopted. Ending the practice of concentrating most decisions in a few bills brought out for passage late in the session could prevent the end of session crush. Set and adhere to committee deadlines. To enhance the deliberative process, make better use of interim study committees and increase participation by taking study committees out of the Capitol and into the communities and permit citizen testimony.
- ◆ Voters cannot make an informed choice if they are voting for a concept without a plan. The current proposal for the constitutional question as it would appear on the ballot doesn't fully explain to the voters what the unicameral legislature would look like or how it would function. The amendment contains no details of structure or operation.

The argument that legislators should "let the people decide" has a decidedly democratic ring to it, however this implies that legislators should not discuss, debate and evaluate the idea before it goes on the ballot. Our Constitution requires legislative scrutiny. For unicameral proponents to suggest that legislators not vote their consciences is unreasonable. If the idea has merit then legislators should put it on the ballot; if it does not, it should not be on the ballot.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota opposes the establishment of a unicameral Legislature. We urge you to vote no to placing it on the ballot.

Sincerely,



Judy Duffy
President



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

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

February 9, 2000

Honorable Dean Johnson
Senate Election Laws Committee
124B Capitol
75 Constitution Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Scheid:

As you know, the League of Women Voters of Minnesota has recently taken a position in opposition to a unicameral legislature. The position was reached after careful study and deliberation of a League committee comprised of individual members from across the state. Together with our stated League principles, existing League positions, and a survey of our members, we have arrived at this position. League members as a whole are very concerned about government actions as well as the form and manner by which decisions are made. This is why we view the proposal to change our state government from its form and its process as a very serious matter.

In short, we are not convinced that a unicameral legislature will cure any of the perceived ills that are a part of the current system. Without any empirical evidence to the contrary, we view the proposal as a risky endeavor that could carry many unintended consequences. Some of the rationale for a unicameral legislature comes from a study conducted in the 1980's. Many of the ills cited in that study have been addressed and changed in the years since then.

Conference committee and accountability issues seem to be the driving force behind the current unicameral push. There are other ways to address the need, formation and operation of conference committees. Accountability, that is the legislator's personal responsibility in voting, is an issue that is as much individual as institutional. Legislators for the most part take responsibility for their votes - all of which are recorded for public information. Any governmental body depends on its elected officials taking personal responsibility for all of their votes and then stating their reasons. Whether those votes are taken in a unicameral or bicameral setting, elected officials need to stand for re-election and their record. The integrity of an individual does not depend on exterior circumstances.

Another issue that the League considers very important in this debate is the growing diversity of our state. In another project that the League is currently involved in, we are facilitating discussions around the state about the issues facing new immigrants. In some of our communities, large and small, upwards of 20 languages are spoken. The demand placed on

public services is immense. Assimilating these new arrivals into our state is a formidable task. The political representation of these individuals will take great effort on the part of all elected officials. To consider diminishing those numbers when we are a growing state both in numbers and diversity seems to be contrary to our needs. Representation is not just a numbers game.

Because we believe a unicameral legislature is a bad idea, we do not favor deferring this issue to the November ballot. The "Let the people decide" argument has a decidedly democratic ring to it but the reality is that it will become a pawn in the election year politics and could very well become a referendum on government and elected officials as a whole. If you believe the idea has merit, then you should vote to put this on the ballot; if you do not believe the idea has merit, it should not be put on the ballot.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee on Monday night. I write to you today to not only restate our position but to emphasize our concerns with this proposal. I was also concerned that those favoring a unicameral position received longer hearing than did our position. We do not represent any special interests other than those of the citizens of the state of Minnesota and wish to make that clear. If you would care to discuss any of these points further, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Judy Duffy, President
League of Women Voters of Minnesota

League of Women Voters of Minnesota

Unicameral Committee

Communications Plan

January 24, 2000, Draft #3

Page 1 of 6

I. Objectives

- A. To inform the public of the League of Women Voter's position on changing our current Legislature system from a bicameral assembly to a unicameral one.
- B. To promote citizen involvement in state government
- C. To reinforce the League of Women Voters as a proactive, grassroots, civic, and good government organization
- D. To increase the League of Women Voters effectiveness as a relevant and influential non-partisan, civic organization
- E. To take a proactive position on a current and pertinent issue that will affect the rights of citizens to interact with and influence state government

League of Women Voters of Minnesota

Unicameral Committee

Communications Plan

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II. Target Constituencies

A. Internal

1. League of Women Voters members
2. League of Women Voters local and state boards of directors
3. League of Women Voters of the United States board of directors
4. League of Women Voters Unicameral forum partners (Citizens League, MPR)

B. External

1. Citizens and residents of the State of Minnesota
2. Local (city-level) media (print, electronic, and radio)
3. State-wide media (print and electronic)
4. Members of the State Legislature
5. Legislative leadership, for example, committee chairs
6. Funding organizations (foundations and corporations)
7. Governor Ventura
8. Nonprofit, civic organizations with whom the League of Women Voters partnered (Citizens League, Hubert Humphrey Institute, etc.)
9. Potential members of the League of Women Voters

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III. Key Messages

- A. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota, following a careful deliberation of the merits and limitation of our current bi-cameral system and the advantages being put forth for a unicameral system, opposes changing Minnesota's bicameral legislature to a unicameral administration.
- B. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota concludes that restructuring the legislature carries certain risk of unknown consequences to our system of government.
- C. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota believes in a representative government that is accountable and effective in carrying out the business of the state, and that responds to the will and needs and concerns of citizens.
- D. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota promotes a system of government that assures equal access and opportunities for citizen participation in government decision-making.

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Unicameral Committee

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- IV. Strategies to deliver key messages to internal and external constituencies
- A. Preparation and distribution of a press kit to include press release announcing position, background on League positions supporting decision, etc., to large and local and state-wide media (print and electronic)
 - B. Submit commentary article announcing and supporting position to major publications state-wide regarding the League's position, stressing the key messages and reasons for position
 - C. Letter to Governor Ventura announcing and explaining position on unicameral Legislature
 - D. Letter to the Boards of Directors of local Leagues of Women Voters
 - E. State-wide briefing with Editorial Boards of large and local newspapers – or press conferences in key cities statewide
 - F. Submit a hard-copy article to be published in local League of Women Voters newsletters explaining the LWVMN position and key messages
 - G. Testimony to Legislature
 - H. Meetings with key legislative committee chairs
 - I. Encourage local Leagues organize forums (town meetings) discussing the League's decision regarding its position in key local municipalities, focusing on key Legislative districts where representatives support the unicameral initiative (Minneapolis/St. Paul, Duluth, Red Wing, etc.)
 - J. Write article for LWV Minnesota Voter to inform members of our position and how we arrived at our position

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- V. Implementation Team
 - A. League of Women Voters Board of Directors
 - B. LWVMN president
 - C. LWVMN executive director and director of communications
 - D. Chairs, LWVMN Unicameral Committee
 - E. LWVMN Communications Committee
 - F. Key members of the LWVMN Unicameral Committee as warranted

League of Women Voters of Minnesota

Unicameral Committee - Communications Plan

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VI. Timeline

Strategy	Implementation Team	Deadline
A. Preparation and distribution of a press kit to include press release announcing position, background on League positions supporting decision, etc., to large and local and state-wide media (print and electronic)	Executive director and communications director	Prepare by Jan 31 & mail week of Feb. 1
B. Submit commentary article announcing and supporting position to major publications state-wide regarding the League's position, stressing the key messages and reasons for position	President of the board of directors with input from key members of the unicameral committee	January 31 & ongoing as necessary
C. Letter to Governor Ventura announcing and explaining position on unicameral Legislature	President of the board of directors	January 31/Feb. 1
D. Letter to the Boards of Directors of local Leagues of Women Voters	President of the board of directors	February 1
E. State-wide briefing with Editorial Boards of large and local newspapers – or press conferences in key cities state-wide	Key members of the Board of directors (President, Action chair), co-chairs of unicameral committee, executive director	Feb. 1 to 4
F. Submit a hard-copy article to be published in local League of Women Voters newsletters explaining the LWVMN position and key messages	Executive director and communications director	Feb. 4
G. Testimony to Legislature	Action chair, co-chairs and key members of unicameral committee	Opening of legis. session
H. Meetings with key legislative committee chairs	Action chair, co-chairs and key members of unicameral committee	Opening and during legis. session
I. Encourage local Leagues organize forums (town meetings) discussing the League's decision regarding its position in key local municipalities, focusing on key Legislative districts where representatives support the unicameral initiative (Minneapolis/St. Paul, Duluth, Red Wing, etc.)	Local League presidents of the board and action chairs	Feb. 10 and forward.
J. Write article for LWV Minnesota Voter to inform members of our position and how we arrived at our position	President of the board	Prepare for next issue of

		the Voter.
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MEETING NOTICE

Unicameral Committee
Saturday, January 8, 2000
10:00 a.m.

League of Women Voters of Minnesota
550 Rice Street, St. Paul

Unicameral Legislature Committee
Saturday, December 18, 1999
Meeting
MINUTES

PRESENT: Kay Erickson, MEPH; Mary Gover, St. Peter; Mary Lou Hill, Minneapolis; Anne Velasco, Robbinsdale; Ady Wickstrom, Arden Hills/Shoreview; Georgiana Campbell, Northfield; Jane McWilliams, Northfield; Jane Gilley, Duluth; Rosemarie Kelly, Executive Director, LWV Minneapolis; Sally Sawyer, Executive Director LWVMN; Susan Simmonds, Minneapolis; Susan Weisbrod, St. Croix Valley.

1. The minutes of the November 20, 1999 meeting were approved as corrected.
2. Discussion of the St. Cloud forum was added to the agenda.
3. The committee discussed what they would do with the prepared "reasons for your position based on League principles and positions;" whether we would form a coalition once we had ascertained our position; who would have responsibility for advocacy (Action Committee? Unicameral Committee?); whether we would establish a communication plan; what options would be available should members concur with the committee's position (working for improvements in present internal system of legislative process, for example); what should happen about the issue being promoted by Governor Ventura and others currently - "let the people decide".
4. Following discussion the following tasks and persons responsible for them were agreed to:
 - A. Response to the move to "Let the People Decide." Susan Weisbrod* and Georgiana Campbell.
 - B. What reforms should be made in present legislative process? Susan Simmonds* and Jane McWilliams.
 - C. Communication Plan: Rosemarie Kelly* and Ady Wickstrom.
 - D. Standards for supporting position if unicameral bill passes. Anne Velasco.*
 - E. Reasons for committee's position. (Synthesis of prepared "Reasons . . .") Jane Gilley*, Mary Lou Hill, Mary Gover.
 - F. Member responses - data analysis. Rosemarie Kelly, Ady Wickstrom.
*person in charge of coordinating work on task.

Members discussed the possible problem created should members not concur with committee's position. It was suggested that the rationale for member's position could be drawn from comments on response tear-offs. This could be reported with the committee's position to the board for their decision and action. No committee decision was made on this point.

5. Future Plans:

- A. January 8, 2000 - Committee will review all work done on tasks, but probably not the data which will not be complete yet.

- B. January 22, 2000 - Review of data from member responses. Preparation of recommendation for board.
 - C. January 26, 2000 - Board meeting.
6. Judy Duffy reported on the progress of planning for a jointly sponsored forum (MPR, Citizens League and LWVMN) at the Fitzgerald Theater on February 16, 2000. It was noted that we will have a position by then and this might cause some confusion. It was also suggested that a unicameral group should be invited to cosponsor. Duffy said that because this is primarily an MPR event, we needn't be concerned that balance is assured.
 7. Susan Weisbrod requested guidance about her role in the St. Cloud forum where she will moderate. She will prepare a historical overview which will not prejudice her neutrality as a moderator.
 8. The December 18, 1999 minutes will be distributed via email to the committee for their review and as an aid in clarifying responsibilities.

Respectfully submitted by Jane McWilliams

MEETING NOTICE

Unicameral Legislature Committee

Saturday, November 20, 1999

9:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Minnesota Women's Building

550 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN 55103

Bring a Brown Bag Lunch

AGENDA

9:45 a.m. Welcome

10 a.m. Tom Todd, Legislative Analyst, House Research

11 a.m. Meeting

1. Approve minutes of November 6 meeting
2. Discuss Tom Todd's presentation
3. Board meeting update (See attached enclosure for a recap of the Board meeting and proposed plan.) Mary Steen, VOTER editor has suggested that most of the next Voter be devoted to Unicameral. She suggested the side by side comparison using the standards. Jane suggested that we may want to use the Principles; she also suggested that we may want two articles, pro and con, perhaps written by someone from MSHL and OUCH. We could give them our Principles/Positions/Standards sheet and have them respond to our concerns. We have a lot of space, we could do both a side by side comparison and articles by supporters and opponents.

Note that the Board has changed its meeting date from January 12 to January 26 to allow more time for member input. I have added a committee meeting on January 22 to the timeline so we can evaluate member input.

- Local League Presidents' mailing
- Voter article
- Process for member input

Just for getting us started on a framework for asking for member input, Judy and Sally have suggested that we may want to ask

members to agree with some concurrence statements. For example the tear off could have questions such as:

___The League of Women Voters of Minnesota supports a unicameral

legislature because (then use the standards)

___it provides for fair and equitable representation

___it provides effective democratic representation

___it provides adequate opportunity to participate in the legislative process

etc.

___The League of Women Voters of Minnesota opposes a unicameral

legislature because

___it does not provide for fair and equitable representation

___it does not provide for effective and democratic representation

that
The League of Women Voters opposes an amendment to the constitution
not
provides for a unicameral legislature because the rules and procedures will
be established, therefore the legislature and voters will not know how a
unicameral legislature will operate.

Please come with your suggestions.

FYI: Tom Todd explained that the reason the legislation does not contain specific information about how a unicameral legislature would operate has to do with separation of powers. One legislature cannot bind the next legislature. Therefore this legislature cannot put into statute rules that would restrict the next legislature. Also, if rules for a unicameral legislature were to be set in statute, they would be open to veto by the governor. Legislators are reluctant to get another level of government involved in how they will operate.

LWVMN Unicameral Committee
Minutes
November 6, 1999

The Unicameral and the Action Committees and the LWVMN Board convened at 10:30 to hear Rep. Mindy Greiling present "pro" arguments and Bill Brady, Opponents of a UniCameral House present "con" arguments.

Following the debate the Committee convened at 12:30.

PRESENT: Rebecca Thoman, Minneapolis; Rosemarie Kelly, LWV Minneapolis Executive Director; Rosemary Guttormsson, Duluth; Ady Wickstrom, Webmaster, ArdenHills/Shoreview; Anne Velasco, Robbinsdal; Jane Gilley, Duluth; Susan Simmonds, Minneapolis; Susan Dyer Weisbrod, Lake Elmo; Mary Lou Hill, Minneapolis; Mary Gover, St. Peter; Gabi Brockelsby, Red Wing; Georgiana Campbell, Northfield; Jane McWilliams, Northfield; Kay Erickson, Action Chair/Unicam. Committee Chair, presiding.

The minutes of the September 25, 1999 and October 9, 1999 meetings were approved.

The committee reviewed the debate. Concerns included: how public will know how to evaluate constitutional amendment creating unicameral legislature if they don't have information about such issues as how it will operate, or how many members there will be. The amendment may not contain any further information than the creation of a one-house legislature, according to Rep. Greiling.

The committee discussed process questions like- should we work on taking a position "pro" or "con" an amendment creating a unicameral legislature; "pro" or "con" putting an amendment on the ballot; working to affect how it appears on the ballot? The discussion evolved into a consideration of the merits of a unicameral system, with accountability and accessibility mentioned as important criteria. The problems with the conference committees, the problems caused by end of the session logjams; omnibus bills; were discussed, as were a number of other issues.

The Committee reviewed the LWV Principles That Apply and revised this list. It now stands:

- Representative Government
- Government accountability and effectiveness
- Participation of active and informed citizens
- Freedom from undue influence on elections
- Encourages responsible government that is responsible to the will of the people
- Dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches
- Open meetings - adequate notice

A discussion followed on the Standards for the Evaluation of the Unicameral Legislature. A concern was raised about the slant of this approach: Are we studying unicameralism? Should we define what's broken and then look at unicameralism? Are we planning to look at the idea in light of the problems with bicameralism and decide whether it would be an improvement over what we have now?

The consensus seemed to be that we should gather more information about how the Nebraska system is working: Georgiana will talk with the League in Nebraska to see how they view their system; Kay will get a tape from Marc Asch of Common Cause which contains information about the Nebraska system; Ady will check the Internet for information.

Rosemarie Kelly will speak with Leagues in other states which have Initiative and Referendum (which seems to be a necessary companion to Unicameralism in Nebraska) and also see whether they have positions on unicameralism.

Jane Gilley and Rosemary G. will research our positions. Anne will call Rebecca to determine how she selected the material she contributed to , our current list; Jane McWilliams will prepare a side-by-side comparison of the internal rules of the Nebraska and the Minnesota Legislatures.

Kay asked for ideas for questions we'd like Tom Todd to address at our

November 20 meeting:

- Conference Committee trends (are they increasing over time?)
- How did divided government affect how the legislature performed?
- What is the effect of Omnibus Bills on the legislative process is there a correlation between these and the increasing number of conference committees?
- What do we know about other legislatures? Do they have log-jams at the end of the session? How have they modified internal rules to achieve a smooth flowing session? Are other states moving to unicameral legislatures?

Kay also asked for guidance-on what to request from the LWVMN Board:

- Should committee ask Local Leagues to schedule discussions or should it contact members directly? Should the response from Leagues or from members be advisory only?
- Should we plan to try to have a position by the time the legislature convenes or should we plan to take a position to Council?

The next meeting is Saturday, November 20, 10:00. Tom Todd has been invited to speak.

LWV PRINCIPLES AND POSITIONS THAT APPLY TO THIS ISSUE

- Participation of informed and active citizens
- Government accountability and effectiveness
- Encourages responsible government that is responsive to the will of the people
- Dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches
- Freedom from undue influence on elections
- Representative government
- Open meetings - adequate notice

STANDARDS FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE

Representation

- Does the structure of the unicameral legislature ensure that all citizens are represented in a fair and equitable manner? Does it provide effective democratic representation?

Accessibility and Responsiveness

- Do the operations of a unicameral legislature provide citizens an adequate opportunity to participate in the legislative process?
- Will the simplified structure of a unicameral legislature allow for a more informed citizenry?
- Will citizens have sufficient access with fewer elected representatives?
- Will fewer elected representatives in the unicameral legislature be able to adequately respond to constituents and provide constituent services?
- Will a unicameral legislature increase the influence of lobbyists and special interest groups?
- Given the dispersion of the population in the State, does the size of the unicameral legislature effect the accessibility to legislators?

Accountability

- Does a unicameral structure provide sufficient checks and balances during the legislative process?
- Is there sufficient ability to catch and correct legislative error?
- Does the structure of the unicameral legislature provide sufficient opportunity for citizens to hold legislatures accountable for their actions?

Distribution of Power

- Does the structure of the unicameral legislature result in a reasonable and acceptable distribution of power within the legislature?
- Does the unicameral legislature change the balance of power between the branches of government?

Effectiveness

- Assuming Minnesota would retain partisan designation of its representatives, would this negatively impact the effectiveness of a unicameral legislature?

The Solution "fits" the problem

- Is changing the fundamental structure of government the most effective method of fixing the problems identified in Minnesota's bicameral system?

Report of the November 10, 1999 Board Meeting

The Board agreed with the Unicameral Committee that we should:

1. reach a position based on current League principles and positions in order to affect legislation this session
2. provide a way for local Leagues to weigh in with their advice to the Unicameral committee by providing a tearoff. The tearoff will be returned to the local League. Leagues will be asked to send a response back to the Unicameral Committee. They will be encouraged to hold discussion meetings with their membership. Could be topic for January meetings – 1st two weeks in January could be Unicameral week
3. use the Voter to educate members about the issue. The December *Voter* will be devoted to Unicameral

(Things to consider: What are our criteria for determining if the members approve or disapprove of unicameral? What if the members decisions is contrary to what the committee decides? Tearoff could ask members to concur with a statement by the committee. Could also be designed to ask members to agree or disagree with statements of principle and not specifically ask about unicameral or bicameral.)

The January Board meeting will be held January 26 instead of January 12.

Possible timeline

November 20 -	Committee meeting
November 20 – 29	Voter deadline for unicameral issue
December 15	Voter mailed
December 18	Committee meeting
January 8	Committee meeting
January 14	Deadline for individual responses to be sent to local Leagues
January 20	Deadline for local Leagues to send responses to Unicameral Committee
January 22	Committee meeting
January 26	Board meeting

President's Mailing – camera ready information

1. Explain the process: what we're doing, how and why, bylaws, tearoff
2. Fact sheet: legislative process (that the legislation will be to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot, timing, who makes the rules, list bills--what they include and don't include, etc.)

3. Revised Positions/Principles/Standards sheet
4. Resources: reference previous packet, speaker, supporting and opposing organizations (committee available to facilitate meetings)

Voter (pages 1 - 7 - 600 words per page)

Page 1 Letter from Duffy explaining urgency, why we're doing what we're doing (make the case for the process—rushed time frame, need to be at the table --topic is fundamental to League)

Page 2 Letter from committee that sets the stage explaining the League process and the legislative process — *Enckson + Weisbrod* →

Page 3 - 6 *parallel* — Use questions from "Standards" and do side by side comparison of Unicameral and Bicameral

Page 7 *5-6 questions* — ½ page for tearoff — what kind of advice do we want?

Box Committee members and/or local League and city —
Current bills —
Principles/positions —
Resources (organizations, speakers, books) —

History
NR - process
don't know rules finding next steps
legis
enckson
Russ Snow
1 + R ?
(Assignments: pg. 1 — Duffy; pg. 2 — ?; page 3-6 — Gilley and Guttormsson; pg 7 — Wickstrom, Current bills and legislative process — Weisbrod)

Unicameral Legislature Committee

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

M I N N E S O T A

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

Date: February 3, 2000
To: Local League Presidents
From: Judy Duffy, President
Re: Unicameral Position

Enclosed, you will find LWVMN's new position on a single house legislature. The membership's response to the questionnaire in the December Voter was both geographically and numerically significant to allow us to formulate a strong position opposing a unicameral proposal.

You will find in this mailing the report to the LWVMN Board at its January 26 meeting and other information that will help you to respond to any questions you may receive. The committee that was formed to carry out this study/position process did yeoman service to all of us at a very busy time of the year. We all owe them a great deal of gratitude. We are now in a position to act at the legislature as soon as is necessary.

There will be a joint legislative hearing on Monday evening, February 7 at which we will be testifying and stating our position. A floor vote is scheduled in the House on February 29. You will be receiving progress reports on this issue as well as all issues we will be covering at the legislature. You will be asked to respond to Action Alerts on a number of issues. At this time, it would be helpful for you to sound out your own legislators and inform them of our position. Testimony and news release will be available on the LWVMN website (www.lwvmn.org) after February 7.

Again, I am pleased with the work of the Unicameral Committee and feel they have put us in good position to act.

Report of the Unicameral Legislature Committee to the LWVMN Board
1/26/00

The Unicameral Legislature Committee, established to examine the issue of a unicameral Legislature and to present its findings to the LWVMN Board, finds that current League positions and principles can be used to take action and recommends that the League of Women Voters of Minnesota oppose restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house.

The committee recommends the adoption of the following resolution: "Resolved, that the League of Women Voters of Minnesota oppose restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house."

Kay Erickson, Chair

On behalf of the committee I move the adoption of the resolution just read.

Background:

At its August meeting the LWVMN Board established the Unicameral Legislature committee to examine the issue of a unicameral legislature and to recommend a course of action for the League. Sixteen Leaguers from the metro area and greater Minnesota (Red Wing, Northfield, Duluth, St. Peter, and St. Croix Valley) have met at least monthly since September.

At the November Board meeting we reported that it was the committee's decision and the board agreed to have a position in time to affect the 2000 legislation session. At that meeting the Board instructed the committee to include a way for local Leagues and local League members to weigh in with their input. The December Voter was devoted to the unicameral issue with a tear off for members to send in to their local Leagues. Local League boards were asked to review the results and send them on to the committee. The results showed that the members who responded overwhelming opposed a unicameral system for Minnesota:

423 (19%) of 2219 members responded.

Of those responding: 74% Oppose
20% Support
6% Undecided

Responses came from: 4 of 6 state units
37 of 42 Local Leagues
1 nationally recruited member
7 Members at Large

Leagues and state units not responding were: Rock County, Moorhead, St. Peter, Brooklyn Center, Mankato, Wayzata/Plymouth, Brooklyn Park/Osseo/Maple Grove.

85% of Local Leagues/State Units participated.

The committee's work has included:

1. Hearing feedback from the League's regional meetings on the Unicameral Committee's process.
2. Listening to Rep. Mindy Greiling, a unicameral supporter, and Bill Brady, chair of Opponents of a UniCameral House (OUCH) debate the issue at a committee meeting.
3. Hearing from Tom Todd, Legislative Analyst from House Research
4. Researching the issue through: newspaper and magazine articles, House Research reports, and Tribune of the People by Royce Hanson; watching tapes from Common Cause Nebraska; attending and listening to audio tapes of Citizens League and Minnesota Women's Consortium meetings and researching pending bills
5. Researching League positions and principles that apply to this issue
6. Researching reforms in the present system (recent reforms and what could be changed), and developing standards by which any system should be judged
7. Writing articles for the September and December Voters
8. Developing a process for local League and member input:
 - Encouraging local Leagues to hold meetings on the issue, in some cases providing a speaker/moderator
 - Providing packets of information through the Board Memo
 - Developing a tear-off for the December Voter for members to mail to their local Leagues; asking local Leagues to send them on the LWVMN with their comments

Should the Board adopt the recommendation, the committee is ready with Communication and Action plans. The committee may schedule additional meetings if necessary.

Rationale:

The committee has prepared the attached "Reasons" for its recommendation.

Reasons for opposing a Unicameral Legislature for Minnesota based on League positions and principles:

Representation:

Representation is cut in half. Although everyone will be represented equally, with the greater distances in rural Minnesota the representative may not have any connection with or knowledge of the community he or she is representing.

Accessibility and Responsiveness

Because the number of legislators will be reduced by at least one third according current proposals, the opportunity for citizens to run for office will be reduced.

A bicameral system allows citizens more opportunities to have their views heard—if the representative from their district does not agree with them, the senator might.

Because of the greater distances in greater Minnesota, citizens there will have less contact and fewer opportunities to see their legislators in person if there is only one legislator. Therefore response to constituents will be decreased.

Lobbyists and special interests will have fewer people to influence. The power of individual legislators will be increased.

The increased number hearings in a bicameral system (committee hearings in both houses, conference committee which allow for additional debate after floor debate) allow for more opportunities for citizen input and a more open process.

Accountability

It doesn't necessarily follow that because a system is unicameral legislators are more accountable. Game playing by legislators can occur with the multiple votes that a bill goes through during a unicameral process just as it can by voting for a bill knowing that it will be killed in the other house.

Distribution of Power

A unicameral system does not necessarily result in a distribution of power among legislators. With one house a strong leader, or small group of legislators could wield considerable power. That power would be unchecked by leaders of another house.

Nebraska has Initiative and Referendum which provide a check in a unicameral system. The League would not support I&R in Minnesota. The judiciary and executive veto cannot check abuses within the legislative process.

Effectiveness

A unicameral system may be easier to understand but Nebraska's procedures actually make Nebraska less efficient in processing legislation. Here again the number of bodies may not be the reason for being more or less effective.

1. We don't know enough about how the system would operate to make an informed decision at the polls.
2. Structural problems can be improved by the changing the rules. It doesn't require changing the entire system of government.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MINNESOTA

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

March 9, 2000

Dear Member of the Minnesota House of Representatives::

The League opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house. When it was determined that this would be an important issue in this session of the legislature a statewide League committee was convened to study the issue through reading studies and hearing presentations from advocates and opponents. Subsequently the committee furnished each member of the League information on the unicameral legislature with arguments from both proponents and opponents. Members then convened in local units to discuss the proposal and forward their conclusions to the state league as a recommendation for state action. The overwhelming response was opposition to a unicameral legislature. In light of member response, the statewide committee's recommendation and in accordance with League principles and current positions, the state board of directors of the **League of Women Voters formally adopted a position of opposition.** This has been an intense and thoughtful process.

Democracy was never meant to be efficient. It was established to give voice to the people through their elected representatives who would deliberate and carefully craft laws. The deliberation that occurs in a two-house system while repetitive can assure that differing viewpoints will be aired and measured. Reform can be accomplished without tossing out our entire system.

The League opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house for the following reasons:


- ◆ Restructuring the legislature carries an unacceptable risk of unintended/unknown consequences.
- ◆ Restructuring to a unicameral legislature is a disproportionate response to the stated problems.
- ◆ Fewer representatives and only one legislative body may not adequately represent minority and regional views and interests. The importance of protecting political diversity outweighs the possible benefits of simplification.
- ◆ In sparsely populated areas of the state, the problem of less easy access to legislators would be exacerbated by a unicameral system.
- ◆ A unicameral legislature does not provide sufficient checks and balances within the legislative process. Single, special interest groups could more easily dominate the process. The slower more deliberative process of a bicameral legislature is more likely to produce good legislation.

- ◆ A unicameral legislature would alter the current balance of power between the executive and legislative branches. The governors who favor the proposal give a clear indication that it would be far easier for a governor to negotiate with one set of legislative leaders rather than two.
- ◆ There is no assurance that the unicameral system would save money. There is a very real possibility that a reduced legislative body would require more staff and longer sessions to accomplish necessary legislative tasks. The workload is not reduced. An unintended consequence could be a shift in power to staff (nonelected) from the legislators (elected).
- ◆ The legislative process differs fundamentally from a business in its mission and therefore should not be similarly organized.
- ◆ Improvements can be made to the current system by changing the rules of the legislature. Legislative rulemaking would influence the operation of a unicameral legislature just as current rules influence the operation of the bicameral system. For example, it is possible to reduce the authority of conference committees by using joint committees more and conference committees less. Legislative rules on conference committee appointments, authority and procedures to assure maximum representation among legislators and clear enforceable rules can be adopted. Ending the practice of concentrating most decisions in a few bills brought out for passage late in the session could prevent the end of session crush. Set and adhere to committee deadlines. To enhance the deliberative process, make better use of interim study committees and increase participation by taking study committees out of the Capitol and into the communities and permit citizen testimony.
- ◆ Voters cannot make an informed choice if they are voting for a concept without a plan. The current proposal for the constitutional question as it would appear on the ballot doesn't fully explain to the voters what the unicameral legislature would look like or how it would function. The amendment contains no details of structure or operation.

The argument that legislators should "let the people decide" has a decidedly democratic ring to it, however this implies that legislators should not discuss, debate and evaluate the idea before it goes on the ballot. Our Constitution requires legislative scrutiny. For unicameral proponents to suggest that legislators not vote their consciences is unreasonable. If the idea has merit then legislators should put it on the ballot; if it does not, it should not be on the ballot.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota opposes the establishment of a unicameral Legislature. We urge you to vote no to placing it on the ballot.

Sincerely,



Judy Duffy
President

Unicameral Legislature Wrap Up May 2000

The Board accepted the Unicameral Committee's recommendation and on January 26 voted to oppose restructuring Minnesota to a single house. We made our position known immediately with press releases, action alerts, Voter articles and testimony.

On February 7, Judy Duffy testified before a joint committee meeting of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee and the Senate Election Laws Committee. Her testimony outlined how we reached our position and our rationale for that position. We were positioned close to the end of a lengthy evening session at which Governor Ventura testified and in which the proponents seemed to have the preponderance of time to make their case. In fact, most of the audience and media left after the Governor's testimony.

On February 9, a letter was delivered to the House Government Operations Committee restating our position and countering the basic arguments for a unicameral legislature (conference committees and accountability). The Senate Election Laws Committee received the same letter.

Leaders of both the House and Senate said the bills would get heard. Speaker of the House Steve Sviggum was an author of the House bill. Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe, (DFL Erskine) stated at the outset that the bill would get a full and open hearing in the Senate. What occurred was that committees in the House and Senate passed the bill on to the next committee "without recommendation," in effect giving the bill a "social promotion" as it was tagged, in an attempt to get the issue to floor discussions. As the session progressed, supporters seemed to think that the issue was in trouble while those in opposition were worried that it would survive.

In the House (HF 159, Sviggum and HF 4147, Sviggum)

The Governmental Operations Committee met to discuss the bill and take public testimony on February 9 and 11. (Because the League had testified at the joint meeting we could not testify at several subsequent hearings in both houses.) Public testimony was unanimously in opposition.

The Committee amended the bill to add Mark Gleason's (DFL-Richfield) proposal for a Voter's Guide to be prepared by the Secretary of State. The committee vote to pass with recommendation to the Government Finance Committee chaired by Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview) failed; the motion to pass it without recommendation carried.

The State Government Finance Committee took up the bill on March 9. The Committee heard testimony from Speaker of the House Steve Sviggum, but did not hear from other supporters or opponents. Rep. Sviggum told the committee they owed it to the citizens to bring the issue forward and to put it on the ballot. Committee members voiced concerns about how to stop runaway government, increased power of committee chairs, cost savings when Nebraska requires more staff than Minnesota, lack of interest by the general public, why we needed such a extreme change in government when other reforms could correct problems.

Phyllis Kahn (DFL- Minneapolis) also questioned the assumptions made in determining the cost savings concerning staff and had further questions and rent, moving and remodeling costs that were not included in the fiscal implications. She moved to call the unicameral body the Delegate Assembly and the representatives Delegates, explaining that it was preferable to call them something completely different than to retain the designation of Senate and Senators. (The motion carried.)

The motion to send the bill to the Ways and Means Committee without further recommendation failed on a 5 to 5 tie vote, which should have killed the bill. However, during the afternoon session, House leadership tried to revive it using a seldom used parliamentary rule that had been changed earlier in the session to allow a bill to be taken from a committee on a majority vote (instead of 60 per cent which was the previous requirement). Rep. Sviggum stated that he might use this procedure after the committee vote and insisted that the change was not made to make it easier to move the unicameral bill.

On April 11 Speaker Sviggum introduced a new bill (HF 4147)-rather the old bill-new number. "While not illegal, it is certainly uncommon," was the description made by one legislator of the tactic. On May 1 the Government Operations committee heard the bill and it was clear from the outset that legislators were instructed to pass it with a recommendation to pass to Rules and to the House floor which indeed was the case. On a 76 to 54 vote House members refused to go along and referred it back to Ways and Means on the last day of the session.

In the Senate (SF 43, Spear)

The Senate Elections Laws committee heard testimony on February 21 and 23. Both hearings played to a packed house. Senate authors Allan Spear (DFL-Minneapolis) and Dave Kleis (R-St. Cloud) gave a preliminary introduction. Sen. Spear addressed the criteria that should determine the placement of a matter on the ballot for constitutional amendment. The idea should require a constitutional change, have merit, and have widespread interest. Sen. Kleis accused opponents of unicameralism of using Greater Minnesota's fear of Twin Cities' domination to buttress their arguments.

Proponents testifying included former Governor Al Quie and Royce Hanson, former U of M faculty and author of *Tribune of the People*, a 1990 study of the Minnesota Legislature. He said that the legislative process should be visible, transparent and easily understood--the conference committee blurs all these qualifications in Minnesota. He did admit that the bicameral system allows for better representation of diverse and minority views. He also said he was unfamiliar with how well recent reforms of conference committees since the publication of his book were working.

Testifying in opposition were Arlen Erdahl, former Congressman and Secretary of State, and former Representative Myron Orenstein (DFL-St. Paul). Both stated that unicameralism is the answer to a nonexistent problem. Further it was averred that governors dislike the bicameral system because it requires them to bargain with two houses rather than one. They defended the present system as a good one to protect the rights of minorities and defend against expediency.

The committee voted 7 to 4 not to recommend passing. At the request of Senator Moe a second motion was adopted which passed the bill on to the Government Operations and Veterans Committee without a recommendation. In this form the bill narrowly survived on a 6 to 5 vote.

Judy Duffy testified on March 1, before the Senate Government Operations and Veterans Committee which passed the bill without recommendation to the Senate Rules Committee chaired by Sen. Moe. It stayed in this committee until the end of the session.

Conclusion

Although it may be an issue in some of the upcoming legislative elections, this was the year best suited to enact the amendment with redistricting to follow in 2001. It is believed that future attempts at a unicameral legislature would have to postpone implementation until the 2010 census has taken place. Though its supporters will not go away it is doubtful that they will be able to muster another \$700,000 to finance an effort of the magnitude we saw in 2000. It also relieves LWVMN of mounting a campaign to defeat the amendment in the fall election. In fact, there will be no proposed constitutional amendments on the 2000 election ballot. The Governor is incensed that the issue did not get on the ballot and in news reports has threatened to campaign against legislators who thwarted his efforts. He vowed to continue to work for a unicameral legislature and for term limits to "throw the bums out." Our work never ends!

LWVUS Positions Relevant to the Study of a Unicameral Legislature

(Taken from Impact on Issues 1998-2000)

Government

In the summary of this position (page 3), the following are included in the list of items that describe the position and pertain to this study:

- ▶ Promote and open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive;
- ▶ Assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making.

In the Statement of Positions (pages 7 and 8) the following are listed and pertain to this study:

"The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible." Adopted June, 1984

"The League of Women Voters of the United States believes in the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The League is convinced that individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged." Adopted March, 1982

LWVMN Positions Relevant to the Study of a Unicameral Legislature

(Taken from Program for Action 1997-1999)

Government

Section II, Government (page 13) includes the following which pertain to this study:

Organization of Government: Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota and Legislature and Executive Branches.

Detail includes

- ▶ "Legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess." (1995, 1968)

Section III, Initiative, Referendum and Recall (page 13) includes the following which pertain to this study:

Detail includes:

Support of:

- ▶ The continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory);
- ▶ The continuation of compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments;

Opposition to:

- ▶ direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes;
- ▶ optional and compulsory referendum on statutes; no agreement on petition referendum on statutes;

In addition:

History of State Action:

Amending the Constitution: The 1947 LWV State Constitution study showed the need for change the amending process. Ratification of a constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of all those voting in the election. Thus a voter who fails to vote on the amendment automatically casts a "no" vote. LWVMN believes that the requirement for ratification should be changed to a majority of those voting on the question. In 1974 LWVMN supported a constitutional amendment allowing amendments to be passed by a 55% majority of those voting on the question; the amendment was defeated by the voters.

cc: Erickson, M.C.W.
Duffy, Michael



RECEIVED NOV 01 1999

JEFFERSON CENTER

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The Jefferson Center invites you and a guest to the Breakfast Club

Join the Jefferson Center as we host a debate on whether a unicameral legislature would be beneficial to Minnesota.

Gene Merriam, Co-Chair
Minnesotans for a Single House Legislature

Senator Roger Moe
Majority Leader, Minnesota Senate

Date: Friday, November 19, 1999

Time: 8 to 9 A.M. Complimentary breakfast is available at 7:45 A.M.

Place: Nicollet Island Inn • 95 Merriam Street, Minneapolis • Free parking is available

RSVP: 612.926.3292 by Monday November 15, 1999

Because of the growing popularity of this event, reservations are required.

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The Jefferson Center's Breakfast Club is sponsored by the Dayton Hudson Corporation.

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Testimony presented February 7, 2000, to a joint hearing of the
Senate Election Laws Committee and the
House Government Operations and Veterans Committee
By Judy Duffy, President
League of Women Voters of Minnesota

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political grassroots organization that influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. Because I believe in good government and Minnesota continues to lead the way in achieving this important aim, I am pleased to be here tonight.

The League opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house. When it was determined that this would be an important issue in this session of the legislature a statewide League committee was convened to study the issue through reading studies and hearing presentations from advocates and opponents. Subsequently the committee furnished each member of the League information on the unicameral legislature with arguments from both proponents and opponents. Members then convened in local units to discuss the proposal and forward their conclusions to the state league as a recommendation for state action. The overwhelming response was opposition to a unicameral legislature. In light of member response, the statewide committee's recommendation and in accordance with League principles and current positions, the state board of directors of the League of Women Voters formally adopted a position of opposition. This has been an intense and thoughtful process.

Volunteer
(Special Interest - Represent Citizens & Voters across the State)

It is our opinion that a unicameral legislature does not provide sufficient checks and balances in the legislative process – the slower, more deliberative process of a bicameral legislature is more likely to produce good legislation.

*broader definition:
Checks / balances
in sense of diff. time
focus, schedules
priorities*

In a unicameral system, representation for all Minnesotans would be cut in half. Since each citizen would be represented by only one member, those citizens who hold minority views may find it more difficult to be represented in a unicameral system. A unicameral legislature would be less likely to represent the complexity of interests and diversity of all Minnesota residents. Of particular importance, citizens in geographically large districts already have less easy access to their legislators. By taking away one of the two members who represent citizens in these areas, a unicameral system would exacerbate the *current* situation.

Some believe that government should be run like a business. Although it could be argued that administration of state government might benefit from a more business-like approach, the legislative process differs fundamentally from a business in its mission, and therefore should not be similarly structured.

Restructuring to a unicameral legislature seems to be a disproportionate response to the stated problems. The current legislative system may be flawed, but is not broken.

Perceived problems in the current system could be remedied by changes in the rules or adherence to the rules already in place, rather than restructuring to a new system. For example, it is possible to reduce the authority of conference committees by using joint committees more and conference committees less. Legislative rules on conference committee appointments, authority and procedures to assure maximum representation among legislators and clear enforceable rules can be adopted. The end of session crush could be prevented by ending the practice of concentrating most decisions in a few bills brought out

*Conf Committees
running amok
same people
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less accountability
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lobbyist influence*

for passage late in the session. Set and adhere to committee deadlines. To enhance the deliberative process, make better use of interim study committees and increase participation by taking study committees out of the Capitol and into the communities and permit citizen testimony.

While the League of Women Voters supports compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments, the current proposal for the constitutional question as it would appear on the ballot doesn't fully explain to the voters what the unicameral legislature would look like or how it would function. The amendment contains no details of structure or operation. The voters, in essence, will be voting for a concept and not a plan. The Rochester Post-Bulletin, in an editorial cartoon January 5, 2000, depicted it as a "car under a blanket". If you put it on the ballot and then call for public discussion without a look at the specifics— there is still nothing to discuss.

thoroughly
The League feels the legislature has the responsibility to ~~to~~ debate this issue. The American legislative process was not designed to allow legislators to opt out of controversial issues. The issue should be carefully scrutinized on its merits.——

and

THIS IS THE PLACE TO HAVE THE DEBATE.,

*Discuss +
Decide*

Thank you for allowing the League of Women Voters to testify on this very important issue.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota opposes restructuring the Minnesota Legislature to a single house for the following reasons:

- ♦ Restructuring the legislature carries an unacceptable risk of unintended/unknown consequences.
- ♦ Restructuring to a unicameral legislature is a disproportionate response to the stated problems.
- ♦ Fewer representatives and only one legislative body may not adequately represent minority and regional views and interests. The importance of protecting political diversity outweighs the possible benefits of simplification.
- ♦ In sparsely populated areas of the state, the problem of less easy access to legislators would be exacerbated by a unicameral system.
- ♦ A unicameral legislature does not provide sufficient checks and balances within the legislative process. Single, special interest groups could more easily dominate the process. The slower, more deliberative process of a bicameral legislature is more likely to produce good legislation.
- ♦ A unicameral legislature would alter the current balance of power between the executive and the legislative branches.
- ♦ There is no assurance that the unicameral system would save money. There is a very real possibility that a reduced legislative body would require more staff and longer sessions to accomplish necessary legislative tasks. The workload is not reduced. An unintended consequence could be a shift in power to staff (nonelected) from the legislators (elected).
- ♦ The legislative process differs fundamentally from a business in its mission, and therefore should not be similarly organized.
- ♦ Improvements can be made to the current system by changing the rules of the legislature. For example conference committee abuses can be addressed by strictly enforcing current legislative rules or enacting new operating rules. Legislative rulemaking and adherence to those rules would influence the operation of a unicameral legislative system just as surely as current rules and adherence influence the operation of the bicameral system.
- ♦ Voters cannot make an informed choice if they are voting for a concept without a plan.

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It is our opinion that a unicameral legislature does not provide sufficient checks and balances in the legislative process – the slower, more deliberative process of a bicameral legislature is more likely to produce good legislation.

In a unicameral system, representation for all Minnesotans would be cut in half. Since each citizen would be represented by only one member, those citizens who hold minority views may find it more difficult to be represented in a unicameral system. A unicameral legislature would be less likely to represent the complexity of interests and diversity of all Minnesota residents. Of particular importance, citizens in geographically large districts already have less easy access to their legislators. By taking away one of the two members who represent citizens in these areas, a unicameral system would exacerbate the situation.

Some believe that government should be run like a business. Although it could be argued that administration of state government might benefit from a more business-like approach, the legislative process differs fundamentally from a business in its mission, and therefore should not be similarly structured. Restructuring to a unicameral legislature seems to be a disproportionate response to the stated problems. The current legislative system may be flawed, but is not broken.

Subj: **Unicameral article**
Date: 2/25/2000 12:31:21 PM Central Standard Time
From: kerickson@visi.com (Kay Erickson)
To: GandJDuffy@aol.com

Judy, this is a slightly different version with some updated statistics on the number of Senators on conference committees. I checked out Dean Johnson's numbers to be sure, and got some additional information about Senate leadership serving on conference committees. (revision begins at paragraph 5) Kay

Op-ed piece for Greater MN weeklies and dailies

The current drive for a unicameral legislature is a solution in search of a problem. Proponents of changing Minnesota's two house legislature to one house have yet to demonstrate what is so terribly wrong with our system that requires changing everything about it. With a strong economy and a ranking at or near the top in every quality of life survey comparing us to other states, Minnesota is nationally respected. In a recent Minnesota Poll, 77% of Minnesotans said they were satisfied with the direction the state was heading.

But unicameral proponents would have voters toss out our two house legislature for a system that is untried (except in Nebraska) and about which citizens know very little. The constitutional amendment that would go on the ballot calls for one house called the Legislature and reduces the number of representatives from 201 legislators (67 Senators and 134 Representatives) to 135 "Senators" serving four year staggered terms. The legislators in power in 2003 would make the rules for how the house would function.

These are among the reasons the League of Women Voters of Minnesota opposes restructuring to a unicameral legislature. The position was reached after careful study and deliberation of a League committee comprised of individual members from across the state. Together with our stated League principles, existing League positions and a survey of our members, we have arrived at this position. For 80 years the League has been concerned about government actions as well as the form and manner by which decisions are made. This is why we view the proposal to change our state government structure as a very serious matter.

The League is not convinced that a unicameral legislature will cure any of the perceived ills that are part of the current system, and may carry many unintended consequences. Conference committees and accountability seem to be the driving force behind the current unicameral push.

Unicameral proponents contend that a few people on conference committees make all the decisions in a bicameral system. The numbers do not support this contention. As was pointed out in a recent Senate committee hearing, 51 of 67 senators served on the nine major tax, bonding and finance conference committees during the 1999 legislative budget session.

New legislators are as welcome to serve on conference committees as experienced legislators. Serving on conference committees has more to do

with the interests and time availability of individual Senators than whether they are in power. Research shows that the leaders of the Senate often serve on fewer conference committees than do other Senators.

The way conference committees (where members of both houses meet to iron out differences in bills) conducted business in the '70's and '80's has been corrected. The committees now conduct business in public, bills have to have been heard in other committees, and they do not meet into the wee hours of the morning. If additional corrections are necessary, they can be made without changing our entire structure of government.

Accountability, that is the legislator's personal responsibility in voting, is an issue that is as much individual as institutional. Legislators for the most part take responsibility for their votes—all of which are recorded for public information. Whether those votes are taken in a unicameral or bicameral setting, elected officials need to stand for re-election on their record. Integrity is individual; it does not depend on the structure of the institution.

Another issue of concern to the League is the impact of cutting every citizen's representation in half. (Instead of having a representative and a senator as we have now, under a unicameral system each citizen would have only one representative.) Particularly in sparsely populated rural areas where the responsibility for serving constituents is shared by a senator and two representatives, there will be one less person trying to provide services to citizens, one less person voicing rural concerns.

To consider diminishing the number of legislators when we are a growing state both in numbers and diversity seems to be contrary to our needs. A unicameral legislature is less likely to represent the complexity of interests and diversity of all Minnesota residents. Representation is not just a numbers game.

In addition, a unicameral legislature would provide fewer opportunities for citizen input, fewer points for corrections to occur, fewer checks and balances within the legislative process and between the branches of government. Indeed, a unicameral body, with just one house and fewer legislators may concentrate power and be more vulnerable to lobbyist and single interest group pressure.

The argument that legislators should merely "let the people decide" has a decidedly democratic ring to it, however this implies that legislators should not discuss, debate and evaluate the idea before it goes on the ballot. Our constitution requires legislative scrutiny. For unicameral proponents to suggest that legislators not vote their consciences is unconscionable. If the idea has merit then legislators should put it on the ballot; if it does not, it should not be on the ballot.

Democracy was never meant to be efficient. It was established to give voice to the people through their elected representatives who would deliberate and carefully craft laws. The deliberation that occurs in a two-house system while repetitive can assure that differing viewpoints will be aired and measured. Reform can be accomplished without tossing out our entire system. The League of Women Voters of Minnesota opposes the establishment of a unicameral legislature and urges readers to do the same.

ACTION ALERT!!

To: LWV Minneapolis members living in legislative district 59B, represented by Representative Phyllis Kahn

From: Sally Sawyer, Executive Director, LWVMN

SUPPORT THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' POSITION OPPOSING A UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE

Please call Representative Phyllis Kahn (651-296-4257) and ask her to **vote against** putting a constitutional amendment to adopt a unicameral legislature on the ballot in November's general election.

She is a member of the House Committee on Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs. This committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, February 9, at 8 a.m. to discuss this bill. The committee is scheduled to vote on this bill on Friday, February 11, 2000.

This bill is House File No. 159. The entire text of the bill can be found at www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.htm