



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 7, 2017

To: House Committee on Education
Representative Margaret Doherty, Chair

Re: Ballot Measure 98 hearing on February 8, **Comment**

LWV Positions support occupational (career and technical) education, racial equity in education and other issues addressed by Measure 98. The League of Women Voters US believes that an equitable, quality public education is critical for students. The kinds of programs the LWVUS supports include: Programs in basic education, occupational education and retraining when needed at any point of an individual's working career; expanded opportunities in apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs.

Yet the League of Women Voters remained "neutral" on Measure 98. It should be noted that LWVOR did not reach this decision easily. **Our overriding concern with Measure 98 was an ongoing burden on the legislative budget process.** In fact, Measure 98 is a classic example of the LWV slogan "Think Before You Ink" when considering initiatives. That publication asks: "What funding is proposed? Is this an 'unfunded mandate'? Would it force our Legislature to pull funds from other essential programs? How might it limit government budget flexibility? LWVOR believes initiatives should create their own revenue sources—not earmark, restrict, or obligate a specific percentage of the General Fund."

The Governor's Recommended Budget allocated "half" funding for Measure 98. The Co-chairs framework paints a grim perspective of many vital safety net services that must be cut to balance the budget without increased revenue. Balancing the budget is no easy task in the best of times.

Fully funding Measure 98, while perhaps a good idea to consider in better times, must be rejected this session, unless SIGNIFICANT additional revenue is provided. The LWVOR Legislative Action Committee has prioritized REVENUE AND TAX REFORM for the 2017 session, given the \$1.8 Billion deficit for the upcoming biennium and an even greater deficit projected in future years. **We strongly urge adopting stable and fair revenue policies and tax reforms to adequately fund services and functions critical to the well-being of Oregonians--education, social services, public safety, health care, natural resources and other vital services.**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Measure 98's impact on existing education programs and other vital safety net services.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

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