



**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.

March 14, 2017

To: [Joint Subcommittee on Education](#)
Co-chair [Senator Rod Monroe](#)
Co-chair [Representative Barbara Smith Warner](#)

Re: [SB 5516](#) – Department of Education
Measure 98, **COMMENT** on BUDGET LIMITATIONS

[LWV Positions](#) support occupational (career and technical) education, racial equity in education and other issues addressed by Measure 98. The League of Women Voters believes that an equitable, quality public education is critical for students. The kinds of programs LWV 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.

Nonetheless, we 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, something exacerbated this session with a \$1.8B deficit. In fact, Measure 98 is a classic example of the LWV slogan “**Think Before You Ink**” when considering initiatives. It 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, about \$400 per student. 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 stable revenue and fair tax sources are implemented. Furthermore, in this session, it is highly probable that General Fund cuts in Education might impact existing CTE programs already underway in school districts. Unfortunately, Measure 98 only allows funding of “new” CTE and cannot be used to backfill de-funded CTE programs, even those with a strong track record.

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 the overall Education Budget and existing CTE programs in this climate of funding deficits.

Norman Turrill, LWVOR President

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