



**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.

April 2, 2017

To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senator Alan Olsen, Vice Chair

Re: **SB 114** and **SB 258**, Repeals City Charter Preemption on Voter Annexation - **SUPPORT**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) has numerous positions related to citizen participation and access. We support city and county home rule and have always advocated that local citizens have the right to bring matters before their fellow local residents on a variety of issues. Also, LWVOR first studied land use in 1959 and has been active since in supporting our statewide land use planning program **with local implementation**. It is because of these long-standing positions that we ask that you **support SB 114 or SB 258**.

These bills **repeal** Section 2, Chapter 51 of Oregon Laws 2016—**SB 1573 (2016)**. The League believes citizens of a city have a right to initiate charter amendments to their local city charters and that, upon adoption by the citizens, said charter amendments should be allowed to be implemented so long as they are constitutional.

These bills **return** local charter provisions, including those where local citizens have determined it is in their best interest to have a vote before annexing property into their city. Yes, these votes can sometimes be a mechanism to limit growth in a city; but more often it allows for a broad citywide conversation on how to pay for the infrastructure, such as water and sewer and other public services, along with police and fire protection should that property become part of the city. SB 1573 did not require the property owner(s) to fund the needed infrastructure, nor these important public services. Depending on the size of the property annexed, there may be a need for more schools. All of these conversations occur when an annexation is considered in a public process. SB 1573 did not allow the city to consider if the city's long term annexation plans would now fit with this particular property's annexation. It didn't even require a public hearing before the city approved the annexation application.

The 2016 bill **did not account for feasibility to serve**, because not all cities have systems-development charges or other methods to require the annexed property to pay for the cost of these newly required services. It might require that services be provided in an illogical manner that would be more costly than an orderly growth plan. Yes, there is intended under our planning system to be a 20-year land supply in an urban growth boundary, and that cities are the best government entities to provide urban level of services. But the system **did not require** that properties come into cities on behalf of developers or property owners with no public process. The system assumed that local governments and their citizens have **local control** to determine their destiny.

It is because of the above concerns that the League asks that you **vote YES** on either SB 114 or SB 258 (equal measures) and reject the 2016 usurpation of local control. Because the 2016 bill usurped a city's charter rights and there is litigation pending, it is appropriate for the Emergency Clause to be used for this legislation.

Sincerely,



Norman Turrill
LWVOR President



Peggy Lynch
LWVOR Natural Resources Coordinator