



**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 27, 2017

To: **Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government**
Senators [James Manning, Jr.](#), and [Greg Smith](#), Co-Chairs

Re: [SB 5536](#) Secretary of State proposed budget – **Comments**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports state Voters' Pamphlets, in compliance with statute. Our Voter Education position supports providing voters with accurate information to make reasoned, informed choices. We are concerned with standing Elections Division budget cut proposals, which may be used. We used to get considerable HAVA funding for the League's Voters' Guides and Mock Election programs, and we still work to inform voters. Since the League no longer gets these funds and they're almost gone, much of our voter information is online. Central to this discussion is defining "publication" and effectively reaching voters.

For statewide candidates and ballot measures, we still print Voters' Guides, in English and Spanish. We work with the State Library Talking Books and Braille Services to produce Braille and audio CD Voters' Guides, Large Print (which we share with the Elections Division), and TBABS mails them to registered users. We post the audio recordings and state guide PDFs on our website, which, thanks to TBABS advice, gets high automated reader service ratings.

Publication online allows vast expansion and updating. In the fall 2016 election, we repeatedly contacted all county and many city elections officials, the state Elections Division, and others. We posted over 1100 Oregon candidate names online, indexed by office titles, by counties, with their statements and lots of information. We covered over 350 Oregon ballot measures, indexed by numbers, counties, and by general topics. Our google analytics shows dramatic website use increase, both rural and urban, with extended readership time. We cannot afford to print and distribute all this information. We are concerned about who we miss online. As Steve Trout said, this is the challenge. It is evolving rapidly. PEW Research Center reports who is online in [Digital Divides 2016](#) (slide numbers below). A March 22, 2017 [Digital Divide](#) update looks at increased lower income smart phone use:

- (4) Income: about half earning under \$30,000 annually have smart phones; 22% aren't connected.
- (10) By Education: 87% of adults use the net, only 61% of non-high school graduates.
- (16) By race, whites exceed that 87% average by 2%, blacks and Hispanics lag by 8%.
- (18) Broadband access, to read Voters' Pamphlets clearly on a bigger screen, shows a bigger disparity, with 73% whites, compared to 47% Hispanic.
- (19) Our mobile connection is about the same, 76-79% across races.

We discourage these possible budget cuts and want to be involved in addressing these needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Norman Turrill
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