



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA**

4026 Hummer Road · Annandale, Virginia 22003-2403
703-658-9150 · www.lwv-fairfax.org

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LWVFA testimony to the Fairfax Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly

Good morning. I am Julie Jones, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, speaking on behalf of our members and supporters in Fairfax County and Fairfax City. We thank you for the privilege of speaking to you this morning.

The League understands that the weak economy has reduced revenues at all levels of government. However, continuous cutbacks in State funding have jeopardized the future of local core services such as **education** and **transportation**. These services are so basic to the social and economic success of any community that they are a key factor in the County's ability to attract new businesses and to keep the ones it already has. The League of Women Voters particularly supports the County's Legislative Program relating to education, transportation, and the need for the diversification of revenue sources allowed to counties and other local jurisdictions so that property taxes do not make up such a large portion of local revenues.

Education – Despite increasing enrollment and a series of funding cutbacks, our public schools have maintained their high standards, but they cannot continue to do so indefinitely without increased financial support from the Commonwealth. Businesses demand a well-educated workforce. We urge the General Assembly to avoid further cuts in Virginia's support of K-12 public education.

Transportation – We strongly encourage the General Assembly to establish a dedicated, steady, and reliable funding source for all transportation modes. Straightjacketed by the Dillon Rule, localities cannot raise enough revenue to absorb the increased cost of ever-dwindling State support.

Voting -- It should come as no surprise to you that the League is opposed to measures that would restrict the access of citizens to voting and favors those that would facilitate both registration and voting. Thus, we oppose measures such as HB 9, which replaces oaths of affirmation with provisional ballots, in cases where a voter does not have an ID with him/her; SB 1, which not only eliminates the Oath of Affirmation, but disallows the use of voter registration cards as a means of identification; and HB 61, which restricts groups such as the League from providing absentee ballot applications to persons living in assisted living facilities. As we have in the past, we support measures such as Senator Howell's SB 12, which would provide for no-excuse absentee voting.

We also encourage the use of technology to improve access to registration and voting while, at the same time, saving money. In particular, we urge the adoption of online voting registration for persons who already have a signature on file with a Virginia agency, such as the DMV. And speaking of money, we are concerned that the budget for the State Board of Elections be adequate for managing both central operations and supporting those of local elections offices during the coming election year.

Medicaid –The League opposes further reductions in payouts to poor residents of the Commonwealth; Virginia already ranks 47th in payment of Medicaid benefits,

With regard to other issues, the League:

Believes that Virginia’s **gun control** laws should be tightened rather than weakened further;

Opposes additional limits on a **woman’s reproductive rights**; and

Asks you to begin now the process of adopting a Constitutional Amendment to require a **nonpartisan redistricting process** by the time of the 2020 Census.

We invite you to attend the Women’s Legislative Roundtable, held every Wednesday morning at 8:30 in the General Assembly 7th floor West Conference Room beginning on January 18th and ending on February 29th. League members come to Richmond from all over the Commonwealth to attend these meetings. We hope you will join us. Thank you.