



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

PO Box 863
Augusta, ME 04332-0863

(207) 622-0256
lwvme@gwi.net

TO: The Honorable Senator Lisa T. Marraché
The Honorable Representative John L. Patrick, Co-chairs
The Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs

RE: LD 2219 An Act To Promote Transparency and Accountability in Campaigns and
Governmental Ethics Sponsor: Speaker Cummings

The League of Women Voters of Maine is pleased to submit the following testimony in support of LD 2219.

The League believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government. We support legislative ethics laws that create an atmosphere of transparency and openness, prevent undue influence, and safeguard citizens' ability to influence legislation. We further support lobbying disclosure that provides information to the public as a means of guaranteeing citizen access to the legislative process.

In particular, the League is in favor of the changes proposed by §1013 that provide for members of the public to bring an ethics complaint against a legislator. Other considerations aside, granting standing to members of the public to file complaints provides for public confidence in the fairness, openness and accessibility of the process. It avoids the appearance of a closed process, where collegiality may create constraints against one legislator filing a complaint against another legislator. We supported a similar proposal last year and note with approval that the confidentiality clause has been modified from what was proposed previously to allow the complainant to seek advice or assistance from a third-party.

We also support the provision in §315 and §316 that would provide additional information concerning a lobbyists, the interests they represent, and the committees before which they intend to appear. We support making a photograph of each lobbyist available in both the paper docket and on the disclosure website as a convenient way for legislators, but perhaps equally importantly, for members of the public to more easily identify lobbyists.

The League cannot speak to all of the other provisions of LD 2219 – we do not have established positions in all the areas proposed; and in some other areas where we have positions, we have not been able to analyze the specific proposal thoroughly enough to speak for the League. However, with respect to these two areas specifically, we urge you vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 2219.

With respect to the others, we urge you to consider them with goals in mind of transparency, openness and safeguarding citizens' ability to influence legislation.

Ann Luther, Co-president
League of Women Voters of Maine
March 3, 2008