



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

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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 1058 An Act To Require the Reporting of Executive Branch Lobbying
Sponsor: Rep. Canavan

The League of Women Voters of Maine is pleased to submit the following testimony concerning LD 1058. The League believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government.

The League supports lobbying disclosure that provides information on the pressures exerted on the policy-making process as a means of guaranteeing citizen access to influence that process. In order for citizen participation to be meaningful, a high level of transparency is required so that citizens can understand how laws and regulations are developed, where proposals originate, and who is influencing the process.

In 1975 when the Maine legislature passed a comprehensive lobbyist disclosure law, it recognized, in its Declaration of Purpose, that "...full disclosure of the identity, expenditures and activities of any persons who engage in professional lobbying is required." This is an expansive statement that does not limit professional lobbying to contact with legislators and the Governor's office.

LD 1058 is consistent with this Declaration of Purpose and would properly expand the definition of "lobbying," to include lobbying with agencies or department personnel in the Executive branch.

This is appropriate for two reasons. First, lobbyists may wish to influence legislation that affects a specific state agency and garner support for their position by influencing that agency's testimony on the bill. Second, lobbyists may well desire to influence the contents of departmental bills submitted directly by the agency to the legislature. In both cases, it would be difficult for the average citizen to have any way of ascertaining when a lobbyist contacts a state agency, the content of such interaction, or the possible consequences.

We respectfully suggest that this Committee vote "ought to pass" on LD 1058.

Ann Luther, President
League of Women Voters of Maine
April 2, 2007