

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE



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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE APPLAUDS COURT DECISION ON BALLOT COMMITTEE DISCLOSURES

Augusta -- The League of Women Voters of Maine (LWVME) applauds the decision issued on October 28, 2009, in U.S. District Court by Judge D. Brock Hornby in the matter of *National Organization for Marriage and American Principles in Action v. Commission on Government Ethics and Election Practices*. In denying the plaintiff's request for a temporary restraining order from complying with Maine's ballot committee disclosure laws, Judge Hornby wrote, "Maine has a strong and even compelling interest in helping the electorate assess the particular [ballot] issue on its merits by providing voters with information about where the money supporting a measure has come from and therefore whose interest it serves."

According to Barbara McDade, president of the League of Women Voters of Maine, "The League believes that campaign finance disclosure in the context of ballot initiatives is paramount to preserving Maine citizens' ability to cast an educated vote on those questions placed before them. As we see more and more use of Maine's ballot initiative and citizens' veto provisions, these disclosures are more important than ever."

The League of Women Voters believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process. The League believes that individual liberties, including First Amendment rights of association and speech must be guaranteed, but the League agrees with Judge Hornby that the disclosures required under Maine law are imperative. Citizens who are enacting law through ballot measures must have access to information about which interest groups are "lobbying" for their votes.