LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

December 21, 2015

Governor Rick Snyder
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Snyder:

The League of Women Voters of Michigan urges you to veto two bills, SB 13 and SB 571.

SB 13 eliminates straight-party ticket voting. While Michigan is one of ten states with this provision, Michigan has an exceptionally long ballot and does not have the equipment or election workers to deal with the increased voting time that would be required. While the bill appropriates additional funds it is extremely doubtful the equipment situation can be improved by the November 2016 election. The League is very concerned that this change will result in longer lines and decreased voter participation.

SB 571, the bill that was substituted at the last minute with no public hearings, changes voter education and campaign finance reporting. According to the analysis done by the Michigan Municipal League, this bill would block local governments from sending out the most basic factual and objective information about local ballot proposals within the 60 days before an election. It could prohibit public access broadcasts of city council meetings or even non-partisan voter forums by third parties such as the League of Women Voters if a local proposal is referenced. The Michigan Associations of Counties, of School Administrators and of School Boards also agree SB 571 would prevent public officials from performing a vital educational role to residents about local initiatives.

In addition, SB 571 does not address the problem of independent expenditures being reported months after the election. It is impossible for voters to know who is paying for or against election issues in a timely manner. More transparency is needed.

For 95 years the League has worked to increase voter participation and education. These bills passed by the Michigan Legislature will decrease voter participation. Stand up for the citizens of Michigan and veto SB 13 and SB 571.

Sincerely,

Judy Karandjeff
President