



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SB 91 - State Board of Elections – Open Meetings – Video Streaming and Recording (State Board of Elections Transparency Act)

POSITION: Support

BY: Barbara Schnackenberg and Nancy Soreng Co-Presidents

DATE: January 19, 2017

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active citizen participation and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. This has been a principle of the League since our founding in 1920.

We have supported video broadcasting and the maintaining of an on-line archive of broadcasts of legislative hearings and floor sessions and most recently supported broadcasting and archiving the broadcasts of the Board of Public Works meetings on-line for public access.

We believe that allowing the public to watch State Board of Election meetings will increase their understanding of the election process and the decision making that goes into making elections work. In addition, it will be helpful to local Boards of Election who aren't always able to send a representative to the MSBE meetings to be able to view the proceedings. We assume that the video recordings will be accessible by the public for the same period of time (5 years) that public bodies are required to keep records of their proceedings according to the Open Meetings Act as amended last year by HB984.

We urge a favorable report on SB 91.