



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON**

February 26, 2013

To: House Judiciary Committee  
Representative Jeff Barker, Chair

Re: HJR 1 – Relating to Abolition of the Death Penalty - Support

Chair Barker and Committee members:

The League of Women Voters (LWV) is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The LWV of the United States has a position on the death penalty, which states that the death penalty should be abolished.

Among the reasons the LWVOR supports abolition of the death penalty are the following:

- 1) The death penalty is extremely expensive, due to the precautions and extra measures taken attempting to insure that only appropriate defendants receive the death penalty. Adding to the expense is the necessity for re-sentencing and retrials due to the extensive error rate. Resources expended for the death penalty could be better used for positive programs that reduce crime and serve the victims of crime.
- 2) An error cannot be corrected if the death penalty is carried out on an innocent person.
- 3) The death penalty may mislead family members of victims that another death will bring closure instead of addressing their true needs by supporting services and policies that heal the damage caused by violence.
- 4) In practice, the death penalty is unfair because it targets the poor, those without adequate legal representation, and other vulnerable people—people who are mentally ill, developmentally disabled, and members of an ethnic or racial minority group.

The LWVOR believes that use of the death penalty is not good public policy and that the abolition of the death penalty should be referred to the citizens of Oregon to decide whether they wish to continue its use in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Robin Wisdom  
LWVOR President

Kathy Pugh  
Social Policy