



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 22, 2017

To: [Senate Committee On General Government and Accountability](#)  
[Senator Chuck Riley](#), Chair

Re: **SB 106** – Created Public Records advocate and Advisory Council – **Support with comments**

The League supports this bill to create a Public Records Advocate and Advisory Council, relating to our mission to work for a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government. We commend the work of the Attorney General's Public Records Law Reform Task Force, after passage of Senate Bill 9 in 2015, which we supported. We have an eye to our budget shortfall. Initial investment could be prioritized in the context of dramatic program savings.

We acknowledge the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the federal Freedom of Information Act, with nine disclosure exemptions. Oregon has an estimated 550 disorganized public records disclosure exemptions. Organizing those exemptions to ease compliance could markedly improve service and savings. From the [Oregonian, June 29, 2016](#): *the \$1 million quote from Portland Police was based on the bureau's claim that it would need to review more than a half-million individual cases to see if they were ongoing investigations, allowed to be exempt from disclosure. Apparently, a sort button doesn't exist in their data system.* The Council could seek similar service improvements and savings.

This legislation allows the Council to set rules, then allows them to apply processes. Please consider:

- Take care with Council decision making. With quarterly meetings and few voices, it is important that members be included, not just by quorum, but perhaps allow voting in absentia when necessary.
- See "[Should We See Everything a Cop Sees?](#)". We are concerned about fiscal vulnerability. We see mediation as a way to rein in large costs by focusing records requests to needs.
- Defining "the press" to determine fee waivers, may warrant discussion.
- Mediation should be optional, with sensitivity to imposition versus optional service for our small, rural counties. We are concerned with possible confusion for mandatory interpretation with the word "shall" 35 times in this bill.

We caution that phase-in expectations should be realistic, given the scope of this project and related expenses. We urge support of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill  
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Rebecca L. Gladstone in black ink.

Rebecca Gladstone  
LWVOR Governance Coordinator