

Dear Members of the **House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs** and the **Senate Committee on Government Operations**:

The League of Women Voters (LWV) has worked for good government for over a century. We seek transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in our public officials at every level. To that end, the League of Women Voters of Vermont (LWVVT) advocated strongly for the establishment of a Vermont Ethics Commission, which was accomplished in 2017.

Since then, we have advocated for a State Code of Ethics to add a Uniform Municipal Code of Ethics, strengthen the Commission by granting investigative and enforcement powers for the Commission, and increase staffing.

While the legislature approved legal Codes and granted increased authority, it did so without the necessary funding for staff to take on these key responsibilities.

You will have heard compelling testimony from members of the Vermont Ethics Commission and others, illustrating how Vermont compares to other states' commissions in terms of funding and staffing.

Currently, the Vermont Ethics Commission is trying to fulfill its duties with a volunteer commission and two part-time staffers. Its proposed budget request for 2026 is less than 1/3 that of Rhode Island's 2025 funding. Even allowing for the difference in the state's populations, the contrast is striking.

In this day and age of so much public distrust in government, please give the Vermont Ethics Commission the financial support it so desperately needs to do its important work for our democracy.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Adelman, President & Legislative Advocacy Chair for Voting Rights and Election Integrity

Catherine (Kate) Rader, LWVVT Legislative Advocacy Chair for Ethics

Dr. Betty Keller, Board Member & LWVVT Legislation Advocacy Chair for Civil Rights & Due Process