

League of Women Voters of Greater Green Bay
Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding Hearing
Monday, March 26, 2018; De Pere Wisconsin
Presentation by Judy Crain; JVCrain@netnet.net

Good afternoon and welcome to this important area of our state. Thank you for coming here and for giving us the opportunity to speak to the crucial issues relating to the state's responsibility for funding of our schools. I am Judy Crain, a member of the League of Women Voters of Greater Green Bay which is a part of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. I would like to make a few comments based on the positions of our organization.

First and fundamentally important: The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has long had a strong position of support for Wisconsin public education as absolutely basic to the strength of our state. One of our stated educational positions asserts our strong support for "equal educational opportunity for each child through an equitable state aids formula." As you all know, it is more than forty years ago that the state's school aid formula was adopted to equalize local school spending and local tax effort. However, it is obvious that the equalization formula has not been adequately funded for decades. And that inequities and differences among districts are a great concern. Clearly the issues around adequate state financial responsibility for support of good education with equal opportunity for all our children is at the center of the work of your commission. We fervently hope that your work will move us ahead in important ways.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin also has a position asserting that "all institutions or organizations that receive public funds for K-12 education meet the same state requirements as public schools, including:

- * Accounting for the use of public funds
- * meeting performance standards for their students
- * meeting the same standards for all school employees."

In addition, the League points out that in districts where vouchers are a reality, there may be an increasing financial impact that affects the district's ability to serve its students, including those with special needs. The Blue Ribbon Commission should consider such impact.

Finally, we believe that the Blue Ribbon Commission should address the state's responsibility to the funding needs of school districts that have high concentrations of students in poverty, those with special needs, and those whose first language is not English.

As you who are the members of the Blue Ribbon Commission well know, your work can lay the groundwork for improvements that will strengthen our public schools' ability to offer the best in education for our children and grandchildren for years to come. This includes ensuring that our schools are able to employ and retain highly

competent educators who will be responsible for teaching our communities' children and youth for the future that many of us will not see. Our goal is to make sure that our children have the best education possible. I applaud the Commission for reaching out and coming to people all over the state for our views, our concerns and our hopes. Please keep us informed, continue to give us access to you and your work, and we wish you well in your challenging and all-important task.