



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Pinny Sheoran
Pinny.sheoran@gmail.com

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARIZONA
SUPPORTS PROPOSITION 208

September 30, 2020, Phoenix, AZ -- League of Women Voters of Arizona supports a YES vote on Proposition 208 - Invest in Education, the ballot measure that increases and begins to equalize public school funding across the state. It increases income taxes only on those Arizonans with the highest 1% of personal income.

After careful analysis, League members have determined Proposition 208 is consistent with established League positions and is structured to deliver the promised results for Arizona public school children.

The League is a nonpartisan organization and develops positions only after careful in-depth studies. The League has studied and developed comprehensive positions on public school finance since 1979 and addresses such issues as funding for quality, how funds should be collected, and an adequate funding formula, a uniform distribution of state funds, fiscal accountability and local participation in decision-making and the distribution of funds. These positions, developed by the League well before Prop 208, provide the basis for our strong support of this ballot measure in 2020.

The League of Women Voters recognizes the inequities of local school property taxes. We support a state funding formula that decreases reliance on local district property taxes and increases reliance on statewide taxes for support of public education to better assure parity across school districts throughout our state. The Arizona legislature has failed to provide such a plan for the past 10 years, resulting in a rate of per pupil spending that ranks 49th in the nation. Despite recent increases, our elected leaders have managed to spend \$800 million less on education than they did a decade ago.

This deficit has resulted in large class sizes, teacher and support staff shortages, and reductions in educator salaries.

These deficits can be corrected by asking those in Arizona with the highest 1% of personal incomes to pay a little more (3.5% on individual earnings over \$250,000 or joint earnings over \$500,000) to invest in our communities and the future of our state.

A “YES” vote on Proposition 208 will:

- Put an estimated \$940 million into Arizona’s public schools.
- Enact a 3.5% income tax in addition to the existing income tax (4.5% in 2020), on income above \$250,000 (single filing) or \$500,000 (joint filing).
- Distribute the revenue from the 3.5% income tax to teacher and classroom support staff salaries, teacher mentoring and retention programs, career and technical programs, and the Arizona Teachers Academy.
- Make the measure a state statute, with strong accountability measures that will prevent the legislature from diverting the funds to causes other than what voters intend.

Proposition 208 offers a solution that will channel needed funds to the personnel working directly with our children — not to the administration of schools, as opponents claim.

The proposition does place an additional tax on those who earn more. Opponents claim this is an unfair burden on small businesses. Again, the additional tax applies only to income above \$250,000 (single filers) or \$500,000 (joint filers). We would assert that any business that yields that much money in personal income is not a small business. Business owners will continue to thrive in Arizona, even as they pay a little more for the quality education needed so that they can benefit from a strong, well-educated workforce.

Please join League of Women Voters of Arizona in supporting Proposition 208.

Submitted by League of Women Voters Arizona

Bonnie Saunders, Interim President and Pinny Sheoran, State Advocacy Chair