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April 28, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government

Re: Opposition to Assembly Bill 165

Assembly Bill 165 would prohibit cities, counties, and other localities from using public dollars to fund a Guaranteed Income Program. The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin opposes this bill because it counters two positions of the League: 1) Economic Equity including support for “legislation, policies and programming to promote Economic Equity and support the democratic principle of common social good” and 2) Community Policy including “promoting the fiscal, social, cultural, residential, educational and environmental quality of life for all residents.”

Since 2017, more than 150 Guaranteed Income pilots have launched across the United States. These pilots demonstrate the benefits of providing direct cash payments to individuals and families with the freedom and autonomy to spend their resources in the way that best fits their needs. It also allows for individuals engaging in work outside of paid employment, such as caregiving, to continue that work, as necessary. These programs are in contrast to existing safety net programs that often have punitive and burdensome requirements for participants.

Research from various Guaranteed Income pilots show that [well-designed programs confer many benefits](#), such as:

- [Increasing adults’ participation in the labor force](#);
- [Increasing educational attainment and decreasing involvement with the criminal legal system](#) for children;
- Improving physical and mental health for [older adults](#);
- Enhancing economic security and physical and mental health [for adults in rural areas](#);
- [Decreasing income volatility](#) and boosting financial wellbeing; and
- Boosting [housing](#) and [food security](#).

Finally, AB 165 would limit the capacity of local government to be nimble and flexible to meet their community’s needs. This is important given state leaders’ inaction in boosting the

minimum wage or otherwise ensuring workers and families can make ends meet. For example, in the past two decades, [state leaders have enacted laws to void existing local ordinances and prohibit new ordinances](#) relating to local minimum wages, fair scheduling, project labor agreements, prevailing wage, paid leave, and gig economy work. Assembly Bill 165 is one more attempt to tie the hands of local elected leaders in ensuring the economic security of their community members. Due to this and for the reasons outlined above, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is opposed to this bill.