LWV®

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN
EDUCATION FUND

June 23, 2009

To: All Members of the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly

Re: Oppose amendment to convert the GAB's investigations GPR sum sufficient appropriation to an annual appropriation.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin supported in 2007 the creation of a single state agency responsible for ethics and elections and with the authority and capacity to enforce the law in these areas. We oppose the Senate's amendment to the biennial budget bill which would restrict the Government Accountability Board's ability to mount investigations of government corruption -- particularly if the wrongdoing is happening in the Wisconsin Legislature.

The amendment limits the GAB to spending no more than $31,000 annually on investigations of possible wrongdoing by public officials and requires the GAB to go to the Legislature – the very people who might be under investigation – for any additional funds. To put this in perspective, the GAB has spent a total of $45,000 to hire outside investigators in 11 of the 51 cases the Board has looked into since early last year.

We believe government should function efficiently, economically and effectively. In particular, we support the maintenance of a strong governmental body to monitor and enforce campaign finance laws. This requires an independent Wisconsin Government Accountability Board with both the authority and capacity to conduct investigations.

Following the convictions of five former lawmakers for exploiting the public trust, enforcement was rightly the core element of the law that created the Government Accountability Board. Without adequate funding for investigating authority, the reforms of 2007 cannot achieve the highest degree of integrity in our state government.

We urge you to oppose this amendment, in order to protect GAB's independence and its ability to conduct investigations into potential wrongdoing.

COMMUNITY
SHARES
OF WISCONSIN