To: Assembly and Senate Committees on Education

Re: Statement Opposing Civics Education Bill A.B. 563

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on Assembly Bill (A.B. 563). After extended study, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (LWVWI) believes educational bills should promote equal educational opportunity for every child through an equitable state aid formula while retaining substantial program and personnel responsibilities in the local district.   Based on this position, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin opposes the Assembly bill on civics education (A.B. 563).

Although LWVWI strongly supports civics education at all levels of K-12 schooling, we cannot support this particular bill.   The bill requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to go through the Rule Making Process during which the curriculum and instructional materials could be referred to the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules. Legislators without educational expertise could then review and direct DPI to change its curriculum.   This process is flawed by possible intrusion of unqualified persons making important decisions about curriculum and instruction. The Department of Public Instruction with its current elected Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly, an expert on civics education, should not be subjected to the Rule Making Process.   Furthermore, legislators with educational knowledge and skills already serve on the Wisconsin State Superintendent's Academic Standards Review Council.

LWVWI would like to support a civics education bill that requires instruction at every grade level based on a comprehensive history curriculum including culturally inclusive history. Every student in our state deserves a just, equitable, and quality education. We encourage legislators of both political parties to work together to bring forward a civics education bill that serves the best interest of every student and the interests of all voters in our state.