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**THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS**
of New York State

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:
A.7173 Buchwald/ S.1133 Breslin**

TO: New York State Senate and New State Assembly

DATE: April 24, 2014

SUBJECT: *Concurrent resolution of the Senate and Assembly proposing an amendment to section 7 of article 5 of the constitution, in relation to forfeiture of pension rights or retirement benefits upon conviction of a felony related to public employment.*

The League of Women Voters of New York State supports A.7173/S.1133, which proposes a constitutional amendment that would allow the legislature to propose and adopt a law providing that any state officer or local officer convicted of a felony involving the breach of public trust may be subject to forfeiture of their pension benefits. The League has long felt that the laws of New York State inadequately define, monitor, and discipline unethical behavior in the public sector on the part of public officials. This legislation would amend the constitutional protections on public pensions to permit the legislature to provide both a needed deterrent to corruption and hold accountable public officials who have been convicted of serious crimes involving the breaking of public trust.

It is unconscionable that currently in New York State a public official can accept bribes, steal public funds, or engage in numerous other forms of public corruption and yet still feel secure in the knowledge that even if convicted of these serious crimes, they will inevitably receive a state pension. Current law leaves New Yorkers paying for the pensions of corrupt public officials no matter how devastatingly those officials have undermined the public trust and forsaken their oath of office.

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges support of A.7173/S.1133.