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

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:
Assemblyman Tedisco's Truth in Spending Act**

TO: New York State Assembly
DATE: March 1, 2016
SUBJECT: *An act to amend the state finance law, in relation to enacting the "Truth in Spending Act"*

The League of Women Voters of New York State supports the above referenced legislation which would ensure state funds are used only for the purpose stated in a funding request. Under current law, budget line items which are not specifically itemized can be spent freely without the legislature having to disclose specifics on where the funds will be allocated. This loophole allows legislators to earmark funds for certain projects for their own benefit. Legislators have used this oversight to distribute money to themselves, their friends, and family members. Countless members have used this loophole for their own gain, including former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver who steered state funds in exchange for patient referrals to the private law firm for which he received compensation.

Assemblyman Tedisco's Truth in Spending Act will ensure that state funds cannot be distributed without disclosure and justification. The bill will require that state agencies track the funding they distribute to ensure the funds are being spent in a manner consistent with their designated application. The State Attorney General will assist in monitoring this act by requiring disclosure forms and reviewing the credentials of organizations applying for state funding. The Attorney General will also maintain a separate website to help increase transparency.

New Yorker's deserve to know where and how their tax dollars are being sent. This act will inform the public with greater detail on where public money is being spent and will hold legislators accountable when funds are improperly spent.

For the above reasons, the League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges your support Assemblyman Tedisco's "Truth in Spending Act".