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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

LEGISLATIVE MEMORANDUM

IN SUPPORT OF: **A.420/ Paulin**

TO: Assembly Health Committees
DATE: April 15, 2013

Subject: *Amends the education law, the insurance law and the public health law, in relation to providing for dispensing emergency contraception under certain conditions.*

This legislation will help to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by increasing access to emergency contraception for women in New York State.

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly supports A.420, the “Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act.” A recent federal court ruling has mandated that the FDA end its age restriction on the over the counter (OTC) purchase of Plan B emergency contraception. There is overwhelming medical evidence that Plan B emergency contraception (EC) is safe for all women. Age restrictions on OTC Plan B place undue burdens on women who do not have the necessary proof of age documentation at the time of purchase. EC is a time sensitive drug that can be taken up to 72 hours after unprotected sex, but it is proven to be most effective if administered within the first 24 hours.

The intent of this legislation is to increase access to emergency contraception by:

- ⤴ Allowing women direct and immediate access to emergency contraception from a pharmacist, registered nurse or licensed midwife, using a non-patient specific order written by a licensed medical provider.
- ⤴ Mandating that all insurance policies that cover prescription contraception to cover emergency contraception when provided by a non-patient specific prescription or OTC.
- ⤴ Directing the New York State Department of Health to include information on EC and its safety, efficacy, appropriate use and availability in its wellness education and outreach program.

The League supports this legislation because it would not only reduce the number of abortions in New York, but it will also reduce the cost and health risks associated with pregnancy, childbirth and abortion. Since this drug is time-sensitive this bill is necessary because it allows women to bypass the frequent difficulties encountered when trying to make medical appointments to get a prescription from a health care provider.

The League’s position supports access to quality health care and this legislation meets that criteria.

The League of Women Voters urges your support of A.420.