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

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:
IN SUPPORT OF:
A.5694/ESPAILLAT

TO: ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE
DATE: MARCH 3, 2009

Subject: An act to repeal section 4 of chapter 198 of the laws of 1978, relating to authorizing projects to provide improved and expanded school health services for pre-school and school-age children.

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly supports this legislation that would make the funding for school-based health services permanent. School-based health services offer important primary and preventive health care to preschool and school age children. The League believes that early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. School-based health clinics partially fulfill a need in the delivery of health care services, particularly for children in low income, high-risk communities. The League's goals of health promotion and disease prevention among New Yorkers of all ages are well served by the early intervention and prevention services provided by school-based health clinics.

The permanency of school-based clinics is essential in light of the fact that there are a growing number of low-income children and adolescents whose health care needs are going unmet. Today many parents who are single, or who are in low-paying jobs that provide no health coverage, do not have the time or money to get adequate health care for their children and their numbers are increasing. School-based health services are a cost-effective means by which to serve the health care needs of a tragically underserved population.

Compelling arguments can be made for permanency of school-based health services. Many children lack even the basic health care services of physical examinations, health education and counseling, and could benefit from treatment for acute and episodic illness, immunization, laboratory tests, nutrition and psychological services as well. These are essential services without which children run the risk of failing educationally. Schools with school-based health services have lower rates of absenteeism. Other data supporting the expansion of school-based clinics include evidence that New York City schools with clinics are less likely to have high rates of violent incidents.

The League supports permanent funding of school-based health clinics to create greater access to primary and preventive health care early in a child's life in a convenient and trusted environment when at a time an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. School-based health services promote good physical and mental health, prevent illness leading to disability and hospitalization, and facilitate learning and healthy living.

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges your support for A.5694.