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

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:
S. 248/FUSCHILLO

TO: SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE
DATE: MARCH 3, 2009

Subject: An act to amend the public health law, in relation to prohibiting the sale of flavored cigarettes.

The League of Women Voters of New York State supports this bill that amends Article 13-F of the public health law by adding a new section that prohibits the sale of flavored cigarettes containing natural or artificial substances that causes the cigarette to have a characterizing flavor. Flavors include, but are not limited to, those such as fruit, chocolate, vanilla, mint, cocoa, dessert, alcoholic beverages, herbs, spices and honey, but do not include tobacco, clove, or menthol. Section two of the bill provides that civil penalties shall be imposed for violations of the law.

With new smokers being predominantly children, public health experts believe that children are more likely to choose flavored cigarettes because they mask the harshness and irritation of smoking making flavored cigarettes a step toward mainstream cigarettes. Roswell Park Cancer Institute points to far greater usage of flavored cigarettes by children than adults, with new smokers being overwhelmingly children. Since October 2006 the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, through an agreement with over 40 Attorneys General and the Office of the Attorney General, has ceased distribution of flavored cigarettes nationwide. Without passage of this bill, other manufacturers can attempt to capture this market.

This legislation supports the League's position of promoting better public health and disease prevention.

For the above reasons, the League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges your support of S.248.