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

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:
S. 5686 (Seward)

TO: NYS Senate
DATE: June 8, 2015

Subject: An act to amend the insurance law, in relation to enrollment during Pregnancy. This act requires any insurer or organization offering health insurance contracts to allow the enrollment of an individual who is pregnant and provides that such coverage shall begin on the date of application.

The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly supports the above referenced legislation which provides that pregnancy be added to the list of “qualifying events” that allow one to apply for health coverage from the state’s health exchange at any time of the year.

The League supports this legislation with or without the requirement that the pregnancy be “certified,” but we prefer that there be no “certification” requirement because we think it might cause delays in accessing prenatal care.

Since having a child is already on the list of “qualifying events” that make it permissible to apply for health coverage outside the “open season,” it only makes sense to cover health care for the period of time between becoming pregnant and having a child. Statistics show that early prenatal care pays off in terms of healthier babies and mothers – and it saves money too.

The League of Women Voters believes that everyone should have access to a basic level of healthcare that includes prevention, health promotion, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive healthcare), acute care and mental health treatment. Further, the League of Women Voters of New York State believes that women have a fundamental right to privacy as they make reproductive healthcare decisions, and that their economic status should not limit their opportunity to make those decisions, based on their own personal beliefs and desires.

For the above reasons, the League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges your support of S. 5686.