



The League of Women Voters of New York State
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:

October 29, 2008

For more information contact:

Betsey Swan (518) 956-3855

LEAGUE RELEASES RESULTS OF CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE ON ITS COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FINANCE PROPOSAL

The League of Women Voters of New York State (League) released today candidate responses to a questionnaire developed to gauge support for the comprehensive legislative proposal put forth by the League last June in its Campaign Finance Reform Project. All candidates for state Senate and Assembly received the questionnaire.

Nineteen percent of candidates, including 20% of incumbents and 18% of non-incumbents, completed the questionnaire. Only 4% of unopposed candidates responded. In each house, majority leadership responded at a rate lower than the average (12% in the Senate and 11% in the Assembly), while minority leadership responded at an above-average rate (29% in the Senate and 25% in the Assembly).

The questionnaire and ratings of candidates who returned the questionnaire are attached. Further information, including the League's legislative proposal, the letter sent to candidates, and a breakdown of the responses of all candidates, is available at the League's website at www.lwvny.org under *League Announces Candidate Responses to Campaign Finance Reform Questionnaire*.

"While the number of responses is disappointing to the League," said legislative analyst Betsey Swan, "the voters are the real losers because they have the right to know where candidates stand on this important issue." Ms. Swan further responded, "The League looks forward to fine-tuning its proposal during the next legislative session in light of suggestions from candidates and in consultation with members of the legislature. We see this as an ongoing dialogue that will ultimately move the process forward to the benefit of all New Yorkers."

The League embarked upon its Campaign Finance Reform Project last June in the belief that meaningful reform could not occur without specifics. This session has seen the disintegration of bipartisan discussion and passage of one-house bills in preparation for the election. The proposal contains what the League believes are minimum standards for meaningful reform. It sets contribution caps at the same levels that presidential candidates and U.S. senators must follow. It shuts loopholes that rank Albany's campaign laws among America's weakest. Most importantly, the proposal would provide the independent enforcement and tough penalties needed to deter violations.