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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

NEWS RELEASE

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LEAGUE RELEASES COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FINANCE PROPOSAL LWVNYS Proposal Sets Benchmark for Real Campaign Finance Reform Civic Groups Call For Public Leaders Meeting on Government Reform

The League of Women Voters released today a comprehensive campaign finance reform proposal to set a benchmark for measuring reform legislation. The League was joined by Common Cause and NYPIRG in calling on Governor Paterson to convene a Public Leaders Meeting to discuss campaign finance and ethics reform before the legislative session concludes as scheduled on June 23, 2008.

The Governor released a campaign finance proposal last week that makes a promising start—albeit late, but falls short of real reform, particularly on vigorous independent enforcement. As the Governor knows from his years in the Legislature, it takes much more than proposing a bill to make reform happen. Real leadership requires investing political capital and, for issues like campaign finance reform, holding direct negotiations to enact a meaningful law.

In light of the failure of state leaders to move real reform, the League of Women Voters of NYS unveiled today a comprehensive campaign finance reform proposal to set minimum standards for what qualifies as campaign finance reform in this state. This proposal 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. Critically, the proposal would provide the independent enforcement and tough penalties needed to deter violations and end Albany's blind-eye culture so that campaign finance laws will be fairly and vigorously enforced.

While the groups continue to urge state leaders to enact meaningful campaign finance reform while there is still time, civic groups vowed a concerted effort to ensure voters are well-informed about where candidates stand on real campaign finance reform if the 2008 session ends without enactment of a reform law that meets the minimum standards announced today.

The League called on the leaders to state publicly their positions on the plan's elements and to use the plan as a template for a genuine reform law the Legislature can pass and Governor Paterson can sign before adjournment. If the 2008 session ends this month without real campaign finance reform, the Legislature and Governor Paterson will have failed to deliver the reform New Yorkers voted for in 2006.