



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

**CGA Education Committee
Public Hearing February 28, 2007
Comments Submitted by Katherine Wilson, School Finance Specialist
Bill 1114, AAC Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Education**

As an addendum to my testimony submitted to the committee on February 20, I would like to comment on the phase-out of the **Priority School District Grant** proposed in Bill 1114.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports, in addition to the broad-based grants provided by Education Cost Sharing, targeted measures directed at improving academic achievement in communities with concentrations of disadvantaged children. Priority school districts are just such communities and the Priority School District Grant is just such a measure, providing supplemental dollars for programs like early childhood learning, full-day Kindergarten, smaller class sizes, early reading intervention, after-school, extended school day and building hours, and weekend and summer school.

The governor's budget proposes adding \$5 million to the Priority School District Grant in FY 2008 and another \$19.5 million in FY 2009, but then Bill 1114 would cut the grant by 50% in FY 2011 and terminate it in FY 2012. Particularly in light of the lack of cost indexing in the ECS Foundation proposed by the governor, we do not understand the logic behind eliminating this important additional aid for Connecticut's neediest school districts, and we do not support it. We urge the legislature to make appropriate changes to Bill 1114 so that the Priority School District grant continues.