



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.[®]

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**CGA Energy and Technology Committee
Public Hearing March 4, 2014**

SUPPORT FOR

**SB 135 AAC the Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Education
Technology Investment Account**

**HB 5172 AA Appropriating Funds for the Public, Educational and Governmental
Programming and Education Technology Investment Account**

**Submitted by Pua Ford, Media Issues Specialist
League of Women Voters of Connecticut**

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut appreciates the opportunity today to voice support for proposed bills SB 135 and HB 5172.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that community access television channels must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded, regardless of the provider of TV/video services to Connecticut residents. Government should provide opportunities for citizen participation in decisions regarding community access, or PEG, TV.

We applaud the legislators from both major parties who have submitted bills to restore funds swept from the Public Educational Governmental Programming and Educational Technology Investment Account (PEGPETIA) in the FY 14 and FY 15 Budget. The League has also offered comments to the Appropriations Committee in connection with HB 5030, requesting restoration of PEGPETIA funding for the next fiscal year, noting that the sweeps already have proven harmful to community access television in the current fiscal year.

Half the PEGPETIA funds are intended to provide for capital expenses not otherwise available to community access television organizations after regulation of cable television was relaxed in 2007, and franchise review was no longer required. Without the availability of these funds, community access television would lack the ability to upgrade equipment in this time of fast-changing and very expensive technology. The other half is dedicated to educational technology.

As we hear reports of a surplus projection of over \$500 million in this year's budget, it does not seem unreasonable to ask for less than 1% of that (the \$3.4 million swept in this year) to be returned for its original purpose as put forth in CGS section 16-331cc. Therefore, we request that bill language to the effect of SB 135 and HB 5172 be approved so that necessary budget adjustments can be made before the end of this short session.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer our testimony to the Committee today.