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**Date: December 10, 2013**

**To: Senator Katie Sieben, Representative Steve Simon, and Members of the Senate Elections Subcommittee and House Elections Committee**

**From: Sherri Knuth, Policy and Outreach Manager**

**CC: Gary Goldsmith, Campaign Finance and Disclosure Board**

**Re: Joint Hearing regarding Campaign Finance and Disclosure Board's electronic database and website**

League of Women Voters Minnesota recently published a new report on campaign finance in Minnesota and our recommendations for reform. The report, [The Tip of the Iceberg: How Minnesota Campaign Finance Laws Limit Transparency](#), is attached.

I would like to call your attention to that part of the report that is pertinent to the joint hearing to be held on December 16 regarding the Campaign Finance and Disclosure Board's electronic data and website. Specifically, we point out that the Campaign Finance Board's website is outdated and "does not follow conventional practices that would guide general users to readily search the page for information on campaign contributions and expenditures in the state."

LWV Minnesota recommends that the website be improved and points to the website maintained by the [State of Washington](#). That website enables users to "follow the money," allowing voters to find out who has paid for advertisements seeking to influence their vote and therefore cast an informed vote.

LWV Minnesota recognizes that the Campaign Finance Board has faced limitations in funding that have likely made it difficult to maintain a state-of-the-art website. Thus, the board may require additional funding from the legislature to provide a website designed to meet the interests and needs of voters.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue for voters and the health of our democracy in Minnesota.