



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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In Support of HB706

An Act Relative to the Integration of International Human Rights Standards into the Laws & Policies of the Commonwealth

**Testimony presented to the Judiciary Committee
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**by
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League of Women Voters of Massachusetts**

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has a longstanding position in support of both a federal Equal Rights Amendment and the existing Massachusetts ERA ratified by the voters in 1976. The League was an active player in that campaign and in the work that followed to make the laws of the Commonwealth gender neutral.

There were about 150 places in the MGL that treated men and women differently. It took four years to eliminate the gender specific language in all of these with the exception of one. That one still remains as a blemish and permits the insurance industry to classify people on the basis of gender in state regulated policies. As some of you know there has been a steady campaign for over 25 years to remedy this. The fact that it still remains in the MGL is testimony to the insurance industry lobby.

Since the Massachusetts ERA has eliminated virtually all explicit discrimination in the MGL we are here today to talk about the kinds of implicit discrimination that still exists and the kinds of differential impact that has on women and men of all races and religions in our social fabric. HB706 provides for a way to look at these problems systematically and think about ways to solve them for the benefit of everyone.

The state and the national League of Women Voters recognizes the interconnectedness of women's issues globally and is eager to see HB706 passed so that Massachusetts can be part of this national and international work to eradicate discrimination based on gender, race and nationality. We urge the Judiciary Committee to give HB706 a favorable report.