



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

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TO: The Honorable Senator Earle McCormick and
The Honorable Representative Adam Goode, Co-Chairs,
The Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

DATE: April 23, 2015

RE: LD 409 An Act To Lower the Individual Income Tax Incrementally to Zero

My name is Helen Hanlon. I am a resident of Winthrop. I am here today as a volunteer member of the League of Women Voters' Advocacy Committee to testify *Against* LD 409, An Act To Lower the Individual Income Tax Incrementally to Zero.

The League believes that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation to support Maine citizens with the services we have deemed important and appropriate for our State. A system without income tax disenfranchises the poor, elderly, and disabled by cutting programs, services, and even access to government. Taxation should not be viewed as taking or giving but should be seen as a way to create the strongest, best society for all citizens. Widely viewed as a duty or an obligation, paying taxes is another way we participate in our political process. It is the way we fund our democratic society. Taxes are an investment in our shared civic enterprise – the one we have now and the one we want for our children.

The League of Women Voters of Maine has a long and involved history with the State income tax. In the 1960's we undertook a multi-year study of taxation and the problem of increasing the State's revenue. We came to the conclusion that an income tax was the fairest and best way to fund the work of our State and support the people of Maine. In the words of Dorothy Dunton, a League leader from Auburn, the income tax places "the burden where it belongs on those most able to pay."ⁱ

The implementation of an income tax was supported by members of both parties when it passed in the 1960's. And, while there was an effort to repeal it in the years just after it passed, many community groups supported it. In 1971, The Maine Municipal Association urged "all those who own property to consider the impact of such a loss in revenue would have on their town or city."ⁱⁱ We urge you to consider this again today.

We respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to LD 409. Thank you for your attention.

ⁱ Bangor Daily News, February 19, 1976

ⁱⁱ Bangor Daily News, November 2, 1971