

Thank you Chairman McCaffrey and members of the Committee.
My name is Jane Koster. I am president of the League of Women Voters of RI representing the League.

Since 2009, the League has urged passage of a bill that would place the General Assembly under the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission.

Today we come in support of Senate Resolution 56 and urge the committee to support this bill.

When we vote for a candidate we are voting for an honest and informed representative to promote open and honest government and to represent all voters honestly. We believe that the majority of our representatives are that type of government official. We know that this is not always the case, however.

This year, with the recent corruption conviction of the previous Speaker of the House, the national image of Rhode Island as a place to live and do business is tarnished. When the Governor and Legislature are fighting to get more businesses to locate here, nothing could help our image more than to pass this ethics amendment. It would show we are serious about offering all businesses locating here a level playing field.

The voters this time need to be heard and we believe our General Assembly is ready to do just this.

Let's allow our Secretary of State Gorbea to place this question on the 2016 General Election ballot. Let the Voters decide.

Thousands of RI public officials are subject to administrative oversight as that of the Ethics Commission. Let's put the General Assembly under the same oversight as these public officials.

The League of Women Voters strongly urges you to support Senate bill 56 which would amend the Constitution to give the Ethics Commission the power to adjudicate all alleged violations in the Legislature.

Thank you Chairman Keable and committee members.

