April 25, 2017

The Honorable Ed Hernandez, O.D.
Chair, Committee on Health
California State Senate
P.O. Box 942848
Sacramento, CA 94248-0001

Re: SB 562 (Lara and Atkins)—Support in Concept

Dear Senator Hernandez:

The League of Women Voters of California wishes to inform you that it supports in concept SB 562 (Lara and Atkins).

The LWVC has a long history of support for single payer legislation in California. SB 562 contains the principles of single payer health care embodied in prior legislation. We are supporting it in concept pending a report of a financial study that is expected in May and will inform amendments describing the financing plan.

The League of Women Voters of the United States has held a position since 1993 stating that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents. This bill, if enacted, would provide such a health care system to all California residents.

Even with the positive impact of the Affordable Care Act, nearly 3 million Californians do not have coverage currently. That number is likely to increase substantially now that the ACA is under attack nationally. California has done an exemplary job of implementing both the exchange and the Medi-Cal expansion under ACA, but assuming full responsibility for continuing its provisions if the current level of federal support were diminished is not likely to be a sustainable course of action.

Californians, as individuals, employers, and taxpayers have experienced a rise in costs of health care and health care coverage in recent years, including rising premiums, deductibles, and copays, as well as restricted networks and benefit packages and high out-of-network charges. Many Californians find themselves “underinsured” as a result of these factors.

Single payer programs have been shown in repeated research, including the Lewin study in 2005 in California, to be efficient and to save money for government, business, and individuals. Similar systems are used in industrialized nations around the world and spend substantially less per capita on health care than does the United States, while providing care to all their residents, frequently with better outcomes.

This bill would establish a system that serves all California residents with comprehensive benefits, full choice of provider and would be affordable to all with individual costs based on ability to pay.

For these reasons, the LWVC supports SB 562 in concept.

Sincerely,

Helen L. Hutchison
President

cc: Senator Ricardo Lara
     Senator Toni Atkins