April 15, 2021

To:　　　　　Members of the U.S. Senate

From:　　　　Virginia Kase, Chief Executive Officer

Subject:　　　Support the For the People Act (S1) in the Senate

Dear Senator:

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) urges you to strongly support the *For the People Act* (S1), the transformational democracy reform package that would return power to everyday Americans. This pro-democracy legislation passed in the House of Representatives on March 3, sending a strong message that American voting rights must be protected. We urge you to join your colleagues in the House and support this widely popular bill to strengthen our democracy.

Throughout our 100+ year history, the League of Women Voters has worked to "level the playing field" of our election system by registering new citizens to vote, fighting unfair district maps in court, and advocating in Congress for fair elections. The 2020 election underscores the urgent need for transformational democracy reform to combat unprecedented voter suppression, historic levels of dark money, and rampant ethical abuses by special interest groups. This sweeping bill, the *For the People Act*, would address many of these problems and rises to the challenge of strengthening our democracy.

The *For the People Act* aligns with many of the League's long-held positions. In particular, LWVUS is advocating for the following essential elements of the bill:

- **Expanding voter registration:** We must upgrade our voter registration process through the expansion of automatic voter registration, online voter registration, and same day registration. In this past election, we saw how these provisions increased voter turnout that benefitted both parties. The League has seen firsthand the problems with our election system and how it discourages new voter registration. S1 will modernize voter registration processes and remove these barriers.

- **Returning citizens' voting rights:** We must restore voting rights to returning citizens. In the 2020 election, over 5 million individuals were kept from the ballot box due to a previous conviction or an inability to pay the fines accrued while imprisoned. This legislation will restore the voting rights of returning citizens. The *For the People Act* ensures that if an individual has completed their sentence then

they become eligible to vote in all federal elections.

- **Increasing voter participation:** We have seen the process of voting become more challenging, especially for women and communities of color. In recent elections, voters have faced a variety of obstacles, including but not limited to reduced polling places, long lines, strict voter identification requirements, and wrongful purges of voter rolls. S1 expands voting rights protections and reforms that will make our elections more accessible, yield increased turnout, and ultimately elevate the voice of all Americans. The policies in S1 have been successfully implemented at the state level for decades and have strong bipartisan support.

- **Implementing fair redistricting:** It is time to end gerrymandering once and for all so that voters select their elected officials – not the other way around. Across the country, in legislatures, in courts, and on the ballot, the League has fought against efforts to draw unfair election maps to keep power in the hands of the powerful. Gerrymandering silences the voters and residents of disputed districts, who, instead of electing officials to represent their interests, are selected by politicians working to serve themselves. S1 will establish clear rules around state redistricting processes so that maps can be drawn fairly. These provisions, combined with the restoration of the *Voting Rights Act*, will ensure fair and equal representation for all people across the country.

We understand the importance of seizing this historic opportunity to repair our political system by **moving immediately on this single package of comprehensive democracy reforms, S1**. We stand ready to work with you to achieve this critically important outcome.

Sincerely,

Virginia Kase