

Presentation Senate Select Committee
On K-12 Education Funding
League of Women Voters of SC

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee with regard to the continuation and possible expansion of 4K programs for at-risk children in SC.

The LWV has long held positions that support education in general and specifically early childhood education. Through the League's studies we know education is the basis for democracy and the maintaining of productive lives for all citizens. Education benefits the public good. Everyone in the country and in our state gains from a better educated people. Businesses gain from a better educated workforce. We know also that education has an effect on our ability to adequately defend and protect our country. Our general position states: "Support of public state-supported education at all levels which is effective, equitable and accountable."

We empathize with the difficult decisions that face each of you in governing our state in these hard economic times. We certainly recognize that prioritizing the many needs of our state are before you. As you evaluate these priorities, we strongly encourage you to continue to keep funding for 4K high on this list. As the LWV sees it, education is not simply an expenditure; it is a long term investment that prepares the next generation. Internationally, we see this investment being made every day in emerging world powers. We live in a knowledge-based, global society. The question looming before South Carolina officials and citizens is are we willing to make the necessary investments, financial and otherwise, that will give us a place in this society?

There is a critical need for all of us to look at the education of our children as our responsibility – we believe that we do not have failing schools, but a failing citizenry. The LWV will continue to share our positions as we believe that we, as an organization, have a responsibility to keep our citizens informed, just as we believe that all of us have a responsibility to share in the education of our children.

To invest in our children and prepare them for further learning, preparation must begin at age zero and continue until they enter our public K-12 system. Education is not a service, it is an absolute necessity.

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