



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Revenue In support of S.1474/H.2698 –
An Act Relative to Regional Transportation Ballot Initiatives
By Robin Roberge, LWVMA Transportation Specialist
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) supports “a statewide public transportation service, accessible to all, that provides access to jobs, housing, and services while creating minimum disruption of the environment; public monies allocated flexibly to meet public transportation needs.”¹

The LWVMA also believes “Transportation funding should come from all levels of government, but regional and local levels should have maximum flexibility to select modes and projects on which to spend allocated funds.”²

We specifically ask for your support in the passing of S.1474/H.2698. Passage and usage will enable a municipality or a group of municipalities to raise additional local money for transportation projects via ballot initiatives, giving voters a more direct role in the process and also showing a clearer correlation between funds being raised and the project(s) for which those funds are used.

Regional ballot initiatives are regularly used to finance transportation investments in states all across the country including California, Colorado, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, Idaho, Ohio, South Carolina, and Louisiana. These initiatives have high rates of passage (70-80%) and can be a key mechanism to fund both operations and capital projects for transportation. This legislation would give municipalities both more control of and more of a stake in the projects in their region.

RESULTS OF POLLING MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS

MassINC, which has advocated allowing local and regional ballot initiatives to fund transportation, has found little opposition in polls in both 2012 and 2013. In September 2012, 73 percent strongly or somewhat agreed that “the state should allow the residents of each region to hold a vote to raise taxes on themselves to pay for projects they care about.” In February 2013, 75 percent strongly or somewhat supported the idea of “giving cities and towns and regional planning agencies the authority to place transportation funding measures for their specific area on the ballot for voters to approve or reject.”

The League of Women Voters requests a positive vote on these bills and passage in the General Court.

Thank you for your consideration

¹ <https://lwwma.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Where-We-Stand.pdf> pg. 54

² *ibid*