

Testimony on HB 9, Public Records Law
Before the Senate Committee on Judiciary – Civil Justice
The Honorable David Goodman, Chair
By Ann Henkener, LWVO State Government Specialist

On March 2, 2005, the Ohio League of Women Voters testified in support of HB 9 before the House Civil and Commercial Law Committee. One of the League's basic principles is the informed participation of citizens in government, which of course requires that government records and meetings be open to public view. We continue to support the additional training required by the bill, and the assistance an ombudsman could provide in facilitating resolution of disputes about obtaining public records.

The League supports the amendment that would require public disclosure of work papers stemming from an audit by a private audit firm on behalf of the State Auditor. The League does not support the amendment that would allow a holder of a permit to carry a concealed weapon to opt out of a requirement that that person's identity be made known to a journalist upon request.

The League urges the Senate to proceed quickly with this bill. It contains many important provisions that will help Ohioans get access to information about their government. To the extent controversial amendments might delay enacting important and non-controversial parts of the bill, those controversial amendments should be left for another day. With those caveats, the League would urge the enactment of HB 9.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.