THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SEATTLE

8 April 2008

King County Charter Review Commission
701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3210
Seattle, Washington 98104

Co-chairs Lois North and Mike Lowery and Commission Members,

The League of Women Voters of Seattle and the League of Women Voters of King County South *support a Home Rule Charter free of statutory law.* We believe that *King County Metropolitan Government should have public involvement as a core value.* We commend you for your participation in this Charter review process. We would like to submit the following comments on the proposed amendments.

Charter Amendment by Citizen Initiative

- The Leagues of King County support measures that *provide ways for citizens to amend the charter.*

Council Action on Charter Review Recommendations

- We have a long-standing position that *Charter Review recommendations to the council should be placed automatically on the ballot.* This position was developed in response to the concern shared by the commission that the County Council ignores amendments. We support this amendment that requires the Council to act on recommendations as a possible solution to the Council's past "pick and choose" approach to the commissions amendments.

Regional Committees

- The League *supports a countywide policy making body with legal authority to establish policy for functions which require area wide solutions.* We understand quite well the importance of regional planning and governance for some of our most important issues. We support efforts of the Commission to enhance the effectiveness of these committees.

Open Space Protection

- The League Women Voters of Washington supports establishing *priorities for open space that are based upon the character and needs of the population.* The Leagues of King County support the amendment providing additional protection over open space land owned by the county acquired for their high conservation value.

Serving the Greater Seattle Area
1620 18th Avenue, Suite 101 • Seattle, WA 98122
Phone: (206) 329-4848 • Fax: (206) 329-1273
Email: info@seattlelwv.org • Web: www.seattlelwv.org

Anti-Discrimination

- The League believes that *all levels of government share the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability.* We support adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the classes protected from discrimination.

Qualifications for Assessor and/or Elections Director

- We also support *a system of clearly fixed responsibilities* and we believe *jobs requiring technical skills should be appointed.* Since the Office of Assessor and/or Director of Elections may become an elected position before the next Charter Review, we support the amendment that minimal qualifications be required for this increasingly technical position as they are for Sheriff.

Charter Review Commission Appointment/Confirmation Process

- We support the Charter Review Process but we agree there must be a *clear, consistent and open process for appointing and confirming the Review Commission members.*

New Commitments to Unincorporated Area Residents

- We commend you for acknowledging the concerns raised by the unincorporated areas residents regarding representation. We support the changes made to the preamble .

Amendments on which we are taking no position

- Sheriff's Office and Collective Bargaining, , Budget Timeline, Elections Division Deadlines, Transitory Provisions and Budget Allotment Requirements

Issue of concern

- In light of the recent campaign financing reform at every level of government recommended with the passage of ESSB 5278 by the state legislature, *we recommend that the commission address public funding of campaigns for King County office during this review session.* We believe the commission has the opportunity to influence this important reform process within King County.

Once again we thank you for your time and efforts participating in this process and we applaud you for your accomplishments.

Respectfully,

Denise D. Smith, President
League of Women Voter of Seattle

Becky Cox, President
League of Women Voters King County South