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February 19, 2019

To: Senate Education and Workforce Committee

From: Liz Tentarelli, president, League of Women Voters NH LWVNewHampshire@gmail.com

Re: SB 280-FN-LOCAL Education Funding

The League of Women Voters NH has a position in support of the state of New Hampshire funding the cost of an "adequate education" as ordered by the courts. Thus **we support raising the ADMR amount to \$7,500**, a realistic figure in light of the actual average cost of education around the state.

Where we have a problem is using state funds, no matter whether the proposed \$7,500 or the current \$3,636, to pay for religious schools or to go to families who choose to do unsupervised home education. Our public schools may not be working as we would wish for every child, but it is not in the interests of improving our public schools to give scarce state moneys to alternative education systems. **We oppose the rest of the bill.**

The so-called Croydon bill of the past session was a common sense way to provide schooling to students in small towns that did not have the full complement of grades in their own public school districts. The bill wisely limited using state money for tuitioning students to other schools to other public schools or non-sectarian private schools. The bill recognized that a private kindergarten just a few miles away made more sense pedagogically, socially, and fiscally than transporting students many miles to a public school with seats available.

I would suggest that if this committee were to investigate how many school districts fall under the Croydon bill they would probably not find a religious school to be the only logical tuitioning choice.

Please keep in mind the separation of church and state in our constitution and **amend SB280 to go back to the wording in the Croydon legislation.**

As for **funding home education at \$7,500 per child**, I can't figure out where that money is going. Page 1 lines 18 to 22 lumps home educated pupils with those who attend approved schools, but makes no mention of where that funding goes in the case of the home-schooled child. Is it to the school district that accepts home educated pupils for some classes or extra-curricular activities? Does it go to the parents, who under current NH law are not required to submit curriculum plans or assessments to any entity? That would be just a give-away with no assurance of education actually happening or costing \$7,500. If state money is to go to home education, then home educators must agree to oversight and fiscal accounting. **Until that is done, drop the financial incentive to parents to pull their children from the public schools.**
