To: Members of the Joint Committee on Finance

Date: December 3, 2018

Re: December 2018 Extraordinary Session Bills

The League of Women Voters of Dane County believes that the legislature must be responsible to the citizens of Wisconsin, and that its leaders, committees, and members represent the state as a whole, as well as their own districts. We believe in the system of checks and balances that ensures no single branch of government becomes so powerful that it can act without regard for the well-being of all Wisconsin residents. We also believe in open, transparent government, so that residents can understand what the legislature proposes and are given opportunity for input; ultimately, we believe in the right of citizens to change the government leaders and legislators through fair and open access to the vote. We expect all parties to assist in the orderly transition of one government to the next.

We have just had an election in Wisconsin, in which the voters changed the leaders in the Executive Branch of the government. We should not be here, today, at a hastily called meeting of the Joint Committee of Finance, to discuss ways in which the legislature can usurp state powers that have largely been the prerogative of the Executive Branch. Nor should we be discussing complex bills that were drafted so hurriedly that the Legislative Reference Bureau did not have the time to provide thorough descriptions of the proposed bills. Bills drafted in secret and in haste are more likely to result in bad law.

But we are here discussing these bills, even though we all know they are likely to result in increased inefficiency, haphazard implementation and look very much like an effort to repudiate the will of the voters.

The League of Women Voters of Dane County opposes AB 1071 in its entirety, on the grounds that it will mostly increase confusion, reduce turnout and exceed the capacity of the election system to provide for secure, accessible elections.

The League of Women Voters of Dane County opposes AB 1070, 1072 and 1073 on the grounds that they disrupt the system of checks and balances on which we rely to ensure that no branch of the government becomes overweening. Among the most shocking provisions of AB 1070 is the creation of s. 13.124, which mandates full payment by tax-payers of costs of legal representation from sources beyond the Department of Justice, for any member of the Assembly or Senate, or any staff member thereof, who is sued for acts or allegations that are "arguably within the scope" of the

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individual's duties. In other words, no one can be held accountable for efforts to subvert representative government, no matter how reckless.

The League of Women Voters of Dane County has grave concerns about AB 1069, on the grounds that it may tend to undercut the principles of “complete streets,” which provide for consideration of all forms and consumers of transportation, including cars, trucks, buses, intercity transit and pedestrians.

If it is so important for the good of the state and its residents to pass these bills, the League of Women Voters of Dane County believes this body should take them up using standard procedures, and after the people’s chosen leaders have taken office in January.

Thank you for your consideration,

Aileen Nettleton, President League of Women Voters of Dane County