



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

February 11, 2025

To: [Senator Prozanski](#), Chair, [Senate Committee On Judiciary](#)

Re: [SB 473](#) – Creates a crime to threaten a public official – **SUPPORT**

The League supports SB 473, which creates a crime of threatening a public official. We believe that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know. We believe in promoting civil discourse through action and education for all government bodies, staff, and citizens for the purpose of improved public policy decisions and processes. Civil discourse means, at a minimum, mutually respectful, courteous, constructive, and orderly communication.

The League has testified to protect our elections officials, urging expanding protection to cover elected officials candidates running for office. Our [testimony](#) for [HB 4144](#) Enrolled (2022) recommended expanding harassment protection to: candidates, lawful protesters, public servants, and volunteers. The privacy protection described in HB 4144 included confidentiality for residential addresses, required to process candidates' filing for office. Several noted wanting to protect their families from intimidating visitors. See "Public servant" in ORS 244.020: A public official, advisor, consultant or assistant at the request or direction of the state, person nominated, elected or appointed although not yet occupying the position; and Jurors.

We also recommend incorporating doxxing, see [our testimony](#) for [HB 3047](#) Enrolled (2021), Section I (1) (c). It is sadly reasonable to fear that online content, including mis-, dis-, or mal-information and deep fakes, can inspire the fear of violence that is described in this bill. As we recommended above, for HB 4144, it is reasonable to protect "public officials" from intimidation, as cited in SB 473.

In the 1950s, the League worked courageously to protect fundamental rights and individual liberties against the threats of the McCarthy era. In 2005, the League launched Openness in Government: Looking for the Sunshine, a project to broaden public awareness about the issues involved in, and the threats related to, accountability and transparency in government. Our 1976 Convention incorporated the League's individual liberties principle into the national program, authorizing the League to act against major threats to basic constitutional rights. Subsequent Conventions reaffirmed that commitment and, in 1982, the LWVUS Board authorized a specific position statement on individual liberties.

We urge your support for SB 473.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

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