



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN
EDUCATION FUND**

122 State Street, #201A
Madison, WI 53703-2500

Phone: (608) 256-0827
Fax: (608) 256-1761

<http://www.lwwwi.org>
lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org

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To: Assembly Committee on Judiciary and Ethics

Re: Support of Assembly Bill 333

Protecting the citizens' right to know is a core value of the League of Women Voters. It is a prerequisite to our mission of encouraging informed and active participation in government. Without informed participation, we do not have a democratic system.

Our ability to be informed citizens, in most cases, relies on the ability of the news media to investigate issues and events. Reporters, in turn, rely on their sources.

For the most part, we expect the media to identify their sources, and reporters are well aware that citing anonymous sources lessens the credibility of their assertions. However, occasionally sources insist on anonymity for the protection of their jobs or their personal safety. Sometimes this is the only way to get an important story out to the public.

AB 333 prohibits any person other than a court from issuing a subpoena compelling a news person to testify or produce information about the identity of a source, information that could lead to such identity, information obtained from a confidential source or any other information obtained by a reporter in pursuing a story. This is an important protection for both the whistleblower and the reporter. But it is bigger than that. It also protects every citizen's right to be informed.

This legislation does that while also providing for those rare cases where confidential information may be needed for a criminal or civil investigation. AB 333 allows a court to issue a subpoena to compel a reporter to identify an anonymous source, but only if the needed information is not obtainable from any other source and there is an overwhelming public interest at stake.

We urge you to recommend passage of AB 333. Thank you.