



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF TEXAS

**Testimony
Senate Education Committee
SB 1000
March 27, 2007**

League of Women Voters of –Texas (LWV-TX) is a nonpartisan, political organization with 32 local Leagues across the state. The League of Women Voters of Texas **opposes SB 1000**, a voucher bill for students with autism. This bill would authorize public funds for non-governmental special education programs for children with autism, but would not meet the needs of all children with autism. The bill would also take away public funds by allowing the transfer of funds from public schools to nongovernmental community based establishments that provides for the educational needs of children with autism. The estimated cost taken from public schools to private schools at \$14,000 per student is \$214, 948, 000. The actual cost may be higher and could result in decreased funding for children with autism still attending public schools and other special education programs.

The LWV-TX position is there should be a sufficient level of state support to public schools to ensure that all Texas children receive a high level of education and equal access to quality education. **SB 1000** does not guarantee that these criteria can be met.

Not all children under **SB 1000** would be able to take advantage of this program, since not all would be accepted into th

ese special programs. Other problems with this bill are that some families would have difficulty with transportation to the school, in rural areas these special programs are not always available and not all parents would be able to afford the cost beyond what a voucher would cover. The quality of the education is also questioned Teachers in private schools are not required to meet the special education certification that is required for public school teachers.

Thank you for your consideration in hearing the LWV-TX opposition to **SB 1000**. Adequate funding for public school education is vital for all Texas children.