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A WIN FOR OHIO VOTERS
State Agrees to Make Changes in Ohio's Electoral Process

Columbus, OH -- The League of Women Voters of Ohio, the League of Women Voters of Toledo-Lucas County, and a dozen Ohio citizens reached a historic agreement with the State of Ohio to fix defects in the way Ohio conducts its elections.

“Ohio voters won a great victory today with the settlement of this case which was about giving all eligible Ohio voters the chance to vote in a fair election and have their votes counted, said Meg G. Flack, president of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. “Careful planning and uniform execution of elections was our goal and we believe this agreement achieves that.”

The agreement, calling for new institutional procedures in the electoral process, settles a lawsuit filed in 2005 that alleged that then Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, Governor Bob Taft and their predecessors had failed to protect the fundamental rights of eligible Ohio voters to cast a meaningful ballot, as required by the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. This landmark agreement is binding on the state to provide for uniformity and consistency in Ohio election procedures so that the opportunity to vote can be enjoyed equally by all Ohio citizens. [See the details of the agreement here.](#)

“The lawsuit was not about overturning election results, it was about fixing a broken election system that was preventing people from having their votes counted,” said Peg Hull Smith, spokesperson and past president of the League of Women Voters of Toledo-Lucas County.

“The agreement reached represents the best interests of Ohio voters and guarantees careful planning, evaluation and oversight of the process that will provide greater access to the election process. It is our hope that it restores public confidence in our elections process,” explains Peg Rosenfield, elections specialist for the Ohio League of Women Voters.

“We sought to move the Ohio election system beyond the disturbing images from past elections ingrained in our consciousness and to vindicate the fundamental right to vote of every Ohio citizen,” stated Jon Greenbaum, legal director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and part of

the legal team. “This settlement reflects the efforts of many over the past four years to make the system work for all voters.”

“This settlement not only improves elections for Ohio, but sets a national precedent that can be a model for other states seeking greater uniformity, transparency and efficiency in election administration,” said Brenda Wright, director of the Democracy Program at Demos and one of the counsels for the plaintiffs.

“The Ohio League has done great work on behalf of Ohio citizens to create a more fair, just and open elections system,” stated Mary G. Wilson, national President of the League of Women Voters. “We are pleased with the results in Ohio and remain committed to breaking down the remaining barriers to voting around the country.”

“Voters can be encouraged by today’s agreement that state election officials share our vision of an effective system that protects their rights and grants them access to a smooth election experience,” concluded Flack. “This is a great victory for the citizens of Ohio and one that will assure that the state consistently provides and implements the most efficient election system.”

Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner stated, “We are pleased to see this matter resolved for the people of the State of Ohio. The lawsuit represents concern over years of practices in election administration that have been addressed through improving and making more uniform and accountable procedures that affect Ohioans' rights to vote. This lawsuit was one of 21 pending matters of litigation inherited by my administration in January 2007. We are confident that this settlement will be a springboard for Ohioans to see a new day in continued smooth elections in which Ohio voters participate in record numbers and in which Ohio and the nation have confidence.”

The plaintiffs were represented by the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Demos and the law firms of Proskauer Rose LLP, Arnold & Porter LLP and Connelly, Jackson & Collier LLP, along with the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area and People for the American Way Foundation.

About League of Women Voters Ohio

The League of Women Voters Ohio is located in Columbus, Ohio and has 33 local affiliate organizations around the state. The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage informed and active participation in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. For more information, go to www.lwvohio.org

About the Lawyers' Committee

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCRUL), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, was formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. The principal mission of the Lawyers' Committee is to secure, through the rule of law, equal justice under law, particularly in the areas of fair housing and fair lending, community development, employment discrimination, voting, education and environmental justice. For more information about the LCCRUL, visit www.lawyerscommittee.org.

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