

LWVAL Testimony on HB109 to the House Constitution and Elections Committee, Jan. 25, 8:00 am, Capitol Auditorium

LWVAL welcomes this Committee's hearing on HB109. We commend Rep. Newton, Senator Little and the Committee for bringing this bill forward.

The League of Women Voters of Alabama has supported Constitutional Reform since our study from 1967 to 1973 convinced us that the 1901 Constitution is the chief barrier to good government and progress in Alabama. In 2001-02, we reviewed, restated and reaffirmed our support of constitutional reform and a citizens' convention to rewrite the constitution. In our democracy, it is the people's job to decide the fundamental rules and principles that guide their government.

We believe the Alabama Constitution should protect the people in the exercise of their civil liberties and provide a framework for government, broadly defining authorities, responsibilities, and relationships between branches of state government and between state and local governments. It should contain neither statutory law nor restrictive details that necessitate continual amendment

The findings contained in Section 1. of HB109 lay out compelling reasons for revising the Alabama Constitution. As Sub-section 11 says: The 1901 Constitution is in "urgent need of a fresh and open reexamination and revision in a sound public convention process to assure maximum public voices and broad participation . . ."

We say to the Committee: The time is now. Let's get on with asking Alabama Citizens if our state's Constitution should be rewritten.

The grassroots must remain strong, committed and active in this effort. The League of Women Voters pledges its best efforts to encourage informed and effective participation of Alabama citizens in this undertaking.