

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
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MEETING DATE: July 31, 2012

AGENDA ITEM: Proposed Multnomah County Library District

FOR: XX AGAINST:

NAME: Mary McWilliams, League of Women Voters of Portland

CONTACT INFORMATION (optional):

ADDRESS: 310 SW 4th Ave., room 520

CITY/STATE/ZIP: Portland, OR

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ATTENDING TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2012

****** LETTER ATTACHED ******



The League of Women Voters of Portland

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Proposed Library District Public Hearing Multnomah County Commission July 31, 2012

The Leagues of Women Voters of Portland and of East Multnomah County support a public library system that upholds the principles of intellectual freedom and the public's right to know. We support the library as a basic community service with an assured, stable and adequate source of funding.

The Leagues urge you to refer creation of the library district to the November ballot. Voters should be given the opportunity to approve a district with a permanent rate that will provide funding sufficient to support all library needs. The current practice of relying on temporary local option property tax levies for a major portion of the system's budget is unacceptable, especially in light of the overwhelming support voters demonstrated for their libraries during the May election.

We acknowledge the impact a new library district will have on local taxing jurisdictions and understand their concern. Rather than objecting to creating a stable source of funding for our libraries, however, the League encourages elected officials to consider calling for a statewide conversation about the property tax system. The current debate about how to fund our libraries is only one indication that there is room for improvement.

Again, we fully support referring the library district to the November ballot. Thank you for considering our comments.