

**Testimony**  
**House Public Health Hearing**  
**SB 308 and HB 856**  
**May 14, 2007**

The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX), a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWV-TX supports **SB 308** and companion bill **HB 856**, to provide disease control programs to reduce the risk of certain communicable diseases. This bill would allow local public health authority and other local entities charged with protecting the public health to establish a program to provide anonymous exchange of used hypodermic needles and syringes to reduce the risk of hepatitis B, hepatitis C, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other blood-borne diseases. The programs to offer education on transmission and prevention of blood-borne diseases, assistance in providing health-related services to include substance abuse treatment and blood-borne disease testing are sound public health preventive disease programs.

SB 308 and HB 856 supports the LWV-TX position that considers substance abuse a public health issue. LWV-TX further supports educational programs on the risk of communicable blood-borne disease, the risk to health from substance abuse, treatment for substance abuse users and providing for sterile needle and syringe programs to reduce the risk of blood-borne diseases. The holistic approach outlined in these bills will benefit the health and productivity of the recipients of the programs, be a cost savings for health care, and benefit the public at large in reducing the risk of blood-borne diseases.

Thank you for consideration in supporting SB 308 and HB 856 to provide preventive public health programs to a population at risk.