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League of Women Voters of Wisconsin: Opposes election security funding allocated to non-security functions in the Governor's budget proposal for the Wisconsin Elections Commission

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Election security is a top concern for the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, as well as the public. While we applaud the Governor's office for supporting an overall increase in expenditure authority for the Wisconsin Elections Commission, we are concerned about the Governor's proposal to take money from federal election security funding to pay for state voter mailings, especially those targeting unregistered voters. Election security funding should be used only for efforts related to election security and nothing else.

According to the Wisconsin Elections Commissions' March 2019 board meeting open session materials, $371,300 of HAVA Election Security funds from the federal government would be used for portions of the ERIC program and its mailings. ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center) program sends postcards to unregistered voters about how to vote, and helps remove people that have died, moved or are no longer eligible to vote from our voter rolls. ERIC has bipartisan

support, garnering the support of clerks, elections officials and voter advocacy groups like the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. As more states join ERIC (which now totals 26, including Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois), the program becomes even more effective because more states are sharing data about individuals moving and registering in their state. The Governor's proposals such as automatic registration will help unregistered voters participate in the voting process, but does not replace important programs like ERIC mailings.

Wisconsin has been a top target for voter database attacks. Instead of using the budget to address a long term solution to funding election security, the Governor's office has done the opposite and proposed using existing, temporary funding for election security to fund other necessary election projects. For the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin it is not an either/or problem. Rather we must fully fund all aspects of our election system, including database maintenance, election security, and efforts to educate and register all voters. We encourage the Wisconsin Elections Commission, Governor Evers and the Legislature to work together to fund and protect our election system.