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Proposed Lame-Duck Session of the Wisconsin Legislature

MADISON, WI –The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has long held that the legislature must be responsible to the citizens. Its leaders, committees, and members should represent the state as a whole as well as their own districts. It should make decisions that meet state needs and reconcile conflicting interests and priorities. Legislators should not act in their own partisan interest.

Legislative leadership has announced that a lame-duck session will be held next week, with hearings on Monday, Dec. 3 and a vote potentially on Tuesday, Dec. 4. Yet, when this was announced midday on Friday, the bills themselves were still not available to the public.

If there must be a lame-duck session, it should not be rushed. The proposed legislation should be available for all to see and respond to. Secrecy and fast-tracking are indications of a partisan power grab.

We hope the bills that are introduced will be positive reforms offered in the interest of the people rather than in partisan reaction to the results of an election. We add the following comments about some of the matters that are purported to be covered in the session:

- The League supports a healthy system of checks and balances among the three branches of government. We will be watching for any proposals that violate that principle.
- The League strongly opposes any proposal to move the presidential primary to a date between the February and April elections in 2020. This option would cause voter confusion, increase election official fatigue, waste millions of tax dollars, and possibly have disastrous consequences if a recount is needed between elections.
- We support having maximum opportunities for Wisconsin citizens to obtain a ballot and vote, including opportunities for absentee and early voting.
- We support the protections in the federal Affordable Care Act for persons with preexisting conditions. It is fine to add a similar provision to state law, but it is unneeded if we preserve the ACA.
- We opposed the current policy imposing work requirements for some recipients of BadgerCare and we would not support this being written into the statutes.

In the long run we expect our state leaders to work together to carry out a smooth transition of power and serve the people of Wisconsin.