

12/2024 This internal document came to us in an email from an LWVUS Legislative Policy Coordinator. We include it here with two goals: 1) to model the use of League positions in deciding which policies or legislation to champion or oppose (see highlighting), and 2) to make our messaging more consistent (and perhaps compelling), even as in this case, when speaking on one's own behalf, not as a representative of the League. --bp

H.R. 9495 Talking Points from the League of Women Voters

H.R. 9495 would grant the Treasury Secretary the authority to suspend the tax-exempt status of organizations deemed “terrorist supporting” without providing meaningful due process. It failed to meet the required 2/3 vote on 11/12/24 in the House, but on 11/19, a rule was passed that would allow it to come for a vote again, requiring only a simple majority. As part of the League’s [Citizen's right to know/ citizen participation position](#) (page 52), the League has opposed numerous attacks on nonprofit organizations' ability to advocate, thus Leagues can use this position to oppose HR 9495.

- The freedom to dissent without fear of government retribution is a vital part of any well-functioning democracy
- We should not grant the executive branch new powers to investigate and functionally shut down and silence its critics
- This proposed legislation would harm all Americans' free speech and due process rights by creating new executive authorities that could be abused by any presidential administration seeking to terminate the tax-exempt status of nonprofit organizations arbitrarily
- The executive branch already has extensive authority to prohibit transactions with individuals and entities it deems connected to terrorism and nonprofit organizations are already prohibited from providing material support to terrorist organizations
- The lack of guardrails creates the potential for future administrations to weaponize these powers against groups on both ends of the ideological spectrum
- The executive branch could use this authority to target its political opponents and use the fear of crippling legal fees, the stigma of the designation, and donors fleeing controversy to stifle dissent and chill speech and advocacy
- The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government.
- The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen’s right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.