



PRINCIPLES

- The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.
- The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.
- The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.
- The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

FOREWORD

LWVCT IMPACT ON ISSUES is a guide for League leaders on the LWVCT program. It provides information that is the basis for community and governmental action on issues of importance to League members at the state and local levels.

LWVCT program, chosen at biennial conventions, includes both study and action. Member agreement on issues, adopted either by consensus or concurrence is developed into the formal positions presented in this book. These positions are the basis for action. Action is also taken in support of the League “Principles” (shown on the preceding page).

The format of this edition provides the positions in brief, the full position statements, and the background and action that have been taken in the last several years. Each major issue area has an “Action Taken on National Positions” section, which represents LWVCT action only. This guide is intended to be used both for LWVCT positions and as a companion book to the *LWVUS IMPACT ON ISSUES* when deciding what action can be taken on an issue. For your information, sections are included to record LWVCT positions dropped by Convention delegates and LWVUS positions upon which we’ve taken prior action.

Local Leagues are encouraged to use the LWVCT positions at their own level to influence public policy. It is the responsibility of the local League board to determine whether member understanding and agreement exist and whether the action on the local level makes sense in terms of timing, need and effectiveness. If a local League wants to take action on the state level, it must first inform the LWVCT Public Issues Vice President to ensure that all levels of the League speak with one voice.

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2007-2009 LWVCT POSITIONS IN BRIEF

GOVERNMENT

Campaign Finance Reform (1975; affirmed 2005)

Support: limitations on campaign contributions and expenditures, full disclosure, and partial public funding of campaigns.

Election Laws (1983; last updated and affirmed 2007)

Support: political process open to all citizens; right to vote with confidence in the election process; availability of adequate information to make informed voting decisions; expanded registration processes, including Election Day Registration; voting systems that are secure, accurate, recountable and accessible; adequate funding and support for state agencies responsible for supervising elections, enforcing election laws, and assuring the integrity of voting technology.

Ethics (2004)

Support actions to: reform, strengthen, and clarify Connecticut's codes of ethics as they apply to public officials, public employees, and lobbyists; require a transparent, competitive, and clearly defined state contract selection process; and Promote the establishment of municipal ethics commissions and municipal ethics codes as applied to municipal public officials, municipal public employees, and municipal lobbyists.

Fiscal Policy; (1981; updated and affirmed 2003)

Support: state budget that is an effective policy-making tool with stated goals and priorities with financial data on past performance in meeting goals, economic impact data and program costs. The Spending Cap should be made more responsive to fiscal realities.

Oppose: bonding for current expenditures; increased tax burden on business.

General Assembly (1982; affirmed 2003)

Support: measures to improve the effectiveness of the General Assembly, legislative committees, public hearings, and staff.

Initiative and Referendum (1984; affirmed 2003)

Support: ratification of Constitutional amendments by referendum; improved voter information and ballot questions.

Oppose: proposal of Constitutional amendments by initiative; direct initiative to propose laws.

Primaries, Procedures and Parties (1983; affirmed and updated 2003)

Support: participation in party's nominating process for party members only; increased participation by party members.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Use (1975; affirmed 2005)

Support: comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and development.

Transportation (1975; last affirmed 2005)

Support: the planning and development of a balanced multi-modal transportation system in Connecticut.

Water Resources (1967; affirmed 2005)

Support: measures to improve water quality and preserve wetlands; regional, long-range approach to planning.

SOCIAL POLICY

Death Penalty (2006)

Support: abolition of the death penalty.. Capital punishment should not be a sentencing option for murder or any other crime. Until the death penalty in Connecticut is abolished, support an immediate moratorium on executions.

Gambling (1994; updated and affirmed 2003)

Support: the 2003 repeal of the so-called Las Vegas Nights legislation; inclusion of safeguards in any bills that are considered by the legislature.

Oppose: legalization of additional forms of gambling, especially the expansion of casino gambling and all legislation that enables such expansion.

Mental Health (2003)

Support: comprehensive community-based mental health systems for children and adults to include early detection, intervention and a range of services, and a public health initiative on mental health.

Quality Integrated Education in Connecticut Schools (1991; affirmed in 2001)

Support: quality education that reflects the diversity of our society; collective responsibility; alternative means of school assignment; state responsibility for funding; local responsibility for the initiation and implementation; and shared responsibility for planning, monitoring and assessment of programs.

School Finance (1990; updated and affirmed 2000)

Support: a system that: makes available to each community sufficient financial resources to provide a suitable program of educational experiences for every child; removes the cap on the ECS grant, and sets the Foundation in the state's biennial budget.

School Start Time (2006)

Support: policies and practices that delay school start times in Connecticut high schools, middle schools, and junior high schools in order to facilitate the alignment of instructional time with adolescent sleep patterns.

School Vouchers (1996, affirmed 2007)

Support: system of elementary and secondary education that is fiscally and educationally accountable to citizens.

Oppose: the use of public funds through vouchers or direct payment to support students attending non-public schools.

Teen Pregnancy (1989; affirmed 1999)

Support: a comprehensive Family Life Education program in all schools; school-based health clinics for health care services including reproductive health; programs and services designed to help teens delay parenthood and to enable teen parents to finish high school.

GOVERNMENT

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Adopted 1975; affirmed 2005)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the goals of a campaign finance system should:

- ensure the public's right to know;
- combat corruption and undue influence;
- enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office.

To achieve these goals, we support the following measures for campaign reform:

Limitations

The League believes that there should be limitations on the size of individual contributions and on overall expenditures by a candidate. These limits should be realistic and reasonable; high enough to be enforceable, but not so low as to affect candidates adversely. Cash contributions should be limited to small amounts.

Disclosure

We support full and timely disclosure of all contributions prior to elections and of expenditures by a stated deadline. We realize that provisions must be made for campaign deficits, but there must be safeguards against contributions pledged orally in advance, to be fulfilled after the election in order to circumvent prior disclosure.

Enforcement

No system, however complete or well-meaning, is effective if it is unenforceable. The establishment of a bipartisan elections commission with investigatory and subpoena powers is essential to any campaign reform. Strong penalties should be provided for violators.

Length of Campaigns

The length of campaigns should be shortened, but enough time should be provided to allow full discussion of the issues and for adequate visibility of all candidates.

Funding

The League believes that partial public financing of campaigns for qualified State offices — Constitutional, Senate and House — will enable candidates to run for office regardless of personal financial resources. It can also aid in removing the undue influence of large-scale money. The League also recognizes the need for new sources of state funds to provide for such financing.

This position applies to all state elections including primaries.

Background and Action

During the 2000 session, the LWVCT, in coalition with 40 other groups, supported a bill establishing a comprehensive public financing system with spending limits for state-wide campaigns. It passed in the legislature but was vetoed by the Governor.

The LWVCT also supported CFR at the federal level through many Calls to Action.

In 2001, the League, in coalition, again supported a comprehensive system of voluntary spending limits and public financing for candidates for statewide offices and General Assembly offices. It

passed all the necessary committees and was ready to be brought up in the legislative session. When it became apparent the votes were not there in the Senate and the Governor said he would veto any such legislation, the bill was pulled.

During the 2002 session, very few CFR bills were submitted, and none were passed by the GAE Committee.

In 2003, the LWVCT supported a bill providing for spending limits and partial funding of political campaigns. It was not reported out of the GAE committee.

The 2004 session was an extremely difficult one for the legislature, preoccupied with the ethics hearing on Governor Rowland and several key members of his staff. The coalition championed a bill to tighten laws concerning contributions from political committees, lobbyists and large contractors. It included provisions to treat purchases of ads in ad books as contributions and prohibited political committees from funding communications identifying or advocating for or against candidates in the last thirty days of campaigning. The House debated a bill authorizing municipalities to establish programs for public financing of local campaigns. After an intense debate, the bill was referred to the Finance Committee and died at the end of the session.

Immediately after being sworn in, Governor Rell convened a meeting of organizations supporting campaign finance reform. She requested attending organizations to present her with proposals for a legislative package that would be likely to pass in the next session. The LWVCT sent a detailed proposal including reforms debated during the 2004 session (limits on contribution from political committees, lobbyists, large state contractors, limits on issue advocacy and promotional ads, ad books advertising, more timely reporting requirements and adequate funding for the enforcement agencies) and support for partial or full public funding of campaigns.

At the beginning of the 2005 session, this proposal was forwarded to the leadership and chairs of the GAE committee and copies were sent to the entire legislature. The League joined forces with a grass-roots organization, Citizens for Election Reforms (CFER). The coalition of Common Cause, CCAG, Democracy Works and others adopted a strong platform of reforms centered around the public financing of campaigns. The Governor's Fairness Proposal did not include public financing of campaigns. The House and Senate each proposed campaign finance reform bills, each containing some elements of public financing of campaigns. The coalition lobbied both chambers and the leadership in the hope of consolidating the two versions into an omnibus bill. Just before the end of the session, the Governor abandoned her opposition to public financing and urged the legislature to take action during the session. The League and the coalition lobbied strenuously for passage of a consolidated bill that would reconcile the elements of the House and Senate versions. At the end of the session, each chamber passed its own version of the bill and there was no agreement before the session adjourned. No campaign finance legislation emerged from the 2005 regular session.

As several critical bills did not pass during the regular session, a special session was called for June 21, but the agenda did not include CFR. The LWVCT and the coalition lobbied the leadership and the Governor to include CFR. Instead, the Governor formed a bi-partisan working group to deal with the issue of campaign finance. The LWVCT lobbied the Governor and the leadership to include civic groups such as the League as members of the working group. This did not happen, but the LWVCT specialist attended all working group sessions.

Work on a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill that included public financing of campaigns continued throughout the fall of 2005 following the report of the bi-partisan working group. League members actively lobbied for CFR, writing letters and responding to action alerts with e-mails and phone calls. National president Kay Maxwell joined the President, Public Issues Vice-President, and Election Laws specialist at the Capitol to lobby legislative leaders and the Governor's staff during the month of November. Shortly thereafter, legislative leadership, surrounded by good government advocates including the President of the League, announced plans to call a special session to pass a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill. Some League members came to the Capitol on the date of the vote to lobby their representatives in person; others responded to last minute requests to lobby recalcitrant representatives by phone and e-mail shortly before the vote. In the end, a comprehensive bill that bans lobbyist and state contractor contributions and provides a voluntary system of public financing of campaigns was passed and signed into law by the Governor in early December, 2005.

Like all landmark legislation that begins with a rejection of the status quo and then improves over time, the campaign finance law passed in December was not perfect. The League identified three areas for concern and advocacy in 2006: the "non-severability" clause, the "organization expenditure" provision and the limitations on minor party and petitioning candidates. The "non-severability" clause was the major concern since a successful court challenge on any provision would have invalidated the entire law. In dramatic fashion, the legislature passed a "fix" for the non-severability clause minutes before the end of the legislative session. The law, PA 06-137, also limits organization expenditures in certain situations and provides more favorable terms for minor party and petitioning candidates seeking public financing.

Throughout the CFR "fight," the League worked closely with its lobbyists, Judith Blei & Associates, and its coalition partners. One partner credited the League with providing the "extra muscle" necessary to win the 30-year fight for public financing.

The focus in the campaign finance reform area has now shifted to implementation of the new law. During the early part of the 2007 session, a law was passed that made several changes to the state contractor bans and administrative requirements. The State Elections Enforcement Commission, which is responsible for implementation of the law, requested several other changes designed to ease the administrative burden, clarify the requirements and help the SEEC in its enforcement activities. The League testified in favor of some of the proposed changes and against other suggested changes. The SEEC's requested changes did not pass. A coalition partner attributed the lack of success to conflicts among legislators and general fatigue with the subject of campaign finance reform.

Several lawsuits have been filed challenging the constitutionality of the lobbyist bans and the limitations on minor parties and candidates. The League will continue to monitor changes to the campaign finance laws, the status of the lawsuits, and implementation of the bans (currently in effect) and public financing of the '08 campaigns.

Action was also taken on LWVUS Action Alerts related to campaign finance reform, as requested.

ELECTION LAWS

(adopted in 1983, updated 2005; updated 2007)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the political process must be open to all citizens and that the right to vote with confidence in the election process and with adequate information with which to make informed decisions must be guaranteed for all. To achieve these goals, the LWVCT supports the following:

Registration Processes

- expanded opportunities for the registration of potential voters via the Internet and through use of off-site, off-hour registration sessions, increased use of Mail-in applications and applications submitted through various state agencies;
- instruction by state and local officials on proper voter registration procedures for those distributing voter registration applications;
- implementation of Election Day Registration (EDR) for all federal, state and local elections with adequate safeguards to protect against fraud;
- maintenance of an accurate, reliable, state-wide electronic, centralized voter registration system and accurate local voter lists;
- adequate training, compensation, and assistance for registrars and adequate training for their designees;
- outreach to potential voters, such as high school students and new citizens, by town and state elections officials.

Election Procedures

- sufficient funding and adequate personnel for state agencies to supervise and enforce election laws;
- expanded and unbiased public education in voting machine use, and expanded opportunity for unbiased ballot information at the polls;
- assistance to voters for whom English is not their primary language;
- mandatory training and supervision of all election workers to assure uniform compliance with federal and state laws;
- adoption of procedures to minimize voter inconvenience;
- identification of voters at polls to prevent fraud;
- instruction from the Office of the Secretary of the State to all election workers regarding the use of Presidential and Provisional ballots, ballot questions and referenda on Constitutional Amendments;
- impartial voter education by the Office of the Secretary of the State and local elections officials, where appropriate, regarding ballot questions and referenda;
- assurance that absentee voting privileges are available to all;
- stronger measures to protect the absentee ballot from fraud and undue influence.

Voting Technology (based on the LWVUS position)

- implementation of voting systems that are secure, accurate, recountable and accessible (SARA) in order to ensure the integrity of, and voter confidence in, elections;

- **consideration of a broad range of options that meet SARA criteria and keep pace with evolving technology;**
- **use of voting systems and procedures that provide fairness to all voters, including the disabled and those who do not speak English as their primary language.**

Funding

Adequate funding and support for state agencies responsible for supervising elections, enforcing election laws, and assuring the integrity of voting technology are fundamental to protecting citizens' right to vote and having their votes counted.

Reviewing Connecticut's election laws must be a continuing activity, in light of the evolving technology in voting systems, new legislation and regulations, and the needs of the public.

Background and Action

In 2000, a bill protecting the security of electors by preventing the disclosure and transfer of social security numbers was passed, eliminating this category of information from Voter Registration forms. A pilot program authorizing the use of electronic equipment for counting absentee ballots proceeded under the direction of the Secretary of the State. In 2001, the Governor proposed legislation authorizing a "direct primary" system that would have allowed a would-be candidate to more easily petition their way onto the ballot. The Senate defeated this proposal. The LWVCT took no position on the issue.

A Bill was passed restoring the voting rights of convicted felons on probation. It is aimed at lessening the racial disparity in voting eligibility, and bringing such persons into the democratic process.

A Bill supporting the establishment of a Commission to study new Voting Technology, the Computerized Voter Registration and training of election workers passed one legislative chamber but due to time restraints was not raised in the other chamber. A Bill creating a State-Wide Voter Guide was proposed and was postponed until the next year for clarification.

During the 2002 session, the LWVCT supported several Voting Rights bills: An Act Concerning Voting Reform requiring local officials to comply with the Voter Bill of Rights, mandating the use of modern and accurate vote counting technology and a state-wide voter registration data base; a bill mandating the education and training of poll workers and of the voting public; a bill concerning participation in the State-Wide Centralized Voter Registration System; a bill requiring a Voter Guide for state elections, and a bill concerning election day registration. The Voter Bill of Rights passed with some modifications but all the other bills failed.

On October 29, 2002, the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) established a program to provide funds to states to replace voting systems, create the Election Assistance Commission and to set minimum election administration standards for administering federal elections.

The 2003 session saw the re-introduction of an Election Day Registration (EDR) bill and of legislation implementing the provisions of the HAVA bill. Once again, the LWVCT worked with the Connecticut Coalition for Effective Democracy to pass these critical reforms. Three bills passed in regular session: a bill mandating towns to join the Secretary of the State's state-wide centralized voter registration system by September 1, 2003; the Election Day Registration; and

the HAVA implementation bill. The EDR bill was vetoed by the Governor. A bill mandating a Voter Guide did not pass. A bill authorizing a new primary system passed both houses on the last day of the session.

In 2004, the LWVCT testified in support of the re-submitted EDR bill which would also mandate training of Assistant Registrars and Town Clerks and supported other reform bills, such as an expanded Voter Bill of Rights, the bill for permanent funding of the “good government” commissions and compliance with HAVA. Continuing the coalition work, the LWVCT participated in several public hearings. The Voter Bill of Rights and the permanent funding bill passed; the EDR bill passed all committees, but at the end of the session, it was referred to the GAE committee again and died at the end of the session. A bill requiring that all electronic voting machines have a voter-verified paper trail was debated during the session but died.

In December 2004, the GAE Committee held public hearings on voter registration and voting procedures during the presidential election. The LWVCT submitted a report on the compliance with the existing voter registration procedures, problems during the presidential election including lack of training of election workers and uneven application of election laws. This was followed by a presentation to the leadership of the LWVCT Election Laws reform agenda. These initiatives included EDR, mandatory voter registration at all naturalization ceremonies, improved training of all registrars and poll workers, and a requirement that the Secretary of the State certify electronic voting equipment that is secure, accurate, recountable and accessible. The LWVCT expressed its concern about the Request for Proposal (RFP) by the Secretary of the State, urging the broadening of the eligibility to companies that developed a non-direct recording electronic (DRE) technology. The LWVCT was represented at the five regional GAE committee hearings on CFR, Ethics and Election Reform, especially as it concerned EDR. Testimony was repeated as the bill made its way through the various committees. Calls to Action were also issued. The LWVCT and the coalition supported the substitute language to the omnibus elections reform bill, responding to the concerns of registrars of voters. Ultimately, despite intensive efforts by the coalition, EDR did not pass. It had the support of all relevant committees, the Secretary of the State and the leadership of ROVAC (Registrars of Voters Association of CT). It was left to die because of the opposition of the rank-and-file registrars. Enacted into law were certain provisions setting the standards for DREs (including a voter-verified paper audit trail) and creating new voting and campaign procedures, mandating the preparation of an on-line voters guide, requiring the Secretary of the State to provide voter registration services at certain naturalization ceremonies and a new study on push polling. Thus, despite the hard work by the coalition and the LWVCT, EDR did not pass in the 2004 session.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires the state to use voting machines which meet certain requirements regarding accessibility and reliability during all federal elections. During the fall of 2005, League members from around the state attended the voting machine demonstrations put on by the Secretary of the State’s Office. The League conducted an informal survey of their reactions, sent a letter to the Secretary of the State, Governor and GAE leadership regarding our concerns, and issued a press statement on the matter. Among other things, the League called for the Voting Technology Standards Board to be convened immediately and for the SOTS to lease, not purchase, the voting machines required to meet the HAVA requirements for the 2006 elections.

The Voting Technology Standards Board was convened in December 2005, quickly issued a report and disbanded. During the 2006 session, the League advocated for the re-authorization of the Voting Technology Standards Board. The bill fell victim to the clock, as time ran out on the legislative session. Also during the 2006 session, the League opposed a bill that would have required full-faced ballots for direct recording electronic voting machines. After heavy lobbying by the League, the bill's sponsor agreed not to bring the bill up for a vote before the full legislature during that session.

The SOTS initially selected a direct recording electronic machine for the HAVA mandate. However, after problems surfaced with the vendor and certification, the SOTS reversed herself. Ultimately, the SOTS chose optical scan machines to replace the state's lever machines, which do not meet the HAVA requirements. Twenty-five communities were selected to pilot the machines during the 2006 elections. Audits of the new machines were conducted in 17 randomly selected districts.

Passing some form of Election Day Registration was a League priority again in 2007. The League worked closely with DemocracyWorks on education efforts (focus groups, a public forum and presentations at the Convention of the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut) and with legislative leaders and the Secretary of the State's office on crafting a bill. The initial bill called for full EDR. When it became apparent that there would be stiff resistance to passage of full EDR, a voluntary pilot program was suggested. Although a number of towns were willing to participate in the pilot, concerns were raised about the constitutionality of the program. Neither the SOTS nor the Attorney General were willing to give assurances in that regard. Finally, a statewide demonstration project was suggested for the 2008 presidential preference primary. The bill passed the Senate, but was never called in the House. On a positive note, the League and its coalition partners were successful in defeating several amendments that would have required voters to produce a photo ID at the polls in order to exercise the right to vote.

All municipalities will be required to use the new optical scan voting machines during the 2007 elections. The League believes that manual, random audits are essential to ensuring the integrity of the machines — and, therefore, the elections — and instilling voter confidence in the new machines. During the 2007 session, the League worked closely and successfully with the Secretary of the State's office on the passage of a law which requires random, manual audits of voting machines after each election. The League's concerns regarding manual recounts in the event of recanvasses and the necessity for a clear statement that the paper ballot is the official record of the elector's vote were not addressed in the statute; however, the League has been reassured by the Secretary of the State's office that these issues will be addressed in regulations which carry the force of law.

The League is working with the registrars and the Secretary of the State's office to provide voter education regarding the new machines.

In 2005, Public Act 05-235 was passed which created new requirements for the distribution of applications for absentee ballots. The League believes that this law has had a chilling effect on the distribution of absentee ballots. During the 2007 session, a bill was introduced that would have eliminated the pre-registration requirement for distributors of applications for absentee ballots. The League testified in favor of the bill, but felt that the changes to the law should go even further. The bill died in the GAE Committee. A resolution proposing amendment to the

state constitution to remove restrictions on the categories of citizens who can vote by absentee ballot was also introduced. The League did not take a position on the bill; however, a state study has been authorized on the subject. The resolution died on the Senate calendar.

Two “bills” that would have provided for election of the president by popular vote rather than by the Electoral College were introduced during the 2007 session. Neither of these bills passed; however, similar bills are sure to be introduced next year. The League did not testify on these bills, but should be prepared to advocate for the elimination of the Electoral College in coming years.

Election reform has been an area of intense activity over the past several years. The League has been aided in this area by the efforts of our lobbyists, Judith Blei and Associates, and by the unflinching dedication of our members to these issues. The Election Laws specialist testifies on relevant bills, works with legislators and executive branch personnel on issues of importance to the League and provides a presence at the Capitol. Members have answered action alerts, written letters and personally lobbied their representatives. At the 2007 Convention, the delegates approved updates to the position and again voted to make election laws a League priority.

Action has also been taken on LWVUS Action Alerts related to election reform, as requested by LWVUS.

ETHICS (Adopted 2004)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the public should have confidence in the integrity of its government. Government officials and employees should be held accountable for carrying out their duties in both an effective and an ethically responsible manner.

To these ends, the LWVCT supports actions to:

- 1. Reform, strengthen, and clarify Connecticut’s codes of ethics as they apply to public officials, public employees, and lobbyists.**
- 2. Ensure the existence of strong, effective, independent watchdog agencies, such as the State Ethics Commission, Freedom of Information Commission, and the State Elections Enforcement Commission; support the allocation of resources necessary for these commissions to fulfill their responsibilities.**
- 3. Require a transparent, competitive, and clearly defined state contract selection process.**
- 4. Promote the establishment of municipal ethics commissions and municipal ethics codes as applied to municipal public officials, municipal public employees, and municipal lobbyists.**

Background and Action

The 2004 session was dominated by concerns over ethics lapses in Hartford, Bridgeport and Waterbury. The Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee held early meetings requesting input on several ethics bills, including the composition and funding of the state Ethics Commission, its investigatory and penalty assessment powers, campaign contributions by state contractors, municipal ethics boards and codes, and corrupt officials. Several passed: funding of the Ethics Commission and expansion of its membership passed as did bills strengthening laws concerning gifts by state contractors. The LWVCT recommended and the leadership appointed Helen Pearl as the community representative on the Ethics Commission as of July 1, 2004.

In August 2004, at Governor Rell's invitation, the LWVCT presented proposals for additional campaign finance reform and ethics legislative package, making a strong connection between ethics and campaign finance reform.

During the 2005 session, the LWVCT supported the bills reforming the state contracting process, and several other bills concerning the recovery of funds by the Attorney General, revocation of state pension benefits for those found guilty of ethics transgressions, and confidentiality of municipal ethics complaints. We supported, in principle only, the reorganization of the Ethics Commission and to have it receive all necessary resources. The proposed reorganization of the Ethics Commission was opposed by the Commission members and several articles in the press criticized the LWVCT as being inactive on ethics reform. A strongly-worded explanation of our support for "a strong, effective, independent watchdog agency" and for increasing citizen involvement in the process was published in the Hartford Courant. Ultimately, the legislature acted to replace the current Ethics Commission with a new Office of State Ethics, effective October 1, 2005. The legislature passed an omnibus bill to reform corrupt contracting practices by large majorities and the Governor was on record as strongly supporting this bill, but she unexpectedly vetoed the legislation after the July special session. At the same time, the Governor issued an executive order mandating many of the reforms included in the vetoed bill. The legislature decided against an attempt to override the veto.

In 2006, two ethics provisions, a "revolving door" provision which prohibits the Governor from accepting employment from any state contractor for a period of one year after he/she leaves office and a prohibition on accepting honorariums to the Governor's spouse, were included in PA 06-137. State contracting reform and municipal ethics bills died.

During the 2007 session, a bill passed that requires certain public officials and state employees to identify their outside employers in their annual statements of financial interests. The bill also establishes a task force to study the Office of State Ethics' recommendations regarding a municipal code of ethics. Another bill, which would have established a municipal code of ethics and regulated municipal lobbyists, died on the House calendar.

In the absence of a specialist dedicated to this area, the League monitored, but did not actively advocate on ethics issues. Action was also taken on LWVUS Calls to Action, as requested.

FISCAL POLICY

(Adopted 1981; updated and reaffirmed 2003)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports the following components of the state's fiscal policy:

1. The state budget should be an effective policy-making tool of the state government. The budget should be based on uniform accounting and reporting procedures and should identify all money available to the state. Such budget should contain:
 - clearly stated goals accompanied by enough detail to enable priority setting among programs; financial data on past performance in meeting goals;
 - economic impact data and program costs.
2. The Spending Cap authorized by the 1992 Constitutional Amendment should be made more responsive to the fiscal realities of the state by enacting the following changes:
 - require capped expenditures to grow only by the increase in personal income, inflation or Connecticut adjusted gross income, whichever of the three options is the greatest;
 - reduce income growth factor from five to three years;
 - re-base by adding that portion of surplus spending used for on-going expenses to the base going forward each year;
 - exempt federal funds for those programs growing at a rate exceeding the income growth rate and whose federal matching grants are large compared to the state portion of funding; particularly Medicaid;
 - exempt new federal funds the first year.
3. Bonds should be used only for long-term capital projects and never for current expenditures.
4. The state should fund at least 50% of the Educational Cost Share grant, increased state funding for special education costs, and fully fund the PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) for state-owned properties.
5. The "circuit breaker" program of property relief for the elderly should be extended to all low-income families regardless of age, and should apply to renters as well as owners of property. These complex programs should be well publicized and assistance with the application process should be available to all who are applying. Any relief granted under this program should be funded by the state government, to avoid further burden on other property taxpayers in the municipalities.
6. Should inadequate revenues be generated by the current state tax system to fund the budget, additional revenues should come from increasing the progressivity of the income tax.

Background and Action

In 2001, the LWVCT lobbied the Governor to include enough money in his 2001-'03 budget to cover at least 50% of statewide K-12 public education costs and to increase the state funding for special education

The 2001 General Assembly adjourned without passing a budget, necessitating a special session. One of the contentious issues was the spending cap and its influence on the budget in the

presence of the \$640 million surplus. In the final budget, municipalities received some additional funds for special education but the ECS formula reform was stalled. For the first time in many years, no new tax cuts were enacted. The approved budget for FY 2002 was approximately \$78 million under the spending cap.

During 2002, revenues plummeted and the budget showed a significant shortfall. The LWVCT urged the Governor and the legislature to conduct a review of all tax expenditures, special tax exemptions and maximize the use of new federal funds. Since 2/3 of all Connecticut corporations pay only the minimum \$250 tax, we recommended redressing this imbalance while maintaining the State's competitive position. The approved budget was balanced in a special session by using up the rainy day fund and enacting a number of one-time fixes. Bonding increased.

In January 2003, the LWVCT adopted the Spending Cap portion of this position. Copies of the position were sent to all the legislators. Budget shortfalls dominated the legislative session; the Governor's budget proposal included the elimination of critical social services; the LWVCT strongly opposed these cuts, lobbied for a careful examination of all federal funds flowing into the state and continued to press for continued ECS and special education funding. The legislature finally adopted a budget in a second special session that combined modest revenue increases (mostly fees for various services), across-the-board budget cuts and one-time reductions. A small deficit was funded by issuing bonds. The legislature discussed a "millionaire's tax" but ultimately rejected such a tax.

In 2004, several property tax reform and education funding bills were proposed, including a bill that would have eliminated the ECS funding cap and raised the foundation element of the ECS formula. The bill eliminating the ECS cap passed. The LWVCT provided testimony in favor of a bill providing for the maximization of federal funds and supported changes in the state revenue reporting. The bills did not pass. The 2004 budget produced a very modest surplus, thus no proposals for additional taxes were presented.

In 2005, the legislature was again facing a significant budget deficit and various tax increases were proposed. It appeared that the spending cap would be exceeded in this fiscal year, resulting in a call for a review of the legislation. The LWVCT submitted comments on various bills concerning the spending cap, maximization of federal funds and use of unappropriated surplus. The bills did not pass.

The League currently has no specialist in the areas of the Spending Cap or budgets. No action was taken in this area during the last biennium.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(adopted 1982, reviewed and reaffirmed in 2003)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports continued improvement in the structure and procedures of the General Assembly in order to maintain its effectiveness as an independent and responsive branch of the state government. It should have the means to make independent judgments in fiscal and budgetary matters and to insure that the intent of its adopted legislation is pursued efficiently by agencies of the executive branch.

To these ends, we support the following objectives:

- **annual sessions of limited length; increased use of the interim between sessions for preliminary consideration of legislation and for oversight to evaluate existing legislation and its implementation;**
- **four-year staggered terms for state senators;**
- **compensation for legislators commensurate with the requirements of legislative service and sufficient to insure that any eligible citizen may serve without undue regard to his/her financial status. The League would emphasize the need for fiscal responsibility as well.**
- **continued improvement in the organization and procedures of the General Assembly to provide an orderly flow of legislation with full and open consideration by committees and on the floor of the General Assembly and a public hearing scheduling plan to promote full participation of committee members by minimizing conflicts. We encourage each legislator to use discretion regarding the number of bills he/she proposes and to seek opportunities to co-sponsor bills;**
- **uniform adherence to public hearing procedures that give priority to the public's convenience, allow for ample public comment on any legislation which will later go before the General Assembly, and assure such comments an adequate audience by committee members.**

Background and Action

The LWVCT continues to support measures to tighten reporting requirements for General Assembly lobbyists and to reduce the amount they can contribute to lawmakers, and the restriction prohibiting legislators from lobbying within one year after their term expires. The LWVCT opposes bills that would weaken the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act.

In 2001, the General Assembly adjourned without a budget vote and left a record number of bills to die due to time pressures at the end of the session.

In 2002, the budget was again seriously delayed and a special session was required to forge a compromise spending plan. An additional special session was held to eliminate the budget gap resulting from diminishing revenues.

A budget shortfall dominated the 2003 session. The Governor proposed to consolidate the so-called "good government" agencies: the Ethics Commission, Election Enforcement and the Freedom of Information Commission into one new agency to save money. The LWVCT strongly opposed the proposal as the consolidation would weaken the oversight role of each agency. The proposal was dropped but a 15-20% reduction in the appropriations for these agencies was discussed as part of the budget negotiations. The LWVCT opposed such reductions.

In advance of the 2004 legislative session, the LWVCT contacted all legislators to urge support for a proposal to streamline legislative operations and to request appointment of a League representative to a committee to propose procedural changes. Issues under consideration were: improvements to the procedures at committee hearings, legislation debated at closed meetings or caucuses, scheduling of committee hearings and of votes on legislation passed by committees, and lack of public parking. A subcommittee under the Joint Committee of Legislative

Management was formed to look at a variety of procedural and access issues. The LWVCT was not granted a seat on the committee but our specialist attended the various meetings and presented a written proposal for changes to the committee. Kevin Sullivan was the principal proponent of the revisions; when he became Lt. Governor, the impetus for the reforms was gone.

Ultimately, the committee recommended minor changes; a minority (Republican) report pushed for further improvements but that report was not implemented. However, access by the public to the LOB parking garage has been much improved.

Other activity included action on several bills designed to strengthen the Ethics laws concerning gifts, financial disclosures, contracting procedures, funding of the “good government” agencies and whistleblower complaints. Most of these bills passed. With the investigations of Governor Rowland, Ethics became a major issue. Lacking a specific position on Ethics, the LWVCT board authorized a committee to develop a position statement on Ethics for approval at Council 2004. Hence, many of the activities previously reported under this position have been transferred to the Ethics section.

In 2005, there was no further legislative activity regarding the reorganization of the General Assembly. From 2005 to the present, we have seen a slight improvement in the scheduling of committee and public hearings, and somewhat better parking availability. The League supported a trial expansion of public parking by converting an existing government employee lot into a public lot; although the trial period worked well for the public, it reverted back to government use. However, the basement of the LOB parking garage was made available to the public.

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

(Adopted in 1984; reviewed and reaffirmed in 2003)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports the current method of amending the State Constitution, with amendments proposed by the General Assembly and ratified by referendum and then the General Assembly. The League of Women Voters of Connecticut opposes the adoption of the initiative device to propose Constitutional amendments, direct initiative to propose laws, and the initiative and referendum device as a non-binding expression of public opinion.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the incorporation of the following controls into any initiative and referendum plan is essential:

- **A provision for legal review of the initiative proposal;**
- **A time limit for the collection of signatures and a ban on payment for solicitation of signatures;**
- **Definitions of the qualifications of sponsors, circulators, and signers of petitions and a determination of a method for legal verification of signatures.**
- **Geographical distribution of signatures and a signature requirement high enough to discourage frivolous use.**
- **Full disclosure of contributions to initiative campaigns and limits on contributions if constitutional means can be found.**
- **Provision for statewide dissemination of printed material on ballot questions, including full text, explanatory information, pros and cons, and an estimate of the cost of the proposed change.**
- **Specification of the size of the vote necessary for passage.**

The League feels strongly that these requirements should be addressed through the statutes, while the constitutional amendment itself should contain only the broad outlines of an initiative and referendum proposal.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that a measure proposed by initiative and adopted by referendum should not be subject to gubernatorial veto, and that the voters should have the power, through a subsequent referendum, to amend or repeal such measures. We believe that ballot questions should be placed before the voters only at general elections, not at special elections. We feel strongly that improvements need to be made in the content and dissemination of information on ballot questions, and that the cost of printing and distributing such information be borne by the government.

Background and Action

The 1999 and 2000 sessions saw limited activity in this area.

Since the 2001 session, there has been no significant activity on this issue. In the 2005 session, the LWVCT, under its election laws position, advocated for improvements in the dissemination of information regarding all election issues. The LWVCT has no specialist in this area.

PRIMARIES AND PARTIES

(Adopted 1983; reviewed and reaffirmed in 2003)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut urges all political parties to make their process more accessible to the public.

We believe that:

- **only enrolled party members should be eligible to participate in their party's nominating processes and urge the parties to take action which will promote greater participation by members;**
- **requirements for the placement of petitioning or minor party candidates on the ballot should not be made more restrictive than at present.**

Background and Action

Changes in the primary procedures were proposed by the Governor in 2003, but the legislation did not pass. In 2004 the General Assembly adopted a new primary system. The LWVCT did not participate in the discussions as we felt our position did not adequately cover the proposals. The League has taken no action in this area over last biennium as we have no specialist.

LWVCT ACTION ON LWVUS GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

REDISTRICTING

Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population and fairness.

LWVCT Redistricting Guidelines:

- **The LWVCT goal is to reapportion the state legislature on the basis of population and fairness.**
- **The League supports contiguity and compactness of districts; districts substantially equal in population; integrity of political subdivisions; and preservation of community interests.**

Background and Action

Legislative redistricting must be reviewed every ten years after the census.

In 2001, the LWVCT testified before hearings at Hartford and the new district hearings, requesting that redistricting be made more reflective of the population and more accountable.

A Call to Action went out to individual Leagues to testify at their closest district hearing. The LWVCT provided needed materials for such action. The LWVCT testified to the need to change the methodology to make it more reflective of “fairness of representation.”

Based on the 2000 census, the Reapportionment Committee re-drew Connecticut’s six US Congressional districts into five, and state election districts were also re-districted.

There has been no activity in this area since the most recent reapportionment. The LWVCT continues to monitor this important program area. Significant activity is expected around the next census.

NATURAL RESOURCES

LAND USE

(Adopted 1975; reaffirmed 2005)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports policies and procedures which promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and development of land and water resources.

These include measures to preserve and protect:

- inland wetlands and water courses
- tidal wetlands
- flood hazard areas
- watershed lands
- agricultural lands, including pasture and forest lands
- open space, ridges

The League believes that the state, with provision of technical assistance, should have a major role in land use planning in cooperation with other levels of government. We recommend a regional long-range approach to planning for land and water resources. Opportunities for citizen participation in decisions concerning land and water resources should be provided.

The LWVCT believes that land use planning at all levels of government should reflect the need to conserve energy by coordinating the planning for housing, employment and mass transportation, and by zoning to encourage multi-family housing where such facilities could be served by city water and sewers.

The League supports our present system of regulating wetlands, both inland and tidal, under state law with municipalities having the option of regulating their own inland wetlands. We feel that ridges should be regulated in a similar manner.

Transportation routes should be designed by a coordinated effort on all levels.

Strong state involvement in the siting of oil refineries, power facilities, and airports with attention paid to regional and local concerns should be provided.

Primary responsibility for other industrial facilities and regional shopping complexes should be at the local level with some regional input.

In general, local people should have control over land use decisions of purely local concern, and regional and state governments over those of regional and statewide impact: since most decisions have implications at all levels, a mechanism for input and decision-making by all levels is highly desirable. For those areas of the state still lacking local controls, the state should require the adoption of local zoning regulations.

The League believes that Connecticut's existing agricultural land, (tilled, pasture, forest lots, etc.) should be protected from development and supports more state technical, legal and financial aid to preserve farmland. We strongly endorse the state's purchase of development rights for agricultural land.

The LWVCT supports the Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development, which provides a planning process to guide the future conservation and development of Connecticut and to insure efficient use of the state's financial and natural resources. It establishes a growth policy to balance economic, environmental and social needs.

The overall Plan strategy is to reinforce and conserve existing urban areas, to promote staged growth, and to preserve areas of significant environmental value.

Background and Action

Prior to the 2001 legislative session, the Governor proposed to save from potential development 18,700 acres of Kelda water company lands. The proposal received universal support although the method of securing these lands was debated. The LWVCT joined the Coalition for the Permanent Protection of Kelda lands and lobbied intensively and successfully to retain \$30 million in the budget and for another \$30 million bonding package.

During the 2002 session, debate continued, culminating in the eventual signing of a compact to conserve 15,000 acres of land in four counties; the Nature Conservancy contributed \$10 million and the state paid \$80 million. The state acquired conservation and public access easements to Class I lands (directly adjacent to reservoirs) and fee title to Class II lands (150 feet from reservoir or water supply). Recreational activity will be consistent with the protection of watersheds.

During 2003, the LWVCT joined The Endangered Land Coalition to further protect the reservoirs and surrounding forest lands. A bill was proposed to close the abandonment loophole, to provide land protection at time of water company mergers and to use the ratemaking process to conserve water company lands. The bill was progressively watered down and ultimately lost support and died. However, four private water companies agreed to a voluntary 2-year moratorium from selling water company lands to allow DEP review of the natural resource for the value of the property. The LWVCT continued its efforts to assure passage of a strong bill in the next session.

In addition, the LWVCT supported legislation to make the Plan of Conservation and Development a more effective guide for state, regional and local planning and regulation. The bill died.

In 2004, the LWVCT worked to broaden the Endangered Land Coalition and contacted legislators to urge support for a change in statutes giving the Commissioner of Public Health the power to place reservoirs and the surrounding land from development and to change the DPUC rule to award water company shareholders the majority of the benefits for conservation land sales instead of for sales that allow development. The LWVCT and the coalition also testified in support of Aquifer Protection regulations and for safeguards against water reservoir abandonment. After constant prodding, the Reservoir Land Protection bill passed the various committees of cognizance and the coalition worked hard to assure action before the end of the session. The bill passed the Senate but had to return for a House vote. It passed on the last day of the session after an all-out Action Alert. Even more dramatic was the progress of the reservoir abandonment bill. An inconsistency was discovered in the language of the bill the House was ready to vote on in the last moments of the session; this required it to go back to the Senate and thus would kill the bill. After frantic negotiations, the leadership agreed to place the bill onto the

“budget implementer bill.” It was passed and signed into law.

The LWVCT sent comments to the Planning and Development Committee’s meetings on Smart Growth Initiatives and property Tax Burdens and expressed strong support for the strengthened State Plan of Conservation and Development 2004-2009. The legislature did not act on the plan as it wanted additional time to consider public comment. Fall Conference 2004 dealt with Sustainable Growth and other related topics. The LWVCT re-submitted its comments on the Plan of Conservation and Development and reiterated its strong support for the document.

Before the start of the 2005 session, the LWVCT and coalition partners urged the Governor to place additional funds in her budget for various land preservation programs. A bill was drafted and eventually signed into law by the Governor providing funding for farm land preservation, land protection, affordable housing and historic preservation.

A Clean Water Investment bill that would establish a \$1 per month drinking water surcharge to pay for conserving the lands that surround water supplies died in the Energy and Technology committee. The LWVCT testified in favor of a bill expanding previous legislation that would require notification of the Public Health Commissioner when development projects are proposed on land within water supply watersheds. Although the bill was sent to the Senate, it was not brought up and died.

The LWVCT also lobbied for the adoption of the re-submitted State Plan of Conservation and Development. It was passed and signed into law.

In 2006, the League, working in partnership with the Endangered Lands Coalition, supported legislation giving the Commissioner of Public Health notification of any development application in a public drinking water watershed. This passed and was signed into law.

In 2007, the League, in partnership with the Endangered Lands Coalition, advocated on two proposals. The League supported a provision in a bill to restore incentives for the conservation of surplus water company lands. Unfortunately, a law passed in 2005 created unintended consequences by jeopardizing our state’s proven incentives law for the preservation of water company lands. The 2005 law required utilities to sell assets, such as land holdings, at public auction. For nonprofit organizations and/or government agencies working to preserve land, conservation sales cannot be achieved at a public auction but require months of careful analysis, multiple approvals, and funding partnerships. This “technical fix” provision passed as part of a larger bill and was signed into law. Alternatively, the League vehemently opposed an amendment attached to a bill in the final 2 days of the session thwarting due process which would allow mining on New Britain Water Company Class I and Class II lands. Current law forbids such a use for water supply watershed lands. The League believes that allowing mining to occur on critical water supply lands sets a regulatory-busting precedent for the most critical of our resources. The legislature passed the bill and the Governor, despite much opposition, signed the bill into law. In an interesting post-session development, some of the legislators who spearheaded passage of the bill are now suggesting that they will work to repeal it based upon reaction from the community.

Also in 2007, the Governor’s initiative for “Responsible Growth” was supported by the League. Coordination between the LWVCT Land Use and Affordable Housing portfolios took place in this session. The League supported a bill which passed in Special Session providing a Massachusetts-style proposal for overlay zones in areas with infrastructure, suitable for transit-

oriented development that included affordably priced housing at specified densities.

TRANSPORTATION

(1975; affirmed 2007)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports the planning and development of a balanced transportation system for Connecticut. The goals of such a system are to maintain air quality standards, conserve energy and land, and give all citizens freedom to move about regardless of age, income, or physical capacity. Connecticut's transportation system must be coordinated, interlocking, and multi-modal, able to respond to changing needs. Citizens must be included at all levels of planning.

Background and Action

In 2000, there was limited legislative activity in this area. However, traffic congestion on roads became a pressing issue. The Governor formed a Transportation Strategy Task Force to study ways to remedy overcrowding on state roads. The Task Force was to report in spring 2001.

In 2001, transportation became a hot issue. Several initiatives were presented, including expansion of rail traffic, incentives to businesses whose employees use public transport, and the use of shoulders on I-95 and I-84 to increase road capacity. The Task Force reported in April 2001 and their recommendations resulted in HB-6985, a comprehensive bill that was amended and altered several times. The LWVCT testified in support of the major initiatives proposed in the bill. The final budget approved in special session included the funding for the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB).

The five Transportation Investment Areas were to submit their plans to the TSB by January 15, 2002. In December 2002, TSB presented to the Governor and the legislature a preliminary strategy plan and cost projections for the first ten years. The LWVCT expressed a strong concern that the entire strategy plan (and funding) was skewed heavily towards automobiles, highway improvements and expansion. Input to that effect was provided at the regional public hearings on the proposed plan.

During the 2003 session, the LWVCT lobbied the Transportation and the Planning and Development Committees to require the TSB to reconsider the recommendations to more closely conform to the original mandate. Letters to the Editor and Calls to Action followed. Ultimately, a bill was reported out of committee and again, and the LWVCT provided testimony urging more mass transit and movement of freight over long distances by rail and barges. An on-going dialog followed between the Transportation Committee and the League. The General Assembly adjourned without taking action on the omnibus transportation bill, but agreed to debate the bill in the special session, scheduled for June 16. That debate shifted to the adoption of a modest proposal to fund some mass transit projects through the budget and continued bonding for major highway projects. The modified proposal passed.

The LWVCT continues to be concerned with the overcrowding of the state's highway and the over-reliance on trucks to move freight. The 2003 Fall Conference was dedicated to the examination of the various facets of this complex issue and innovative solutions to the problem.

In 2004, the LWVCT joined the Citizens Transportation Lobby, a group of Fairfield County

residents dedicated to improving the safety of I-95 and other transportation improvements. A letter was sent to the leadership urging priority for transportation issues. A request for a progress report regarding the implementation of projects approved under the 2003 special session bill was sent to the Department of Transportation (DOT). In April, the DOT held regional meetings to publicize its 2005 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The LWVCT responded to the plan by urging more emphasis on reducing the traffic congestion on the state's highways and a development of a coordinated, interlocking and multi-modal transportation system.

A new DOT Commissioner was appointed in late April 2004 and the League re-sent its comments on the STIP plan. This was followed by a Transportation Initiatives paper, sent to the Bureau of Policy and Planning of the DOT.

An expanded Transportation Initiatives paper was written and sent to the DOT and the Governor before the 2005 session. A broad coalition of statewide organizations held a very successful transportation rally at the Capitol to lobby for a variety of transportation initiatives, including approval of and funding for replacement railroad cars for the Metro North line, an increase in barge and freight rail service to reduce traffic on highways, improved station parking, feeder bus service to rail stations, faster replacement of overhead wires and adequate state police to ensure safer conditions on the state's highways.

The Governor included many of these initiatives in her budget. The LWVCT supported the transportation part of the budget by attending a variety of public hearings, writing letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, attending rallies, issuing calls to action. The League is on record as supporting the Governor's proposal for a gradual increase in the gasoline tax and user fees (high speed tolls) and using traffic fines to pay for some of the mass transit projects. Towards the end of the 2005 session, the Governor modified the gasoline increase proposal to increase the tax at the wholesale level. Despite all the pressure, the bill did not pass in the regular session.

The Governor immediately called for a special session to include debate on the transportation package. The bonding was approved and the transportation package was enacted into law.

In January 2006, the League transmitted a list of its legislative priorities to the General Assembly's Transportation Committee: reducing all vehicular traffic on the state's roads by funding new railroad equipment and facilities, increasing barge transportation of goods and passengers, improving bus service between and within communities, and providing government subsidies for users of mass transit and incentives for employees/employers for usage of mass transit. An additional concern related to safety on the highways. The League proposed to fund these improvements by increasing fines for safety, speed and other violations, introduction of gateway user fees on all interstates and aggressive pursuit of federal funds. Several bills were debated and the League provided testimony on all; eventually, a comprehensive bill was passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor that included restoring commuter rail service between New Haven and New London as well as numerous improvements to the state's transportation system including rail station improvements on three lines, implementing New Britain-Hartford busway (subject to the availability of federal funds), a new commuter rail station between New Haven and Milford, dredging of New Haven port and establishing a railroad link to this port as well as planning for numerous highway improvements to be financed by the sale of bonds. The Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) was placed under the administrative aegis of the Office of Policy and Management. Transportation fared extremely

well in 2006; thank-you letters were sent to the leadership and the Governor for their support of the initiatives.

The TSB, charged with developing, revising and implementing a Transportation Strategy for the state, held a series of public hearings in July and August 2006. The League presented testimony urging further expansion of the railroad branch system to allow freight access to port facilities and planning for a new rail freight connection across the Hudson in New York City; increased bus service within and between communities and incentives for the use of mass transit. We urged the DOT to adopt a Fix-it-First policy in order to improve the infrastructure maintenance.

In coalition with the Citizens Transportation Lobby and other organizations, the League once again planned a Transportation Lobby Day in Hartford in January 2007. Many legislators attended and promised support for various initiatives to improve mass transit and reduce congestion on Connecticut's highways.

The League testified on numerous bills proposing a study of user fees on CT's highways, a bill to increase the hours of operation of the weigh stations, expansion of rail and bus service, new railroad cars for the various commuter rail lines, incentives for mass transit use and senior transportation. All the bills were eventually combined into an omnibus bill that passed all committees but was never brought up for a vote in the House. Some of the initiatives included in the bill were later funded in the budget implementer and more funding may become available after the Bonding package is approved. The Weigh Station bill died; the DOT applied for a federal grant for the study of user fees. The grant did not materialize and the funding for the study was not included in the budget.

Despite the optimism that Transportation would be the great beneficiary of the 2007 session, there was little progress this year. Transportation has been adopted as one of the LWVCT's two legislative priorities since 2003 and remains a legislative priority for the 2007-09 program year.

WATER RESOURCES

(1967; affirmed 2005)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports state policies and programs which promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and development of land and water resources. Such planning should consider the interaction of our natural resources with each other as well as their relation to the needs of our growing population.

Specific measures which the League supports include:

- **enforcement of regulations to improve water quality;**
- **provision for an adequate staff to implement programs;**
- **acquisition and preservation of open space land, including inland wetlands and tidal marshes;**
- **a regional approach to planning;**
- **adequate and equitable financing of state programs;**
- **establishment of clear lines of authority and coordination of policy among state agencies.**

Background and Action

The LWVCT has been a member of the Clean Water Coalition since 1987. The coalition has had success in passage of the revised Inland Wetlands Act, the Integrated Pesticide Management bill and the Aquifer Protection legislation. The LWVCT has lobbied for legislation to improve Connecticut's waterways and maintain primacy (control) over monitoring water quality for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The LWVCT has supported the clean-up of Long Island Sound with active participation on the Citizen's Advisory Committee of the Long Island Sound Study to encourage adequate funding to correct problems caused by inadequate sewage treatment, combined sanitary and storm sewers, contaminated runoff, and toxic pollution; to recommend cooperation among Sound communities; and to support utilizing regulatory entities which are already in place to improve Long Island Sound.

In 2001, the anticipated comprehensive legislation to speed up the clean-up of the Sound and eliminate the nitrogen runoff did not materialize.

During the 2002 session, the LWVCT strongly supported a bill prohibiting the use of alternative sewage disposal systems in drinking water supply watersheds (except for municipal uses in communities where the majority of the land is in drinking water supply watershed). The bill passed.

Three major bills in this area were introduced during the 2003 session: the LWVCT supported a bill mandating a comprehensive look at the state of the watershed when reviewing applications for discharge permits (the bill died), opposed a bill requiring the DEP to evaluate and permit alternative sewage systems (it undermined legislation passed the year before) which unfortunately passed, and lobbied extensively on behalf of a bill proposing to safeguard the state's reservoirs and surrounding lands (see Land Use, above). After several amendments, the bill failed.

During the 2004 and 2005 sessions, several clean water initiatives were proposed and debated. These included various Long Island Sound initiatives, extension of the Clean Water Fund grants to local municipalities (the bill passed), the Water Diversions Act, and Marine Sanctuaries. In 2005, a bill to mandate a Minimum Stream Flow Regulation and a bill authorizing the formation of a Bi-State Long Island Sound Committee passed. Much of the LWVCT action was concentrated in the area of drinking water and drinking watershed preservation, as described under Land Use.

In December 2005, the League co-sponsored the conference *Water Law in Connecticut: Balancing Needs for Fish and Faucet*.

In the 2006 session, the League opposed proposed changes to the state's organizational structure of water planning and recommended further discussion among stakeholders to refine proposals. This bill died. The League also urged support for authorizing seventy million dollars in bonding to fund the Clean Water Fund, but the bonding package was not approved. In 2003 and 2004, the Connecticut General Assembly rescinded Clean Water funding and in 2005 voted *not* to fund the Clean Water Fund. In recent years, it appears clear that Connecticut has turned its back on its commitment to clean water, despite the outstanding results we have achieved based upon Clean

Water Fund investments in reducing sewer line overflows and upgrading sewerage treatment plants.

At the 2007 LWVCT Convention, delegates voted to form a committee to update the Water Resources position in light of current knowledge of impacts of non-point-source pollution. If no committee is in place by December 1, 2007, the position will be retained as is.

LWVCT ACTION ON LWVUS NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

The League supports measures to promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of Natural Resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of Air Quality, Energy, Land Use, Waste Management and Water Resources.

AIR QUALITY

The League supports:

- **measures to reduce vehicular pollution, including inspection and maintenance of emission controls, changes in engine design and fuel types and development of more efficient transportation systems;**
- **regulation and reduction of pollution from stationary sources;**
- **regulation and reduction of ambient toxic air pollutants;**
- **measures to reduce transboundary air pollutants, such as ozone and those that cause acid deposition.**

Background and Action

In 2000, the “Filthy Five” legislation, designed to implement stricter pollution controls for the state’s five fossil fuel burning plants, once again failed to pass. A compromise delaying implementation of the proposed legislation until 2006 and heavy lobbying by industry scuttled the bill.

In 2001, a compromise bill, renamed the “Sooty Six” bill, became the subject of an intensive lobbying effort by the Clean Air Coalition, now including 114 diverse organizations. The bill would have required plants in Bridgeport, Middletown, Milford, Montville, New Haven and Norwalk to meet strict emission standards and would have outlawed some forms of pollution credit trading by December 31, 2004. The bill passed both houses by large majorities (31-5; 86-56) and the Governor originally promised to sign it. However, he later had second thoughts after hearing from plant operators and managers of the New England regional power grid warning that the bill could cause California-type energy shortages. The Coalition, Democratic legislators and citizen groups banded together to pressure the Governor to sign it. On June 2, the day the bill would have become law even without the Governor’s signature, he vetoed the bill.

In 2002, a new “Sooty Six” bill was proposed, including a waiver provision allowing for the suspension of strict standards if lower-sulfur fuel became unavailable. The waiver made the bill acceptable and it passed. The LWVCT strongly supported a mercury reduction bill to eliminate the unnecessary use and discharge of mercury by 2010. The bill passed.

In 2003, two significant bills were introduced: a bill to further reduce mercury emissions from coal fired electricity generators and a bill to reduce emissions from diesel engines. The LWVCT supported both; the mercury emissions bill passed but the diesel bill died in committee. A bill mandating the reduction of diesel fuel emissions from school buses and a “clean cars” bill were supported by the League. Both died. The “Clean Cars Initiative” bill was expected to return in the next session.

Because of the lack of a specialist in this area, the LWVCT acted through coalitions that developed to work on important areas of this portfolio. The League again worked with the Clean Cars Alliance, The Connecticut Climate Action Project, the Zero Mercury project and Connecticut Fund for the Environment.

In 2004, the LWVCT and the coalition lobbied for legislation to mandate California-type emissions standards for cars by 2007. The bill passed. The LWVCT also testified on behalf of a bill to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of our ecosystem by reducing of CO₂ pollution. The Coalition, including the LWVCT, sent over 4,000 letters to the Governor to demand action on global warming. A Climate Change Dialogue was convened by the Governor to recommend policies; 38 of the 55 recommendations were accepted, including a plan for the state to purchase 20% of electricity from clean sources by 2010. A bill requiring a plan to reduce greenhouse gas pollution to the 1990 levels by 2010 passed and was signed into law.

During the 2005 session, the Clean Cars Alliance focused on cleaning up diesel fuel emissions, clean energy and energy conservation, and clean cars incentive programs. Bills to establish a plan to reduce particulates from diesel fuels and to provide incentives to purchasers of clean and energy efficient cars passed and were signed into law. Bills to further reduce the sulfur content of home heating oils and fuel for off-road vehicles, warning of mercury contents of fish, green building standards and others did not pass.

During the 2006 and 2007 legislative sessions the League's major goals were to improve emissions standards, reduce greenhouse gases, combat air pollution and reduce the threat of global warming. The Air Quality Specialist worked closely with the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, the Connecticut Climate Coalition, and Clean Water Action.

In the 2006 session, the League advocated for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to reduce global warming in the northeast region by cutting power plant carbon dioxide pollution. This regional agreement was signed by Governor Rell. We opposed changes to the Toxic Release Inventory and urged the retention of current reporting requirements; our letter countered proposals to limit public access to critical information about toxic chemicals released by companies into local communities and raised the reporting thresholds of toxic chemicals released into the environment. We testified in favor of the Clean Car Incentive Program. This bill passed. It required the DEP commissioner to establish a greenhouse gas (GHG) labeling program for new motor vehicles sold or leased for the 2009 model year or later and established a mechanism for public education that would include information about the environmental impact of emissions from motor vehicles and the impact of vehicle choice on vehicle GHG emissions. It established a \$5 greenhouse registration fee that must be deposited into the federal Clean Air Act account. Passenger cars using hybrid technology and with an EPA-estimated gasoline mileage rating of at least 40 mpg were exempted from the sales tax. We advocated for immediately reducing diesel emission from school buses, transit buses and state construction equipment. (Federal regulations require a reduction in pollution from new diesel trucks and buses sold after 2007. Unfortunately, older engines are not affected by these rules and they will be on the road for a long time.) Retrofit emission control systems can be installed on older engines, reducing diesel pollution by up to 90%. This bill was not voted on by the General Assembly during 2006.

In 2007, the League and our coalition partners were pleased that a number of our goals were achieved. Measures to reduce global warming, to extend sales tax exemptions to efficient motor vehicles and to support green building construction were included in a comprehensive energy bill

that was passed by the General Assembly. We advocated for a comprehensive energy plan with our coalition partners and were one of the signers of the *Environmental and Consumer Statement on CT Energy Bills*. The comprehensive energy bill requires that the Rell administration sell permits to emit global warming pollution to power-generating companies and that the proceeds from these permits will be invested in energy efficiency and new clean energy generation. Two other measures that we strongly supported this year were included in this bill: 1) The sales tax exemptions on hybrid vehicles was extended to all motor vehicles that achieve forty miles per gallon in either highway or city driving; 2) The state's "green building" requirements were increased and financial incentives were adopted to encourage the use of energy-efficient technology in state facilities, school construction and school renovation. The LWVCT believes that green buildings are not only more energy efficient, they are more likely to incorporate renewable energy sources and use grid power generated from renewable sources. We supported legislation that adopted Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards and provided for financial incentives for school construction projects so that students could learn in a more conducive and healthier environment. We continue to support regional measures to reduce global warming: We signed, as part of the New England Climate Coalition, a letter sent to New England Governors urging them to take action on global warming.

Our continued effort to reduce diesel pollution in school buses was successful in 2007. We provided testimony and wrote numerous e-mails to legislators that supported the installation of equipment to reduce diesel emissions in school bus cabins by keeping harmful fumes out of the passenger compartment as well as tailpipe emission control retrofits. Provisions of this bill were incorporated into "An Act Implementing the Provisions of the Budget Concerning General Government" This Act provides grants for equipping all school buses with closed crankcase filtration systems and other devices that will reduce emissions and pollution in school buses by September 1, 2010. A bill that did not pass that we supported was an enforcement mechanism for the prohibition of idling of motor vehicles. This bill died in the Public Safety Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND POLLUTION CONTROL AND ENERGY

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment. Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Background and Action

Broadwater Energy, a subsidiary of foreign-owned oil companies, is proposing to permanently anchor a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) processing facility in Long Island Sound. Long Island Sound was designated as an Estuary of National Significance in 1987. The Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), developed by diverse stakeholders of government officials, nonprofit organizations and commercial interests, indicates that the Sound provides an estimated \$5.5 billion per year to the regional economy from boating, commercial and sport fishing, swimming, and sight-seeing. As large as the Queen Mary II, the LNG factory operations would harm this estuary of national significance and begin the industrialization of Long Island Sound.

Overall, the Broadwater project would delay the implementation of alternative energy strategies, increase our dependence upon foreign fossil fuels, usurp public lands and waters for its exclusive use and benefit, imperil Long Island's coastal environment and increase the risk of an environmental accident or terrorist attack.

In 2005, the League joined the Sound Alliance in opposition to the Broadwater Energy proposal. Since that time, we have actively opposed this proposal and have submitted testimony urging denial of the application to the US Coast Guard, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the State of Connecticut's Long Island Sound Liquefied Natural Gas Task Force.

FERC is currently reviewing the application and is expected to render a final decision in 2007. The US Coast Guard's 2006 Waterway Suitability report did not take a stand in support or opposition to the proposal, but it did indicate that the proposal poses significant risks that would require added law enforcement, security, and firefighting capabilities to escort boats transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG), and help prevent terrorist attacks, shipping accidents, and environmental damage. Connecticut's federal and state elected officials – including the entire congressional delegation, Governor Rell, Attorney General Blumenthal, Secretary of State Bysiewicz, and the CT LIS Liquefied Natural Gas Task Force – have strenuously opposed the facility. New York State authorities are currently reviewing the proposal and the first decisions on the various permits could be rendered as early as Fall 2007.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The League supports:

- **policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous waste;**
- **policies to ensure safe treatment, transportation, storage and disposal of solid and hazardous waste in order to protect public health and air, water and land resources;**
- **planning and decision-making processes that recognize suitable solid and hazardous wastes as potential resources;**
- **policies for the management of civilian and military high- and low- level radioactive wastes to protect public health, and air, water and land resources;**
- **the establishment of processes for effective involvement of state and local governments and citizens in proposals for siting of treatment, storage, disposal, and transportation of radioactive wastes;**
- **full environmental review of treatment, storage and disposal facilities for radioactive wastes;**
- **safe transport, storage and disposal of radioactive wastes.**

Background and Action

The LWVCT has consistently supported statewide recycling and environmentally sound waste disposal. The LWVCT successfully worked for passage of the Bottle Bill, the mandatory recycling law, and lobbied for the passage of landmark legislation that addressed the problem of excess packaging. The LWVCT advocated for the concept of an enlightened resource recovery program through establishment of the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority.

Efforts to broaden the recycling legislation began during the 2000 session, although no legislation was proposed.

In 2001, legislation was proposed to include containers for non-carbonated beverages into the recycling program by imposing the same five cents per container fee as exists for carbonated beverage containers. The bill was not acted on by either chamber.

Efforts to broaden the recycling program continued through the 2002 and 2003 sessions but no bill made it out of committee. A bill to repeal the Bottle Bill, disguised as “litter tax,” was defeated by a coalition consisting of the Connecticut Audubon Society, ConnPIRG and the LWVCT.

In 2004, a bill was introduced by the Planning and Development committee to repeal the Bottle Bill. The initiative was defeated by the coalition. Despite efforts, no expansion bill made it past the committees in that session.

In 2005, a bill was introduced to broaden the 1978 CT deposit legislation to include bottled water containers. Although the proposal included only bottled water containers and not all non-carbonated beverages, the proposal was significant. The Coalition which now also included the League of Conservation Voters and the entire Connecticut Fund for the Environment network lobbied intensely to push passage through the various committees, to defeat a “poison pill” amendment, and organized a media advisory event to assure passage. A Call to Action was issued by the LWVCT. Unfortunately, despite all efforts, the bottle bill did not pass in the 2005 session.

In 2006, a bill was again introduced to include the now ubiquitous water bottle to the beverage container redemption-recycling program. The bill passed the Senate, only to languish and die on the House calendar. A different bill that added all non-carbonated beverages and increased the deposit to ten cents, died in committee.

In 2007, a bill failed to pass again due to intense industry lobbying. The bill was introduced to add bottled water and non-carbonated beverages (excluding dairy), e.g., sport drinks and iced teas, to the beverage container redemption-recycling program and to increase the deposit to ten cents when and if neighboring states increased their deposit to ten cents. Once again the bill passed the Senate. The House Screening Committee did not send the “bottle bill” to the House despite all the overwhelmingly positive Environment and Finance, Revenue and Bonding committee votes. Instead, it sent the bill to General Law, where it was voted down 13-4. Despite all advocacy efforts, the bill was not resurrected.

The LWVCT has no Waste Management Specialist at this time, but work on this issue is undertaken by the League’s Drinking Water Specialist.

SOCIAL POLICY

DEATH PENALTY

(2006)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that capital punishment should not be a sentencing option for murder or any other crime. A sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of release is punishment that ensures public safety without raising the many complex problems associated with the death penalty. Along with opposition to the death penalty, we support:

- Continued strong standards of competency and experience for attorneys, and appropriate compensation.
- Continued sufficient State funding for testing and preservation of biological evidence.
- Reforms to assure validity of testimony by eyewitnesses, codefendants, and jailhouse informants.
- Reforms, including collection of data, to address problems of proportionality in sentencing.

Until the death penalty in Connecticut is abolished, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports an immediate moratorium on executions.

The LWVCT currently does not have a specialist in this area. No action was taken during the past session. A coalition on this issue may be in formation.

GAMBLING

(1994; updated and affirmed 2003)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut opposes legalizing additional forms of gambling, and especially the expansion of casino gambling in Connecticut. The LWVCT opposes all legislation that enables the expansion of casino-type gambling – including, but not limited to blackjack, poker, craps, high-stakes bingo, roulette, or slot machines – in Connecticut, regardless of the venue or the sponsor of such gambling. The LWVCT supports the 2003 repeal of Connecticut’s so-called Las Vegas Nights legislation because we recognize that this legislation has facilitated the expansion of casino gambling in Connecticut.

In working to influence public policies on gambling the League will:

- strongly oppose legalization of additional forms of gambling;
- advocate for the repeal of any legislation that facilitates the expansion of casino gambling in the state;
- advocate for the adoption of legislative/regulatory of safeguards – legal, environmental, social, economic, land use – to curtail further expansion of gambling in the state.

Expanded gambling is not an acceptable method of enhancing state and local government revenue or stimulating economic development.

Background and Action

The LWVCT position on gambling was adopted in 1994 by concurrence with the LWV

Pennsylvania position.

In 2000 and 2001, there was limited activity in this area.

During the 2002 session, several groups repeatedly asserted their requests for expansion of casino gambling. Opponents of gambling began talking about the repeal of the Las Vegas Nights legislation, enacted by the legislature in 1972, to help non profits raise funds. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 provided federally recognized Indian tribes the right to enter into gambling negotiations with the states that permitted gambling for any purpose. The LWVCT's position was silent on Las Vegas Nights. The position was reviewed by a special study committee spearheaded by the Wilton League and new wording was adopted at the LWVCT's 2003 Convention.

Meanwhile, during the 2002 special session, the legislature repealed the 1972 Las Vegas Nights legislation. The LWVCT strongly supported this repeal based on our opposition to any expansion of casino gambling. However, during the regular session, the House passed a bill that would have undermined the repeal and potentially re-opened the door to further casino expansion. In coalition with the Alliance, the LWVCT succeeded in having the bill stripped of the language that could have caused difficulties.

No gambling bills were proposed in the 2004 session.

In August 2004, the Department of Interior, charged with reviewing the process by which it granted the recognition to the Schaghticoke Indian tribe, found no irregularity in the process. They found that no clear standard for granting federal recognition to tribes exists and that the regulations governing the Bureau of Indian Affairs are "permissive and inherently flexible." Governor Rell strongly objected to this finding and requested that the Connecticut Congressional delegation take all the necessary steps to repair the "seriously flawed recognition process." The LWVCT supported this initiative and thanked the Governor for her efforts. Eventually, the BIA reversed their recognition of the tribe.

No new gambling bills were offered during the recent legislative sessions.

The LWVCT has no Gambling specialist at this time.

MENTAL HEALTH

(2003)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports comprehensive, community-based mental health systems for children and adults. These systems should include early detection and intervention with a range of services to facilitate care, treatment and recovery. The LWVCT supports a public initiative on mental health.

Background and Action

The Mental Health position was adopted at the 2003 Convention based on a study led by the Greater Hartford and New Britain Leagues. Legislators were provided with copies of the newly-adopted position.

The LWVCT immediately contacted the Governor to express concern about the excessive loss of direct care and support staff in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services facilities

and hospitals.

During the 2004 session, the LWVCT, as part of the Keep the Promise Coalition, testified on behalf of several bills to ease the plight of the mentally ill: an initiative for a new community mental health residential program for offenders with serious mental illnesses who are leaving correctional facilities, a budget initiative to add 180 supportive housing units for families, and a bill to mandate supportive housing for persons with mental disabilities. We have also opposed budget cuts in community-based and early-detection mental health systems for children. Some additional funds were appropriated in the budget, and the Medicaid co-payments enacted in the previous year were repealed, but the specific bills did not pass.

The LWVCT had no Mental Health Specialist from 2005 to 2007. However, together with the Keep the Promise Coalition, we advocated for various housing bills in 2005.

A new Mental Health Specialist is in place for the next legislative session.

QUALITY INTEGRATED EDUCATION

(1991; reviewed and affirmed 2001)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that racial/ethnic and economic integration is essential to providing quality education in a pluralistic society. The entire population must be well educated to insure the economic future of our state. Schools educate and socialize the next generation. Youngsters can receive a complete education only in classrooms that reflect the diversity of the adult world they will enter.

Given the large number of towns in the state and the concentration of minorities in a few core cities, most desegregation plans must involve more than one community. Thus, the LWVCT supports the concept of collective responsibility. The responsibility for desegregation must be shared by all concerned; i.e., the state of Connecticut, racially imbalanced school districts, contiguous school districts and adjacent school districts.

The state of Connecticut and local Boards of Education must work together to achieve quality education throughout the state. Programs to reach this goal could include but not be limited to the following:

- **Recruitment of minority teachers**
- **Magnet schools**
- **Schools with before- and after-school day care**
- **Schools with preschool programs**
- **School pairings**
- **Collaborative school construction between districts**
- **Expanded vocational/technical school programs**
- **Redrawing of school boundaries**

Within the traditional educational structure, students are assigned to schools based on the students' places of residence. We believe that alternative means of school assignment, decided by parents and authorities together, can provide flexibility in achieving the goal of integration. Assignment based on parents' places of work, specific needs or special interest of students are examples of alternatives that could be used.

A working partnership between state and local authorities must exist to guarantee success.

Ideally, the responsibility for initiation and implementation of programs should be local. When communities do not act or cannot work together, then the state must step in. The state must take the lead in developing funding mechanisms for programs, particularly at the initiation and implementation stages. There must be shared monitoring and assessment of programs by both the state and local authorities.

Background and Action

In 1996, the LWVCT adopted this position as one of its 1997 legislative priorities.

A committee was formed following the 2001 Convention, reflecting delegates' desire to update this position, and recommended that the position be retained as written.

Various bills attempting to recruit and retain minority teachers, clarifying the charter school legislation and other initiatives were proposed in 2001. The LWVCT joined CAPE (Connecticut Association for Public Education) in a proposal to clarify the charter school legislation but the bill did not make it out of the session.

The LWVCT has had no QIE specialist since 2001.

SCHOOL FINANCE

(1990; updated and affirmed 2000)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that fairness or equity in education means more than the spending of equal dollars or the provision of identical programs for the education of each public school child in our state. The League therefore supports a system of public elementary and secondary education in Connecticut which will provide a suitable program of educational experiences for each child and which will make available to each community sufficient financial resources to support that level of educational services.

The League believes that the state has the responsibility to define broad goals for an educational program and to establish minimum required levels of student achievement. There should be significant local participation. School districts should be encouraged to exceed the standards where possible.

- 1. The state should assure through state grants to communities that sufficient resources are available for the education of every child, regardless of where that child lives. The state should fund 50% of the statewide cost of K-12 public education. Every school district should receive a minimum per-pupil state aid.**
- 2. Because of the wide differences in local wealth, greater equality of educational opportunity will require a greater average state share of local school costs. This means a considerably higher state percentage of school costs in poorer communities and a lower percentage in wealthier ones. State aid to any city or town should be free to rise each year by as much as the Educational Cost Share (ECS) formula requires.**
- 3. In measuring the relative ability of different communities to finance schools from local resources and therefore the relative need of each for state financial assistance, the state should consider:**

- a. the community's property wealth as defined by its Grand List per Pupil or preferably per capita, compared to that in other communities in the state;
 - b. the income level of that community compared to that of other towns in the state; and
 - c. other demands on local tax revenues, such as police, fire and social services.
4. The state should recognize that spending equal dollars per child in the school assistance programs does not mean equal educational opportunity. Since certain children are more difficult to educate, it is more costly to educate them to a minimum achievement level. In determining the total amount of state assistance to a community, many factors should be considered. Among them:
 - a. the number of poorer families, possibly those on Aid to Dependent Children (in view of welfare reform legislation, a more accurate measure of children in poverty, such as eligibility for free or reduced cost school lunch should be substituted for Temporary Family Assistance);
 - b. the number of those failing state Mastery tests;
 - c. the graduation rates or drop-out rates;
 - d. the number of students not proficient in English; and
 - e. the Excess Cost Grant, which reimburses the district for the cost of the most expensive special education students, should be set lower than five times the local per-pupil costs.
5. In order to assure that increased state assistance for schools achieves an improvement in education, especially in poorer communities, the state should require a certain minimum expenditure per pupil for a community to be eligible for any state assistance for its schools. The state should also require that any increase in the school assistance be used for an equivalent rise in local school expenditures over that of previous years. The Minimum Expenditure Requirement (MER), the amount that a district is required to spend on education, should be equal to the Foundation times the number of Needs Students, as defined in the ECS formula.
6. Local communities should retain control of instructional programs and spending allocations and there should be no cap on spending per pupil.
7. If a substantial number of students in a district are failing to attain state-set achievement levels, the state should step in and work with the district to analyze the problem and to seek an improvement.
8. The acute problem, particularly in cities, created by the concentration of children who for various reasons are more costly to educate, requires that the state adopt extraordinary measures directed at raising the levels of achievement in these communities.
9. The programs and monies should, as much as possible, provide incentives for cities and towns to emphasize and execute effective educational programs.
10. The cap on the ECS grant should be removed within two years as specified in the 1999 ECS legislation

The Foundation, the basic element of the ECS formula, should be set in the state's biennial budget.

Background and Action

The Concurrence position above was approved by the LWVCT board in January 2000. Press releases were sent to selected media and legislators were informed of the new position. No ECS legislation was proposed during the 2000 session.

In 2001, testimony was sent to the Governor urging full funding for the ECS formula and a lower threshold for the Special Education Excess Cost Grant. More than 50 bills were introduced in the House and Senate to restructure and/or phase out the ECS formula. The LWVCT presented testimony to the Education Committee urging early removal of the cap and full funding. The LWVCT participated in a West Hartford conference on the ECS formula sponsored by the West Hartford PTA. Ultimately, the leadership decided to abandon legislative efforts to revamp the formula and dealt with the funding increases through the budget. Municipalities received some additional funds in both budget years.

During the 2002 session, the LWVCT testified in favor of a bill to slightly increase the Foundation in 2003 and phase the cap out entirely in 2004. The bill died because of budgetary constraints.

Many bills were proposed to restructure the ECS grant and increase the Special Education Excess Cost Grant. The LWVCT testified in favor of those increasing the aid to municipalities. No bills passed. The reform of the ECS grant was entirely overshadowed by the fiscal situation.

Each session, numerous bills are submitted proposing various changes to the ECS formula and to increase state support for special education. In 2004, the legislature abolished the ECS cap and appropriated money to begin phasing out its effects. Despite this legislation, towns are still receiving less than their full entitlement. The 2001 law, reducing the special education cost threshold from five to 4.5 times the district's average per pupil expenditure for the preceding year, was delayed several times and was scheduled to take effect in 2005.

The passage of federal No Child Left Behind legislation is also affecting educational costs.

Due to a more favorable fiscal picture, the 2005-'06 budget included a 4% increase in the ECS grant above the 2004 budget, and implemented the re-imbursement threshold for the Excess Cost Grant for Special Education to 4.5 times the average expenditure, but granted an additional increase in the funding for this formula. The Governor also formed a task force to review unfunded state mandates. The LWVCT submitted no testimony in 2005.

During the 2006 session, the LWVCT submitted testimony in support of bills increasing the ECS Foundation by 3%, tying it in the future to increases in the Consumer Price Index, and changing the definition of per capita income so as to incorporate more current data. These measures failed. The sole change made to the formula for FY 2007 was a provision that no town would receive less than 60% of its formula grant, which affected only Simsbury. Total ECS funding increased .4% (\$8 million) based on a town-by-town schedule that allocated proportionately more to towns receiving less than formula aid.

The LWVCT also testified on the following targeted measures: in support of \$3.5 million in additional funding for preschool slots in ERG I towns, which passed; in favor of \$250,000 competitive grants to establish all-day Kindergarten programs in Priority School Districts, which failed; for a requirement that the state provide assistance in the development of individualized education programs for diverse learners in regular education settings, which failed; for a measure

requiring elementary schools in Priority School Districts to have Family Resource Centers, which failed; against a special levy on the state's wealthiest towns, which would have funded increased aid to towns with high educational tax burdens, and which failed.

Among other major education grants, the Special Education Excess Cost grant increased by \$20 million, which was supposed to fully fund the 4.5 multiplier for the first time, and the Priority District Base Grant rose by \$12 million.

Overall, state education aid increased by 3% (\$60 million) for FY '07.

Also in 2006, the Governor convened a Commission on Education Finance, whose mission was to address disparities in aid to municipalities. The LWVCT monitored the commission's meetings throughout the year and offered detailed testimony regarding our position on school finance at a public hearing in June.

The LWVCT also followed the activities of the CT Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF), an organization representing municipalities, non-profits, and individuals interested in addressing the adequacy of school funding in the state. CCJEF was the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit filed against the state in November 2005, alleging that existing funding was unconstitutionally inadequate and inequitable.

In addition, we worked with the Citizens Network of the Capital Region (CNCR), a grassroots organization advocating reduced dependence on the property tax to fund education, to present four interactive community conversations on education funding. Three of these were co-sponsored by local Leagues.

In early 2007, the Governor's Commission on Education Finance published its findings, recommending overhaul of the ECS formula, modifications to other education grants, and implementation of a results-based school accountability system. The Commission's recommendations were compatible overall with the League school finance position. The Governor adopted most of the Commission's suggestions in her proposed budget for the 2008-'09 biennium.

During the 2007 session, the LWVCT formulated a set of legislative priorities for school finance and communicated them to key legislators. We testified in general support of the Governor's early childhood education, school accountability, and ECS initiatives, but suggested modifications to her definition of the ECS Foundation and the Minimum Expenditure Requirement (MER). We also advocated: higher funding for other targeted grants, particularly pupil transportation, adult and bilingual education, after-school programs, and family resource centers; funding and implementation of a pre-K data collection system; and reduction of the Special Education Excess Cost multiplier to 3.5. We testified against her proposed 2011-'12 phase-out of the Priority School District grant.

The budget compromise that emerged from the 2007 legislative special session contained the largest increases in ECS funding (\$182 million for '08, \$80 million for '09) since 1996. The accompanying ECS legislation makes major improvements in the formula and includes an acceptable MER. It does, however, contain a troublesome 4.4% minimum increase provision (i.e. hold-harmless) and does not include the type of Foundation definition LWVCT advocated. It phases in additional funding for the new formula: for '08, 17.31% of the difference between the '07 grant and the fully funded grant; for '09, a disappointing 23.3%.

The adopted budget funded significant increases for early childhood education (including a

preschool quality rating system) and implementation of a school accountability system. With respect to targeted grants: pupil transportation, bilingual education and family resource centers were flat funded; adult ed increased about 5% for '08 only; after school programs received a 70% increase for '08, a tiny one for '09; the Special Education Excess Cost Multiplier remained at 4.5 and was fully funded. The Pre-K Data collection system was not funded. Phase-out of the Priority School District Grant was eliminated and instead a \$150 per pupil minimum grant was enacted.

Overall, the budget increased education aid by 11.4% (\$237 million) for '08 and by 4.4% (\$102 million) for '09.

In February 2007, CCJEF released “A Framework for Adequately and Equitably Funding Connecticut’s Public Schools,” a policy study outlining its recommendations for a redesigned funding formula, school accountability, and revenue/tax restructuring. The \$3.7 billion price tag attached to its funding proposal — about \$1.5 billion higher than the governor’s 5-year plan for ECS — generated disbelief and dismissal among legislative leaders. As of July, its lawsuit against the state was still in pretrial motions.

The LWVCT continued to work with CNCR in 2007, co-sponsoring a “Connecticut Summit on School Funding Reform” in January and a Bloomfield community conversation in April.

SCHOOL START TIME

(2006)

The League of Women Voters has long supported policies and programs that promote quality education as well as the health, well-being, and safety of all children. Research shows that modifying school start times in accordance with the biologically-determined sleep patterns of adolescents is associated with increased school attendance, higher grades, lower drop-out rates, less tardiness, and fewer fall-asleep car crashes by young drivers. In order to set a high priority on the health and safety of Connecticut’s adolescent students and to offer them the opportunity to learn when they are most alert and receptive, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports policies and practices that facilitate the alignment of school start times with adolescent sleep patterns. Specifically, we believe that:

- **Adolescent students – in middle school, junior high, and high school – would benefit academically, socially, and physically from starting school no earlier than 8 am.**
- **Public schools in Connecticut – junior high schools, middle schools, and high schools – should delay academic instruction until after 8 am.**
- **The State of Connecticut should support local efforts to delay the school start times until after 8 am for adolescent students through consultation and technical assistance.**
- **State policies should be flexible enough to allow variation in local plans to implement later school start times for adolescents.**

Background and Action

No serious bills were introduced in this area in the 2006-'07 sessions. No action was taken. The LWVCT currently does not have a specialist in this area.

SCHOOL VOUCHERS

(1996; affirmed in 2007)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the system of elementary and secondary education must be fiscally and educationally accountable to Connecticut citizens. Therefore, public funds should not be used through vouchers or direct payments to support students attending non-public schools.

The League bases its position on choice in education on three undesirable consequences: it will reduce fiscal and educational accountability; it will subvert the goal of equal educational opportunity; and it will sap public schools of financial resources and citizen support.

Background and Action

The 1995 Convention adopted a concurrence on school vouchers based on the LWVNJ position.

In 2000, the LWVCT and CAPE joined forces to lobby against the Governor's efforts to introduce voucher legislation. None of the bills passed.

In 2001, the Governor once again proposed a funding scheme to provide public funds for children attending private schools. Legislative leadership did not act on any such bills and no funding was included in the biennial budget.

During the 2002 session, the Governor proposed a legislative package to build upon the federal No Child Left Behind Act. It didn't pass.

The LWVCT opposed a similar legislative package proposed as part of the Governor's 2004-'05 budget.

No serious bills were proposed during the most recent legislative sessions; therefore no action was needed on vouchers during the past several sessions.

TEEN PREGNANCY

(1989; affirmed 1999)

- 1. The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the problems caused by teen pregnancy threaten not only our youth but also the future well-being of the State of Connecticut and therefore must be addressed aggressively on the state level.**
- 2. Therefore, we believe the state of Connecticut must:**
 - a. Actively encourage a comprehensive, age-appropriate K-12 Family Life Education program in all schools, and provide for teacher-training programs to ensure that such programs are well taught.**
 - b. Support school-based health clinics to give teenagers access to a broad range of health care services, including reproductive health.**
 - c. Support programs and services designed to help teenagers delay parenthood.**
 - d. Support appropriate services and programs designed to encourage and enable teen parents to finish high school and become economically self-sufficient.**

3. **Specific programs should be developed with the help of broad-based community advisory groups to ensure that there is local support and understanding of these programs.**
4. **The League of Women Voters of Connecticut also supports local initiatives in each of the aforementioned areas.**

Background and Action

The LWVCT has been following this issue through coalition work and monitoring of legislation that addresses family planning, school based health clinics and programs and services to meet the needs of teen parents.

No significant bills have been proposed since 2000. The LWVCT continues to monitor this issue.

In 2005, an amendment to an unrelated bill proposed to require parental involvement in the minor's decision-making concerning pregnancy decisions. The LWVCT opposed the amendment. It did not pass.

Legislative efforts in this area have been taken principally under the LWVUS position on Reproductive Rights. The LWVCT has no specialist in Teen Pregnancy but does have an active Reproductive Rights Specialist advocating on some of these issues.

LWVCT ACTION ON LWVUS SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS

GUN CONTROL

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons.

Background and Action

The Gun Control position was adopted at the 1990 LWVUS Convention.

After Connecticut's passage of a significant gun control bill, no legislative changes were made during the 2000 session.

During the 2001 session, the General Assembly passed a bill to streamline the process to receive gun permits, enable the police to more easily take weapons away from those subject to restraining orders, and ban .50 caliber armor-piercing bullets.

There were no significant bills passed in 2002.

In 2003, a bill to establish a ballistic data base from shell casings taken of every hand gun sold after October 1, 2003, was proposed in the wake of the D.C. sniper attacks. The LWVCT supported the bill; however, it died in committee.

In 2004, a bill requiring the reporting of a theft or loss of a firearm and another bill concerning a waiting period for the sale of rifles and shotguns were both introduced. The League, in coalition with CAGV (Connecticut Against Gun Violence) supported both bills. The latter bill died in the Public Safety Committee. The bill requiring reporting of stolen guns passed two committees but remained stalled in the House. It died for lack of action.

The LWVCT also responded to several LWVUS Calls to Action regarding bills to renew the federal assault weapons ban.

In 2005, the stolen firearm bill was re-introduced and a new bill proposed expanding the registration coverage for long guns. Both bills passed the Judiciary Committee but, once again, became stalled in the Public Safety Committee despite active lobbying by the LWVCT and the coalition.

In the 2006 session, the stolen firearm bill was re-introduced with active lobbying in support by LWVCT and the Coalition. It passed the Senate but failed to pass the House by 7 votes.

In 2007, a hard-won victory! After intense lobbying by Connecticut Against Gun Violence, the League and coalition partners, the bill passed and was signed into law by the Governor.

HEALTH CARE

The LWVUS position, adopted 1993, supports a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost to be available to all U.S. residents. The League favors a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes, with administration either by a

combination of the private and public sectors or by a combination of federal, state and/or regional government agencies.

Background and Action

In 2007, LWVCT joined a coalition of organizations in the “HealthCare4Every1” campaign, to advocate for accessible, affordable universal health care for all residents of CT. The LWVCT submitted testimony in support of two Senate bills in March. One provided for a single payer system in addition to access to affordable universal health care; the other would have created a purchasing pool of multiple private health plans with a sliding scale for all uninsured residents. However, the legislature failed to initiate universal health care. Instead, it established a commission to make recommendations for 2008 and passed an extension of the HUSKY health care program for youth and a raise in the re-imbursement rate for doctors and service providers for the poor.

HOUSING

Support equal access to housing without discrimination. Some of the criteria that support this position are:

- **Opportunities for purchase or renting of homes and for borrowing money for housing should not be restricted because of discriminatory reasons such as race, color, sex, religion or national origin.**
- **Responsibility in nationwide effort to achieve equality of opportunity for access to housing resides with government at all levels and with the private sector.**
- **Funding should be adequate for public education to inform citizens of the provisions of fair housing legislation, of their fair housing rights and of procedures to be followed in securing them.**
- **There should be continued evaluation to provide a basis for revision and strengthening of all procedures so that equality of opportunity for access to housing can be accomplished.**
- **State and local governments should establish effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate, and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector.**
- **Government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing assistance programs.**
- **Zoning practices and procedures that will counteract racial and economic isolation should be promoted.**
- **Publicly assisted housing should be included in viable, balanced communities, with provisions for quality public services and facilities.**
- **The rights of tenants to negotiate for proper maintenance, management of facilities and services should be protected.**

Background and Action

The LWVCT supports the goals of the Partnership for Strong Communities. Among the goals of the Partnership are encouragement the construction of affordable housing through the enacted Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure and effecting additional legislation towards this end.

The LWVCT was not active in this program area in 2000 or 2001, as there was no specialist on board. During the 2003 session, in coalition with the Partnership for Strong Communities, the LWVCT testified against the weakening of the appeal procedure for the RAP program.

In 2004, the LWVCT opposed a bill that would have weakened the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure Act. It did not pass.

In 2005, the same initiative was opposed by the League. The bill was successfully defeated.

The LWVCT also supported the Partnership's initiative to create a new \$100 million Housing Trust Fund for Economic Growth and Opportunity. It would create a reliable and consistent source of revenues needed for the rehabilitation and production of housing for low and moderate income families. A Call to Action was issued to support the bill. Unfortunately, after passing the key Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, the bill did not pass.

During both the 2006 and 2007 legislative sessions legislation was introduced that would weaken the Appeals Procedure. The LWVCT monitored these proposals but did not feel it necessary to intervene. Fortunately, none of the proposed bills reached the floor.

In 2007 HomeConnecticut, staffed by the Partnership for Strong Communities, introduced legislation that would provide incentives to municipalities that allow creation of higher density affordable housing. The LWVCT submitted testimony on behalf of this legislation (SB 1057) not only because of its potential to spur construction of affordable housing but because it encourages responsible land use. A Call to Action was also issued and although the bill was not fully funded, it was passed and signed by Governor Rell. HomeConnecticut considers this a significant achievement and is cautiously confident that additional funding will be applied.

INCOME ASSISTANCE

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Criteria should be:

- **eligibility of all low-income individuals for assistance should be based on need;**
- **benefit levels should be sufficient to provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter;**
- **there should be increased emphasis on cash assistance but in-kind assistance should be continued;**
- **under a revised program, participants should not have their benefits reduced;**
- **privacy of participants should be protected;**
- **work should be encouraged: participants' total income should increase as earnings increase;**
- **supportive services should be available but not compulsory for participants in income assistance programs.**

Background and Action

In 2000, the Earned Income Tax Credit legislation was debated without any action. The LWVCT was not an active partner in any coalition.

In 2001, several bills were introduced to strengthen the TAF (Temporary Assistance to Families) program for families transitioning from welfare to work. The League presented testimony to the Appropriations Committee in favor of rental assistance, a longer period for food stamp and health insurance benefits, Earned Income Tax Credit, affordable childcare and more. While some limited additional funds were approved in the biennial budget, no significant legislation passed.

Budget issues dominated the 2002 and 2003 sessions. The LWVCT testified against the budget cuts in the various areas of temporary assistance, food stamps and health insurance. The final budget, adopted during the second special session, contained significant cuts in these areas.

All League activity under this portfolio in 2004 and 2005 has been described under Children's Issues.

In 2006, the LWVCT had a specialist who actively worked in coalition with the Connecticut Association for Human Services in advocating for a state earned income tax credit. The effort was off to a very promising start when the Human Services Committee gave the Bill (No. 147) bipartisan support and when the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee included a tax credit for low-income workers in the tax package they reported out of Committee. Unfortunately, the Earned Income Tax Credit failed to survive the budget negotiations.

It was unfortunate too that our Specialist moved out of state and no replacement was found for her for the 2007 session. During the 2007 session, the League's support of this effort was limited to submission of testimony. Once again this year, the effort to establish an Earned Income Tax Credit was unsuccessful.

The LWVCT does not have an Income Assistance specialist at this time.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Background and Action

The LWVUS adopted this position in January 1983.

The LWVCT supported the passage of the Freedom of Choice Act which would preserve the right of a woman to choose an abortion.

Connecticut continues to provide Medicaid funding for all necessary abortions; there is no parental notification law. Teenagers are counseled regularly regarding all options and parental participation in all decisions is encouraged.

In 2005, a bill was introduced to give Connecticut's uninsured adults greater access to family planning services and reproductive health care. The LWVCT, in coalition with NARAL, supported the bill, which passed. An amendment to another bill, requiring parental involvement in a minor's decision about abortion, was opposed by the LWVCT, although we took no position

on the bill to which the amendment was attached. The bill and the amendment died.

In 2006, the “Compassionate Care for Victims of Sexual Assault” bill was introduced, which provided that victims of sexual assault would be offered emergency contraception in any Connecticut hospital or other medical facility where they were being treated. Due to strenuous opposition by the Catholic Church, the bill failed to pass. In 2007, the bill was re-introduced, with intense negotiations occurring between proponents and opponents in an effort to find a solution which would set a standard of care for the provision of emergency contraception to be delivered by hospital staff or a third party independent provider (nurse, doctor, physician assistant, advanced practice nurse) who would perform the sexual assault forensic exam and offer and provide the emergency contraception on-site. The LWVCT joined NARAL, Planned Parenthood, Connsac and other organizations to promote passage of this bill. The bill was overwhelmingly approved by both the House and the Senate and signed into law by the Governor.

Several attempts were made by some legislators to curtail those freedoms, specifically in regard to parental notification. Those bills, fortunately, died in committee.

LWVUS POSITIONS UPON WHICH LWVCT HAS TAKEN ACTION IN PAST

CHILD CARE, CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.

CHILDREN AT RISK

This position was adopted by concurrence of delegates at the 1994 LWVUS Convention. Support policies and programs that promote the well being, development and safety of all children.

The LWVUS believes that early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the well being, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children. These include:

- **Child abuse/neglect prevention**
- **Teen pregnancy prevention**
- **Quality health care, including nutrition and prenatal care**
- **Early child education**
- **Developmental services, emphasizing children ages 0-3**
- **Family support services**
- **Violence prevention**

Background and Action

The 1988 LWVUS Convention adopted a position on childcare that evolved from several other positions. In 1996, the LWVCT adopted Children-At-Risk as a legislative priority. Although we have two separate positions, legislation and advocacy have dealt with elements of both.

In 2000, the Earned Income Tax Credit legislation was debated without any action. The LWVCT was not an active partner in the coalition.

In 2001, several bills were introduced to strengthen the TAF (Temporary Assistance to Families) program for families transitioning from welfare to work. The League presented testimony to the Appropriations Committee in favor of rental assistance, a longer period for food stamp and health insurance benefits, an Earned Income Tax Credit, affordable childcare and more. While some limited additional funds were approved in the biennial budget, no significant legislation passed.

Budget issues dominated the 2002 and 2003 sessions. The LWVCT lobbied against cuts in various programs serving children and adults. The final 2003 budget, adopted in second special session, contained significant reductions in these critical areas.

In 2004, the LWVCT supported an omnibus bill, putting forth strategies for achieving a 50%

reduction in child poverty over the next ten years. It dealt with affordable housing, access to health care, vocational training and other strategies to encourage self-sufficiency for families moving from welfare to work. The bill passed and became law. The law established the Connecticut Child Poverty Council. In December 2004, the League commented favorably on the plan of action adopted by the Council.

In 2005, a bill was proposed to implement the recommendations of the Council aimed at reducing child poverty in the state. The bill passed and became law.

The LWVCT also supported a bill to create an Earned Income Tax Credit against the Personal Income Tax. The bill did not pass.

The League also testified in favor of the restoration of healthcare coverage for caregivers of HUSKY A and B children. Although the bill did not pass, the budget carried some additional funding in these areas.

The LWVCT currently has no specialist in this area; some advocacy efforts occur under our Income Assistance portfolio.

POSITIONS DROPPED BY LWVCT CONVENTIONS

During the Program Planning process, League members thoroughly evaluate existing LWVCT positions for relevance and member understanding. Convention delegates have approved several drops, clarifications and re-studies of positions, but also requested that the text of dropped positions and the rationale for dropping them be recorded.

Board of Education Elections (1981, reaffirmed 1991, dropped 1999)

Support: legislation enabling municipalities to determine the composition, terms of office, and methods of selection of local boards of education.

Rationale: This position has been substantially achieved.

Jury Selection (1985, reaffirmed 1995, dropped 1999)

Support: computerized jury lists at state level from voter and motor vehicle lists; no exemptions except extreme hardship; \$90 fine for failure to serve; use of expanded voir-dire questionnaire; one-day/one-trial term of jury service.

Rationale: This position has been substantially achieved.

Merit Selection of Judges (1979, reaffirmed 1989, dropped 1999)

Support: broad-based judicial merit selection commission to recommend appointments to the Governor.

Rationale: This position has been substantially achieved.

Property Tax (1975, reaffirmed 1995, dropped as separate position 1999)

Support: extension of the property tax relief program for the elderly to all low-income households.

Rationale: included in Fiscal Policy position, 1999

Nominating Procedures (updated 1988, recommended for update 1999)

Support: requirement that convention delegates be allocated according to the number of votes received by each slate in the primary; all delegates to conventions be chosen by open caucuses.

Rationale: Position needs updating to conform to new legislation. An update committee was sought but was never found, and the position was dropped..

Juvenile Justice (1980, reaffirmed 1991, recommended for update 1999)

Support: in-service training for juvenile case judges; formation of local police Youth Departments; trained probation volunteers; separate and equal overnight placement for boys and girls and separation of status offenders and delinquents.

Rationale: Delegates to the 1997 Convention recommended updating this position since many felt that changes in the juvenile court procedures have changed and the position no longer applies. Despite diligent efforts, no committee could be found. Delegates to the 1999 Convention agreed that unless a committee to update this position could be formed by October 1, 1999, this position should be dropped. None was found and the position was dropped.

Energy (1980, reaffirmed 1989, recommended for update 1999)

Support: measures to reduce our dependence on nuclear energy by encouraging conservation of resources and the use of renewable resources.

Rationale: The Energy position, adopted in 1978, at the time of the oil crisis, was based on the LWVUS position but is less comprehensive. Delegates to the 1999 Convention agreed that an update was needed. However, unless a committee to update this position could be formed by October 1, 1999, this position would be dropped. None was found and the position was dropped. Action is always possible using the LWVUS position.

Constitutional Provisions For Calling A Constitutional Convention (1955, recommended for update 2005)

Support: the Connecticut Constitution should provide for the calling of a Constitutional Convention; a mandatory referendum at stated intervals on the calling of a Convention; submitting to the people the question of calling a constitutional legislature at other times than the mandatory referendum intervals; the affirmative popular vote necessary to call a constitutional convention should consist of a majority of those voting on the question, not those voting in the election.

Rationale: This position was adopted before the revision of the Connecticut Constitution in the 1960's and has been largely superseded; the LWVCT has taken no action on this item for a number of years. In 2005, the LWVCT Convention delegates recommended that a committee be formed by December 2005 to restudy the position. No committee was found by the deadline, so the position was dropped.

Marital Property Rights (1986, reaffirmed 1995: recommended for update 2005)

Support: the principle of treating property of married persons differently from that of single persons, including recognition of new form of property ownership "spousal property" in which each spouse holds a undivided one half interest in the property without regard to title.

Rationale: There has been very limited legislative activity in this area and the LWVCT has no specialist in this program area. Delegates to the 2005 Convention agreed that a restudy is needed as the position is dated and recommended that a committee be formed by December 2005 to restudy the position. No committee was in place by December 2005, so the position was dropped.

PUBLIC ISSUES TEAM as of 9/07

VP/Public Issues	Cheryl Dunson	203-861-7335	Greenwich
Director/Government (also Election Laws and Open Government specialist)	Christine Horrigan	860-567-3268	Litchfield Cn.
Director/Natural Resources	Karen Burnaska	203-261-9243	Bpt. Area
Air Quality	Naomi Schiff Myers	203-637-3892	Greenwich
Drinking Water	Cheryl Dunson	203-861-7335	Greenwich
Land Use	Margaret Wirtenberg	203-544-9270	Weston
Transportation	Jara Burnett	203-637-9244	Greenwich
Director/Social Policy	Naomi Schiff Myers	203-637-3892	Greenwich
Gun Control	Claire Sauer	860-434-2936	SE CT
Housing	Barbara Brockhurst	860-739-2664	SE CT
Mental Health Care	Polly Franck	203-637-1367	Greenwich
Reproductive Choice	Birgitta Longnecker	203-637-8924	Greenwich
School Finance and Education Cost Sharing	Katherine Wilson	860-232-2670	Gr. Hartford
School Vouchers	Karen Rosen & Claire Sauer	860-232-5027 860-434-2936	Gr. Hartford SE CT
Universal Health Care	Charlotte Shapiro	203-264-5850	Southbury

BE A GRASSROOTS LOBBYIST!

Interested in voting issues? Solving the transportation crisis? Getting guns away from Connecticut's children? We all know that legislators are most responsive to their "hometown" constituents. So ... won't you consider joining the LWVCT Public Issues Team's *Grassroots Lobby Corps*? Help us promote the League's positions on those state issues that you find most compelling. Many League members around the state have already signed up to be part of this informal group. But we want YOU, too!

Our Public Issues Team specialists will be working on a variety of legislative proposals including Election Laws, Transportation, Air Quality, Education Funding, Health Care, and more. They need your help to get proposals passed into law. You can be involved as much as you wish. Our PI Team specialists provide the expertise and the background information and e-mail Action Alerts to you on your topic of interest. You provide a "voice" from your community — a phone call, an email or letter to your legislator/s, or just a "heads-up" to others who might be interested.

To sign up or to get more information, just e-mail Jean Rabinow at lwvct@lwvct.org to request the list of lobby corps issues. Once you receive the list, identify which topics interest you, contact Jean again, and she will sign you up. It's that easy! We look forward to hearing from you.

MEET TEAM BLEI

For many years, the League has had the benefit of working with Judy Blei and Associates. In their legislative monitoring role for the League, they provide a special password-protected, interactive website for each specialist and a listing of all the bills for the specialist that relate to her area of specialty. The specialists select which bills will be their priorities and then use the Blei site to track priority legislation and efficiently contact legislators. In addition to their monitoring, the Blei team conducts an excellent pre-session training session for specialists and helps us with their insight and observations as we “de-brief” at the conclusion of the session.

Although Judy and her team have long provided legislative monitoring services for us, it was only in 2005 with membership support that we hired her to lobby on behalf of the member-adopted priority of election laws.

Many wonder what Team Blei does for us in the lobbying arena. The short answer is: Lots. Among other things, Judy and her staff:

- Help us to develop a coherent, effective legislative strategy.
- Provide a constant presence for us at the Capitol when we cannot be there in person.
- Assist us in crafting our “message” to legislators through public hearing testimony, fact sheets, letters and the like.
- Ease access to legislators, the Executive and staff at all levels.
- Conduct vote counts on our behalf on specific legislation.
- Provide insight to individual legislators and suggest strategies to move bills through the legislative process.
- Provide technical and clerical assistance.

Judy and her associates work closely with the League and our coalition partners on critical election laws legislation. One of our coalition partners credited the League and our lobbyists with being the “extra muscle” needed to make campaign finance reform and public financing of campaigns a reality. We thank our members, for contributions that enable the League to augment our volunteer efforts with the seasoned and knowledgeable lobbying team of Judy Blei and Associates. You may not be able to go to the Capitol to lobby with us but know that your contributions are working to advance good public policy in Hartford.