



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 to help League leaders use LWVCT and certain LWVUS public policy positions effectively at the state and local levels.

The League at any level — national, state or local — takes advocacy action on the basis of either the LWV underlying Principles (shown on the next page) or formal Positions. Positions reflect member understanding and agreement on issues, and are developed after study and consensus on a particular issue (or by concurrence with the outcome of study by another level of League).

This guide presents the official statements of LWVCT Positions for each program area, and the LWVUS Positions (sometimes via summary description) under which LWVCT regularly takes action. The Positions are grouped under the three headings of Government, Natural Resources and Social Policy. The discussion traces significant LWVCT actions and achievements under these Positions, as background and a resource for League leaders contemplating advocacy or educational outreach.

The guide also includes 2013-2015 *LWVCT Positions in Brief* and *LWVUS Positions in Brief for LWVCT Action* for quick reference. Additional resource material included describes the LWVCT Public Issues Team and our legislative monitoring and lobbying advisors; lists Inactive Positions (archived or dropped by state convention or LWVUS Positions used in the past), and describes how to become a grassroots lobbyist for the state League. The LWVUS *Impact on Issues* (available on the www.lwv.org website) is a companion guide for a full understanding of LWVUS Positions and how they can complement and reinforce state and local positions.

Local Leagues are encouraged to use *LWVCT Impact on Issues* and 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 exists 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 consult with the relevant PI Team Director or the LWVCT Public Issues Vice President to ensure that the League's message is consistent throughout the state. Our goal is to strengthen the League's "Impact on Issues" at all levels of government.

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2013-2014 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; amended 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; 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; amended and affirmed 2003, amended and partially affirmed 2013)

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.

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.

Internet and Media (2008)

Support: government policies that promote broadband, wireless, and other means of high-speed Internet deployment throughout the state; access to high-speed Internet, without charge, through schools and libraries; state efforts to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet; adequate protection, promotion, and funding of community access television channels regardless of the provider of TV/video services to Connecticut residents; government provision of opportunities for citizen participation in decisions regarding community access TV.

Primaries, Procedures and Parties (1983; amended and affirmed 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; 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

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 Education in Connecticut Schools (1991; affirmed 2001, 2013)

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; amended and affirmed 2000; amended and affirmed 2010)

Support: a state system that: provides to each town funds sufficient to offer a suitable education to every child; covers 50% of the statewide cost of local public education; bases grants on the relative ability of towns to finance schools locally and on the factors that influence the cost of educating different children.

School Vouchers (1996; amended and affirmed 2008)

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

Oppose: the use of public funds through vouchers, state tax credits or any other state incentives or payments, direct or indirect, to provide tuition support for students attending non-public schools.

Teen Pregnancy (1989; amended and affirmed 2009)

Support: measures to ensure that all adolescents have access to age-appropriate sex education programs; school-based health clinics with services including reproductive health; programs and services designed to help adolescents delay parenthood and to enable adolescent parents to finish high school.

Oppose: restrictions on adolescents' rights to obtain a full range of reproductive health services.

LWVUS POSITIONS IN BRIEF FOR LWVCT ACTION

Clean Air

Support: measures to reduce air pollution and policies to accelerate pollution control, resource recovery and non-polluting disposal of solid and hazardous wastes; and adequate funding for enforcement of environmental protection.

Climate Change / Global Warming

Support: measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including cap and trade programs, carbon offsets, low-carbon fuels and green building standards.

Energy

Support: environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Gun Laws

Support: protection of the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

Health Care

Support: a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

Housing Supply

Support: policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

Reproductive Rights

Support: protection of the constitutional right of the individual to make reproductive choices.

National Popular Vote

Support: use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished.

Solid Waste

Support: policies to reduce generation and promote reuse and recycling, and for the safe treatment, transportation, storage and disposal of solid and hazardous waste.

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

For over a decade, the LWVCT has worked in coalition with many other groups supporting bills establishing a comprehensive public financing system with spending limits for state-wide campaigns. 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 contributions 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 Government Administration and Elections Committee and copies were sent to the entire legislature. A coalition consisting of the LWVCT, Common Cause, CCAG, Democracy Works and others adopted a strong platform of reforms centered on 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 LWVCT 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 LWVCT 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. LWVCT members actively lobbied for CFR, writing letters and responding to action alerts with e-mails and phone calls. LWVUS 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 LWVCT, announced plans to call a special session to pass a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill. Some LWVCT 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 (the Citizens' Election Program) 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 LWVCT 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 LWVCT worked closely with its lobbyists, Judith Blei & Associates, and its coalition partners. One partner credited the LWVCT with providing the “extra muscle” necessary to win the 30-year fight for public financing.

Following the 2006 legislative session, the focus in the campaign finance reform area shifted to protection and 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 LWVCT 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 were filed challenging the constitutionality of the lobbyist bans and the limitations on minor parties and candidates. In 2008, the bans were upheld by a federal district court. The court’s decision was appealed. Following a bench trial in March 2009, the district court ruled on August 27, 2009 that the Citizens’ Election Program, which provides public financing for campaigns, unconstitutionally burdens the First Amendment rights of minor parties and issued an injunction enjoining the State Elections Enforcement Commission and the Attorney General from operating and enforcing the Citizens’ Election Program. The court granted the state a stay in order to give the Attorney General time to file an emergency appeal.

During the 2008 and 2009 regular sessions, the LWVCT supported and testified on a number of bills designed to expand the enforcement powers of the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to “tweak” the rules and procedures related to the Citizens’ Election Program. In 2008, a bill passed and was signed into law which expands the State Elections Enforcement Commission’s authority to issue cease and desist orders, makes changes to the registration forms for PACs, expands the law granting individuals the right to incur legal expenses to contest/maintain the results of elections, subjects party candidate listings to attribution laws, repeals a requirement that certain mailings bear a photograph of the candidate, “tweaks” the contractor and lobbyist bans, establishes grant application deadlines and a corresponding schedule of payments from the Citizens’ Election Fund, and allows participating candidates to spend supplemental grant money immediately upon receiving it. Bills introduced in 2009 to further “tweak” the system and expand the enforcement powers of the SEEC died, as the legislature focused its efforts on the budget crisis.

The November 2008 general election witnessed the first statewide rollout of the Citizens’ Election Program. Approximately 75% of the candidates running for the General Assembly in November elected to participate in the public financing program. Despite this success, the Citizens’ Election Program came under serious attack during the 2009 regular session. Several bills were introduced to significantly reduce the public financing grants available to eligible candidates under the program and a bill was introduced to eliminate the program in its entirety and to reverse the bans on lobbyist and state contractor contributions. The LWVCT opposed these bills, none of which were successful.

Given the state’s dire fiscal situation, the Citizens’ Election Fund, which holds money to be used for public financing during election years, proved to be a tempting target for legislators looking for money to fill the budget shortfall. Through budget cuts, transfers and rescissions, the Citizens’ Election Program was reduced by approximately \$21 million. In light of the dire fiscal situation, the LWVCT recognized that all state programs likely would require reductions, but opposed any further cuts or transfers from the

Fund. The LWVCT defended this program vigorously by actions such as testifying at public hearings, sending letters to the Governor, the Appropriations Committee and legislative leadership, participating in press conferences and writing letters to the editor.

In preparation for the 2010 legislative session, in December 2009 the League started another round of advocacy to protect the Citizens' Election Program. The LWVCT participated in a press conference with its coalition partners urging preservation of the remaining balance of the Citizen Election Fund and a "fix" of the law in response to the U.S. District court's ruling. LWVCT also worked with the CT News Service (the service the LWVCT contracted with to increase our visibility) to collaborate on radio news stories spotlighting the need to preserve the 2005 campaign finance reforms.

During January 2010, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments on the constitutionality of Connecticut's 2005 campaign finance reforms. (A lower court previously upheld the lobbyist bans, but declared the Citizens' Election Program, which provides public financing of campaigns, unconstitutional.) The Second Circuit's work was complicated by the US Supreme Court's ruling in the case of Citizens United v. FEC, which overturned 100 years of campaign finance reforms on free speech grounds and created a new constitutional right allowing corporations to spend tremendous sums of money on elections.

During February and March, the League met with the House co-chair of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, and Senate leadership to discuss a "fix" for the Citizens' Election Program. The League worked with its coalition partners to put pressure on legislators to find a constitutional "fix" for the Citizens' Election Program through action alerts, letters to the editor, press releases, educational forums and meetings with legislators.

Two bills, one proposed by the Governor and the other by the GAE Committee, were introduced to "fix" the Citizens' Election Program (HB 5021 and HB 5022). The League testified in support of both bills. A special committee was established to reconcile competing bills/approaches to the "fix." Negotiations focused on key points relating to the size of grants, minor parties, and matching funds. Both bills died.

Despite our vigorous opposition, the legislature continued to raid the Citizens' Election Fund in 2010 as a means of dealing with the ongoing fiscal crisis. During April, the legislature cut \$10,000,000 from the Citizens' Election Program as part of HB 5545, *AAC Deficit Mitigation for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2010*. At the urging of advocates (including the League), this cut was delayed to January, 2011 so as not to interfere with funding for the 2010 state elections. The legislature cut another \$5,000,000 on the last day of the legislative session as part of SB 494 AA Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2011.

To buy the legislature time in the event of an adverse court ruling, the House and Senate passed HB 5544, *AAC The Citizens' Election Fund*, on an emergency basis. The bill extended the period before the campaign finance law reverts back to the pre-2005 law from 7 to 30 days (in most cases) in the event a court prohibited the expenditure of funds from the Citizens' Election Fund. The Governor signed the bill (PA 10-2). With just moments to spare on the last day of the legislative session, the House and Senate passed SJR 48, which would call them into a special session for the limited purpose of dealing with any issues growing out of the anticipated Second Circuit Court ruling.

A campaign finance bright spot during the 2010 session was the passage of *An Act Concerning Independent Expenditures* in response to the Supreme Court's ruling in the Citizens' United case. The Governor signed the bill (PA 10-187). Connecticut's law requires organizations, like corporations and unions that make expenditures supporting or opposing candidates, to file reports with the state and disclose who paid for campaign advertisements. It includes "stand by your ad" provisions that require a CEO of a sponsoring organization to appear in any televised or videotaped campaign ad and acknowledge

approval of its content. Written communications must include the names of the entity and the CEO. Certain organizations must also list their top five contributors.

In July, the legislature was called into special session in response to the two important decisions handed down by Second Circuit Court of Appeals. The Court ruled that the Citizens' Election Program does not violate the First and Fourteenth Amendment rights of third party and petitioning candidates, but struck down as unconstitutional the lobbyist contribution ban, the lobbyist solicitation ban and the so-called "trigger provisions" which provide additional public funds for participating candidates when their non-participating opponents or third parties spend over a certain limit.

In response to the rulings, the legislature passed SB 551, *An Act Concerning Clean Elections*. Among other things, the bill made changes to the Citizens' Election Program affecting opposition status, grants, spending limits, and matching funds. Most notably, the bill eliminated the matching grant (i.e. "trigger") provisions and doubled available funding for qualifying gubernatorial candidates from \$3 million to \$6 million. The bill also eliminated the reversion clause (replacing it with a severability clause) and addressed issues related to lobbyist and state contractor contributions and the soliciting and bundling of campaign contributions. Governor Rell opposed the increased funding level for gubernatorial races and vetoed the bill citing the state's ever-burgeoning deficit. In August, the legislature overrode the veto and the bill became law (PA 10-1). The Second Circuit's rulings were appealed to the US Supreme Court, which denied certiorari.

The 2011 legislative session opened with continuing grave concern regarding the state's severe budget deficit. Governor Malloy, the newly elected governor, proposed a budget that would cut the funding for the Citizens' Election Fund nearly in half. The Governor's proposed budget also included steep cuts to the budget of the State Elections Enforcement Commission (the agency that oversees the Citizens' Election Program). In tandem with the budget proposal, the Governor proposed consolidating the SEEC, the Office of State Ethics, the Freedom of Information Commission, the Judicial Review Council and the State Contracting Standards Board into a new Office of Governmental Accountability. The League strongly opposed both proposals. The departmental consolidation, now known as the Office of Government Accountability, passed as part of the Budget Implementer bill that was signed into law (PA 11-48). The new law also included changes to the state election laws on campaign finance. Among other things, the law makes scheduling revisions for the Citizens' Election Program, expands the list of goods and services that are not considered campaign contributions, eliminates mandatory audits of publicly financed campaigns and creates a system for random audits, and makes changes to the reporting requirements for organization and excess expenditures.

During the 2011 session, the League supported SB 945, *AAC Electronic Filing Of Campaign Reports*, which proposed lowering the threshold for electronic filing of campaign finance reports and extended the electronic filing requirement to certain individuals and committees. The bill was voted out of the GAE Committee but died in the Revenue, Finance and Bonding Committee.

In 2012, the legislature decided that it could and must do more to protect Connecticut elections from the influence of special interests. In February, the Government Administration and Elections Committee introduced HB 5528, *AAC Changes to the Public Financing and Other Election Laws*. The bill would have expanded the reporting and disclaimer requirements for independent expenditures by, among other things, (1) requiring organizations to identify sources of funds used for campaign spending including all donors who give \$1000 or more in the aggregate, (2) requiring organizations to disclose all transfers ensuring that individual and corporate donors couldn't hide behind conduits, intermediaries or front groups, (3) strengthening "stand by your ad" provisions by requiring organizations to list their top 5 donors and to provide a link to a website that lists the names and addresses of all donors, and (4) requiring corporations to report political spending to shareholders and obtain board approval for campaign related

disbursements over \$4000. The bill also would have raised various contribution limits, clarified the rules on coordination and increased penalties for knowing and willful campaign finance violations.

The League testified in support of the disclosure provisions, but raised concerns regarding the across-the-board doubling or near doubling of contribution limits for the Citizens' Election Program. In its testimony, the League opposed a provision that would have allowed participating CEP candidates to raise unlimited funds when outspent by non-participating candidates. A substitute bill was voted out of the GAE Committee that stripped the provision allowing participating CEP candidates to raise unlimited funds and substituted in its place a provision increasing the grant for gubernatorial candidates from \$6 million to \$9 million.

After clearing the Appropriations Committee, HB 5528 eventually died on the House calendar. However, many of its provisions (sometimes in revised form) were included in an e-cert bill, HB 5556, *AAC Changes to the Campaign Finance Laws and Other Election Laws*, which was introduced in the House on May 5. Coupled with the disclosure provisions were new provisions to allow military and overseas voters to return completed absentee ballots by fax or email. In comments sent to legislators, the League supported the disclosure provisions contained in HB 5556. However, we voiced concerns about the lack of provisions in the bill to ensure the security of overseas ballots returned by fax or email. We also noted that we were not offering any specific comments on provisions relating to other changes to the campaign finance laws and the Citizens' Election Program due to a lack of time to properly review them – a shortcoming of the emergency certification process and a concern generally to the League. HB 5556 passed the House and Senate on May 8. The Governor vetoed the bill, citing concerns over the constitutionality of some of its provisions.

As it has done in past years, the League also testified in support of a bill to lower the threshold and expand the universe for mandatory electronic filing of campaign finance reports. The bill died on the House calendar.

In 2013, Connecticut's historic 2005 campaign finance reforms again came under serious threat. The League submitted written testimony in opposition to a bill that would eliminate cost-of-living adjustments under the Citizens' Election Program (HB 5897). We also submitted testimony in opposition to a bill that would dispense with weekly campaign financial statements in the last month before an election (HB 6289), a bill that would permit state contractors to make campaign contributions in a manner similar to lobbyists (SB 1127) and two bills that would have made it easier for state central committees to raise more money by increasing maximum contributions (SB 1120) and permitting the use of ad books (SB 1126).

Near the end of March, the League submitted testimony in support of SB 5, *AAC Changes to the Campaign Finance Laws and Other Election Laws*. This bill was a modified version of the disclosure bill which passed in 2012, but was vetoed by the Governor. The League supported the expanded disclosure provisions, but opposed the doubling or near doubling of campaign contribution limits.

At the end of the session, the legislature's commitment to positive campaign finance reform took an abrupt turn for the worse. Arguing that in a post-Citizens United world it was necessary to re-write the campaign finance laws to combat the Super PAC money that flooded the state prior to the 2012 elections, the House passed an omnibus campaign finance bill, HB 6580, *AAC Independent Expenditures and Changes to Other Campaign Finance Laws and Election Laws*, in the middle of the night without time for public review or comment. While the bill contained some of the provisions that the League had earlier testified against (including raising contribution limits and allowing the use of ad books by state central committees), we were blind-sided by provisions in the bill that weakened the reporting, disclaimer and attribution requirements for independent expenditures adopted in 2010, allowed political parties to make

unlimited “organization expenditures” on behalf of candidates participating in the Citizens’ Election Program (including running negative ads against a candidate’s opponent), permitted a degree of coordination between political candidates and Super PACs by allowing candidates receiving public financing to help political committees raise money which could later be used on their behalf in the form of independent expenditures (essentially creating a parallel system of campaign financing) and eliminated criminal penalties for knowing and willful campaign finance violations, among other things. Despite the League’s attempts to de-rail it, the bill passed the Senate (again in the middle of the night. One tiny bright spot in an otherwise dismal bill was the omission of a provision lifting the ban on state contractor contributions. There were no sweeps of the Citizen’s Election Fund in 2013.

Prior to passage of the bill, the LWVCT sent action alerts and messages to legislators asking them to vote against the bill. We also lobbied senators in person, asked local leagues to contact targeted senators, and urged the Governor to veto the bill. The Governor signed the bill into law (P. A. 13-180). The League followed up its advocacy after the session ended with a news story and letter to the editor. Local leagues also raised concerns with their legislators. As of this writing, we are still digesting the massive changes made by the bill and considering next steps.

Finally, the League submitted testimony in support of HB 6633, *AAC Campaign Finance Law and Prior Bad Acts*. This bill would prohibit persons who are convicted of certain crimes from serving as campaign treasurers or receiving a grant from the Citizens’ Election Fund. While the League supported the bill in concept, we raised concerns regarding the breadth of the bill and the potential for unintended consequences. A variation of the bill was included in HB 6580.

National Advocacy

In spring 2009, the LWVCT also participated in a press conference introducing the federal Fair Elections Now Act, which would allow federal candidates to run for office using small donations and limited public financing. The bill, which was introduced in the House of Representatives by Connecticut Representative John Larsen, had the support of the entire 2009 Connecticut congressional delegation. It did not pass in the 2009, nor the following year. It was reintroduced in 2011 session.

In fall 2010, the LWVCT wrote to Senators Dodd and Lieberman at the request of LWVUS encouraging them to vote in favor of the DISCLOSE Act, which attempts to address concerns arising out of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens’ United v. FEC*. Senator Dodd responded that he was leaving the Senate; all future requests should be addressed to Senators Lieberman and Blumenthal. Senator Lieberman responded that had he been present he would have voted for cloture, but would have voted against the bill because of amendments made in the House. The bill failed to gain enough votes in the Senate to end debate and was never called for a vote.

ELECTION LAWS

(Adopted in 1983; amended 2005; amended 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

Advocacy prior to 2005

In 2004, the LWVCT testified in support of a re-submitted Election Day Registration bill which would also mandate training of registrars and town clerks. The LWVCT also worked in coalition to support other reform bills, such as an expanded Voter’s Bill of Rights, a bill for permanent funding of the “good government” commissions and compliance with HAVA. 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 Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee again where it died. 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 and problems encountered 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 direct recording electronic (DRE) technology. The LWVCT was represented at the five regional GAE Committee hearings on Campaign Finance Reform, 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. Despite the hard work by the LWVCT and coalition partners, EDR did not pass in the 2004 session.

Advocacy from 2005 and onward

Election reform has been an area of intense activity over the past several years. The LWVCT has been aided in this area by the efforts of our lobbyists, Judith Blei and Associates, and by the unflagging 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 LWVCT 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 LWVCT priority. At the 2009 Convention, the delegates again voted to make Election Laws a LWVCT priority and to undertake a study regarding election law timelines, ballot access procedures and United States Senate vacancies. A study group was formed, conducted research and interviews, and wrote reports. In 2009, the legislature changed the method of filling US senate vacancies. After completing its work, the study group concluded that there was not a sufficient basis for amending an

existing position or creating a new position and the study was abandoned. At the 2011 Convention, the delegates again voted to make Election Laws a LWVCT priority and amended the LWVCT's position on voting technology to be consistent with the change to the position at the national level. At the 2013 Convention, the delegates voted once again to make Election Laws the LWVCT priority.

Over the years, LWVCT has worked closely with the Secretary of the State (SOTS) and her office on election-related matters, and LWVCT was represented on the SOTS Election Performance Task Force.

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

Voting Technology

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 LWVCT 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 LWVCT 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 LWVCT 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 LWVCT opposed a bill that would have required full-faced ballots for direct recording electronic voting machines. After heavy lobbying by the LWVCT, 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.

All municipalities were required to use the new optical scan voting machines during the 2007 elections. The LWVCT believes that manual, random audits are essential to ensuring the integrity of the machines and instilling voter confidence in the new machines. During the 2007 session, the LWVCT 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 LWVCT was also proactive in the rollout of the new voting technology. Prior to the 2007 elections, the LWVCT created "Stop, Look and Listen," a statewide voter education program regarding the new machines. The LWVCT conducted a series of regional training sessions for local League volunteers on effective voter outreach on the new voting machines. About 60 local League volunteers reached approximately 2,400 people at scheduled informational meetings with countless others informed by LWVCT cable access broadcasts, community events and voter registration drives and via our newsletter.

The LWVCT was also a founding member of the Connecticut Citizen Election Audit Coalition. The Coalition was formed to organize citizens to observe the audits. The purpose of the observations is to demonstrate citizen interest in the process, increase citizen involvement in elections, provide feedback to the Secretary of the State and the legislature on the process and its contribution to confidence in our elections, and provide members of the public with information necessary to determine their confidence in

our elections. To date, LWVCT has participated in ten audit observations. Additionally, in late 2010, the Connecticut Citizen Election Audit Coalition conducted a citizen recount of the ballots cast in the gubernatorial race in Bridgeport, in conjunction with the Connecticut Post and with the cooperation with the City of Bridgeport. This recount was organized in response to many concerns raised by the media, voters, and candidates regarding the accuracy of Bridgeport's reported vote counts in light of the need to hand-count thousands of ballots, mostly photocopies, after the polls closed. Following each audit observation, the Coalition issues a report detailing its observations and recommendations. The reports are posted on the CT Election Audit website at www.ctelectionaudit.org.

LWVCT is no longer a member of the Citizen Election Audit Coalition, but we encourage our members to volunteer.

During the 2008 and 2009 regular sessions, bills were introduced to establish an independent audit board, require separate entities to program and test election hardware, and to require the Secretary of the State to establish/refine audit procedures, among other things. The LWVCT testified in favor of these provisions. Although these bills made it out of committee, all of them ultimately died.

In 2010, the LWVCT testified against a bill that would have substituted audits using different voting tabulators for the current system of hand-counted post-election audits. The bill died in the GAE Committee. In 2011, the LWVCT opposed bills that would have (1) have permitted audits to be performed either manually or using an independent machine rather than a tabulator, (2) exempted municipalities who successfully completed a post-election audit from participating in another audit for ten years and (3) provided a four year exemption period for small towns after an audit. All three bills died in committee.

At the 2010 LWVUS Convention, transparency was added as a fifth criterion to the national position on voting technology. The LWVCT position was amended at its 2011 Convention to reflect the addition. The League now supports voting systems that are secure, accurate, recountable, accessible and transparent (SARAT).

In 2013, the League again opposed a bill that would have eliminated the requirement that registrars conduct audits manually, reduced the minimum percentage of voting districts to be audited and prohibited more than 3 districts in a municipality from being audited. The bill was successfully voted out of the GAE Committee, but died at the end of the session.

The League also opposed two bills that would have treated multiple votes for a single, cross-endorsed candidate as an overvote, requiring an elector to fill out a new ballot or give up the right to vote for that candidate. (The state's current tabulator technology treats multiple votes for cross-endorsed candidates as a single vote.) Both bills died in committee.

Election Day Registration

In 2007, passing some form of Election Day Registration was again a LWVCT priority. The LWVCT worked closely with Democracy Works 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.

The LWVCT, together with other good government groups, again advocated for the passage of Election Day Registration during the 2009 regular session. A bill was introduced and passed in the House. However, despite agreement on the language of the bill among the various stakeholders (e.g. registrars, town clerks, good government groups, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and the Secretary of the State), the bill was never brought up for a vote in the Senate, ostensibly because of the number of hostile amendments that had been filed on it.

In 2010, a bill was introduced to establish a pilot program to permit same day registration for municipal primaries. The bill was successfully voted out of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, but died in the Appropriations Committee despite its relatively small fiscal impact and the concerted efforts of the LWVCT and its coalition partners.

In 2011, research and outreach by the Office of the Secretary of the State (SOTS), including the formation of an Election Performance Task Force, led the SOTS to work actively for certain election laws changes, including election day registration (EDR). During the fall of 2011, LWVCT and local Leagues assisted the SOTS in sponsoring community meetings around the state to inform CT residents about current election law issues.

During the 2012 legislative session, the League submitted testimony on multiple election law bills, including an EDR bill which passed both chambers and was signed into the law by the Governor (P.A. 12-56). The law permits anyone to register and vote in person on Election Day if he or she meets the eligibility requirements for voting in this state and (1) is not already an elector or (2) is registered in one municipality but wants to change his or her registration because he or she currently resides in another municipality. The act requires registrars of voters to designate one location (where registrars can access the statewide centralized voter registration system) for completing and processing EDR applications. The law becomes applicable with the November 2013 election. The GAE Committee will “watchdog” the outcome of the 2013 elections through a required report from the Secretary of the State.

Voter Service Outreach Committee

In July 2013, LWVCT formed the Voter Service Outreach Committee, with representatives from local Leagues around the state, to inform and engage CT residents about the significant changes to our election laws that will be implemented over the next year, starting in November 2013 and continuing through November 2014. After meeting with representatives of SOTS to obtain their input, it was decided to focus 2013 voter outreach on changes that become effective with the November municipal elections — Election Day Registration (EDR) and Permanent Absentee Ballots (PAB) for persons with physical disabilities.

The committee prepared and published pamphlets for public distribution explaining EDR and PAB, and developed guides for local Leagues and volunteers to use in communicating with the public on the election law changes. Pamphlets will be available in both English and Spanish.

Next steps for the Voter Service Outreach Committee will include alerting local Leagues and informing the public regarding additional election law changes for 2014 — Online Voter Registration and Military Online Voting — and the November 2014 ballot question on removing barriers in the State Constitution to early and absentee voting, so that the legislature can determine whether and how to permit expanded absentee ballots and/or early voting.

Election Administration

The LWVCT's participation in the "Stop, Look and Listen" program and the audit coalition has helped inform its advocacy efforts. The LWVCT's primary concern regarding both the rollout of the new voting technology and the audits was the lack of consistency exhibited across the state. To address these concerns, the LWVCT supports the creation of an independent audit board, "professionalization" of registrars, the adoption of clear statutory and regulatory guidelines, and expansion of the investigatory and enforcement powers of the State Elections Enforcement Commission. During the 2008 and 2009 regular sessions, bills were introduced to establish an independent audit board, require separate entities to program and test election hardware, address privacy in the voting process, amend the Voter's Bill of Rights, require the Secretary of the State to establish/refine audit procedures, require the Secretary of the State to establish a certification program for registrars, and expand the powers of the State Elections Enforcement Commission, among other things. The LWVCT was generally supportive of these bills and testified in favor of many of the provisions. Most of these bills made it out of committee; however, all of them ultimately died.

Bills were introduced in 2010 to expand the authority of the SEEC, make a violation of the "Voter's Bill of Rights" subject to penalty, allow the Secretary of the State access to polling places on Election Day, address the issues of voter privacy, and extend prohibitions on transporting, preparing, repairing and maintain a voting machine to business entities affiliated with a candidate. In 2010, bills were also introduced to require each polling place to comply with the requirements for assisting electors with disabilities and to extend the use of provisional ballots, currently available for federal elections, to all elections. The LWVCT testified in support of these bills generally; all of the bills died.

In 2011, with the election of the former House Majority Leader as Secretary of the State, the appointment of the Co-chair of the GAE Committee as Deputy Secretary of the State, and the scandal surrounding the 2010 election in Bridgeport where several polling places ran out of ballot, election reform efforts fared better. A law was passed establishing procedures to address issues that may arise at polling places. The law requires registrars of voters to (1) develop a municipal emergency contingency plan, for example, ballot shortage solutions and (2) certify to the Secretary the number of ballots they order for each polling place. In the absence of a certification or a waiver, the law requires registrars to order one ballot for each registered voter. Registrars must also certify polling place locations and provide moderator contact information. The law authorizes the Secretary to access polling places (unless she is a candidate) to review them for election law compliance and to disqualify moderators under certain circumstances.

A second bill was passed in 2011 that made changes to election laws affecting voter registration lists, the conduct of primaries and elections, election officials, voting equipment and polling places, post-election procedures and certain campaign finance forms. Among other things, the law prohibits businesses affiliated with a candidate from transporting, preparing, repairing or maintaining voting tabulators, codifies in law voter privacy practices currently in regulation, requires the Secretary of the State to recommend a method for online voting for military personnel stationed out of state and requires moderators to attribute "unknown" votes for cross-endorsed candidates based on a formula. The bill also expanded the investigatory powers of the SEEC to allow it to conduct investigations based on statements that registrars of voters file alleging election violations, not just allegations that the Secretary of the State or town clerks file. The LWVCT supported both election reform bills passed in 2011, with the exception of the original provisions related to "unknown" votes for cross-endorsed candidates (changed in the final bill) and the provisions regarding online voting for military personnel (see below).

In 2011, the LWVCT also submitted testimony in favor of a bill extending the use of provisional ballots to state and municipal elections. The bill passed the House, but was never taken up by the Senate. The

LWVCT also supported a bill addressing issues related to the number of polling places and moderators for primaries, hiring of poll workers, and preparation of ballots. The bill died in the GAE Committee.

In 2012 and 2013, the League again testified in favor of extending the use of provisional ballots to state and municipal elections. Although the bills were successfully reported out of committee, they died at the end of the session.

In 2012, the League supported in written testimony a bill that would have established a process for removing registrars of voters from office, among other things. A substitute bill was voted out of the GAE Committee, but died at the end of the session. In 2013, the League testified in favor a bill to prohibit persons who have been convicted of or pled guilty to certain felonies from being certified as moderators. The bill passed both chambers and was signed into law by the Governor (P.A. 13-21).

In 2013, the League submitted testimony on a variety of bills dealing with election administration. We supported bills to require towns to provide Internet service to the offices of the registrars of voters, to provide greater ease in voting for individuals with disabilities, to permit election officials and their staff to vote by absentee ballot, to allow municipalities to reduce the number of polling places for primaries, to require election officials to identify and correct any errors in an election return within 7 days of the election and to make adjustments to the provisions concerning appointment of members to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. We also supported a provision to make any declaratory ruling, instruction or opinion issued by the Secretary of the State binding upon registrars of voters and town clerks and enforceable by the State Elections Enforcement Commission, a long time goal of the League. We supported in concept two bills allowing towns to check voters in electronically but raised concerns over a lack of standards or procedures. We also testified in favor of a bill to ensure that any persons convicted of a felony and committed to custody are informed of their eligibility to have their electoral privileges restored. Finally, the League supported a bill to require the Secretary of the State to review and consider certain election administration functions performed by municipalities for the purpose of regional consolidation. The League opposed a bill to provide that each poll worker be trained only once during a calendar year. All of these bills died.

Photo ID

In 2007, the LWVCT and its coalition partners were successful in defeating several amendments to an Election Day Registration bill that would have required voters to produce a photo ID at the polls in order to exercise the right to vote. Photo ID amendments were also placed on various bills during the 2008 regular session. The LWVCT lobbied actively against the amendments. The sponsors did not call the photo ID amendment on the one bill that passed; time ran out before the other bills could be called. Consequently, there was no debate on photo ID requirements in either chamber in 2008. Two bills requiring the presentation of photo identification in order to vote were referred to the GAE Committee in 2011. Neither bill received a public hearing. The LWVCT remains ever vigilant on this issue.

Voter Intimidation and Interference

In 2012, the League supported a bill initiated by the Governor to increase the penalties for voter intimidation and interference, making them Class C or D felonies. The bill passed both the House and the Senate and was signed into law by the Governor (P.A. 12-193).

Absentee Ballots

In 2005, Public Act 05-235 was passed and signed into law, creating new requirements for the distribution of applications for absentee ballots. The LWVCT believes that this law has had a chilling effect on the distribution of absentee ballots. During the 2007 regular session, a bill was introduced that would have eliminated the pre-registration requirement for distributors of applications for absentee ballots. The LWVCT 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. During the 2009 session, a bill was again introduced that would have repealed the requirement of pre-registering with the town clerk, as well as have eliminated the requirement of maintaining and filing a list of the people who receive absentee ballot applications. The LWVCT testified in favor of the bill. An amended version of the bill (minus the provisions dealing with the distribution of absentee ballots) passed the House, but died on the Senate calendar.

A resolution proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to remove restrictions on the categories of citizens who can vote by absentee ballot was also introduced in 2007. The resolution died on the Senate calendar. During the 2009 session, resolutions were introduced to remove the restrictions on absentee voting from the State Constitution, thereby permitting so-called “no excuse” absentee voting, a form of early voting. The LWVCT testified in favor of these amendments. Two resolutions were voted out of the GAE Committee, but died on House and Senate calendars, respectively. Resolutions were again introduced in 2011 to remove restrictions on absentee voting from the State Constitution. The LWVCT testified in favor of these resolutions, one of which received a favorable vote in the GAE Committee. In a strategic move, the resolution was never called for a vote in the House. The LWVCT anticipates that a similar resolution will be introduced in 2012.

Concerned about voter disenfranchisement, the LWVCT submitted a statutory proposal in 2008 to create a “permanent absentee ballot status” for voters unable to get to the polls. Although the LWVCT’s proposal died in committee, a more limited proposal was included in the 2008 Secretary of the State’s bill. That bill passed the Senate, but was never called in the House. A bill to establish a system for the automatic mailing of absentee ballots to persons who are permanently disabled and unable to go to the polls was again introduced in 2009. The bill, which the LWVCT supported, passed the Senate as time ran out in the regular session.

In 2011, a provision making electors with permanent physical disabilities eligible for permanent absentee ballot status passed with LWVCT support as part of an omnibus election-related bill. Under the law, until they are removed from the permanent absentee ballot list, such electors receive an absentee ballot application for each election in which they are eligible to vote.

In 2012, the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed a follow up bill to the 2011 bill. The 2012 act removes the requirement that the permanently disabled to fill out an absentee ballot application for every election and instead allows them to confirm their residency once a year and receive their absentee ballot automatically for every election in which they are eligible to vote.

In 2012 and again in 2013, the League submitted testimony in favor a *Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Grant Increased Authority to the General Assembly Regarding Election Administration*. The Connecticut Constitution currently limits the circumstances under which electors can seek and receive absentee ballots. According to an opinion issued by then Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, it also prohibits early voting. This resolution would remove those barriers and leave it up to the legislature to decide whether and under what circumstances to allow no-excuse absentee ballots and/or early voting. The League asked its members to take action on this issue. Having passed the House and Senate twice, in 2012 and 2013, the resolution now goes to the voters and will appear on the ballot in 2014.

See above under Voter Service Outreach Committee for LWVCT 2013 outreach on EDR, PAB and other changes.

Early Voting

The 2013 session saw the introduction of two early voting bills. While the League supports early voting in concept, we were unable to support these bills due to concerns over the details (or lack thereof) of the

early voting systems being proposed and the failure to address fundamental issues related to security, privacy and cost. We also questioned whether an early voting statute was premature given the need to address the constitutional issues related to absentee ballots and Election Day voting. (See *Absentee Ballots* above) Both bills were successfully voted out of committee, but died at the end of the session.

Military and Overseas Voters

In 2009, the Pew Center on the States issued a report, entitled *No Time To Vote: Challenges Facing America's Overseas Military Voters*, which found that overseas military voters from Connecticut did not have enough time to vote under current Connecticut law. The report noted that “[o]verseas military voters from Connecticut can fax their ballot request—but the state requires the ballots to be transmitted to and from voters by postal mail. Because the time needed for ballots to travel by mail takes longer than the time Connecticut provides in its process, the state’s military voters abroad would need 13 additional days to have enough time to vote.”

http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Fact_Sheets/Improving_elections/NTTV_Connecticut.pdf. The report suggested a number of steps that Connecticut could take to remedy this situation including sending out blank ballots earlier and accepting completed ballots later, allowing electronic transmission of blank ballots, and expanding the use of federal write-in absentee ballots for state and local elections. A bill was introduced during the 2009 regular session to remedy the overseas ballot situation by requiring the Secretary of the State to work with the State Elections Enforcement Commission and the United States Department of Defense to ensure that overseas military voters could use a secure fax, email or other electronic transmission to receive and submit (1) the official postcard form that contains an absentee voter registration application and absentee ballot application for voting in federal elections and (2) a state absentee ballot. The Secretary of the State also included a provision in her bill to allow active duty members of the military to apply for absentee ballots in January of an election year. The LWVCT, which supports secure electronic transmission of the federal postcard application form (both ways) and any absentee ballot *to* the voter, testified in favor of the 2009 bill. At the same time, LWVCT raised concerns about issues related to privacy, voter fraud and undue influence in connection with the transmission of a completed ballot *from* the overseas voter to the town clerk’s office and called upon the Secretary of the State to look carefully and thoughtfully at measures which can ease the transmission of the completed ballot while preserving privacy and preventing fraud and undue influence. Regrettably, both the 2009 bill and the Secretary of the State’s bill died.

In 2010, the LWVCT testified in support of a bill to conform state statutes to the federal Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act by allowing for transmission of applications for absentee ballots and ballots by electronic means, subject to certain safeguards. The bill died during the regular session, but was subsequently passed in special session.

In 2011, the LWVCT opposed a bill that would have allowed online voting by military personnel stationed out of state. Although the bill died in the GAE Committee, a provision requiring the Secretary of the State to recommend an online voting method for military personnel stationed out of state passed as part of an omnibus election bill. Under the law, the Secretary must (1) look at what other states have done to reduce potential fraud and (2) determine whether any such system may be appropriate for Connecticut, and report her progress to the GAE Committee by January 1, 2012. The LWVCT has serious concerns regarding the security and privacy of online voting. In October 2011 the Secretary of the State hosted a public forum with a panel of nationally known experts to discuss and debate this very contentious topic. This event was open to all members of the public and was hosted by John Dankosky, WNPR News Director and Host of “Where We Live.”

In 2012, a provision to allow military and overseas voters to return completed absentee ballots by fax or email passed as part of a campaign finance bill. While the League supported some of the campaign

finance reforms, we raised concerns about the lack of provisions in the bill to ensure the security of overseas ballots returned by fax or emails. The Governor vetoed the bill on other grounds.

The 2013 session saw the introduction of two bills to permit voters who are members of the armed forces serving overseas to return their ballots by electronic means. While the League supports measures to ensure that military voters have sufficient time to vote, we again voiced concerns over the security and confidentiality of the ballot in our written testimony to the GAE Committee. Our bottom line: We believe the state should not adopt Internet based voting or allow for electronic transmission of a completed ballot (by fax or email) unless the systems are able to meet the League's SARAT criteria (secure, accurate, recountable, accessible and transparent) and can reliably address concerns regarding the risks of identity theft, fraud, voter disenfranchisement, undue influence and lack of confidentiality. Both bills were successfully voted out of committee. One died at the end of the session. A modified version of the second bill passed both chambers and was signed into law by the Governor (P.A. 13-185). The act requires the Secretary of the State by October 1, 2013, in consultation with the Military Department, to select a method for members of the armed forces stationed abroad to return their voted overseas absentee ballots, giving due consideration to ballot security and privacy and ensuring that the municipality receives the ballot before the polls close.

Voter Registration

In 2008, a representative of the LWVCT spoke at a press conference in strong support for federal legislation that would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit VA offices and facilities to be designated as voter registration agencies in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act and to allow nonpartisan organizations to provide voter registration assistance. The legislation was sponsored by Connecticut Congressman Chris Murphy and quickly passed the House of Representatives. The ban on non-partisan voter registration drives was ultimately lifted by the VA.

Also in 2008, the General Assembly adopted a resolution to amend the State Constitution to allow 17 year old citizens who will turn 18 on or before the day of a regular election to vote in its primary. The LWVCT supported the amendment. The question was placed on the November ballot and passed.

In 2010, the LWVCT opposed a provision in a bill which would have extended the period of time for attachment of party privileges for voters who change parties. A substitute bill was voted out of the GAE Committee which eliminated this provision. The bill subsequently died.

In 2012, the League once again supported efforts to bring Election Day Registration to the state. The EDR bill that passed and was signed into law (HB 5024, *AAC Voting Rights*, P.A. 12-56) requires the Secretary of the State to establish and maintain an online voter registration system, a long overdue reform. The new online voter registration system goes into effect January 1, 2014

Electoral College/National Popular Vote

During the 2007 session, two "bills" were introduced that would have provided for election of the president by popular vote rather than by the Electoral College. Neither bill passed. In 2008 and 2009, bills were introduced to make Connecticut a signatory to "The Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote." The LWVCT did not testify on these bills at that time due to a lack of position at the national level. At the 2008 LWVUS Convention, delegates adopted a study of the National Popular Vote Compact, which was completed in 2009. The LWVUS Board determined that no consensus was reached. At the 2010 LWVUS Convention, the delegates adopted a position supporting the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of direct popular vote for the election of the president. In 2011, a bill making Connecticut a signatory to the national

Popular Vote Compact was again introduced. The LWVCT submitted testimony in favor of the bill, submitted a letter to the editor on NPV and urged legislators to take up the bill prior to the end of the session. The bill was successfully voted out of the GAE Committee, but died on the House calendar despite heavy lobbying by the LWVCT and its coalition partners.

A bill to make Connecticut a signatory to the National Popular Vote Compact was introduced again in 2013. The League submitted written testimony in support of the bill and sent out two member action alerts asking them to encourage their legislators to take up the bill and vote in favor of it. The bill was successfully voted out of the GAE Committee, but died at the end of the session when the Senate re-committed it to the committee. The League also submitted written testimony in opposition to a resolution to recognize the current Electoral College system as the best way to elect the President. The resolution died in committee.

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 that 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 by 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.

At the beginning of the regular session, the LWVCT was hopeful that 2008 would be the year of significant ethics reforms at the state level. The LWVCT testified in favor of several different ethics bills. During the regular session, the House and Senate passed competing versions of an ethics bill. The bill died in the House as time ran out on the last day of the session.

During a June 2008 special session, the legislature finally passed an ethics bill that the Governor signed into law. Among other things, the new law (P.A. 08-3) requires legislators to undergo mandatory ethics training and permits state courts to reduce or revoke pensions of state and municipal officials and employees who commit certain crimes related to their employment.

During the 2009 regular session, the LWVCT testified in favor of a bill that would have established a model code of ethics and required each municipality to adopt a code of ethics containing certain minimum standards. The bill was favorably voted out of two committees, but never taken up by the full legislature. A bill that would have required municipal lobbyists to register with the Office of State Ethics and wear badges while lobbying died in committee.

During the 2010 and 2011 regular sessions, the LWVCT testified in favor of bills to expand and clarify the authority of the Office of State Ethics (OSE), to make changes to the Citizen’s Ethics Advisory Board and State Code of Ethics for lobbyists and public officials, and to increase the reporting requirements for lobbyists. These bills were successfully voted out of committee, but died in the House.

In 2011, the LWVCT also testified in favor of a Senate bill to create a legislative code of ethics, together with a procedure for convening a legislative ethics committee to decide complaints by a General Assembly member alleging misconduct by another member. The bill was successfully voted out of two committees, but was never taken up by the full Senate.

In 2012, the League presented testimony on a variety of ethics-related bills, including two bills to revise the State Codes of Ethics. Neither bill passed.

A bill to revise the State Codes of Ethics was introduced again in 2013 at the behest of the OSE. The League submitted testimony in support of the bill, which passed both chambers and was signed into law by the Governor in July (P.A. 13-244). The new law expands the exemption for gifts to the state to include goods or services that support participation by a public official or a state employee at certain events, increases and clarifies the authority of the Citizen’s Ethics Advisory Board, reconfigures board members’ terms of office, and requires a public official or state employee act with specific intent before he or she may be found to violate the Code of Ethics for counseling, authorizing, or otherwise sanctioning actions that the Code prohibits. It also expands the grounds for contractor disqualification and revises certain financial and OSE reporting requirements.

In 2011, the Office of State Ethics underwent a major transformation when it was downsized and consolidated with the state's other watchdog agencies in the Office of Governmental Accountability (OGA) as part of Governor Malloy's reorganization of state government. Under the reorganization plan, the OGA, with an executive administrator appointed by the Governor as its head, will provide consolidated personnel, payroll, affirmative action, administrative and business office functions, including information technology associated with these functions, for nine state agencies. The nine agencies are: the Office of State Ethics (OSE), the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC), the Freedom of Information Commission (FOIC), the Judicial Review Council, the State Contracting Standards Board, the Judicial Selection Commission, the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners, the Office of Child Advocate, and the Office of Victim Advocate. Each agency retains its current independent decision-making authority, including decisions on budgetary issues and employing necessary staff.

The LWVCT strongly opposed the Governor's original plan which would have given the Governor sole discretion to appoint the executive administrator and allowed him to reduce agency budgets by repealing laws put in place during the Rowland era to insulate the OSE, SEEC and FOIC from political pressure from a single individual. Among other things, the LWVCT believed that the plans as originally proposed would have compromised the independence of the watchdog agencies with respect to transgressions by the executive branch, created problems of public perception and lead to internal conflicts among the agencies. The plan was modified during the legislative process to provide for input from the agencies on the appointment and termination of the executive administrator and to preserve agency control over budgets.

In 2013, the Governor proposed consolidating the legal and investigative functions of the watchdog agencies within a newly created Office of Hearings within the OGA and eliminating some of the safeguards put in place when the OGA was created. Under the Governor's proposal, the legal staff of the SEEC, OSE and FOIC would have been transferred to the Office of Hearings which, in turn, would have been responsible for investigating and prosecuting complaints and providing advisory opinions and staff assistance to the SEEC, OSE and FOIC. As part of the reorganization, the power to hire and fire legal staff would have been transferred from the individual agencies to the executive administrator. The Governor's proposal also eliminated the ability of the watchdog agencies to fire the executive administrator and allowed the Governor to make changes to the budgets of these agencies along the lines proposed in 2011.

The Governor's proposal was the impetus for the creation of a new coalition, CT Advocates for Accountable Government. Coalition members, including the League, submitted testimony in opposition to the Governor's plan and worked with the press to highlight their concerns. The proposal died in committee.

Action was also taken on LWVUS Calls to Action, as requested.

FISCAL POLICY

(Adopted 1981; amended and affirmed 2003; archived in part 2013)

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. Bonds should be used only for long-term capital projects and never for current expenditures.
 3. 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.
 4. 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 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.

In 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011, the state again faced significant budget deficits. Various spending cuts, tax increases and transfers from different funds were proposed, with several deficit mitigation and budget bills passing to deal with the shortfalls. In 2011, the state employee unions were asked to make significant concessions as part of the budget negotiation process. Also, in 2011, state government was substantially reorganized. The legislature consolidated 28 agencies and created five new agencies, thus reducing the total number of state agencies from 81 to 58 (a 28% reduction).

The 2012-2013 biennial budget included a mix of spending cuts, revenue increases, union concessions and savings from consolidation. Among other things, the 2013 budget act changes amounts transferred to and from the General Fund, eliminates the requirement that a portion of the sales, luxury, and real estate conveyance tax be allocated to the Municipal Revenue Sharing Account (leaving these funds in the General Fund) and allows the Connecticut Lottery to offer Keno games.

The LWVCT currently has no specialist in the areas of the Spending Cap or budgets. As a result, the LWVCT testifies and advocates against budget cuts to particular programs and specific tax/revenue increases under its various positions (e.g. cuts to the Citizens' Election Fund which provides public financing for campaigns, bus fare increases, cuts to education spending) and the consolidation of the state's five watchdog agencies in the Office of Governmental Accountability), but provides only limited comments on the overall budget process.

The LWVCT 2013 Convention voted to archive Sections 2 and 5 of the Fiscal Policy position.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(Adopted 1982, affirmed 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

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 at the Capitol. 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. After the adoption of a specific position on Ethics at Council 2004, many of the activities previously reported under this position have been addressed in the Ethics section.

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 LWVCT 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.

Hoping to capitalize on the legislature's concern regarding ethics in 2008, the LWVCT submitted statutory proposals intended to foster transparency in government by requiring (1) a public hearing whenever a bill or amendment creates an exception to an existing statute and (2) printing of "strike all amendments" at least 2 days in advance of passage. A bill containing these proposals was voted out of the GAE Committee, but died in the Judiciary Committee. In 2009, the LWVCT submitted these proposals both as statutory and potential rule changes to the House and Senate leadership but neither approach succeeded.

In 2009, the LWVCT also testified in support of a constitutional amendment to extend the terms of senators from two years to four years. The text of the amendment was substantially revised during the committee process; the amendment was never taken up by the full legislature.

In 2010 and 2011, the LWVCT submitted an election laws priorities statement to the legislature that included reference to the above "transparency" proposals but again no changes were made by the legislature.

Prior to the start of the 2013 legislative session, the League sent a letter to leadership encouraging the General Assembly to adopt rules to bring greater transparency to the legislative process. We also reached out to other organizations asking them to join our "Sunlight on Legislation (SOL) Initiative." Several organizations indicated that they were interested in joining our initiative. The League plans to use the 2013 legislative experience to "build our case" for greater transparency, develop a comprehensive strategy, educate the public and recruit additional members.

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

(Adopted in 1984; affirmed 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

In the 2005 session, the LWVCT, under its Election Laws position, advocated for improvements in the dissemination of information regarding all election issues. In 2008, the LWVCT opposed the calling of a constitutional convention and actively urged voters to “vote no” on the ballot question. The League opposed the question because in general we were not convinced that there were urgent governance issues to justify the time, expense and energy of a constitutional convention and in particular we opposed the calling of a convention for purpose of adopting direct initiative and referendum via a constitutional amendment. This ballot measure failed.

In 2010 and 2011 resolutions were introduced to amend the State Constitution to allow for direct initiative and referendum. No public hearings were held and the resolutions died. The LWVCT continues to monitor this important policy area.

INTERNET AND MEDIA

(Adopted 2008)

A Neutral Internet: "Net Neutrality"

The LWVCT believes that a free and open Internet is increasingly important to the protection of individual liberties – freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association – guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and by the Connecticut Constitution. The League also believes that net neutrality protections are essential for political discourse, dissemination of news, and democratic participation. Therefore, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports the LWVUS position to protect the open, neutral,

nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet. To further this position, the LWVCT supports efforts by the State of Connecticut to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet.

Universal High Speed Internet Access for Connecticut

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports making high speed Internet access available to all Connecticut residents, without charge, through schools, libraries, and other secure public buildings. High speed affordable Internet access is an essential service that should be readily available to all Connecticut residents and businesses. State and local government policies should support broadband, wireless, and other means of high speed Internet deployment throughout the state.

Efficient, high speed access to the Internet for all Connecticut residents-regardless of geographic location or neighborhood demographics-is a necessity for assuring equal access to local and state government, for maintaining openness and transparency in government activities, for communicating with legislative leaders, for engaging in political discourse, for competing in the global marketplace, and for assuring that voters receive the information they need to participate in our democracy.

Community Access and Public Affairs TV: Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) TV & the Connecticut Network (CT-N)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that community access television channels – for public, educational, and governmental programming – must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded, regardless of the provider of TV/video services to Connecticut residents. Statewide public affairs programming, such as provided by The Connecticut Network (CT-N), must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded by the state legislature and available to all Connecticut residents, regardless of the provider of TV/video services. Government should provide opportunities for citizen participation in decisions regarding community access, or PEG, TV.

Access to the public airwaves through modem TV/video communication is essential to the public interest and to League of Women Voters’ mission and purpose- to protect civil liberties, to ensure open, transparent government, and to promote the public’s right to know. To protect the public interest, high quality PEG transmission and PEG availability on basic service tiers are essential.

Background and Action

At the 2006 LWVUS Convention, LWVCT proposed and caucused for a resolution to recognize a “Net Neutrality” position as based on League Principles. The Convention delegates adopted the Net Neutrality resolution but rejected another (also introduced by LWVCT) in support of community access television. Meanwhile, the Connecticut Dept. of Public Utility Control (DPUC) ruled that Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), such as AT&T’s U-verse service, is technically different from cable television (CATV) and so should be regulated differently. A federal judge ruled in contradiction to DPUC that IPTV is just like CATV. An appeal was filed.

In 2006-07, while LWVCT studied media issues, the General Assembly passed legislation that established the Connecticut Broadband Internet Coordinating Council (CBICC), consisting of academics, public officials and industry representatives, to study and advise the legislature on ways to increase high speed Internet availability in the state. Another bill, PA 07-253, revised statutes to incorporate IPTV regulation in the public utility statutes; in general it relaxed regulation of the industry. This bill also established two special funds, one for capital needs of PEG TV programming and production and another to defray property taxes in municipalities where IPTV is available.

In 2008, the LWVCT concurrence was still in process, but unintended consequences of PA 07-253 had come to light. Delivery of PEG programs by an IPTV service provider was found to be substandard in other states; however, problems were difficult to address in the new regulatory environment. PEG entities collectively tried to push legislation during the 2008 legislative session to correct this, but all proposals failed. The LWVCT monitored legislative initiatives in this area including the bill favored by PEG entities.

In April, 2008, the LWVCT achieved state concurrence on its media study positions on Net Neutrality, universal access to high speed Internet, and community access television. Activity concerning Net Neutrality has taken place in Congress, in federal courts, and in the Federal Communications Commission. Although the LWVUS position is not a national League priority, the LWVCT continues to monitor national events.

During the 2010-2011 biennium, the LWVCT continued to attend CBICC meetings and offer comments. Meetings continued to the end of 2011, months after the Council's establishing legislation was repealed. Members discussed a state application for a federal grant (BTOP), the Internet needs of public entities (municipalities, state library, CT Education Network) and corporate needs for less regulation.

The LWVCT also participated in the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) Broadband Study Committee. The Committee was tasked with creating guidelines for the development of a strategic plan for accessibility to broadband services in the state. The Committee's report was issued for the 2012 legislative session; ironically, it is not available on the CASE website. No legislation followed its recommendations.

In 2013, bills were submitted by the telecommunication industry to relax regulation on landline and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone service. In oral testimony, industry representatives argued that this was needed so that they could devote more resources toward wireless broadband infrastructure. The line workers union and AARP opposed this effort, contributing to its defeat.

In the area of community access television, 2009-10 was dominated by budget deficits and our efforts spent in futilely defending a special fund for capital expenses from "sweeps" into the General Fund. These sweeps were executed again in December 2012 and built into the state budgets for FY2014 and FY2015. The popular capital grant program is on hiatus until the fund is replenished. The state budgets also completely drain the fund for municipal tax relief.

During the 2009-2012 legislative sessions, the LWVCT testified and advocated for good signal quality in PEG programming on any cable/video service and for a regulatory performance review of the industry. Although the latter concept was included in a bill that won bipartisan support and passage in the House in 2011, the bill died in the Senate. The LWVCT also testified in favor of a failed bill which provided incentives for satellite TV providers to carry the Connecticut Television Network (CT-N). In 2012, only performance review was proposed, failing again in the Senate. In 2013, no cable/video-related legislation emerged from committee.

In 2011, the Public Utility Regulatory Authority (which replaced DPUC) initiated a docket to consider performance of Community Access Providers (CAPs), entities officially designated to provide PEG access television programming. The LWVCT submitted written comments to the agency on this docket in October 2011, incidentally noting the need to review the industry's role in PEG programming and the role of broadband Internet in this area. In the procedure following from that docket, only two CAP reviews — for Cox Communications and for Skye Cable XIII in the Waterbury-Comcast area — were begun in 2012 and continue as of this writing. There are over thirty CAPs in Connecticut.

PRIMARIES AND PARTIES

(Adopted 1983; affirmed 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

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. During the 2008 regular session, a bill was introduced at the LWVCT's urging to allow voters who switch parties to retain the rights of the old party until new party privileges attach. During the 2009 session, a bill was introduced, again at the LWVCT's urging, to reduce the time of attachment of party privileges for electors who change parties from three months to one month. Both bills died.

Also, in 2008, the General Assembly passed a resolution proposing a constitutional amendment allowing 17 year olds who turn 18 before the next election to vote in the primary. The question was placed on the November ballot and passed. The LWVCT supported the amendment.

In 2010, the LWVCT opposed a provision in a bill which would have extended the period of time for attachment of party privileges for voters who change parties. A substitute bill was voted out of the GAE Committee which eliminated this provision. The bill subsequently died.

In 2013, the League opposed two bills that would treat multiple votes for a single, cross-endorsed candidate as an overvote, requiring an elector to fill out a new ballot or give up the right to vote for that candidate. (The state's current tabulator technology treats multiple votes for cross-endorsed candidates as a single vote.) Both bills died in committee. We also opposed a bill, SB 1146, *AAC Cross-Endorsements*, which would have eliminated the cross-endorsement of candidates altogether. Although SB 1146 died at the end of the session, the omnibus campaign finance reform bill which passed (P.A. 13-180) contained a provision limiting the circumstances under which a candidate may be cross-endorsed by a minor party. Under the new law, a party endorsement for a candidate running for the municipal office of state senator or state representative (i.e., in single-town legislative districts) is valid or may be filed only when the candidate's name appears on the party's last-completed enrollment list within the senatorial

or assembly district. In addition, the law prohibits a candidate from being cross-endorsed by a major or minor party unless a candidate for statewide office, belonging to the endorsing minor party, received at least 15,000 votes at the previous state election. For cross-endorsement purposes, statewide office candidates are those for governor, secretary of the state, treasurer, comptroller, and attorney general.

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After the 2009 Convention approved a study of 1) state procedures for certifying candidates for inclusion on the ballot, 2) the state election calendar timelines and 3) the methods for filling US senate vacancies; the legislature changed the method of filling US senate vacancies, and the study group concluded that there was not a sufficient basis for amending an existing position or creating a new position. At the 2013 Convention, the delegates approved a re-study of Connecticut's primary system.

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

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.

Federal and state laws require that redistricting be reviewed based upon the most recent Federal Census. Following the 2010 census, several bills were introduced during the 2011 session dealing with redistricting issues. A senate resolution proposing a constitutional amendment to provide for a nonpartisan reapportionment redistricting commission was introduced, but received no legislative action. Public hearings were held on two bills dealing with the issue of how inmates are counted for purposes of redistricting, but died in committee. The LWVCT's redistricting specialist monitored these bills and participated in conference calls on redistricting organized by LWVUS.

In 2010, a bipartisan Reapportionment Committee was charged with preparing the redistricting plan. The Committee was made up of eight legislators (two from each party's caucus in the Senate and House of Representatives). The committee members were: Senate President Pro Tempore Donald Williams (Co-chair), House Minority Leader Lawrence Cafero (Co-chair), Senator Majority Leader Martin Looney, Senate Minority Leader John McKinney, Senator Leonard Fasano, Speaker of the House Christopher Donovan, Representative Sandy Nafis, and Representative Arthur O'Neill.

The Committee held public hearings across the state, one in each Congressional district. The League testified at the July 2011 hearing urging the Committee to create legislative districts that have equal population, respect minority representation, are contiguous and compact, and follow political and geographic boundaries. The final plan was to be presented and approved by the General Assembly by September 15, 2011.

The Committee failed to submit a plan to the General Assembly by September 15 deadline. As a result, a nine-member Reapportionment Commission was formed as required by state law. The 2011 Commission members were the same as the above Committee members with one addition. On November 3, 2011 the commission selected Kevin Johnston as its ninth member. The Commission's deadline for completing its work was November 30, 2011. The Commission met that deadline for drawing the lines of the state House and Senate districts, however, failed to reach an agreement on the Congressional maps. Connecticut's Constitution gives the state Supreme Court the option of forcing the Commission to do its job if it fails to meet its November 30 deadline or to draw the district boundaries itself. The Commission

asked for an extension of time from the Supreme Court. On December 2, the Supreme Court granted the Commission the extension to complete its work.

Under the redrawn map, the number of state House and Senate seats will remain the same with 151 House seats and 36 Senate seats. Connecticut did not gain or lose any Congressional districts. The number will remain at 5.

CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO KNOW/CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

Background and Action

During the 2008 regular session, the League testified in favor of two "good government" bills that would have made it easier for citizens to stay active and informed about their government. These bills would have required state agencies to publish their regulations on their websites and would have created an online citizen's forum to receive suggestions about ways to improve state services. The bill dealing with publication of state agency regulations passed the Appropriations Committee, but was tabled for the House calendar where it died, presumably because of the deteriorating fiscal condition of the state. The electronic citizen's forum bill died in the Appropriations Committee.

Also in 2008, as part of the Ethics bill passed during the special session, a provision was included requiring public agencies to post minutes of their meetings on available websites within 7 days. In response to an outcry from many local municipalities that the 7 day requirement was too onerous, bill SB 772 was introduced in 2009 to extend the amount of time that agencies have to comply with the law from 7 days to 14 days; that bill, which the LWVCT supported, died on the Senate calendar.

In 2008 and 2009, LWVCT submitted statutory proposals intended to foster transparency in government; in 2009 we also submitted the proposal as a rules change. In 2010 and 2011, LWVCT identified transparency among its election law priorities. Unfortunately efforts in this area were not successful. For more information, see the General Assembly "Background and Action" section.

In 2010 and 2011, the LWVCT again testified in favor of bills that would have required state agencies to publish their regulations on their websites. These bills died in the Senate. In 2011, the LWVCT also testified in favor of a bill that would have required any appropriation or revenue related bill to be posted on the General Assembly website 72 hours before a vote. The bill died in the GAE Committee.

In 2011, the LWVCT testified against a reorganization plan to consolidate the state's five watchdog agencies (the Office of State Ethics, State Elections Enforcement Commission, Freedom of Information Commission, Judicial Review Council and State Contracting Standards Board) in the Office of Government Accountability. Although the bill on which the LWVCT testified died in the GAE Committee, a modified plan survived and became law as part of a bill implementing the budget for general government. For more information, see the Ethics "Background and Action" section.

In 2013, the independence of the watchdog agencies again came under attack when the Governor proposed consolidating the legal and investigative functions of these agencies within a newly created Office of Hearings, stripping the agencies of their budgetary authority, and backing away from compromises adopted as part of the creation of the Office of Governmental Accountability. The League and its coalition partners submitted testimony to the Appropriations Committee opposing these changes.

Fortunately, the legislature refused to go along with the Governor's proposals. For more information, see the *Ethics* "Background and Action" section.

In addition to fighting to preserve the independence and integrity of the watchdog agencies in 2013, the League also raised concerns in written testimony about a bill which would have exempted from the Freedom of Information Act's open meeting requirements certain negotiations between leaders of a public agency from different political parties, even if the leaders constituted a quorum of the agency. The bill was successfully voted out of the GAE Committee, but died at the end of the session.

NATURAL RESOURCES

LAND USE

(Adopted 1975; affirmed 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

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 protect 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. As a result of continued advocacy over the summer by Endangered Lands Coalition members and others, key legislators ultimately agreed that it would be best to repeal the law and the repeal passed in special session.

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.

In 2008, the League opposed a bill that would have set *state* standards for conservation development overlays and conservation subdivisions and the League supported a bill that defined "responsible growth," stressed comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and development and stated that not less than 2 per cent of the cost of development would be used to develop pedestrian and other non-motorized transportation improvements. Neither bill passed.

In 2009, numerous "smart growth" bills were considered by the Legislature. The economic downturn encouraged regional planning and cooperation all by itself. The lack of planning and/or funds to do planning in FY 2010 and beyond are the significant problems facing the state.

Over the years, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has been decimated by years of budget neglect. The lack of adequate funding has harmed our environment and the quality of life for Connecticut residents.

In 2008, a large group of environmental organizations lobbied for a restoration of funds for DEEP in the amount of \$5 million for staffing. Thanks to strong leadership and public support, the Appropriations Committee restored \$4.5 million to the DEP's operating budget. Three million dollars would be used for additional staff to put the DEEP on the path to provide consistent enforcement of environmental laws that protect our health, air, water and lands; reduce polluted runoff; help local wetlands commissions respond to growing development pressure; and maintain and protect our public parks, wildlife and forests. With the economic situation worsening as the session progressed, the Governor and legislative leaders agreed not to "open up" the approved FY09 budget. Therefore, any legislation having a fiscal note was not approved by the Legislature. The group of concerned environmental organizations met prior to the 2009 legislative session, but it was felt that the large state budget deficit precluded an increase in DEEP operating funds at this point in time. However, discussions were held on other revenue sources available to the DEEP and how they could best be used to improve DEEP service to the public.

The 2010 legislative session convened with a large budget deficit projected and a new governor to be elected in the Fall. The legislature enacted a two-year extension on the update of the State's Plan of Conservation & Development. The legislature also introduced SB 543, a bill to streamline the state's

regulatory system. The League strongly opposed the bill because it would not streamline the system but weaken regulations and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) oversight. The bill died in the Appropriations Committee. During 2010, the DEP, using the LEAN system, identified and eliminated waste in its processes. Improvements were seen in the water enforcement program, wastewater discharge permits, storage tank inspections and inland wetland permitting programs.

In 2011, with a \$1.4 billion deficit projected over the next two fiscal years, the legislature introduced a bill to require DEEP to establish adequate staffing levels for enforcement and permitting. The League supported the bill. Unfortunately it died in the Appropriations Committee. In addition, the League submitted testimony to the Appropriations Committee in support of funding for the DEEP and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The budget process, that included union concessions as a major part of overcoming the budget deficit, was finally completed in August of 2011. CEQ was funded and is now a part of the new Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Other legislation discussed included coordinating transportation and economic development and the consolidation of regional planning organizations. SB 1199 authorized the "Haddam Land Swap." The land was originally purchased by the State, with a commitment to the seller that it remain open space in perpetuity. The League opposed the bill, but it was passed and signed by the Governor. The League's concern is that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government and the processes followed. The League urged that legislative changes be adopted that clarify the process to be followed by the state when it disposes of land and fix any loopholes that undermine the intent of the seller. Transparency is key!

In 2012, our land use efforts consisted mainly of monitoring the progress of the draft of Connecticut's Plan of Conservation & Development. "Smart Growth" was the watchword. The League supported the principles contained in the Plan that was approved in 2013.

2012 saw the passage of SB 347, *AAC the State's Open Space Plan*. The new law, PA 12-152, requires the Commissioner of DEEP, in consultation with the Council on Environmental Quality, municipalities, regional planning agencies and nonprofit land conservation organizations, to update the strategy for achieving the state's open space goals no less than once every five years. In addition, the strategy must now include priorities for acquisition based on the need for immediate preservation and an evaluation of all state owned lands that would be valuable for conservation. Finally, the bill requires the Commissioner to report to the Environment Committee with recommendations for establishing a system to accurately keep track of lands, both public and private, currently preserved as open space throughout the state.

In addition, in February of 2012, the League emailed the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority re: the NU/North Star merger, requesting that the nearly 10,000 acres of conservation land across the state owned by Northeast Utilities remain protected under any new agreement. In the resulting merger approval, the conservation of those lands continued.

In 2013, the League followed the proceedings and recommendations of the Municipal Opportunities & Regional Efficiencies (M.O.R.E.) Commission. The recommendations were fully contained in HB 6629 and most became part of the implementer bill, HB 6706, which was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor as PA 13-247. The League encourages all levels of government to work together in a voluntary way. Nothing in 6629 or 6706 prevents that from happening. The bills "collect" various good ideas in disparate bills over the last years and put them in one place. Regionalism has always been a strong component of the League's position as long as it is voluntary. The bills' recommendations may move away from the voluntary concept.

Good news in 2013 was the continued funding of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) as an independent watchdog group and the repeal of the Haddam Land Swap bill approved in 2011. The League submitted testimony in support of the CEQ and is very pleased funding was included in the final budget.

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 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 on development of a coordinated, interlocking and multi-modal transportation system.

A new DOT Commissioner was appointed in late April 2004 and the LWVCT 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 and op-ed pieces, attending rallies, issuing calls to action. The LWVCT 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 LWVCT 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 LWVCT 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 LWVCT 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 River 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 LWVCT 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.

During the 2007 legislative session, the LWVCT testified on numerous bills proposing a study of user fees on Connecticut'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.

The legislature approved a bonding package that included \$20 million for bus transit which included, among other appropriations, \$5 million to buy and install clean diesel bus retrofits and \$1 million for elderly and disabled transportation programs.

Following the resignation of the Commissioner of Transportation in December 2007, the LWVCT urged the governor to appoint a new Commissioner open to a departmental change from road-building to longer-term solutions to traffic congestion and increased emphasis on mass transit. Also, in the preliminary budget discussions, the LWVCT urged the Transit Administrator in the Bureau of Public Transportation to increase the operating and capital budgets for bus service in the state.

At the start of the 2008 legislative session, the LWVCT submitted to the legislature its 2008 Transportation Priorities, calling for the reduction of vehicular traffic on Connecticut highways, expanded schedules, capacity and incentives for intra-state mass transit users, expanded traffic on existing rail and barge lines, better coordinated transportation planning, priority of infrastructure maintenance over new construction, improved highway safety and increases in the dedicated funding for mass transit.

Transportation bills fared poorly during the 2008 session. During the 2008 regular session, HB 5734 was raised and, if approved, would have added \$7 million in operating funds in FY09 and \$15 million in capital funds in FY09 to increase bus service across the state. However, due to the economic downturn in

Connecticut, the Governor and Democratic legislative leaders agreed not to “open” the approved FY09 budget and no new funding was approved. While no “new” funding was achieved, \$5 million in capital funds from the 2007 bonding bill was reallocated to allow for the purchase of buses and equipment needed to increase transit in the state.

Regretfully, budget deficits caused the Governor to convene a special deficit-mitigating session on November 24, 2008. The LWVCT strongly opposed the proposed \$5 million reduction in bus operating expenses that had been approved in 2007 to increase and expand bus service in the state. This reduction was approved by the legislature. Budget negotiations to fund the 2009 budget deficit are still not resolved.

The LWVCT also contacted federal and state officials and successfully urged the inclusion of mass transit funding in the federal Stimulus package and specifically the inclusion of “shovel-ready” bus transit projects in the request for Stimulus funding.

The 2009 legislative session was dominated by the budget shortfalls. No initiative requiring new funds fared well. The LWVCT once again submitted its 2009 Transportation Priorities to the legislators and the Governor, based on the 2008 version but urged careful priority-setting among programs due to the fiscal crisis.

The LWVCT submitted an early testimony to the Transportation Committee urging consideration of various concepts to improve the flow of traffic and to fund improvements to mass transit. These included congestion pricing, electronic tolling, expanded rail freight, light rail expansion, easier access to mass transit venues and increased parking at rail stations. We supported mass transit funding at the Appropriations hearings, wrote to the Governor and the Transportation Strategy Board in support of congestion pricing, advocated in favor funding the specialized transportation for the elderly (the Dial-a-Ride bill), and sent a message to the Connecticut Economic Recovery Working Group and Commissioner Marie to thank them for giving priority to infrastructure maintenance projects over new construction.

Our success was quite limited: the light rail, rail freight, increased parking at railroad station bills all died in committee. The electronic tolls/congestion pricing legislation only authorized the DOT to conduct another analysis of the project and report to the legislature on June 30, 2010.

In May, the LWVCT testified at a public hearing in front of the Transportation Strategy Board in support of electronic tolling and congestion pricing.

In late May, as part of a budget deficit mitigation strategy, the governor proposed a 40% increase in bus fares and 10% increase in rail fares. The LWVCT strongly advocated against such increases, lobbying the governor, the legislative leadership and the rank and file. No budget exists as of this writing but the Governor’s latest budget proposal indicates a reduction in bus operating expenses that may necessitate a 20% increase in bus fares.

The only bill passed and signed into law is the Improved Pedestrian and Bicycle Access bill to enhance non-motorized transportation alternatives, promote healthy lifestyles, encourage smart growth and reduce congestion by adopting a complete streets policy, establishing a permanent bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee, devoting a minimum percentage of funds to programs that improve bicycle and pedestrian access and authorizing the issuance of “Share the Road” number plates.

Budget problems continued to dominate the legislative agenda into 2010. Preceding the short session, the LWVCT sent its Transportation Priorities 2010 to the Transportation Committee and the DOT chairs. The principal points included action to promote careful priority setting among programs, increased

dedicated funding sources for mass transit, highway congestion relief, continued funding for existing bus service, expanded freight traffic on existing rail lines, a Fix-It-First Policy giving priority to maintenance of highways and bridges over new construction and expanding efforts to promote safety on Connecticut's highways. Based on these priorities, we have advocated for electronic tolls and an increase in fines for traffic infractions, to be placed into a dedicated transit improvement fund, supported bus safety bills and opposed border tolling. In March 2010, the League organized a Transportation Forum at Norwalk Community College.

No significant transportation bills made it through the session although the League was successful (with a coalition of advocates) to maintain the operating and capital budget cuts to transit at a minimum.

In December 2010, upon the resignation of the Commissioner of Transportation, the League submitted testimony to Governor Malloy's transition team, urging the appointment of a new leader for DOT, focused on mass transit rather than road building projects. League transportation priorities for 2011 were again sent to the Transportation Committee and the transition team.

Governor Malloy's budget for 2011-12 included funding for transit service supported by the League. The League again supported electronic tolling, level funding for bus transportation, coordinated planning for all transportation projects and opposed border tolling and dedicated tolls to expand Route 11. During the budget discussions, the League and coalition partners lobbied against an unrealistic increase in bus fares and other severe cuts to transit projects. We also supported the New Britain/Hartford Busway.

Ultimately, no major new initiatives passed this session. The League continues to partner with Citizen Transportation Lobby, Transit for Connecticut and several other like-minded organizations. As the difficult budget negotiations continued, we opposed any reductions in bus service and its funding. A letter of congratulations and League's 2011 priorities were sent to the newly-appointed DOT Commissioner.

In 2012 and 2013, the League continued to support congestion pricing tolling and oppose border tolls and tolls dedicated to expanding Rt. 11. No tolling bills were approved in either year. We also supported maintaining funding for existing bus and rail service and using revenue from any increase in bus and rail fares for improving and expanding service.

In 2012, the League joined the "Growing Connecticut Around Transit" (GCAT) Coalition, a subgroup of Transit for Connecticut. GCAT advocates for increased planning for and establishment of transit oriented development (TOD) in Connecticut.

In 2013, the League supported placing a "lock box" on the money in the Special Transportation Fund so that that money would be used only for transportation projects. In this difficult fiscal climate, with the state facing a deficit of more than \$1 billion, the biennium budget approved in 2013 essentially maintains funding for existing bus service. Funding is also based on an increase in bus fares to \$1.50. Capital funding for all necessary transportation projects was approved in SB 975. SB 975, now PA 13-277, contains a section requiring resources of the Special Transportation Fund to be used only for transportation purposes effective in 2015.

Throughout the 2012 and 2013 Legislative session, the League continued to work with its many coalition partners.

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

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 LWVCT co-sponsored the conference *Water Law in Connecticut: Balancing Needs for Fish and Faucet*.

In the 2006 session, the LWVCT 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 LWVCT 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. However, no volunteers stepped forward to form a committee by the December 1, 2007 deadline, so the position is retained as is.

During the 2008 legislative session, LWVCT and coalition partners actively lobbied against an amendment to a bill pertaining to protecting small public water supply wells that could have been interpreted as weakening the Class I and II statutory protections on the lease and sale of water company land. Due to alarm raised by opponents, the co-chair of the Public Health Committee read a clear legislative intent statement into the record that this bill, which passed, does not affect in any way the laws pertaining to the protections of Class I and II water company lands.

LWVCT also worked in coalition to enhance wetlands protections by supporting a bill that would have aided our local volunteer boards by 1) clarifying that protecting wetlands is the primary purpose of the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Act and 2) allowing local boards to rely on comments provided by state agencies, expert environmental review team reports, and local water companies in reaching decisions about wetlands. The bill died on the House calendar on the last night of the legislative session, largely because of a major backlog of bills.

LWVCT also supported a bill to protect a 100-foot wide strip of naturally vegetated riverfront area. This is critically important for rivers and streams that flow into our drinking water reservoirs, because, on average, only one mile out of five of these rivers and streams is owned by a water company and protected by statute. The bill passed Environment and Appropriations Committees, but failed narrowly in the Planning and Development Committee.

During the 2009 session, with the failing economy as a backdrop, advocates were required to spend precious time and energy to stop bills that would undermine basic environmental laws. LWVCT and coalition partners lobbied to defend the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) from bills exempting an airport expansion and federally funded construction projects from standard environmental review; Clean Water Act against a bill exempting wastewater washed off boat hulls from regulation and from bills overriding the authority of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to regulate construction in a floodplain. Bills introduced to address the issues raised during 2008 session regarding enhancing wetland protections and establishing a uniform vegetative buffer again died.

During the 2010 legislation session, SB 174, *AAC The Standards of Water Quality*, was introduced. The bill sought to change procedures and requirements for adopting water quality standards. The League supported the underlying bill but opposed an amendment that would undermine DEP's water standards adoption process currently underway. The bill was voted out of the Commerce, Environment and Public Health Committees, but died in the Senate. The League also submitted testimony to the DEP in support of proposed stream flow standards and regulations to provide for the protection of Connecticut's rivers and streams amid the many competing uses, such as drinking water, public safety, irrigation and wildlife. The League included specific changes to the proposed standards in its testimony.

In 2011, the League supported SB 832, *AAC The Protection of Certain Natural Vegetation Near Rivers*. This bill prohibited municipal zoning regulations from allowing disturbances to areas of natural vegetation within 100 feet of a river but would allow such regulations to provide a special permit procedure for site-specific relief under certain circumstances. The bill was voted out of the Environment Committee but died in the Planning & Development Committee.

The League opposed SB 1020 and SB 6400. SB 1020, *AAC Water Resources and Economic Development*, would have circumvented the established Regulation Review Process and block reforms to protect Stream flows. The bill was voted out of the Commerce Committee but recommitted to the Commerce by the Senate and died. SB 6400, *AAC Licensure of Stormwater Professionals*, was proposed to create a licensing program for stormwater professionals but would have confused the stormwater management permitting at DEP with municipal land use oversight. It was voted out of the Commerce and Planning & Development Committees, but died in the House.

The state bonding bill, SB 1242, was passed by the House and the Senate and signed by the Governor. SB 1242 included bond authorization for the Clean Water Fund that was supported by the League.

In 2012, a bill was passed that dealt with the application of fertilizers that contain phosphate. The bill, SB 440, signed into law by the Governor PA 12-155, establishes some restrictions on the use and sale of phosphate-containing fertilizers. It also expands the eligibility for Clean Water Fund monies for projects

that include phosphorus removal from wastewater. In addition, it requires that DEEP work with municipalities statewide to reduce the amount of phosphorus that gets into water bodies and courses. In 2012, many bills were introduced including incentives for water conservation, municipal water rates, streamlining the sale and abandonment of water supply sources and training for inland wetlands agency members and agents. None of these passed.

In 2013, the League supported several positions contained in SB 807, particularly in regards to water infrastructure and conservation. This bill contained strategies that would allow water companies to sustain revenues in ways other than increased water sales, thus encouraging conservation. The bill passed in the House and Senate and was signed into law by the Governor as PA13-78. We also supported HB 6533, *AAC Hydraulic Fracturing Waste*. The bill defined hydraulic fracturing and hydraulic fracturing waste and prohibited the treatment, discharge, disposal or storage of hydraulic fracturing waste in the state. The bill died on the House calendar. In addition, the LWVCT supported the LWVUS's recommendations to study the potential impacts of "fracking" on drinking water resources and co-signed a letter to EPA leaders.

In 2013, the League followed several bills that were introduced but not passed. These included bills affecting public water supplies (requirement for a back-up generator, fluoride elimination, swimming, reduction of phosphorous); water companies (change of regulatory authority, periodic pressure vacuum breaker testing, liability for damages caused by leaks/breaks in water mains); and water supply planning (moratorium on water diversions and establishment of a statewide water use plan, and classification of UConn as a water company).

Information note: Over the next biennium, \$997.4 million was allocated by the Legislature to the Clean Water Fund.

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 2004, the LWVCT and the Connecticut Climate 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 LWVCT'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 LWVCT 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 raise 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 LWVCT 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 State to sell permits to emit global warming pollution to power-generating companies and that the proceeds from these permits be invested in energy efficiency and new clean energy generation. Two other measures that we strongly supported were included in this bill: 1) The sales tax exemption on hybrid vehicles was extended to all motor vehicles that achieve forty miles per gallon in either highway or city driving; and 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.

In 2008, the LWVCT supported a bill to provide an enforcement mechanism for existing anti-idling laws. Costly amendments were added to the bill and the bill was not voted on.

In 2009, bills were introduced that sought to prohibit motor vehicle idling for more than three minutes, with certain exceptions, to increase the authority of the Department of Environmental Protection and to allow for hybrid vehicles and alternative fuel vehicles to use the state's High Occupancy Vehicle lanes if only one person was in the vehicle. None of the bills passed.

In 2010, on a national level, the LWVCT lobbied its Congressional Delegation to oppose any proposal that would delay the clean-up of global warming pollution from coal-fired power plants, oil refineries and other stationary sources. The League supported the Environmental Protection Agency and its ability to hold polluters account able by enforcing the Clean Air Act.

On a state level, the League supported HB 5124, AA Prohibiting the Idling of Motor Vehicles. The bill sought to prohibit motor vehicle idling for more than three consecutive minutes, except for certain exempted purposes. The bill received a “joint unfavorable” vote in the Environment Committee.

In March of 2010, to further our support for strong climate change legislation, the LWVCT joined Oxfam America as part of the 100 “Sisters on the Planet” Ambassadors to Washington, DC, to advocate for climate legislation.

The 2011 state legislative session brought discussion to the topic of outdoor wood-burning furnaces. Many environmental organizations supported a bill that banned outdoor wood-burning furnaces, except for agricultural use and heating of homes of persons involved in farming or agriculture. Substitute language changed the bill considerably. Environmental groups were not united on the substitute language. The substitute bill died in the Senate.

On the national level, the LWVCT asked its Congressional delegation to oppose legislation that would block or prevent action to clean up our air. The League supported allowing the EPA to enforce pollution standards. The LWVCT participated in a LWVUS conference call to discuss the national Clean Air Promise Campaign.

In 2012 and 2013, the League did not have an Air Quality specialist. However, on the national level, the LWVCT contacted Connecticut’s Congressional Delegation and urged them to support the provisions of the Clean Air Act and not diminish the regulatory authority of EPA.

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. Additionally, support measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including cap and trade programs, carbon offsets, low-carbon fuels and green building standards.

Background and Action

In 2005, the LWVCT joined the Sound Alliance in opposition to a Broadwater Energy proposal. Broadwater Energy, a subsidiary of foreign-owned oil companies, proposed permanently anchoring 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) 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.

LWVCT actively opposed this proposal and 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.

In March 2008, FERC gave conditional approval of the project, subject to the State of New York's determination that the terminal would be consistent with New York's coastal management policies. Connecticut's federal and state elected officials – including the entire congressional delegation, Governor Rell, Attorney General Blumenthal, Secretary of the State Bysiewicz, and the CT LIS Liquefied Natural Gas Task Force – strenuously opposed the facility. In April 2008, the New York State Secretary of the State determined that the Broadwater proposal was inconsistent with policies of the Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program and denied the project. Broadwater Energy appealed the decision to the US Secretary of Commerce. In April 2009, the US Commerce Secretary sustained New York's denial of the project. Given that the administrative process has been exhausted, the only option remaining for Broadwater Energy is court action. The Coalition views the chances of success via the courts to be slim at best.

Legislatively, 2008 was a good year for global warming legislation. HB 5600, *AAC Connecticut Global Warming Solutions*, was approved by the Connecticut Legislature and signed by the Governor. The bill caps emissions of global warming pollution and requires emissions cuts to 10% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% emissions reductions from 2001 levels by 2050. Connecticut is the fifth state after California, New Jersey, Hawaii and Washington to adopt mandatory limits for global warming pollution.

However, during the 2008 Legislative session, two bills of note did not pass. The first would have required a study of the creation of a new department of clean energy and the department's impact on energy shortages, price increases, opportunities for clean energy industries, reductions in carbon emissions, increases in renewable energy, and energy conservation. The study would have been funded from the renewable energy investment fund. The second, HB 5798, *AA Establishing a Tax Credit for Green Buildings*, that would have provided for a tax credit for eligible projects rather than a direct rebate, passed the House on the last day of the session but was never called by the Senate, probably due to lack of time.

2009 brought disappointment, success and uncertainty. The "Right to Dry" bill that was intended to lower use of electric energy consumption by allowing residents to use clotheslines was not voted on and the bill to promote use of solar power was not approved by the Senate. Green Building Standards were approved and the bill signed by the Governor. While the LWVCT had advocated for higher standards, the bill requires the State Building Inspector and Codes and Standards Committee to revise state building codes and include a model energy code and green building standards for certain new construction and renovation. During the session, the LWVCT opposed legislation that would have transferred energy conservation funds to the General Fund to cover general operating expenses.

Of particular importance is the fact that SB 794 died in the Environment Committee. SB 794, *AAC RGGI and Ratepayer Relief*, was a proposal to legitimize the substitute language adopted by the Regulations Review Committee last August, allowing CO2 auction proceeds to be used for electric consumer rebates. The decision of the Regulations Review Committee to allow ratepayer rebates contradicted the Legislature's stated intention to use proceeds from the quarterly auctions for "energy conservation, load management, and Class I renewable energy programs."

The LWVCT supported the work of Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and did not support the elimination of funding for CEQ. CEQ serves as an independent watchdog agency that provides essential research, spotlights critical statewide environmental issues, recommends balanced public policy approaches, reviews the construction plans of state agencies and investigates citizen complaints. After much discussion and debate, CEQ was retained.

In 2011, the League submitted testimony in support of funding for the Department of Environmental Protection and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The budget, passed in May and put into

effect after union concessions were ratified in August, allows the CEQ to continue within the new Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

The League testified in support of an omnibus energy bill, SB 1, *AAC Connecticut's Energy Future*. The modified version of the bill, SB 1243, passed both houses of the legislature in the final days of the session. In addition to creating a consolidated Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the act set out four broad energy goals for the agency: to reduce utility rates, to provide a safe, reliable energy supply for residential and commercial users, to increase the use of clean energy in the state and to create jobs and business opportunities in Connecticut in an energy-related economic sector.

It requires the Department to prepare a comprehensive energy plan for the state every three years that includes an assessment of our energy needs with a least-cost mix of energy sources that must consider public health and environmental goals. The act also requires DEEP to develop an annual Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) to determine how our energy needs will be met.

The act creates a new Clean Energy Finance Authority charged with promoting clean energy investments for residential, municipal, small business and larger commercial project. It provides new energy efficiency standards for certain home electronics. It provides a 3 year pilot program for combined heat and power projects and a substantial increase in financing incentives for residential solar.

We do not expect implementation to be seamless or accomplished overnight. However, the provisions of the act will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen the clean energy sector of the state's economy.

SB 1157 which would have restored the Energy Conservation Fund, passed the Senate, but died in the House. SB 1019 which would have allowed municipalities to create a "green fund" using a percentage of the real estate conveyance tax was re-committed to the Commerce Committee where it died.

In 2012, the League supported several bills that died either on the House or Senate calendar: a bill that required utility companies to collect, measure and benchmark energy consumption and efficiency of certain buildings (HB 5385); a bill to remove the cap on subsidies for energy credits for people who heat with oil (SB 450); and an act requiring electric utilities to establish a loan program to help residential customers finance furnace or boiler replacements (SB 451).

In 2013, the League supported most, but not all, of the provisions of HB 6360, *AAC Implementation of Connecticut's Comprehensive Energy Strategy*. Included in the bill were many worthwhile provisions, including benchmarking and disclosure of energy usage, time-of-use pricing, sub-metering for renewable energy installations at multi-tenant commercial and residential buildings, and expansion of the state's natural gas infrastructure. The bill was passed by the House and Senate and became PA 12-298.

A controversial bill watched by the League was HB 1138, *AAC Connecticut's Clean Energy Goals*. The new law PA 13-303 made substantial changes to the state's renewable portfolio standard by allowing the Commissioner of DEEP to enter into 15 and 20 year contracts with Class I renewable energy providers, including large Canadian hydropower.

Two other bills monitored by the League were SB 203 and SB 564. SB 203, *AAC Property Tax Exemptions for Renewable Energy Sources*, allows a property tax exemption for Class I renewable energy installations that generate electricity for commercial and industrial use. The bill was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor as PA 13-61. SB 564, *AAC Mercury Emissions at Certain Power Plants*, allows for annual stack testing for mercury emissions after the operator has complied with

mercury emissions standards for a period of eight consecutive calendar quarters. The bill was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor as PA 13-58.

On the national level, LWVCT joined with the LWVUS to oppose the Keystone XL pipeline. The proposed pipeline stretches 1,700 miles from Alberta, Canada to the Gulf Coast and will carry the dirtiest oil on the planet. It could threaten the safety of our drinking water, promote a bad energy policy and increase greenhouse gases in our atmosphere that contribute to climate change.

SOLID WASTE

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.

In 2004, a bill was introduced by the Planning and Development Committee to repeal the successful “bottle bill” deposit-redemption program. The initiative was defeated by a coalition of organizations including the Audubon Society, ConnPIRG, and the LWVCT. Despite efforts, no expansion bill made it past the committees in that session.

In 2005, a bill was introduced to broaden the 1978 Connecticut 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 Connecticut Fund for the Environment, lobbied intensely to push passage through the various committees and 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 effort to expand the deposit-redemption program 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. In 2008, the LWVCT and many other environmental organizations supported a bill to expand the beverage container redemption provision to

include water bottles, and as amended by the Senate, other non-carbonated beverages. The bill passed in the Senate but was not brought up for a vote in the House.

In 2009, as part of the Governor's deficit mitigation plan for FY09, a 5 cent deposit-redemption program to include water bottles, with unclaimed deposits going to the state, was approved by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor.

During the 2011 legislation session, SB 57, *AA Expanding the Beverage Contained System*, was introduced. The bill would have expanded the bottle bill to include teas, fruit juices and sport drinks. The League supported the bill. Unfortunately, it died in the Environment Committee. A paint stewardship program was approved by both houses and became Public Act 11-24.

In 2012, SB 89, *AA Creating a mattress stewardship program for managing discarded mattresses and requiring mattress producers to establish and manage the program*, passed in the House but died on the Senate calendar. The good news is that in 2013, HB 6437, *AA Establishing a Mattress Stewardship Program*, was passed by the House and Senate and signed by the Governor PA 13-42. The bill establishes a statewide mattress recycling program for the disposal of discarded mattresses. The League supported both the bill introduced in 2012 and the bill passed in 2013. This new law follows on the heels of SB 350, which was passed and signed into law in 2012. The law, PA 12-54, requires mercury thermostat manufacturers to establish a collection and recycling program for mercury thermostats. The League also supported passage of that law.

SOCIAL POLICY

MENTAL HEALTH

(Adopted 2003; affirmed 2013)

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

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 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.

Together with the Keep the Promise Coalition, LWVCT advocated for various housing bills in 2005. In 2008, with the assistance of our Mental Health Specialist, the LWVCT supported a number of bills to increase supportive housing for those with mental illness. These bills were merged and passed in the final moments of the session, resulting in \$35 million of increased bonding authorization for the Connecticut Housing and Finance Authority to support a round of 150 supportive housing units. Another bill, “Supportive Housing as an Alternative to Incarceration Centers,” did not move out of the Appropriations Committee.

The LWVCT Mental Health specialist stepped down at the conclusion of the 2009 session.

During the 2011 legislative session, the LWVCT supported the bill “An Act Concerning Mental Health Parity,” which would have required large group health insurance policies (more than 50 members) to comply with the Federal Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-243) and its regulations. The bill was voted out of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee but died in the Senate.

The Health Care specialist stepped in to cover mental health issues during the 2013 legislative session. 2013 was indelibly impacted by the tragedy in Newtown/Sandy Hook and the resulting advocacy for new laws to curtail gun violence, address shortcomings in the state mental health system, and improve school safety. The League strongly supported SB 1160, *AAC Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety*. This legislation included notable mental health provisions intended to help individuals and their families overcome obstacles to accessing treatment and support, provisions that were based on the work and recommendations of the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention. Provisions relevant to the Mental Health position included:

- Case management and care coordinating services for people involved in the probate court system;
- Mental health first aid training for school climate coordinators;

- Establishment of a regional behavioral health consultation and care coordination program for primary care providers of children. The consultation team includes child psychiatrist, social worker and care coordinator.

LWVCT thanked the Appropriations Committee for providing funding for mental health provisions of the bill. The bill passed the House and Senate, was signed by the governor and became Public Act 13-3.

LWVCT also supported a bill designed to implement a recommendation of the Legislature’s Program Review and Investigations Committee regarding mental health parity. HB 6517 would have required the CT Insurance Department to select a method to check for compliance by insurers with state and federal mental health parity laws. The bill was voted out of the Joint Committee, but died on the House calendar.

QUALITY EDUCATION

(Adopted 1991; affirmed 2001; updated 2012)

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that promoting racial/ethnic and economic diversity and avoiding racial isolation in public schools is essential to provide substantially equal educational opportunity for Connecticut children, as required by state law. Offering students diverse, inclusive educational opportunities from an early age is crucial to achieving national educational and civic goal and the state’s educational, civic and economic goals to prepare students for higher education or productive employment, to give them the opportunity to be responsible citizens able to participate in our democracy, and to contribute to the state’s economy.

A working partnership between state and local authorities must exist to guarantee success. The LWVCT supports the concept of collective responsibility among individual school districts and the state of CT to take proactive steps toward achieving diversity and avoiding racial isolation in the student population. Such approaches could include but not be limited to the following:

- **Magnet schools or programs with other specialized academic themes**
- **Schools with before-and after-school day care**
- **Schools with preschool programs**
- **Expanded vocational/technical school programs**
- **School pairings**
- **Collaborative inter-district school construction**
- **Redrawing of school boundaries or Inter-district student transfers**
- **Recruitment of minority teachers**

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 can provide flexibility in achieving the goal of substantially equal educational opportunity.

Background and Action

The original position was adopted in 1991 as “Quality Integrated Education.” 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, but the position has been used in connection with action on School Finance.

At the 2011 Convention, delegates voted for a review and update of the QIE position; or, if no study committee could be formed, for the LWVCT Board to propose a restatement of the position to reflect the current educational thinking without substantially altering the thrust of the position. At the 2012 Council, the above restatement was adopted, based on the Board's recommendation, to include language consistent with current federal and state law.*

* Consolidated cases of *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, 127 S. Ct. 2738 (2007); *Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding v. Rell*, 295 Conn. 240 (2010); and the December 2011 Joint Guidance from the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education.

SCHOOL FINANCE

(Adopted 1990; amended 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

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 were still receiving less than their full entitlement.

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.

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.

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 LWVCT 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 the Governor's definition of the ECS Foundation and the Minimum Expenditure Requirement (MER). We also advocated for: 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 the Governor's 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 made major improvements in the formula and included an acceptable MER. It did, however, contain a troublesome 4.4% minimum increase provision (i.e. hold-harmless) and did not include the type of Foundation definition that LWVCT preferred.

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 education 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.

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

In 2008, the LWVCT supported targeted grants and other funding but opposed the Governor’s proposed budget and lack of improvement in ECS funding. The Governor proposed a \$1.8 million reduction for 2009 to the School Readiness grant. The Appropriations Committee raised the Governor’s proposal by \$32.3 million. The LWVCT advocated for a higher phase-in percentage and 60% funding floor for ECS, increases for pupil transportation, bilingual education, family resource centers and adult education, and restoration of the \$1.8 million for School Readiness and proposed reducing the Special Education Excess Cost multiplier from 4.5 to 3.0 and fully funding the grant. These bills died with agreement between legislative leaders and the governor to leave the adopted budget as is but the good news was that there was no cut to School Readiness. The 2009 adopted budget eliminated all funding (\$19.7 million) for the Early Reading Success portion of the Priority School District grant, which the Appropriations Committee had sought to restore, leaving the state’s poorest school districts with no state aid for this well-respected program.

While the LWVCT’s position on school finance calls for higher levels of aid to education than the state currently provides, during the 2009 fiscal crisis we supported simply maintaining current funding and opposed proposed cuts, the burden of which would fall mostly on the neediest districts and students in our state. Governor Rell's budget proposals, announced May 28, 2009, were claimed to “preserve municipal aid.” While her latest proposals did maintain funding for Education Cost Sharing (ECS), by far the largest state grant to municipalities, they did contain significant cuts to several others. Those cuts would affect specific grants in support of public education; (e.g., Head Start Services and Family Resource Centers).

During the 2010 regular legislative session, the LWVCT opposed three school finance bills, due to cost and lack of new or specific funding streams, which bills would have increased high school graduation requirements, added two years of foreign language requirements, and added multiple proposals to reduce the achievement gap. We also opposed a bill to require the state to pay tuition for charter school students equal to the home district per pupil expenditure and deduct this tuition from the home district ECS grant, because of the impact on ECS and the disproportionate impact on poorer towns. Portions of these four bills and others were combined into a major education reform package (PA 10-111) that raised high school graduation requirements beginning with the class of 2018, lifted restrictions on charter school growth (without changing funding), added student academic growth to teacher evaluations as of 2013, and implemented measures relating to closing the achievement gap.

With a looming budget deficit facing the state in 2011, the LWVCT supported most flat funding for education and opposed cuts to transportation and Priority School Districts (PSD). The budget as adopted added \$2 million to the Governor’s proposed education funding, restored PSD to nearly flat and retained cuts to transportation. We supported the Governor’s proposal for a task force to study ECS and other means of funding education; supported setting a Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) for town spending; and expressed concern regarding the funding implications of the Governor’s proposal to transfer control of vocational-technical high schools to local or regional districts. The budget implementer bill HR 6651 adopted the ECS Task Force and Vo-Tech Task Force and modified MBR to allow for limited town spending reductions for enrollment loss.

In other legislation, the LWVCT supported the portions of HB 6432 “An Act Concerning Closing the Achievement Gap” to establish a task force to develop a statewide master plan for eliminating the achievement gap, but questioned the cost of curricula and reported provisions of the bill in the absence of additional funding. As adopted (PA 11-85), the legislation struck a provision which would have required PSD to offer universal pre-K and full-day K by 2013 and would have changed the K eligibility age in 2016. We also opposed mandatory pre-K on cost grounds as contained in SB 1103 “An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education.” The final bill eliminated the pre-K requirement but retained agency reorganization to establish a coordinated system of early care and education within the State Education Department (PA 11-181).

In 2012, Governor Malloy proposed an ambitious school reform plan embodied in two major bills. The first, HB 5014 AA Making Adjustments to State Expenditures and Revenues for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2013, added about \$128 million to the budget for these education initiatives, including a \$54.5 million increase in ECS largely targeted at low performing districts. LWVCT supported most of the governor’s reform ideas, particularly the Commissioner’s Network, Talent Development and other measures designed to provide intensive intervention, improved instruction, increased innovation, and better college readiness. We also supported his proposed increased funding for early childhood education, magnet schools, and ECS, all of which were targeted at disadvantaged and/or underachieving districts. We opposed his proposal to fold the Charter School grant into the ECS grant and expressed reservations about giving charter schools a much larger increase than other public schools were receiving. The final version passed as HB 5557 (PA 12-104) and contained \$100 million for education reform, of which \$50 million was for ECS. Though it provided less funding than the governor wanted, the final package did adopt most of his new education funding initiatives, including the charter school measures that LWVCT opposed.

The second bill, SB 24 AA Concerning Educational Competitiveness, fleshed out the governor’s education reform proposals, and LWVCT offered detailed comments on his plans for ECS. While we supported raising ECS funding and targeting larger increases to underperforming districts, we opposed folding a competitive grant not based on the ECS formula into that line of the budget. We also opposed requiring local districts to pay tuition for their students who attend state charter schools, reducing the ECS Minimum Aid Ratio to zero, setting the Foundation at an arbitrary round number, and basing education spending requirements for towns (the MBR) on their prior school budgets. The final version passed as SB 458 (PA-116). It included the governor’s proposed increases in ECS, but as a town-by-town schedule of grants rather than as changes to the formula. It eliminated both the competitive ECS grant and charter school tuition requirement, but retained the MBR.

Also during 2012, the ECS Task Force established in 2011 met throughout the year and LWVCT provided detailed input regarding the ECS formula. Though many of the conceptual changes we supported were adopted in the committee’s final recommendations released in early 2013, the quantitative components of its proposed new formula fell far short of our hopes in that they were arbitrarily derived in order to produce the same inadequate bottom line as the old formula.

In 2013, Governor Malloy included in his biennial budget plan over \$118 million in new education spending for FY 2014. HB 6350, AA Concerning the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2015, and Other Provisions Relating to Revenue, included a \$50.8 million increase in ECS funding and significant increases to the education reform programs begun in 2012. However, it also reduced, eliminated, or consolidated a number of smaller grant programs, most notably eliminating the grant supporting transportation for public school children. LWVCT supported increased funding for ECS and most of the conceptual elements of the proposed new formula, which was the one recommended by the ECS Task Force, but opposed its specific quantitative elements on the grounds noted above; we also opposed the way the new formula was being phased in. We expressed support for increased funds for the Commissioner’s Network and for Talent Development, the most significant of the initiatives begun in

2012, and opposed elimination of the transportation grant, continuation of caps on several formula grants, and the consolidation of 12 disparate grants worth \$59 million into a single budget account.

The second big education bill of the 2013 legislative session, HB 6357, AA Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education, detailed the proposed changes to the ECS formula and its phase-in. LWVCT supported raising the Foundation, using eligibility for Free/Reduced Price Lunch as the measure of student poverty, using Median Household Income as the sole measure of income, and changing the Minimum Aid Ratio to 10% for towns with the lowest performing schools, 2% for all others. We opposed the proposed Foundation amount because it was too low and was arbitrarily derived to produce a predetermined bottom line, the .3 weighting factor for poor students because it was not evidence-based, elimination of the .15 additional weighting for English Language Learners, and the proposed income and grand list adjustment factors because they were arbitrarily derived. We suggested specific ways the formula should be improved in testimony on SB 1098 AA Concerning the Education Cost-Sharing Formula, but that bill died in the Education Committee.

The budget bill and the education implementer were consolidated and passed as HB 6706 AA Implementing Provisions of the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2015 Concerning General Government (PA-247). It included the \$50.8 million ECS increase requested by the governor, but delivered via a slightly different formula and phase-in that still addressed few of the concerns LWVCT had expressed. The budget did, however, restore the Public School Transportation grant and most of the smaller grants eliminated or reduced by the governor, and also left separate the 12 grants he had wanted to consolidate. The Commissioner's Network and Talent Development initiatives were funded a bit below what the governor originally requested, but the final budget included money for programs he had either reduced or dropped entirely. Unfortunately, the statutory formula grants about which LWVCT had expressed concern remained capped.

SCHOOL VOUCHERS

(Adopted 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, tax credits or any other incentives or payments, direct or indirect, to provide tuition support for 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

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.

In 2008, the LWVCT opposed a bill that provided tax credits for donations to educational foundations to both public and *nonpublic* schools allowing money to be funneled into independent and religious schools. In this way, the state would not provide a direct payment for tuition but would take dollars out of the revenue stream for contributions which are earmarked for nonpublic independent and religious schools.

The use of tax credits that support nonpublic schools was removed from the bill and eventually died. Because the national focus in school choice has shifted to charter schools, and LWVCT has no position on charter schools, our specialist has been following bills that may be of concern but has not advocated.

The School Vouchers specialist resigned at the end of the 2013 legislative session.

TEEN PREGNANCY

(Adopted 1989; affirmed 1999; amended and affirmed 2009)

- 1. The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the problems caused by adolescent 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 take the following steps:**
 - a. Ensure that all school-aged children K-12 have access to comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education that provides them with the necessary skills to make safe and responsible choices in regard to their sexual health. Teacher-training programs should be provided to ensure that such programs are well taught.**
 - b. Support school-based health clinics to give adolescents access to a broad range of health care services, including reproductive health.**
 - c. Support programs and services that provide information and access to affordable birth control in order to help adolescents delay parenthood and avoid unintended pregnancies.**
 - d. Support appropriate services and programs designed to encourage and enable adolescent 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 opposes placing restrictions on an adolescent's right to obtain a full range of reproductive health services.**

Background and Action

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.

In 2008 and 2009, the LWVCT supported the unsuccessful Healthy Teens Act. This federal legislation would have required expansion of family life education curriculum guides for school districts to cover ways to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and a healthy teen education grant program. Medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education is especially important, considering that there are a large percentage of teens contracting STDs.

LWVCT ACTION ON LWVUS SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS

GUN LAWS

(1990 Convention, amended 1994 and 1998)

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

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 LWVCT, 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 was achieved when the bill passed and was signed into law by the Governor, after intense lobbying by Connecticut Against Gun Violence, the LWVCT and others.

In 2008 and 2009, the LWVCT supported bills that would require the microstamping of semiautomatic pistols that would make it possible to link a gun to a crime. In both years, the bill died in the Judiciary Committee. However, a bill passed and was signed by the Governor that prohibited the transfer of an assault weapon or machine gun to a person under eighteen years of age. This bill was introduced as a result of an 8-year-old boy dying from the recoil of an assault weapon, which he was using under the supervision of adults.

During the 2010 regular legislative session, we supported a bill that would have mandated annual firearms safety refreshers and required notification to the Department of Public Safety of a firearms purchase within 24 hours. Although the bill was voted out of the Public Safety Committee, it was never taken up in the Judiciary Committee, and died.

In 2011, the LWVCT supported SB 1094, "An Act Banning Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines," which would have prohibited the possession of certain ammunition feeding devices that accept more than ten rounds, and opposed SB 1210, which would have created a presumption of reasonable self-defense in the use of deadly force against a person unlawfully entering a dwelling. Both bills died in the Judiciary Committee.

During the 2012 session, the League supported SB 64, which would have revised an existing statute prohibiting the carrying of a loaded firearm or hunting while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, to make the blood alcohol level for determining intoxication the same as for driving a car, and certain other administrative changes. Although the bill passed the Senate and was placed on the consent calendar, it

was never called for a vote in the House. LWVCT opposed HR 5245, which would have barred the authorities issuing temporary permits to carry handguns from modifying or supplementing a uniform Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection form for applicants, arguably undercutting the CT discretionary “may issue” standard. Although the bill passed the House, it died on the Senate calendar.

Beginning in the days immediately following December 14, 2012, horrific gun violence in Newtown CT, LWVCT expanded its outreach and advocacy efforts on gun violence prevention, both in Hartford and in our local communities, to become part of the groundswell response across the state to this tragedy. While researching what legislative agenda could be undertaken consistent with the scope of the LWVUS gun laws position, LWVCT urged members to contact legislative representatives and demand action to improve public safety.

In short order, Governor Malloy appointed a Sandy Hook Advisory Commission to address key policy areas in gun violence prevention; and the General Assembly leadership formed the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children’s Safety. Each of the Bipartisan Task Force working subgroups — on Gun Violence Prevention, on Mental Health and on School Safety — held one or more public hearings beginning in late January.

After research and with input from the LWVUS advocacy team, LWVCT submitted testimony on January 28, 2013 to the Working Group on Gun Violence Prevention, and urged our members to speak out for gun violence prevention measures in these four areas: universal background checks for firearms purchases; limitation on large capacity ammunition magazines; strengthening of the assault weapons ban, and strengthening of existing laws on the safe storage of firearms.

LWVCT supported two additional legislative proposals — requiring permits for rifles and shotguns and requiring firearms registration — after reaching out to local leagues to confirm member understanding and agreement.

Local league members became an integral part of the advocacy agenda. As LWVCT intensified advocacy and education efforts at the community and legislative levels, local leagues and committed individual members contacted legislators, sponsored letter writing campaigns and letters to the editor, attended public hearings and other gatherings at the Capitol and wrote their own testimony for the Bipartisan Task Force. LWVCT and local leagues urged members to attend the February 14 March for Change at the Capitol, which attracted 5,500 supporters.

Many additional gun violence prevention bills were introduced during the legislative session, and LWVCT submitted testimony supporting several bills which received a public hearing on March 14. Reportedly impatient with the pace of progress on a comprehensive gun bill, Gov. Malloy introduced his own set of proposals on February 22.

On March 5, the Bipartisan Task Force issued Working Group Recommendations—separate consensus proposals on gun violence prevention for the Democrats and the Republicans and joint recommendations on the mental health and school security proposals. The leadership produced a Bipartisan Bill, SB 1160, on April 1. After vigorous debate, it was passed and signed into law by Gov. Malloy on April 4 as PA 13-3.

The League strongly supported those provisions of the new law which are consistent with the Gun Laws position, including extension of background checks to the private sale of long guns (rifles and shotguns); a new long gun eligibility certificate requirement to buy or receive a long gun (unless already have a handgun permit, handgun eligibility certificate or dealer permit); expansion of the Assault Weapons Ban to add more than 100 specified guns to the list of banned assault weapons, as well as a ban on

semiautomatic pistols or rifles that can accept a detachable magazine and have at least one of listed military-style features; minimum age of 18 for purchase of a long gun; increase in penalties for firearms trafficking; ban on Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines that can hold more than 10 rounds; and strengthening of firearm safe storage requirements.

Additional provisions of the law, not covered by the LWVUS Gun Laws position, and on which LWVCT remained silent, included restrictions on ammunition sales to any buyer not already possessing a permit or eligibility certificate; creation of a gun offender registry; a ban on armor-piercing bullets; and six month disqualification for gun permit or eligibility certificate for anyone voluntarily admitted to a psychiatric hospital, other than solely due to alcohol or drug treatment, and extension of disqualification for involuntary confinement to a psychiatric hospital to 5 years.

National Advocacy

During 2011 and 2012, LWVCT opposed the proposed National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act, which would have allowed any person with a valid state-issued concealed firearm permit to carry a concealed firearm in CT, without meeting CT's stringent requirements, thereby conflicting with and undermining CT permit and licensing gun laws. The legislation did not pass.

On the federal level in 2013, LWVCT obtained LWVUS permission to lobby our Congressional delegation in support of background checks, an assault weapons ban, limiting large capacity ammunition clips, and measures to combat gun trafficking through penalties on "straw purchases" of firearms that put guns into the hands of criminals. None of these had passed in Congress as of this writing.

HEALTH CARE

[Announced by National Board 1993]

Support 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 Connecticut. 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. The legislature instead 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-imbursment rate for doctors and service providers for the poor.

In 2008 and 2009, the LWVCT supported bills that would establish a Connecticut Health Care Partnership. This bill would have expanded the state employees' health insurance pool and would have enabled certain municipalities, small non-profit organizations and small employers to voluntarily participate in a comprehensive medical plan by joining this larger pool, therefore giving them an opportunity to obtain health insurance for their employees that they might otherwise not have been able to afford. These bills successfully passed both houses of the Legislature but were vetoed by the Governor.

2009 saw passage of legislation to establish the “SustiNet Plan,” a self-insured health care delivery plan intended to extend insurance coverage to the state's uninsured:

1. creating a large insurance pool that includes recipients of Medicaid and HUSKY, state employees and retirees, families without health insurance from an employer, and individuals having difficulty affording high-cost insurance on the job;
2. digitizing medical records linked to a central database that physicians and other providers must use as a condition of participation;
3. creating “medical homes” that offer patients round-the-clock central coordination of their health care as well as guidance in managing it;
4. relying on periodic quality review of providers and evidence-based medicine; and
5. providing for public health campaigns in support of such measures as health screenings and immunizations.

The Governor vetoed the bill, but her veto was overridden by both houses of the Legislature. The bill established a nine-member SustiNet Health Partnership board of directors required to make legislative recommendations by January 1, 2011, on the details and implementation of the “SustiNet Plan.”

On the federal level, the LWVCT supported passage of health care reform in 2010 in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act intended to improve health and the quality of care, reduce costs and improve access to health care (Public Law 111-148).

In 2011, the LWVCT supported implementation of the SustiNet Plan (HB 6305), which was combined with HB 6308, AA Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership, and renamed *AAC Healthcare Reform*. This legislation requires the State Comptroller to offer employee and retiree coverage under “partnership plans” to non-state public employers beginning on January 1, 2012, and to nonprofit employers beginning on January 1, 2013. In addition, the Office of Health Reform and Innovation, and the SustiNet Health Care Cabinet are established in the Lieutenant Governor’s office; and changes in reporting requirements and state health insurance are included. Although the final bill does not include a nonprofit public option for health insurance, it calls for the SustiNet Cabinet to propose alternatives to the current health care system, including a public option. Became law, not signed by the Governor (PA 11-58).

In 2012, LWVCT supported HB 5450, which would have established a Basic Health Plan, under an option available in the federal Affordable Care Act of 2010, to provide federally subsidized health insurance to individuals under age 65 whose income exceeds Medicaid limits but is within 200% of the federal poverty level. It was favorably reported out of committees but died in the House.

A successful 2013 bill supported by LWVCT was SB 1026, intended to improve health outcomes and ensure that Medicaid recipients have timely access to an adequate network of health care providers in time for the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. The bill unanimously passed the Senate and House, was signed by Governor Malloy and became Special Act No. 13-7.

HOUSING SUPPLY

[1966, Amended 1969, then incorporated into “Meeting Basic Human Needs,” 1990]

After adopting the Meeting Basic Human Needs position in 1988, the LWVUS reorganized the Social Policy program in 1990. The Meeting Basic Human Needs position encompasses previous positions on income assistance, transportation and housing. The issue of housing supply was separated from the fair housing position, which is still under Equality of Opportunity, and put under the Meeting Basic Human

Needs position. The Housing Supply position includes support for increased public funding, inclusionary zoning techniques and land use policies to encourage affordable housing production and rehabilitation, encouragement of private sector investment in affordable housing and more. The full position is available online at www.lwv.org.

Background and Action

In 2004 and 2005, the LWVCT opposed bills that would have weakened the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure Act, neither of which passed. The LWVCT also supported the Partnership for Strong Communities' initiative to create a new \$100 million Housing Trust Fund for Economic Growth and Opportunity. It would have created 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 regular sessions legislation was introduced that would have weakened the Appeals Procedure Act, but 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 also 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.

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 also 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.

In 2013, LWVCT opposed HB 5894 to delay the establishment of the Departments of Housing. The bill died in committee.

INCOME ASSISTANCE

(1971, Incorporated into “Meeting Basic Human Needs,” 1990)

After adopting the Meeting Basic Human Needs position in 1988, the LWVUS reorganized the Social Policy program in 1990. The Meeting Basic Human Needs position encompasses previous positions on income assistance, transportation and housing.

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 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 (SB 147) bipartisan support and when the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee included a tax credit for low-income workers in the tax package it reported out of Committee. Unfortunately, the Earned Income Tax Credit failed to survive the budget negotiations.

The LWVCT submitted testimony in support of an Earned Income Tax Credit during the 2007 legislative session, but did not take action on this issue during the 2008 or 2009 sessions due to the lack of an Income Assistance Specialist. In 2011, the LWVCT signed onto a petition supporting the Governor's proposal to create a state earned income tax credit set at 30% of the federal EITC, and the budget bill SB 1239 establishing the credit passed and was signed into law by the Governor (PA 11-6).

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

(1983)

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

Background and Action

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 medically necessary abortions exceeding the federal requirements of the Hyde amendment (1977). The Hyde Amendment is a rider that is often attached to yearly appropriation bills for Medicaid funding. It bans use of Medicaid dollars to pay for abortions unless necessary to save the life of the woman. States can use their own funds to cover other medically necessary abortions – usually defined by states as those to protect the physical or mental health of the woman.

In Connecticut, 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, CONNSACS 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.

Also in 2006, several attempts were made by some legislators to curtail reproductive choice, specifically in regard to parental notification. Those bills died in committee.

In 2008 and 2009, the LWVCT supported the unsuccessful Healthy Teens Act. This legislation would have required expansion of family life education curriculum guides for school districts to cover ways to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and a healthy teens education grant program. Medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education is especially important, considering that there are a large percentage of teens contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

In the 2013 legislative session, HB 5296 was introduced requiring parental notification of abortion procedures to be performed on minors. LWVCT opposed, but no hearings were scheduled and it died in committee.

National Advocacy

When the federal Stupak/Pitts amendment to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was introduced in 2010, the LWVCT opposed this effort to restrict women's access to abortion coverage in

the private health insurance market. The amendment was not included in Public Law 111-148, but the Hyde Amendment restricting the use of federal funds for abortions was issued by executive order and extended to this law.

In 2011, the LWVCT opposed the Pence amendment, which would have stripped federal funding from Planned Parenthood. The proposed amendment would have eliminated the national family planning program (Title X) and was aimed at Planned Parenthood with the claim that the money was used to provide abortions. This amendment passed the House but failed in the Senate.

POSITIONS ARCHIVED BY THE LWVCT 2013 CONVENTION

FISCAL POLICY

(Adopted 1981; amended and affirmed 2003. Sections 2 and 5 archived 2013)

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

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.**

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.

DEATH PENALTY

(Adopted 2006. Archived 2013.)

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.

Background and Action

In 2009 the LWVCT supported “An Act Concerning the Penalty for a Capital Felony,” which would have replaced the death penalty with a penalty of life imprisonment without the possibility of release. This Bill passed both houses but was vetoed by the Governor.

The LWVCT has had a specialist in this area since 2010. During the 2011 legislative session, LWVCT submitted testimony on two bills, SB 1035 and HB 6425. These bills were voted out of the Judiciary Committee as SB1035. They would have eliminated the death penalty as a sentencing option for any capital felony committed on or after the bill’s effective date, thus leaving life imprisonment without the possibility of release as the penalty. The bill died in the Senate.

Over a period of several months beginning in late 2011, the LWVCT specialist worked with local leagues to hold informational meetings on the death penalty, including the outcomes of the LWVCT 2006 Study on the Death Penalty—the costs, lack of deterrent effect, and lack of fair and consistent application of the death penalty without regard to race, gender, socio-economics or geography.

On February 28, 2012, SB 280, AA REVISING THE PENALTY FOR CAPITAL FELONIES, was referred to the Judiciary Committee. It replaced the death penalty with a penalty of life imprisonment without the possibility of release for certain murders committed after the effective date. At a public hearing on March 14, the League testified in support of the bill to the effect that 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. SB 280 was voted out of the Judiciary Committee on March 21 and approved by the Senate with a vote of 20 to 16 on April 5. The House followed suit on April 11 with a vote of 86 to 62. Gov. Dannel Malloy signed the bill into law (PA 12-5) on April 25th, making Connecticut the 17th state to abolish the death penalty.

With the passage of eventual abolition of the death penalty in CT over time, the 2013 LWVCT Convention voted to archive this position. The death penalty specialist remains available to respond to inquiries from Leagues in other states.

GAMBLING

(1994; amended and affirmed 2003; archived 2013.)

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 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

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.

In 2009, the Governor proposed generating revenue from online gambling (Keno). The LWVCT has not had a Gambling Specialist but we included the gambling issue when expressing concerns to the Governor and Legislature about some proposed budget cuts and revenue enhancement measures.

The 2013 LWVCT Convention voted to archive the Gambling position, as the League had not had a specialist or any significant member interest in advocacy.

SCHOOL START TIME (Adopted 2006, Archived 2013.)

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. Beginning in 2008, the LWVCT School Start Time Specialist consulted with interested parties in school districts in the state, and in 2011 she began consulting elsewhere in the U.S. (Arizona) and in Canada.

The 2013 State Convention voted to archive the School Start Time position, due to the lack of a specialist or any indication of school district movement on this issue. For this biennium, the specialist who served in this area is available for consultation to those wishing to know more about the topic.

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.

LWVCT Public Issues Team, Legislative Monitor & Lobbyist

The League's Public Issues Team includes the area specialists covering subjects falling within a specific LWVCT or LWVUS position, under the leadership of the Directors for Government, Natural Resources and Social Policy, and the Vice President, Public Issues. The PI Team develops legislative strategy, monitors the bills pending in each legislative session, selects bills for priority attention, and prepares testimony supporting or opposing legislation, for presentation in person at public hearings or through written testimony. PI Team members often work collaboratively with League advocacy partners; serve as representatives to issue-based coalitions supported by the League; and represent LWVCT in speaking at local League, LWVCT or community-sponsored events. See www.lwvct.org/advocacy-overview for a current listing of the PI Team.

For years, the League also has had the benefit of working with Judy Blei and Associates, who as our *legislative monitor* provides an interactive website for each specialist, which can be used to prioritize and track bills, and efficiently contact legislators. The Blei team assists the PI Team in conducting a pre-session training session for specialists and helps us with their insight and observations.

Through membership support, we are able to use Judy Blei and Associates as a LWVCT *legislative lobbyist* for the member-adopted priority of **Election Laws** (including campaign finance and open government). Judy and her staff help us to develop a coherent, effective legislative strategy in the area of elections laws and to implement the strategy through public hearing testimony, facts sheets and contact with individual legislators; provide a presence for us at the Capitol when we cannot be there in person; assist in access to executive and staff in state agencies; provide advice in advancing the legislative process; and provide administrative backup when needed.

The Blei Team works closely with LWVCT and our partners in advocacy on critical election laws legislation. We thank our members for contributions that enable LWVCT to augment all our volunteer efforts with a seasoned and knowledgeable lobbying team. 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.

PUBLIC ISSUES TEAM

as of September 2013

Vice President/Public Issues	Alison Rivard
Chair/Government	Christine Horrigan
Campaign Finance and Open Government	Christine Horrigan and Ilze Krist
Election Laws	open
Ethics	Pat Reilly
Media Issues	Pua Ford
Primaries & Parties	<i>study committee formed</i>
Director/Natural Resources	JoAnn Messina
Climate Change/Energy and Solid Waste	Lyn Taborsak
Land Use	Margaret Wirtenberg
Transportation	open
Water Resources	Carolyn Bayne
Director/Social Policy	Jane Eyes
Gun Laws	Sue McCalley
Health Care	Naomi Schiff Myers
Housing	Barbara Bates Quincy
Mental Health	Caroline Adkins
Reproductive Choice	Birgitta Longnecker
School Finance and Education Cost Sharing	open

BE A GRASSROOTS LOBBYIST!

Interested in voting issues? Solving the transportation crisis? Protecting our communities from gun violence? 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, Campaign Finance, Gun Laws, Climate Change 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. You can help us make a difference with just a few minutes of your time.

To sign up or to get more information, visit our website at <http://www.lwvct.org/10-minute-activist.html>. We look forward to hearing from you.