



THE CHESHIRE-WALLINGFORD VOTER

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League of Women Voters of Cheshire-Wallingford

P.O. Box 394

Cheshire, CT 06410

Our Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education.

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President's Message

It is hard to believe that our year is almost over, but we still have work to do. The Nominating Committee has been hard at work, but again the League needs your help to fill board positions. I know I must sound like a broken record, but without a full working board, our League will face a difficult year. In the past, co-chairs have filled many of the positions and this method has been very successful. You know, many hands make light work so please consider or re-consider a board position.

By now you should have all receive tickets to our Wine Tasting Fund Raiser. It will be a fun evening for all members and guests and help raise money for our scholarship fund. In these difficult economics times, it is a great service to be able to offer a scholarship to a woman returning to school. I hope to see many of you on Saturday April 25th to help ensure a successful event.

Our Annual meeting will be Wednesday June 3rd at the Waverly Tavern in Cheshire. Final details will be in the May Voter along with the proposed Budget for 2009-10 and Slate of Officers and Directors

Kathy

BRAZIL, RUSSIA, INDIA AND CHINA – GIANTS ON THE MOVE

The BRIC countries will be in Connecticut for the morning of April 23, at Quinnipiac University's Student Center in Hamden.

The League's SIR Committee is excited to be presenting such a timely program. Students and teachers will attend this year, again supported by our local League. We hope to see League members there, too.

For information, contact the State League Office at 288-7996 or e-mail lwwct@lwwct.org.

The Voter

We have been very fortunate over the years to have the cost of printing and mailing the *Voter* covered by Calcagni Associates. However the difficult economic times dictate change and Calcagni is no longer able to offer us this service. We are most grateful to them for all their past support.

It is therefore even more important that those of you that do have email receive the *Voter* on-line only if possible. Please contact me as soon as possible to let me if you are willing to receive the *Voter* via email only. We will of course still mail the *Voter* to those who do not have email or cannot receive email attachments.

Thank you for your understanding.

Regional Round Table Luncheon: “Health Care Reform”

The LWV of New Haven and the LWV’s of Amity, Cheshire/Wallingford, Hamden/North Haven, and East Shore invite you to a Regional Round Table Luncheon Buffet at the Graduate Club, 155 Elm Street, New Haven, at 12 noon on Tuesday, March 24, 2009. The cost is \$15.00, to be paid at the door. The featured speaker will be John Hughes M.D., Associate Professor of Internal Medicine, Yale University, and his topic will be “Health Care Reform.” Please let Margot Kohorn of LWV New Haven know if you are coming – 203 795 3151



Nature Waking

April, 2009

In the Quinnipiac River Watershed -“Turtles are on the move in May and June. Look for foraging turtles in the mornings along roadways, rivers, wetlands and fields. Look for nesting females on sandy hillsides. “Quoted from the Quinnipiac River Watershed website. Contact the` QRWA at (203) 237-2237 or e-mail turtlecrossingproject@yahoo.com if you spot them. Excellent resources, including “Habitats of the Quinnipiac Watershed” are available from the QRWA.

See it for yourself - The Quinnipiac Linear Trail in Wallingford is part of a 15-mile multi-use walk and bikeway between Meriden and North Haven.

In the March 17, 2009 edition of the Record-Journal, Dave Moran reported that the trail-in-progress received \$1,425 million through the 2009 Federal Omnibus Appropriations Bill. In response to concerns that this money might be better spent elsewhere, Moran stated that, according to State Representative Mushinsky, “the money allotted to the trail now consists of state and federal funds earmarked exclusively for alternative transportation projects.” A pocket able pamphlet and map is available for the Wallingford section. Contact: Wallingford Public Works Dept. (203) 294-2105 or Google “Quinnipiac Linear Trail” to download the pamphlet.

Check your library for green resources – April is Earth Month. The Cheshire Library will dedicate the library’s solar panels on Saturday, April 18, at 10 AM.

“All Things Green” is a display celebrating Cheshire Reads: Water Witches. The novel, written by Chris Bohjalian, includes the impact of development and endangered species as themes. The author will be in Cheshire on April 22 and 23rd. Copies may be checked out. Connecticut library cards may be used in any Connecticut Library.

Join the League today. Dues payment includes membership at three levels: local, state and national.

**Annual Dues are \$55.00 per person
(\$25.00 for any additional household members).**

Please issue your check to LWV Cheshire-Wallingford and mail it with your name, address and phone number to Elaine Lau, Treasurer, 239 Jinny Hill Road, Cheshire, CT 06410.

LWVCT Public Issues Team Report

by Cheryl Dunson and the Public Issues Team Specialists

Money: As of this writing, Jean reports that we have received \$3,225 in contributions in response to our PI Team fundraising mailing toward our goal of \$7,500. Cheryl Dunson and the Public Issues Team expresses their sincere thanks to those have donated thus far. The upcoming edition of the *Voter* will have a detailed mid-session update – we hope that will encourage more people to support the League’s advocacy work in Hartford.

Reminder: Please periodically check the Action Page of the LWVCT website to view testimony, action alerts, etc. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

GOVERNMENT submitted by Christine Horrigan, Director

Election Laws/Good Government/Voting Machines: The League testified before the Government Administration and Elections Committee on 14 different bills and proposed resolutions. The subject matter of these bills and resolutions ranged from Election Day registration to proposals for “no excuse” absentee ballot voting, early voting, absentee voting by military personnel overseas, no-fault provisional ballots to changes to election processes and audit procedures. The League’s testimony included support for many of these measures and suggestions for improvement to some.

Campaign Finance Reform: The League testified before a subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee urging the Committee to refrain from making further cuts to the Citizens’ Election Program, which provides public financing of campaigns. The deficit mitigation bill passed during February contained a \$1 million cut to the program. The CEP could be cut again as negotiations continue regarding how to address the significant deficit.

Last December, the federal district court ruled that the bans on state contractor and lobbyist contributions enacted as part of Connecticut’s sweeping campaign finance reforms are constitutional. An appeal has been filed. The Republican Party of Connecticut has filed a motion to intervene in the lawsuit for the purpose of joining in the appeal, claiming that, as a major political party, the Republican Party is uniquely situated to challenge these bans.

Media (Broadband access/Net Neutrality/PEG Access TV): Specialist Pua Ford submitted testimony in support of HB 6426 AA Improving Broadband Access after a crash study of the website for the CT Broadband Internet Coordinating Council (www.ct.gov/cbicc).

National Advocacy

DC Voting Rights: In response to an LWVUS action alert, LWVCT contacted our US senators urging support for cloture on the DC House Voting Rights Act. The principle that all citizens are entitled to a vote in their national government is a cornerstone of American democracy. The Senate passed the bill late on February 26 with Sens. Dodd and Lieberman voting in support. LWVUS is now urging members to contact their House members. To view the LWVUS alert, go to: <http://capwiz.com/lwv/issues/alert/?alertid=12768106&type=CO>

NATURAL RESOURCES submitted by Karen Burnaska, Director

Air Quality by Chris Halfar: Testimony was submitted to the Environment Committee in support of Raised Bill 792 AA Prohibiting Idling of Motor Vehicles. The League believes the bill will be a major step toward reduc-

ing vehicular pollution and improving air quality in the state. This bill will place DEP regulations on idling vehicles in the statutes, making them enforceable by police.

Climate Change by Lynn Taborsak: Testimony was submitted to the Appropriations Committee on the Governor's Proposed Budget opposing transfer of \$100 million from energy conservation funds to the general fund. The League believes that revenues for renewable energy and conservation should be used for the purpose for which they were created.

DEP Funding by Karen Burnaska: Testimony was submitted to the Appropriations Committee in support of maintaining adequate funding for DEP staffing and continuing to fund the Council on Environmental Quality as an independent agency.

Transportation by Jara Burnett: Statements of support for various bills on congestion pricing, restoration of freight rail, and continued funding of bus transit were sent to the Transportation Committee's public hearings on February 23 and 24.

Water Quality by Cheryl Dunson: Testimony was submitted to the Environment Committee in support of SB 747 AAC Consistency in Permitting Requirements for Alternative On-Site Sewage Treatment Systems. This bill will support consistency in the review of alternative sewage treatment systems by requiring the DEP to consider the same criteria in permitting large systems (5000 gallons/day) that the Department of Public Health applies when evaluating applications for small alternative on-site systems.

Testimony was also submitted to the Environment Committee in support of SB 569 and HB 5820. SB 569 will aid local volunteer boards by clarifying that applicants must provide evidence to prove that their project will protect the functions and features of existing inland wetland resources. It further clarifies that local volunteer board members can rely on input provided by state officials, expert environmental review team reviews, and local companies in reaching their decision. HB 5820 recognizes the substantial research findings that natural vegetation surrounding rivers and watercourses is vital and cost-effective means to preserve water quality and reduce risks of flooding. This bill solely increases the level of scrutiny on regulated areas (i.e., does not expand regulated areas) with an eye toward protecting vegetation to the maximum extent possible.

Waste by Cheryl Dunson: the budget mitigation bill, HB 6602, "An Act Concerning Deficit Mitigation Measures For The Fiscal year ending June 30, 2009" that passed on Wednesday 2/25/09 included expansion of the 5-cent deposit-redemption program to include water bottles, as of April 1st. As of this writing, the bill awaits the Governor's signature.

SOCIAL POLICY submitted by Naomi Schiff Myers, Director

Death Penalty by Jara Burnett: LWVCT submitted testimony in support of bills to eliminate the death penalty and replace it with life imprisonment without release.

Education Cost Sharing by Kathy Wilson: In February, we submitted testimony on two bills pending before the General Assembly. We supported the Governor's budget proposals for aid to education (HB 6365), which fund ECS and other grants at 2009 levels, in the belief that they represent the best we can hope for in the current fiscal crisis. We opposed a bill adding two years of World Language to high school graduation requirements (SB 945) because it provided no funding to cover the additional costs entailed.

Universal Health Care by Phyllis Behlen: We submitted testimony to the CGA Committee on Health Care in support of HB 6600 – An Act Concerning The Establishment Of The Sustinet Plan. Sustinet builds on existing

health care coverage that Connecticut taxpayers are already funding and includes best practices from other states and other innovative health plans. It will establish a policy that focuses on patient well-being, public health programs and fair payments to health care providers. Because the plan will create a large public-private insurance pool, SUSTINET will negotiate more competitive rates and create savings for individuals and businesses.

Convention 2009

Convention Update

The LWVCT has been able to get Ellen Andrews, Executive Director of the CT Health Policy Project, to be our luncheon speaker at Convention. Three workshops are planned and being organized. Additional details and registration flyers will be sent to all leagues in April. Look forward to seeing you there!

LWV Urges Support for “No Excuse” Absentee Ballots

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut wholeheartedly concurs with the Connecticut Post’s editorial that enabling voters to use absentee ballots for any reason whatsoever –with no excuses required-- would represent “another worthy step in modernizing Connecticut’s electoral process.” (Connecticut Post editorial, 3/20/09)

Having an informed citizenry and encouraging more voter participation in all elections are main goals of the League of Women Voters. Throughout the United States, voting procedures vary greatly. Unlike Connecticut’s tradition of voting in person at local polling places on Election Day, thirty-two states allow early voting. Connecticut does not.

Early voting takes many different forms but all allow voters to cast their votes before an election, either on a single day or a series of days, in person at designated polling sites or remotely by mail.

As noted in the editorial, ‘no-excuses’ absentee voting provides extra convenience for voters, increases voter turn-out in states that have enacted this measure, and may reduce voting lines on Election Day. The League agrees that concerns about undue influence in absentee voting and absentee ballot fraud must be taken seriously. We believe that these concerns can be minimized by increased monitoring by state and local officials.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut joins the Connecticut Post in urging that Connecticut’s voting options be changed to allow voters to use absentee ballots for voting without requiring them to specify reasons or excuses. “No excuses” early voting is an idea whose time has come.

We urge voters to contact their legislators in support of *SJ 43 Resolution Proposing Amendment to the State Constitution Concerning Voting by Absentee Ballot*. If passed by the legislature, the question to amend the constitution to enable “no excuse” absentee ballots would be placed on the ballot in 2010 and voters would have the opportunity to ratify or reject the proposed amendment. Senate Democrats (800) 842-1420 or (860) 240-8600 and Senate Republicans (800) 842-1421 or (860) 240-8800; House Democrats (800) 842-8267, (800) 842-1902 or (860) 240-8500 and House Republicans (800) 842-8270, (800) 842-1423 or (860) 240-8700.

Christine Horrigan
Government Director
League of Women Voters of Connecticut



ACTION ALERT: Health Care and Climate at Risk -- Support the President's Budget

President Obama has proposed a 2010 federal budget that articulates America's most urgent priorities. The proposal contains essential funding for health care reform and for curbing global warming, while making other changes aimed at putting America on a path for economic recovery.

Please take action now to urge your Senators and Representative to support the President's budget!

The upcoming votes in the House and Senate will be the first real political tests for health care reform and curbs on global warming. Opponents of both these important initiatives are mobilizing to defeat the President's budget because they know that's the easiest way to sidetrack reform. We can't let them succeed!

Tell your Senators and Representative that you support health care reform and cutting global warming. Ask them to vote for the President's budget.

In today's economy, it is more important than ever to support a budget that includes solutions to America's toughest problems. The President's proposal includes \$630 billion over ten years for health care reform and \$646 billion over the same time period to reduce the greenhouse gases that are causing global warming.

The House and Senate Budget Committees are expected to release their budget resolutions soon, with votes scheduled quickly after. Make sure your Representative and Senators know that any budget that Congress passes must include investments in two of our toughest challenges - health care reform and global warming.

TAKE ACTION

1. Contact your Senators and Representative now, by phone or by email, and urge them to vote to support the President's budget. Tell them you support health care reform and curbs on global warming.
2. Send this alert to other concerned citizens - your grassroots network, your friends and co-workers. Encourage them to contact their Representative and Senators today!

Send an instant message to your Senators and Representative now! Phone calls are helpful as well, and can be made through the Capitol Hill switchboard at 202-224-3121 or 202-225-3121.

Click [here](#) and [here](#) for additional information on the League's stands on health care reform and global warming.

Sign up to receive Action Alerts directly by email. Don't miss an opportunity to take action! It's easy to sign up and the League will never share your email with others: <https://member.lwv.org/Subscribe.asp>.

Action Alert #111-6, House and Senate, GLC, 03/24/09

2010 CENSUS A VITAL CIVIC COUNT OF ALL AMERICANS

League of Women Voters is 2010 Census National Partner

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters today announced its role as a national partner in the 2010 U.S. Census. The decennial count takes place one year from today.

"The 2010 Census is an enormously important government effort that sets out to count all Americans," said Mary G Wilson, national President of the League of Women Voters. "The League is joining this effort as a national partner to enable our local, grassroots members to help achieve this goal."

"We join with the U.S. Census Bureau and other organizations in emphasizing the importance of every single resident being counted in the community in which they live," Wilson stated. "Many Americans may not be aware of how important Census data is to almost every aspect of their lives. This data is used as the basis for most federal funding to states and communities as well as for determining the number of representatives to the U.S. House of Representatives and to state legislatures. Since Leagues around the country are well-known and trusted sources of civic information, they can play an important role in educating the public that the 2010 Census is important, easy, and fair."

"Our goal is to work with others to eliminate the 'undercount' that occurs, particularly within low income and minority populations," said Wilson. "We have been fighting to protect the rights of underrepresented communities in many arenas including voting and elections, and immigration and health care reforms. The Census influences so many public policy decisions, we all must do our part to see that it is as accurate and inclusive as it can be."

"Officials have worked hard to plan this Census, but they cannot reach into every community without the help of grassroots organizations like the League," Wilson said. "It is our hope that thousands of League members nationwide will do our part to make the Census a success, by helping Americans reach a comfort level with the process and a willingness to participate in this important civic process. Our approach to the Census is similar to that of voting - We want everyone to count!" For additional information on the 2010 Census click [here](http://www.2010.census.gov/2010census) or go to www.2010.census.gov/2010census.



Suffragists picketing in front of the White House. Harris & Ewing. 1917.

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Upcoming events:

April

- 23: SIR, Quinnipiac University, BRIC – Brazil Russia, India and China – Giants on the Move**
- 25: Cheshire-Wallingford LWV Wine Tasting at the home of Elaine Lau 6-9 p.m.**
- 27: Cheshire High School Voter Registration, 7:30 am to 1:45 p.m.**
- 30: Youth in Government Day**
- 29: Board meeting, Cheshire Town Hall 7:15 p.m.**

May

- 1: deadline for NPV consensus**
- 20: Board Meeting, Cheshire Town Hall, 7:15 p.m.**

June

- 3: Annual Meeting, Waverly Tavern, Cheshire**
- 6: LWVCT Convention, Hartford Lyceum**