



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CANTON

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Canton LWV 2014 Voters' Guide

The Canton League of Women Voters asked four questions of all candidates running for the Connecticut General Assembly. Their replies are in alphabetical order.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization of men and women. It encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. See <http://lwvcanton.org> for more information, including on joining the Canton League.

Timothy LeGeyt (R), 17th State House of Representatives District (unopposed)

1.) What is your position on the ballot question?

Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?

There are very few items or issues that I think merit a change in our State Constitution. Since the absentee ballot is already referenced therein, I think it is a worthy issue to put to the ballot in November. However, rather than specify what, if any, restrictions should be placed on the absentee ballot question in the Constitution, I think a better remedy is to have the authority regarding absentee ballots rest with the Legislature.

2.) What is your fiscal philosophy regarding funding infrastructure?

Our infrastructure is one of our highest priorities, because it involves the public's reliance on and the public's safety with whatever infrastructure the government provides. Hence, we can't let it deteriorate, especially to a state where the public is at risk. Our present Governor has raided the Special Transportation Fund more than once to spend in other areas – that is against all public policy.

3.) What is your (fiscal) philosophy regarding supporting education?

Unlike the Federal Gov't, our State Constitution mandates a free and appropriate education for children from five to seventeen years of age. The word "appropriate" is as powerful as the word "free". And the appropriateness of an education is a moving target. We always debate the level of funding for education on the Appropriations Committee and this next session will be no different.

4.) What can CT do to reduce carbon emissions and preserve natural resources?

Connecticut's encouragement for citizens to install alternative sources of energy and the funding programs to support it is vital to our managing of our state and our environment. The level to which the State can offer funding changes with each session of the Legislature, but it should always be a priority.

Melissa Osborne (D), 8th State Senate District

1.) What is your position on the ballot question?

Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?

I will be voting in favor of the amendment. Voter participation is at an historical low. While apathy due to the current toxic partisan and ineffective political climate are certainly are the major contributory factors, the hectic and busy schedules of modern-day life raise further barriers to robust voter participation in the political process. To the extent that removing absentee ballot restrictions can increase voter turn-out, I am in favor of such steps.

2.) What is your fiscal philosophy regarding funding infrastructure?

Investment in infrastructure repair and improvement will be a critical factor in creating a more hospitable business climate, thriving economy, and improved quality of life. With 41% of our roads rated in "poor shape" by the White House, the time has come to get iron-clad legislation on the books to protect infrastructure funds. I will support legislation that would insulate funds generated from the gas tax and prevent them from being pirated for other uses.

3.) What is your (fiscal) philosophy regarding supporting education?

Educational funding should be a joint responsibility of local, state and federal government, with the local government always maintaining self-determination in the application of these funds. The state and federal levels should provide a supporting role financially. State and Federal mandates should only be imposed when necessary funding can be supplied. In addition, the state's ECS formula obligation for special education should be fully funded to relieve the municipalities of this burden.

4.) What can CT do to reduce carbon emissions and preserve natural resources?

The State can encourage reduction in carbon emissions through programs that incentivize residents to boost energy efficiency (ie, proper insulation and CFL bulb use), with mandatory application for state buildings. The State can also encourage a move away from fossil fuels and toward renewables through participation in regional programs, and legislation supporting community or shared solar systems. In addition, electric vehicle use can be incentivized through rebates or reduction in vehicle property tax for EVs.

Kevin Witkos (R), 8th State Senate District

1.) What is your position on the ballot question?

Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?

I will be supporting the constitutional amendment and was the only Republican Senator to do so when this came before us in the chamber. I support “no excuse” absentee ballot voting and believe the residents should have the ability to return the power to make these decisions to the legislature if they want. Turnout in our elections are abysmal and providing more opportunities for people to exercise their right to vote is a good thing.

2.) What is your fiscal philosophy regarding funding infrastructure?

I support enacting a constitutional amendment that would require all funds from the gas tax and other transportation fees to be used strictly for transportation infrastructure. We have one of the highest gas taxes in the nation and that money should be exclusively used to maintain and upgrade our transportation infrastructure. The problem isn't having enough money it is that the current administration would rather use the money on failed state programs.

3.) What is your (fiscal) philosophy regarding supporting education?

One of the most important functions that state and local government provides is the education of our children and always work to ensure that education funding is a top priority in the budget. I also believe we need to allow local school districts to make important determinations about how they spend their education dollars. Which is why I support relieving districts of state mandates that do not supply the funding necessary to implement them.

4.) What can CT do to reduce carbon emissions and preserve natural resources?

I supported the law that made our state a national leader on the reduction of carbon emissions by setting mandatory reduction limits by 2020 and 2050. I have been and will continue to be a leading proponent for the preservation of open space and the protection of our state's forests and waterways. I feel that one of the best gifts we can leave our future generations is the beautiful scenic Connecticut we grew up in.