



2018 Voters' Guide: State House Candidates for 140th

Welcome to the League of Women Voters of Norwalk (LWV-N) Voters' Guide! The LWV is a national, non-partisan organization that believes an educated voter is a motivated voter. Each year, local leagues throughout the state put together guides to help voters understand where their candidates stand on the issues that impact their city or town. The League solicits information from the candidates by asking them questions that can be answered by all candidates, regardless of their party affiliation. The answers come directly from the candidates and are printed unedited by local leagues.

Here are the unedited responses from the three candidates for the 140th, in alphabetical order:

Candidate John Flynn (R)

LWV: What are your top three legislative priorities? Why these?

JF: I have a goal of due process, equal protection under the law, and basic civil rights. They are my three legislative priorities.

I am an experienced Pro-se litigator. I have filed 250 court cases in Superior Court and Federal Court, and 50 appeals in the Appeals Court. Judges have ruled on cases in which the Judges themselves were appointed by the Defendant, our Governor. Fst cv 5014296.

The second major problem with the State is that it doesn't enforce the law. The Charter Oak is rotting at its heart. Connecticut needs a trained arborist. The law is not written to protect your rights. The law is flawed. Our State doesn't even enforce the Cannons of Judicial Conduct. The Sate Police look the other way.

I am a jack of all trades and renaissance man. That's what we need.

The Office of the Claims Commissioner, The Statewide Grievance Counsel, DCF, the State Banking and Securities Division, and other Departments of the State are ethically bankrupt. As a result, we have lost confidence and companies like GE. Many of these State agencies have no accountability, all have immunity, and none are efficient. We simply can't tax ourselves out of these problems. We cannot shift the burden to the next generation. The Municipalities equally are to blame.

We need to save the State from Financial ruin. The pension liability, and the shrinking tax base are problems that a person with an MBA in finance, like me, can figure out. I am uniquely qualified to assist the legislature.

LWV: What alternative revenue streams are you suggesting to keep Connecticut fiscally sound for years to come?

JF: We need to legalize marijuana immediately and collect a billion dollars, just like Colorado, tax it. More importantly, the opioid epidemic is gigantic. 78 people over dosed in one day on the New Haven Green. We pay for all the treatments and services.

Cut taxes, that will add revenue and increase investment.

Alternative revenue streams, we need clean alternative energy sources. For example. Manressa is sitting in my back yard, a hazardous waste dump. We need to retrofit it, convert it to a natural gas facility, create 300 jobs, and sell the excess electricity through the existing line to Long Island. We can generate \$240 million in taxes, move the businesses from the upper harbor, and save \$300 million on the Walk Bridge Ct-DOT project overnight. Do it.

Then we must compensate the 400 existing businesses under the Walk Bridge, so they don't go bankrupt over the six-year CT Dot Walk Bridge Project. Do it.

We need to change the regulation for the listing requirements of NASDAQ and the listed exchanges, so companies can attract investors with less regulation. I witnessed 5,000 small biotech companies fail when regulation took away their ability to raise capital. We need to bring back the ability to grow businesses. We need access to capital that is restricted by listing requirements. That is of itself is a tremendous revenue stream.

I am uniquely qualified to explain economics to Colin and Travis.

LWV: Would you support establishing an independent citizen's redistricting commission-- similar to California's-- to draw new legislative district lines after the 2020 Census? Why or why not?

JF: I would not follow in the footsteps of California. They were a great State 20 years ago. The question itself is suspect. Abe Lincoln lost the popular vote. Thanks to the Electoral College, he won. Where would be? Back in the Stone age with Saudi Arabia. It's a power grab. Let them in, get their vote, and use them for cheap labor.

Why not? They screwed themselves now they want more power for screwing themselves. Now they are screwing us because they need to pay for all the social ills they created. They want a bigger piece of the pie after reckless spending. The problem with borrowing money is that you must pay it back. California has defaulted, and they want other fiscally responsible States to bail them out. CT is next to fail.

Who idea was this question? Please give me their telephone number and name. We have 40 real issues in the 140. What is your agenda? Teach the kids history. Don't change the history books to program the kids.

LWV: What are your ideas on how to increase Norwalk's share of Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) funding?

JF: ECS is based on a town's ability to pay. The system is completely flawed.

Layoffs, tax hikes, and budget concerns are increasing not decreasing. Government grants have been reduced and are in jeopardy. The City keeps building housing and thinks borrowing money and giving tax incentives is smart. It's not smart. More and more kids register and Rilling's crony's get tax incentives squeezing the City's budget. More students with less taxes, and less teachers. Bad idea. The Housing Authority is a disaster. We are not attracting upwardly-mobile people, we are a welfare State and a Sanctuary City. Look at the projects. Go to Harbor View. Go to the 30 building complexes.

Special needs kids are getting hit the hardest. Wait till the Mall fails, and the Walk Bridge destroys half the business in the Downtown. 30 new restaurants and 70 new stores, with and all the increased costs.

Read the latest superintendent report and the recent complaint. ECS allows towns to shift money to none educational purposes.

Lets assume \$16,700 is spent on each child in school each year. The only way to save the educational system is to incentivize parents to move the kids to private school. If the City gave \$8,000 per student to enroll in private school, many parents would make the move and save the City \$8,500 per student. That is the only realistic economic alternative.

Candidate Colin Hosten (Working Families Party)

LWV: What are your top three legislative priorities? Why these?

CH: There are some very important state-level initiatives that we can take to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people here in Norwalk. 1) The question of affordability is a big one for many of us. I'm proud that Norwalk is growing, at a time when many towns in Connecticut are struggling to grow. But I also want to make sure that that growth doesn't penalize our lower income neighbors. As our State Representative, I would support smart, sustainable development that prioritizes an affordable and inclusive Norwalk. 2) I'm also particularly passionate about public education. I know that when we invest properly in public education, we're investing in long-term economic growth. Connecticut has some of the best performing district in the country, but we also have one of the largest education gaps. No child should be robbed of educational opportunities because of his or her ZIP code. That's why I strongly support the plan to build more classroom space in South Norwalk. This will be the first public school built in Norwalk in almost 50 years. It still baffles me that Councilman Simms voted *against* it. 3) And, not least, we need to take a responsible approach to environmental sustainability at the state level, especially in a coastal city when it comes to our changing climate, and the wellbeing of our families who live near South Norwalk's industrial zones.

LWV: What alternative revenue streams are you suggesting to keep Connecticut fiscally sound for years to come?

CH: One example is that I would love for Connecticut to reconceptualize our costly and ineffective drug policy by rethinking our approach on low-level offenses, and taxing the regulated recreational use of marijuana. I also believe that Connecticut can refashion our state as a hub for energy in the 21st century, by incentivizing an efficient transition towards 100% renewable energy and meaningfully funding a "green bank" that subsidizes investments in renewable energy and creates a competitive economic landscape for renewable energy companies. The best part is that a progressive approach to energy creates a win-win situation when it comes to energy sector employment. But when it comes to sound fiscal policy, it's not always about finding new revenue streams. My long-term goal is to dispel the myth that investment in social and public programs comes at the cost of what some conservatives have the nerve to call fiscal responsibility. Data abounds at macro and micro levels to show that when the state makes a point of protecting and supporting the interests of its most economically vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, it promotes long-term economic growth overall. Policies like increasing minimum wage to a livable level and committed investment in public infrastructure—especially our ailing Metro North system—have the win-win effect of stabilizing state budgets while also empowering working class families. I am strongly against most regressive taxes that unfairly punish low-income families and essentially allow the top 3% to hold the state hostage.

LWV: Would you support establishing an independent citizen's redistricting commission—similar to California's—to draw new legislative district lines after the 2020 Census? Why or why not?

CH: Absolutely. The question of full enfranchisement and participation in the democratic process is central to my campaign, and perhaps related to some of the fundamental issues that have been exposed in our electoral system since the 2016 general election. When legislative district lines are drawn in such a way that reduces the full impact of someone's vote—what we commonly call gerrymandering—citizens become disengaged with politics, and politicians start to take their positions for granted. We've seen that right here in the 140th district. We need to do everything to make it easier for people to vote or otherwise take part in the political process. Besides the question of fairly drawn legislative districts, I support expanded voting hours and polling locations; improved voting access for lower-income families, as well as for multilingual voters. Politics is about *people*—not special interests or corporations. I am proud to declare that I have already discarded the letter from the NRA asking me to seek their endorsement. Politics is not a business. I will not buy and trade on policies that can literally mean life or death for some people

LWV: What are your ideas on how to increase Norwalk's share of Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) funding?

CH: As the son of public school teachers, properly funded, high-quality public education is near and dear to my heart. The current ECS formula places too much emphasis on the value of real

estate, which can put excessive strain on property taxpayers. Adjusting the formula to give greater account to the actual earnings of working class families would give municipalities more leverage, while also being fair to taxpayers, and—of course, to our students, who deserve a public education system that sets them up to succeed in every way.

That said, I would frame the question more in terms of increasing education funding for all of Connecticut, not just Norwalk. This kind of zero-sum thinking can sometimes pit communities against one another, fighting for a bigger piece of the pie, instead of working together to grow the whole pie for everyone. I intend to make sure that not only Norwalk gets what we deserve, but that we grow our state economy in a way that creates more education funding overall. I know improving the ECS formula has been a challenge, but I believe we can do it. I have faith in us. But it takes electing the right people. I'm proud to have earned an "Honor Roll" designation from the Connecticut Education Association, and I look forward to working on a legislative agenda that grows Connecticut's economy and improves education funding, while also easing the pressure on our working class. We can do it. But we can only do it together.

Candidate Travis Simms (D)

LWV: What are your top three legislative priorities? Why these?

TS: Education reform: Our schools are not performing as well as they should and the manner in which education funding is distributed to towns in Connecticut is unconstitutional as it allows towns with higher property wealth to spend more on education, with less stress and consequences than towns in lower –property tax wealth areas like Norwalk. Investing wisely and fairly in our children with an education that prepares them for a successful future can be a windfall in the future for our state's economy and for the city of Norwalk.

Economic development and local jobs – we need to leverage the assets we already have here at home. Serving on the Commerce committee will give me the opportunity to partner with local community leaders and local businesses to close the work-skills gap and keep jobs closer to home.

Environmental issues- The environment is where we live, work, play and learn. I will advocate to implement environmental justice laws to ensure our residents, the environment and the economy are all equally protected.

LWV: What alternative revenue streams are you suggesting to keep Connecticut fiscally sound for years to come?

TS: We need to invest in long-term, cost-cutting solutions to improve the economy for years to come. Connecticut is a beautiful state. We should focus on opportunities to grow our visitor

market by increasing tourism throughout the state and local attractions. Jobs and revenue generated by these activities will aid in boosting the economy.

LWV: Would you support establishing an independent citizen's redistricting commission-- similar to California's-- to draw new legislative district lines after the 2020 Census? Why or why not?

TS: Absolutely, I believe voters should have the right to choose their representatives, not the other way around. I am fully supportive of a redistricting plan that makes it easier for voters to participate in the electoral process. We must ensure that district maps are drawn fairly to represent our district and the people who live in our community.

LWV: What are your ideas on how to increase Norwalk's share of Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) funding?

TS: Every child deserves a high-quality education. The ECS formula is a topic that's been a hot issue for several years. ECS is an issue of basic fairness. Right now, we essentially take from some to give to others and that's not right – our children ultimately suffer in the end. It's really frustrating to see other (similar) towns getting twice as much funding than the city of Norwalk.

In Hartford, I'll seek to serve on the Education committee and work with other elected leaders in a bi-partisan manner to make the formula more equitable and breakdown the current system of winners and losers.