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March 28, 2023

Co-Chairs Osten and Walker
Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Co-Chairs Osten and Walker:

The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford (LWVGH) wishes to address the need to fully fund, at the state level, a significant education and implementation budget to enable an effective early voting program for the 2023 election. That is the expectation of voters as a result of the more than 60% of them who approved the 2022 referendum on November 8 for a change to Connecticut's Constitution to allow for an early voting option in the state. Most relevant to this undertaking, not only in the LWVGH regional catchment area, but also statewide, is the necessary state funding to ensure the fair, consistent and seamless delivery of early voting throughout Connecticut. Currently, the Governor's Budget Bill 6659 lacks such funds.

A comprehensive effort is required to successfully introduce and sustain this program. It will incur costs for example, for administration, training town registrars, clerks and moderators, extensive preparation by the Secretary of State's Office, and public outreach and education. To avoid imposing an unfunded mandate on Connecticut's towns, LWVGH strongly encourages the Appropriations Committee to promptly take action and include funds for early voting implementation in the 2023-2024 proposed budget.

LWVGH looks forward to participating in the distribution to voters of well-developed and specific early voting educational materials that the General Assembly and the Governor's Office, in cooperation with the Secretary of the State's Office, make possible through approval of funding in its budget deliberations. With strong financial support from the State, we are confident fruition of early voting will expand participation in the democratic process and elevate the merit of voting overall.

Sincerely,

Carole Mulready
Chair, Voter Services
League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford