



LWVCT POSITIONS ARCHIVED OR DROPPED AT CONVENTIONS

POSITIONS ARCHIVED AT 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.