



League of Women Voters of Connecticut Education Fund

VOTER EDUCATION OUTREACH 2013

Connecticut Election Law Changes Effective for November 2013

- **Election Day Registration**
- **Permanent Absentee Ballots for
Voters with Physical Disabilities**

A Guide for Local Leagues

Thank you for volunteering to participate in an important program that will help the public learn about Connecticut's new election law changes. Your active involvement is critical to reaching as many voters and prospective voters as possible and to instilling the public's confidence that in this state, voting by all eligible residents is promoted and all votes properly cast will be accurately counted.

The LWVCT Education Fund would like to thank the Office of the Secretary of the State for their assistance in developing this program.

Cheryl Dunson and Judy Dolphin, Co-Presidents

Making Democracy Work

Program Overview:

- **Voter Education Outreach 2013** is a voter service effort of the LWVCT Education Fund. The program focuses on educating voters and prospective voters on two changes in Connecticut law, effective for the November 2013 elections, which permit ***Election Day Registration (EDR)*** and ***Permanent Absentee Ballots (PAB)*** for voters with physical disabilities.
- A statewide committee of League members has prepared and arranged for printing of two easily readable tri-fold pamphlets (***EDR & PAB***) that explain how these new election procedures will operate, and caution voters that election day registration is a “safety net” for those who have not registered (or changed their registration from another Connecticut town) under the normal procedures.
- ***Materials:*** Copies of **EDR & PAB** will be made available to local Leagues participating in Voter Education Outreach 2013. For additional assistance in explaining the new laws, the committee has developed a list of Frequently Asked Questions, which are included in this guide.
- ***Timetable:*** Local Leagues should plan to conduct their outreach efforts during September and October. Either the local League’s voter services chair or a committee working with the local board should develop an outreach plan as soon as possible to be in touch with their local registrars of voters about this program, and to identify other community organizations who could assist in Voter Education Outreach 2013.
- Although the primary audience for this program is Connecticut citizens of voting age, the program can be used with future voters (e.g., students, new citizens).
- Sessions will be held in venues with public access and handicapped accessibility, such as public libraries, senior centers, schools, and town halls, and will be open to the public.

Planning Your Outreach:

Here are some suggestions for making the most of your local League outreach efforts.

- As soon as you can, meet with the Democratic and Republican registrars of voters (ROV) in your town to discuss whether they are planning voter outreach on **EDR** and **PAB**, and if so, how you might collaborate.
- Decide whether to enlist the participation of other community organizations in your outreach—either organizations with whom you normally collaborate or new organizations with a target audience among their members or service users. Libraries, local colleges or universities, PTA's, senior centers, human services departments, social organizations attracting retired members all can be valuable resources.
- Decide how to mesh outreach efforts with your regular voter services work—by distributing **EDR** and **PAB** pamphlets during voter registration efforts or at local debates, get-out-the-vote events or other League activities, or by offering the pamphlets on your website, in your newsletter or Voters' Guide.
- Identify possible venues/opportunities to conduct short **voter outreach programs**. These could include the opening minutes of an organizational meeting, a table at back-to-school night, a few minutes before a library program. Set a tentative calendar. Make sure to invite the public to attend, or to have the organization publicize to its members well in advance of the program.
- Develop publicity for your voter outreach efforts as early as possible, including traditional and online media and flyers for posting the availability of **EDR** and **PAB** pamphlets and of any outreach programs. Remember to notify the LWVCTEF Administrator at lwvct@lwvct.org of your local outreach efforts and/or events, so that they may be included in statewide publicity.
- Train outreach volunteers in your League to conduct these outreach programs—using the **FAQ's**. If questions arise that are not covered by the **FAQ's**, then offer to contact the LWVCTEF Office at 203 288-7996 or www.lwvct.org.
- Clarify the role/responsibilities of any partnering outreach organizations. Make any partners/volunteers know that voter outreach is conducted on a strictly nonpartisan basis.
- Discuss with your board how to cover any costs, which should be minimal.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!

Outreach Programs: Before you conduct an outreach session:

- Collect copies of the **EDR** and **PAB** pamphlets to bring, together with copies of *Registering and Voting in CT* and any other resource materials.
- Read the **FAQ** to familiarize yourself with the answers to frequently asked questions.
- Be nonpartisan. Make sure that any examples that you use or statements that you make to do not favor one political party over another. (Wear your League pin!)
- Be patient. What appears to be simple to you may be difficult for others.

Suggested Organizations to Contact:

For EDR: Local Colleges and Universities, Realtors, Libraries, Newcomer Groups, Neighborhood Associations, CT Commuters Council, PTA, Civic Organizations, Men's and Women's associations, etc.

For PAB: Senior Groups, Senior Centers, Commissions on Aging, Town Health and Social Service Departments, Senior Housing Facilities, Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes, Visiting Nurse Associations, Physicians , etc.

Resource Material: The following information and feedback sheet are included for your use:

- FAQ's
- LWVCT feedback form

Contact Information:

- League of Women Voters of CT Education Fund, www.lwvct.org
1890 Dixwell Avenue, Suite 203
Hamden, CT 06514-3183
Jean Rabinow (203) 288-7996 lwvct@lwvct.org
- CT Secretary of the State www.sots.ct.gov.
Phone: (860) 509-6100
Toll-free: 1-800-540-3764
E-Mail: lead@ct.gov

2013 ELECTION CALENDAR

GENERAL ELECTION

Absentee Ballots Available	October 4
Deadline for Mail-In Voter Registration	October 22
Deadline for In-Person Registration	October 29
Last Day to Arrange for Physically Disabled Registration to vote in place of confinement	October 29
Election Day	November 5

Frequently Asked Questions: Election Day Registration (EDR)

1. What is Election Day Registration (EDR)?
A new election law passed in Connecticut in 2012 provides for Election Day Registration (EDR) in general elections. If you are unable to register to vote by Connecticut's normal deadlines, EDR is your safety net. It is your last chance to make your voice heard on Election Day. It is available only for general elections—not for primaries or referenda—and only for those who are not already registered to vote in their town.
2. Why is EDR needed?
It is always best to register to vote well in advance of the election. But, sometimes life gets in the way—you just moved into a new town, you worked overtime and couldn't get to town hall to register, or your computer crashed and you couldn't print out the voter registration form. This is your last chance to make your voice heard on Election Day.
3. How does EDR work?
You must appear in person at your town's EDR location. You will be asked to fill out a voter registration application and provide your identification and proof of residency. You must affirm—in writing—that you have not already voted in this election. If you have been registered to vote in another Connecticut town, the election officials must contact your former town to verify your voting status. When this is completed, you will be able to cast your ballot right there.
4. What ID do I need to bring with me?
If you choose to register on Election Day, you must appear in person and provide proof of your identity and residence. A current and valid Connecticut driver's license will satisfy both requirements. Other options for proof of identity include a birth certificate, social security card or current student photo ID from an institute of higher education. A proof of residence must include your current address. Some examples include: a residential lease, current utility bill, bank statement, college or university student registration or fee statement, or naturalization documents.
5. How long will it take?
*Be prepared to allow extra time for voting if you cannot register before Election Day. Each town has only one designated Election Day Registration location—usually your town hall—where you will register and vote. Registration will cease **promptly** at 8 p.m.*
6. How do I find my EDR location?
You can verify your town's Election Day Registration location by using the Secretary of the State's website (www.ct.gov/sots/), your town's website, or by contacting your town's registrar of voters.
7. How can I verify my registration?
*Go to the League of Women Voters of Connecticut (LWVCT) website (www.lwvct.org) and click on the “**verify your voter registration**” button.*
8. If I move within a town, do I have to notify the registrar of voters?

If you move to a new address within the same Connecticut town, it is best to update your registration with your new address by submitting a voter registration form to the Registrars. You must re-register when you move to a new town within Connecticut.

9. Do I need to notify the registrar of voters if my name has changed?
To avoid confusion or delays on election day, you should update your registration if you have changed your name.

10. What about fraud?
Voting fraud at the polls—voter impersonation—is extremely rare in the U.S. and virtually non-existent in Connecticut. However, voting is serious business—so serious that it’s a Class D felony to lie on a voter registration form. Those who do can be convicted and imprisoned for up to five years and fined up to \$5,000.

Frequently Asked Questions: Permanent Absentee Ballot (PAB)

1. What is a Permanent Absentee Ballot?
A new election law passed in Connecticut in 2012 allows any eligible voter who is permanently physically disabled to automatically receive an absentee ballot for each election, primary or referendum held in that voter's town.
2. Who is eligible for a Permanent Absentee Ballot?
You are eligible to receive a permanent or automatic absentee ballot if you have a permanent physical disability.
3. What is needed to obtain a Permanent Absentee Ballot?
Ask your physician or medical care provider for a letter certifying that you are unable to appear in person to vote at your polling place because of your physical disability. Fill out an application for an absentee ballot and submit it—with your doctor's letter—to your town clerk. Watch for your absentee ballot to arrive in the mail about one month before the next election.
4. How often do I need to renew my Permanent Absentee Ballot?
Your request for an automatic absentee ballot and certification letter is kept on file and entitles you to automatically receive a ballot for each primary, election or referendum taking place during that calendar year. Each January, the registrars of voters will send a written notice to you asking whether you still live at the same address. To continue to receive your automatic absentee ballot, please reply to this notice within 30 days.
5. Can I cancel my request for a Permanent Absentee Ballot at any time?
Yes, you may send a request to discontinue receiving an automatic absentee ballot at any time.
6. Can someone request a Permanent Absentee Ballot for me?
You must request a permanent absentee ballot yourself. Use Connecticut's regular Absentee Ballot Application and ask your doctor for a letter attesting to your physical disability. Be sure to sign your application and submit both documents to your town clerk.
7. What if I need someone to complete the application for a Permanent Absentee Ballot for me?
Anyone can help you apply for an absentee ballot, but if you have received help in completing the application, both you and your helper must sign it.

Also, if you need help in filling out the ballot, you may get assistance from anyone you choose. However, no candidate or agent of a candidate, political party or committee, shall knowingly be present when an absentee ballot applicant executes an absentee ballot, except when the candidate or agent is a member of the immediate family of the applicant. If you are unable to write, you may ask a helper of your choice to fill the ballot out in your presence. However, you must express your wishes to that person and not let that person tell you how to vote. The helper must sign his or her name, along with your name, on the ballot envelope and add the word "by" next to his or her own signature.

8. Is curbside voting still available for the physically disabled?

Yes. If you have arrived at your polling place but are unable to enter due to a temporary incapacity, you may request that the ballot be brought to you. You will have to show identification and privately mark the ballot while in the presence of the election officials. They will deliver your ballot in a privacy sleeve to the voting tabulator where the officials will insert your ballot to be counted.



Voter Education Outreach 2013 Feedback

After completing your League's participation in this voter service program, please complete and forward this form to the LWVCT. This information is not only important to us, but required by our funders. Mail the completed sheet to the LWVCT, 1890 Dixwell Ave, Suite 113, Hamden, CT 06514, or FAX it to 203/288-7998. Thank you!

Name of League: _____

Primary Contact: _____ Email/Phone: _____

EDR & PAB Pamphlets Distributed (Locations): _____

Media Publicity: Print Media: _____

Online Media: _____

Other Publicity: Letter to Editor: _____

Op-Ed Article: _____

League newsletter/website: _____

Names of other participating organizations: _____

Outreach Programs Conducted: _____

Approximate Number of Participants: _____ Open to the Public? _____

What advice would you offer for future LWV voter outreach efforts? _____
