

What Happened 2019: Review of the Legislative Session LWVCT 2018-2019 Advocacy Report

Election Laws

Early Voting Passed Both House and Senate. Lacked Super-Majority in Senate

- LWVCT supported Resolution HJ161 to amend the CT Constitution to allow early voting. Passed the House with bipartisan super-majority support. Passed the Senate with only simple majority. *Resolution must be brought up again in the 2021 legislative session and pass by simple majority in both houses before going to voters in 2022.*

Passed both House and Senate

- Primary petitions for candidates for single-town state representative seats have the same circulation deadlines as candidates for multi-town state representative seats.

LWVCT Support—Bills Passed One Chamber/ Died in Committee/Not Called for Vote

- Increasing Voter Access—restore voting rights to parolees and certain incarcerated persons, expand the number of Election Day Registration sites, allow use of electronic signatures on some election-related documents, and establish automatic voter registration system. Passed the House.
- Providing voter registration applications to prospective tenants. Passed House only.
- Added polling places at institutions of higher education. Died on Senate calendar.
- Establishing Election Day Registration in polling places and extending the hours of Election Day Registration. Died on Senate calendar.
- Restoring electoral privileges to felony convicts who are on parole. Died on Senate calendar
- Requesting an absentee ballot electronically. Died on the Senate calendar
- Establishing a task force to study ranked-choice voting. Passed in the House. Not called in the Senate.
- Ballots used at polling places that serve multiple voting districts. Died on House calendar
- Payment of certain fines prior to the restoration of electoral privileges. Died in Committee.
- Counting of incarcerated persons for purposes of determining legislative districts. Died in Committee.
- Extending the hours of Election Day Registration. Died in Committee.

-Yvonne Senturia, Legislative Specialist

Campaign Finance

Supported CT's Citizen Election Program (a.k.a. the Clean Elections Program).

Testimony submitted:

- Opposed last-minute attempt to erode many of the gains of the CEP. Passed Senate. Not called in House.
- Support to make online messaging more transparent and to define expenditures covered by SEEC. Died in committee.
- Support for clarifying coordinated and independent spending more clearly in the statutes. Died on House calendar.
- Support for more disclosure of detailed expenses by consultants. Died on House calendar.

-Pam Klem, Legislative Specialist and Judy Lhamon, VP Public Issues

Open Government/Transparency in Media

- Supported restoring grant fund and protecting community access TV funds from being swept away into General Fund. Grant fund restored. Annual sweep eliminated.
- Supported expanding per subscriber funding for public, educational, and governmental access TV. Died in Committee
- Supported a Community Voice Channel-- Ellington, Tolland, Vernon, Bolton, Andover, Hebron & Marlborough. Died on Senate calendar.

-Pua Ford, Legislative Specialist

Natural Resources

- Testified in support for modernizing the 40-year-old beverage container deposit law—the Bottle Bill. Expand law included other non-carbonated beverages, increased the deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents, increased the handling fee paid by the distributors to retailers and redemption centers, and allowed the distributors to retain a portion of the unredeemed deposits. Status: Original sponsors withdrew their support of an Amended bill that “gutted the original bill and made it a study.” Passed in the House. Died on Senate calendar.

-Kathy Golas, Legislative Specialist

Land Use

Monitored bills:

- Property tax abatement for certain first responders. Passed in both House and Senate.
- Zoning regulations to provide for expanded housing needs. Passed in the House; Died in Senate.
- Establishment of municipal cultural districts. Passed in House and Senate.
- Creation of land bank authorities. Passed in House and Senate

-Margaret Wirtenberg, Legislative Specialist

Social Policy

Monitored bills:

- Alzheimer’s disease and dementia training. Passed both House and Senate.
- Prescription practices for psychotropic drugs. Died in Committee.
- Opioid use. Passed in House and Senate; unanimous votes of those present.

-Caroline Adkins, Mental Health Legislative Specialist and Judy Lhamon

How LWVCT’s Legislative Lobbyist *Judith Blei & Associates* Helps Us

For many years, the League has benefited by working with *Judith Blei & Associates*. In their legislative monitoring and lobbying role for the League, they provide

- An interactive website and list of emerging bills for each LWVCT specialist.
- Presence at the Capitol and alerts on breaking legislative news.

- Help in crafting our message to legislators— testimony, fact sheets, letters and e-mail.
- Access to legislators and staff.
- Legislative strategy.
- Advocacy workshops and Advocacy/Lobby Days.

Thanks to Judy and her staff for another rewarding and inspiring year!

Interested in Working with Our Advocacy Team on the Following? Call us!

- Health Care
- Education
- Reproductive Rights
- Climate Change/ Air Quality
- Energy
- Gun Laws
- Housing

Thanks to our members and our Advocacy Team for working to advance good public policy in Hartford in the 2019 legislative session!

Public Issues VP **Judy Lhamon**
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