



League of Women Voters of Norwalk
P.O. Box 644, Norwalk, CT 06852

Why Does My Polling Place Change?

Norwalk voters are often puzzled that their polling place changes from one election to another. “Why can’t I just vote in the same place every time?” they ask. **Almost half (about 40%) of Norwalk voters encounter a change of polling places.** Why?

The answer has a simple component and a more complex component. Here’s the simple part of the answer. Norwalk has 5 Common Council (“councilmanic”) districts (and taxing districts within them), defined by the city charter and used for municipal elections in **odd-numbered years**. Norwalk also comprises 2 state representative districts plus portions of 3 more state representative districts, defined by the State of Connecticut and used for state elections in **even-numbered years**. So, if your polling place changes, just remember: **it’s one place in odd-numbered years (2017, 2019, etc.) and the other place in even-numbered years (2018, 2020, etc.).**

Why can’t the state representative districts simply be aligned with the councilmanic districts? That leads to the more complex part of the answer, and it relates to the U.S. Constitution. Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution calls for a census every 10 years and redistricting to keep the House of Representatives numbers—and district lines—proportional to the population. Connecticut’s state laws take their cue from the federal practice: districts for state legislators are also reapportioned after the census. Under federal law, these districts must meet two primary criteria: equal population, and not diluting the voting power of racial or ethnic minority groups. Citizens can disagree about whether the state redistricting could be done better, but no matter how it is done, it’s unlikely that Norwalk’s state representative districts could ever match up with the councilmanic districts. **However, one thing we can be thankful for is that the entire city of Norwalk is within one state senate district!**

To check your polling place for the current year, access the “**Where do I vote?**” link at <http://www.norwalkct.org/index.aspx?nid=339> or call the Registrar of Voters at (203) 854-7996. **A map of Common Council districts** is available by clicking on the link at the “Where Do I Vote?” page <http://www.norwalkct.org/index.aspx?NID=346> ; the direct link is <http://www.norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/299> .

For more information about the League of Women Voters of Norwalk, contact us at (203) 846-8331 or lwv.norwalk@gmail.com