

# ✓ Voters' Guide '14

To the voters:

The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford (LWVGH) is pleased to bring you the printed version of the Voters' Guide for the West Hartford legislative races. Covered in this edition of West Hartford LIFE are the 5th Senatorial District and the 18th, 19th and 20th Assembly Districts. This Voters' Guide provides information on all of the named races in one place as well as a sample ballot and list of polling places.

All of the candidates received questions developed by the LWVGH; they provided answers and short biographies in 350 words or less. The League believes that by reading the candidates' thoughtful responses and viewing our candidate debates done in cooperation with WHC-TV, Channel 5 Access, citizens can make their own informed decision on election day, Tuesday, November 4. A very important part of election day this year is the ballot question which concerns a



LEAGUE OF WOMAN  
VOTERS OF GREATER  
HARTFORD

proposed amendment to the Connecticut Constitution. "This referendum question on the ballot... asks voters whether they favor removing from the state constitution the current restrictions on in-person and absentee voting." (LWVCT 2014 brochure) Some additional information is found elsewhere in this guide and also at LWVCT.org and the Secretary of the State website, SOTS.ct.gov

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization

celebrating its 94th year. It was established in 1920, the year in which the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed women the right to vote. From its inception, the League has been committed to promoting responsible political action through informed participation of citizens in government. Our mission "to produce informed voters" has not wavered over the more than nine decades of service to the community.

We hope that you find the Guide helpful as you prepare to vote. We also encourage you to check out the schedule for the televised debates that will be aired on WHC-TV (Channel 5 and 95) starting the week of October 13. An online version of the Voters' Guide can be found at [www.lwvgh.org](http://www.lwvgh.org). We invite your comments on all of these voter services at [www.lwvgh.org](http://www.lwvgh.org).

Carole Mulready  
President, LWVGH

## Amend the Constitution?

In November, voters will vote on this ballot question to amend the state constitution: Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?

### WHY IS THERE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ON THE BALLOT?

Connecticut's constitution stipulates that ballots must be cast in person on Election Day except for specific exceptions that allow a voter to obtain an absentee ballot for illness or disability, absence from town, or religious prohibitions from going to the polls on Election Day. The referendum question on the ballot will be a Yes/No question. It asks voters whether they favor removing from the state constitution the current restriction on in person and absentee voting.

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## SAMPLE BALLOT

OFFICE PARTY	1 Governor and Lieutenant Governor Vote for One	2 Representative in Congress Vote for One	3 State Senator Vote for One	4 State Representative Vote for One	5 Secretary of the State Vote for One	6 Treasurer Vote for One	7 Comptroller Vote for One	8 Attorney General Vote for One	9 Judge of Probate Vote for One	10 Registrar of Voters Vote for One
REPUBLICAN PARTY	<input type="radio"/> 1A Thomas C. Foley and Heather Somers	<input type="radio"/> 2A Matthew M. Corey	<input type="radio"/> 3A Bill Wadsworth	<input type="radio"/> 4A	<input type="radio"/> 5A Peter Lumaj	<input type="radio"/> 6A Timothy M. Herbst	<input type="radio"/> 7A Sharon J. McLaughlin	<input type="radio"/> 8A Kie Westby	<input type="radio"/> 9A	<input type="radio"/> 10A Beth Kyle
DEMOCRATIC PARTY	<input type="radio"/> 1B Dannel P. Malloy and Nancy Wyman	<input type="radio"/> 2B John B. Larson	<input type="radio"/> 3B Beth Bye	<input type="radio"/> 4B <b>*See note on right</b>	<input type="radio"/> 5B Denise W. Merrill	<input type="radio"/> 6B Denise L. Nappier	<input type="radio"/> 7B Kevin Lembo	<input type="radio"/> 8B George Jepsen	<input type="radio"/> 9B Sydney W. Elkin	<input type="radio"/> 10B Carolyn J. Thornberry
WORKING FAMILIES PARTY	<input type="radio"/> 1C Dannel P. Malloy and Nancy Wyman	<input type="radio"/> 2C John B. Larson	<input type="radio"/> 3C	<input type="radio"/> 4C	<input type="radio"/> 5C Denise W. Merrill	<input type="radio"/> 6C Denise L. Nappier	<input type="radio"/> 7C Kevin Lembo	<input type="radio"/> 8C George Jepsen	<input type="radio"/> 9C	<input type="radio"/> 10C
INDEPENDENT PARTY	<input type="radio"/> 1D Thomas C. Foley and Heather Somers	<input type="radio"/> 2D	<input type="radio"/> 3D Bill Wadsworth	<input type="radio"/> 4D	<input type="radio"/> 5D Peter Lumaj	<input type="radio"/> 6D Timothy M. Herbst	<input type="radio"/> 7D Sharon J. McLaughlin	<input type="radio"/> 8D Kie Westby	<input type="radio"/> 9D	<input type="radio"/> 10D
GREEN PARTY	<input type="radio"/> 1E	<input type="radio"/> 2E Jeffery Russell	<input type="radio"/> 3E	<input type="radio"/> 4E	<input type="radio"/> 5E S. Michael DeRosa	<input type="radio"/> 6E	<input type="radio"/> 7E Rolf W. Maurer	<input type="radio"/> 8E Stephen E. Fournier	<input type="radio"/> 9E	<input type="radio"/> 10E
PETITIONING CANDIDATES	<input type="radio"/> 1F Joe Visconti and Chester Frank Harris	<input type="radio"/> 2F	<input type="radio"/> 3F	<input type="radio"/> 4F	<input type="radio"/> 5F	<input type="radio"/> 6F	<input type="radio"/> 7F	<input type="radio"/> 8F	<input type="radio"/> 9F	<input type="radio"/> 10F
WRITE-IN VOTES	<input type="radio"/> 1G	<input type="radio"/> 2G	<input type="radio"/> 3G	<input type="radio"/> 4G	<input type="radio"/> 5G	<input type="radio"/> 6G	<input type="radio"/> 7G	<input type="radio"/> 8G	<input type="radio"/> 9G	<input type="radio"/> 10G

VOTE ON THE QUESTION(S)
<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
1. Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?

\*The column for state representative will differ depending upon which Assembly District you reside in.

### 18th District:

Andrew Fleischmann  
Democrat, is unopposed

### 19th District:

Mark Zydanowicz, Republican  
Brian Becker, Democrat

### 20th District

Joe Verrengia, Democrat  
is unopposed

## Essay Questions:

1. What are your top three priorities for the next legislative session?
2. Are Connecticut's business incentives structured appropriately and are they working to create jobs? What would you change, if anything?
3. The election ballot contains a referendum on a Constitutional amendment that would remove Connecticut's existing restrictions on in-person and absentee voting. If the amendment passes, the legislature will be allowed to consider passing laws such as "no-excuse absentee balloting" or other early voting options, as some other states have done. If the amendment passes, what changes to the voting laws would you support, if any?

## Amend the Constitution?

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### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

If approved, decisions about absentee and in-person voting will be made by Connecticut residents and state legislators through the current process used by Connecticut's General Assembly for other election-related proposals.

The League of Women Voters CT website, [www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org), has a very easy link to the ballot question information on its home page or go to [www.SOTS.ct.gov](http://www.SOTS.ct.gov), and click on elections and voting. You can register to vote on line at [voterregistration.ct.gov](http://voterregistration.ct.gov).

## League of Women Voters Finance Drive

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## 5th Senate District

Beth Bye

Democrat



Beth is in her second term as a State Senator. Before that, Beth served as a State Representative and a member of the West Hartford School Board. She has been an early childhood education teacher, director, program developer and advocate for 30 years. Beth has focused on education, the environment, job creation and supporting CT's critical safety net programs for children and families while in office. This past session Beth was appointed Chair of the powerful Appropriations Committee that has cognizance over the state budget. She and her wife Tracey Wilson have 5 children and live in West Hartford Center.

### Essay Question #1

- Pass a balanced budget that meets our obligations to our citizens, and that invests in education, workforce development and Connecticut's economic future. This process will involve many difficult decisions and lots of input from CT residents.
- Reorient our human service policies to place families at the center of assistance programs. It is a more humane and effective way to help seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income adults.
- Continue to work with cities and towns on state policies that help spur high tech economic development by helping businesses and residents access high speed, affordable Internet, with improved customer service.

### Essay Question #2

- In 2011, Democrats and Republicans worked together to pass a bi-partisan jobs package that provides incentives for small businesses. This legislation was developed from listening to small businesses about what they needed to grow jobs. It has proven successful in the 5th district as over 70 businesses have participated and they have added 300-400 jobs.
- The program has invested in businesses that have, by and large, succeeded. There is a very small, 1.3% default rate of businesses that have participated. And the program has leveraged \$2 billion in private investment in CT companies.
- The work done on this program is exactly how government should work – listening to people on the ground and working across party lines to benefit residents of the Connecticut.

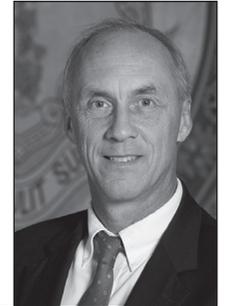
### Essay Question #3

I support no excuse absentee voting and early voting. I think we need to make it easier for citizens to vote in elections.

## 5th Senate District

Bill Wadsworth

Republican



Bill Wadsworth, a lifelong resident of Farmington, has three children and four grandchildren. He has served as an elected official in his community for almost twenty years, most recently as a member of the Town Council and as a State Representative. Bill is a proud veteran and graduate of UCONN.

### Essay Question #1

The next legislative session must focus on real change in the way the State of Connecticut looks at private business. This is not a new issue. For the past fifty to sixty years, the Democratically Controlled General Assembly, accelerated during the times of Democratic Governors, has gradually eroded the base of private sector jobs so that today we face record taxes and record debt. This trend will continue into the future unless a different agenda is adopted. The Office of Fiscal Analysis has already projected a shortfall of one billion dollars in the next budget. Budget shortfalls have always been met with tax increases with the majority party we have today.

Bill's priorities meet this challenge head on. Private sector jobs are the engine that drives our economy and they must be protected at all costs. Tax increases must be stopped and even reversed. Unnecessary regulations and mandates must be eliminated so that our businesses can have the confidence to reinvest in Connecticut. These tax and policy changes must affect all of our businesses and not just a chosen few.

It also will be necessary to reduce the size and cost of our government. The same number of jobs supported a seven billion dollar budget in the early nineteen nineties as today, with a twenty four billion dollar budget. An incredible burden on the taxpayer. With the current trend, even less jobs with support and even higher state budget in the future.

All of that leads to our children. We must provide an environment for them that will provide an opportunity to receive a great education and be able to use that education in the State of Connecticut. We want them to have high quality lives that fulfill their ambitions and keep them close to their homes.

Questions 2 & 3 are not printed because the candidate chose to only answer Question 1.

## 18th Assembly District

Andrew Fleischmann



*Democrat*

I was born and raised in West Hartford, and have been honored to serve our town in the General Assembly. I attended local public schools, graduating from Hall High in 1982. I earned a Bachelor's degree in public policy from Princeton, and a Masters from Stanford. Outside the legislature, I'm President and CEO of Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters, a non-profit that provides children in need with inspiring mentors who help them reach their highest potential. If re-elected, my top priorities will be job creation, increasing state support for West Hartford schools, and closing academic achievement gaps. My wife Caroline and I live near Bishop's Corner and are blessed with two daughters, Emily and Kelly.

### Essay Question #1

- Job creation – which the state can best promote by reducing burdensome property taxes and regulations – and continuing incentives for companies that create jobs.
- More funds for West Hartford schools – while I'm proud of the increase we achieved this past year, I will keep fighting for more funding. It will be hard to achieve this in 2015, given the projected budget deficit – but I will keep pushing.
- Closing achievement gaps – in our town and our state, there is still too much of a gap between the academic attainments of students from middle class families, and those from lower socio-economic status or English-as-a second-language homes. I will keep working to close those gaps.

### Essay Question #2

The current structure of the Small Business Express program is good – as demonstrated by the extremely high percentage of businesses that have received support and created new jobs. We need to keep expanding this program to reach more businesses.

### Essay Question #3

I support no-excuse absentee ballot voting – since it will allow registered voters who may be out-of-town on business – or very busy with family responsibilities – to keep their franchise.

## 19th Assembly District

Mark Zydanowicz



*Republican*

West Hartford Board of Education member and formerly a commissioner on the West Hartford Zoning Board of Appeals. Mark is previously an owner of Guida's Dairy and has 23 years of experience in the Connecticut Army National Guard. An Iraq war veteran where he earned the Combat Action Badge and a Bronze Star. He resides in West Hartford with his wife Nella and their three children.

### Essay Question #1

It's critical our next session focuses on creating jobs, improving our economy and supporting students' success. Critical foundations to the future of Connecticut.

I know what business owners in Connecticut are going through. Tax increases and over-regulation are creating a poor environment to grow jobs and keep them here. I will be a voice for small business, and help bring jobs back to Connecticut.

For the future of our economy, we must put an end to taxing and spending in Hartford which Connecticut families simply cannot afford anymore. I will stand up against wasteful government spending and reduce taxes on residents and small business owners.

As a father of three children, and a member of the West Hartford Board of Education, I know what students need to succeed. Work with both sides of the aisle and schools systems for smart supportive collaboration ensuring every child has access to a quality education and that all Connecticut schools are performing at a high level.

### Essay Question #2

Our government is too focused giving away tax payer money to large companies, like Jackson Labs or Bridgewater, paying them to do business in Connecticut. If we spent more time focused on creating a better environment to do business, these companies wouldn't need cash incentives to open their doors in Connecticut. I'll work to reduce taxes, eliminate burdensome regulations to help create more jobs here in our state.

### Essay Question #3

Giving our citizens every opportunity to exercise their right to vote is an important part of our democracy. I support early voting as it has been implemented successfully in other states. However, I do not support "no excuse absentee voting" or other new voter laws that invite fraud or abuse of the system.

## 19th Assembly District

Brian Becker



*Democrat*

A resident of West Hartford since 1977 and a graduate of Hall High, I live on Candlewood Drive with my wife, Laura, with whom I have two sons, Casey and Cary. I earned my B.A. in economics and history at the University of Pennsylvania and my J.D. at Boston University. I am a principal at Becker Law Offices in West Hartford. I have served as State Representative for the 19th District since 2010.

### Essay Question #1

Continuing to:

1. Create more good-paying jobs in our state – by continuing economic development programs that are working (see e.g., the answer to question 2 below), and by modernizing our tax structure to keep us competitive.
2. Promote government efficiency programs like "Lead By Example", which is currently saving over \$2,200,000 per year through implementation of energy efficiency measures in state buildings.
3. Take a hard look at how we are delivering special education services to our children and finding ways to do it more effectively.

### Essay Question #2

Ideally, we would not have to offer incentives to businesses. The fact, however, is that every state does. Texas, for example, offers \$19 billion per year in business incentives<sup>1</sup> – as much as our entire state budget. If we did not offer incentives, we would not be competitive in the marketplace.

One of our best incentives is the Small Business Express Program. It has worked well - creating over 4000 jobs state-wide (and over 240 just in West Hartford, Avon and Farmington). Another successful program is the Manufacturers' Reinvestment Account, which enables small manufacturers to set aside up to \$100,000 per year in an account to be used for new equipment or training workers. So long as the money is used for those purposes, it can be withdrawn tax free. We should continue expanding these and similar programs to help grow jobs.

### Essay Question #3

I would support changes that make it easier for people to vote including no-excuse absentee balloting and early voting options. We want to do all we can to increase voter turnout and participation since that is the bedrock of our democracy.

## 20th Assembly District

Joe Verrengia



*Democrat*

State Representative Joe Verrengia is a life-long resident of West Hartford. He was educated in West Hartford Public Schools and attended Northeastern University. Rep. Verrengia was a three-term incumbent on the West Hartford Town Council before leaving to serve the 20th House District in Hartford. He also served as a Commissioner to the Metropolitan District Commission. Rep. Verrengia is a twenty five-year veteran of the West Hartford Police Department and currently serves on the Judiciary Committee, the Transportation Committee and as Vice-Chairman of the Public Safety Committee. He also serves on the Connecticut Judicial Information Systems Governing Board (CJIS).

### Essay Question #1

- Job Creation
- Control Taxes
- Education Improvements

### Essay Question #2

We live in a highly competitive business environment as highlighted by the Governor of Texas, Rick Perry's visit to Connecticut last year. Governor Perry came to the state to lure Connecticut businesses south. I support the efforts to not just create but to maintain jobs here in the state. For example, the Small Business Express Program has helped businesses with employment issues and the Step-Up program has offered state assistance to companies with hiring and job training. Governor Malloy's First Five program has UTC investing hundreds of millions of dollars in research and development and Jackson Lab ready to open nearby in Farmington.

What I would change is more on the accountability side. After the state has given the incentives, are the businesses holding up their end of the bargain and if not, there should be penalties in the agreement.

### Essay Question #3

I would support both "No-excuse absentee balloting" and early voting options, as long as there are enough safeguards in place to prevent potential voter fraud. We should make every reasonable avenue open to get more people involved in the voting process and hopefully that would lead to more involvement in their communities.