



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee
February 22, 2010 Public Hearing
League Members Speak Up for the Citizens' Election Program

Dear Legislators:

My husband and I strongly urge you to continue to support campaign finance reform. We are so proud to be living in a state that has a commitment to public financing of campaigns. Please do not use Judge Underhill's decision as an excuse to make further cuts in the funding of the Citizen's Election Program. Please say NO to any budget proposal that fails to preserve the program. Let's do things right in CT. Thank you.

Marilyn Ricci and Joseph Ricci
6 Westview Drive
Canton, CT 06019
860-693-8482, 860-693-8482

I believe that the general public strongly supports "clean elections." The public financing of campaigns is the only way to stop the influence of vested interests (for their gain). Congratulations to Governor Rell and the GAE committee for making CEP a priority. I urge you to keep Connecticut at the top of the list of concerned citizens who value honesty in government.

Ada Seaman
389 Lewis Rd.
New Britain, CT 06053

We wish to express our strong support for campaign finance reform and the clean elections program. Please take strong, immediate action toward this end. Thank you.

Nancy and Karl Mason
97 Pinehurst Rd.
W. Hartland, Ct 06091

I would like to see the strongest possible campaign finance reform.

Mary Kelling
19 Diana Lane
Windsor, CT 06095-3246

To whom it may concern:

I write to encourage your support of the Citizen's Election Program in particular, and public campaign financing in general. It is imperative that we return control of the election process to the citizens of this state, and reduce the influence of lobbyists, PACs, and corporate donors.

I commend Governor Rell and the GAE for making the CEP a priority, and hope that clean elections will become the norm rather than the exception.

Sincerely,

Victoria Rogers
70 Kenyon Street
Hartford, CT 06105
860.306.1432

The cost of running political campaigns is wildly out of control and reform of the system is urgently needed. I support the public financing of campaigns in Connecticut (and the nation) to level the playing field for candidates. Please preserve the Citizens Election Program!!

Sincerely,

Carol Lennig
35 Newport Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06107

Not just the League of Women Voters, but also the majority of CT citizens indicate that there is a real need for Campaign Finance Reform. Right now, there is too much political influence in the hands of a few; we must keep working toward "for the people and by the people", not for the influential, by the influential. Keep the Citizens' Election Program. Thank you.

Carole Mulready
League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford
25 Montclair Drive
West Hartford, CT 06107

Hi,

My name is Lee Terry, a retired attorney, and I support campaign reform. I was state representative Denise Merrill's treasurer twice before, and right away I noticed that there was an important requirement that did not make sense to me. Given the recent Supreme Court decisions that suggest that the right to give money is tantamount to the right to free speech, I believe that an individual lobbyist and an individual that contracts with the state should be allowed to give up to \$100.00 to a candidate, just as every other voter can. The contribution limits by themselves would already prevent a lobbyist or contractor from exerting undue influence over other voters. It might be necessary to require lobbyists and contractors be residents of the state in order to contribute. I think it is also extremely burdensome for an individual who is running for statewide office and who might not have name recognition throughout the state to have to raise the kind of money and number of names necessary to qualify for the benefits of campaign reform. I'd like to see some reasonable changes there, also, either to lower the requirement for total monies needed to qualify, or raise the amount to, say, \$500.00 that an individual could give. And of course, increase the level of participation as mentioned above.

My impression is that these existing limitations and requirements have been deemed constitutional, but that there is another problem relating to matching funds that has been found unconstitutional; of that I am not clear. But, looking ahead, it would seem to me that the changes I propose, or something like them could solve problems posed by the Supremes' latest.

I should also mention that although my experience as treasurer and communicating the rationale and need for campaign reform has influenced my views, I was not urged by any politician to express them, nor do they necessarily reflect the specific concerns of any politician.

Lee Terry
114 Dunham Pond Road
Storrs, CT 06268

I have never felt as proud of the CT legislature as when the Citizen's Election Program was created and the thought of losing it now just breaks my heart. Once lost, I fear that all of our efforts could not soon re-create it because the power of money in a capitalist society is almost absolute. On behalf of myself and of the League of Southeastern CT, congratulations to both the GAE and to Governor Rell for recognizing the critical nature of this legislation and I ask that you please continue to do all that is in your power to modify the language such that it can remain in effect.

Connecticut's landmark legislation has already shown promise in broadening the pool from which diverse and qualified candidates for office can be drawn: please don't let it die!

Barbara Brockhurst
Co-chair, LWV of Southeastern CT
400 Bank Street, #203
New London, CT 06320

February 15, 2010

To Government Administration and Elections Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support campaign finance reform otherwise known as "CEP," or Clean

Elections Program.

Public financing of elections is the only way to prevent elections from being bought by the candidate with the most money and for legislators to devote their time to working for the citizens rather than raising money. I am pleased that the Governor and the GAE committee has made CEP a priority and urge immediate action so that the program can be preserved. Because it is the right thing to do, I am sure that a way can be found to set up public financing of elections so that it is in accordance with the court rulings.

Thank you for your attention to this vital matter.

Sincerely yours,

Irene Weiss
17 Godfrey ST.
Mystic, CT 06355

I believe public financing of elections is critically important to our democracy. One person, one vote, is undermined when corporate money, or wealthy individuals have undue influence over elections. This is especially true in the electronically connected world we live in. I wholeheartedly support public financing of campaigns and want this program to continue. I am very pleased that the Governor and GAE understand the importance of CEP. I urge immediate action until a fix is passed.

Carol L. Raye
66 Seaview Ave.
Branford, CT 06403-5420

I support Public Financing of Campaigns.

Lack of TRUST is the fundamental issue inciting voter anger today. Lobbyists seem to direct our elected officials. One way to restore voter trust is to, at least, reduce the dependence of legislators on lobby money.

Another, follow up reform that badly needs implementing is ETHICS reform. Senators and Representatives who do things that would get any ordinary person fired - should be fired. We need to hold our Legislators to a higher not a lower standard.

Virginia Corbiere
102 Indian Cove Road
Guilford, CT 06437
va@corbiere.com
203-453-3340

Dear GAE Committee Members:

Last month, at a League of Women Voters Breakfast with the Legislators, public campaign financing was the issue of keenest interest to the audience. One of the seven legislators present joked that CEP is making his life harder. He used to run unopposed but when public campaign

financing became available he has had to compete -- and has become a better candidate and a better legislator as a result.

That is precisely what we want in Connecticut-a vibrant democracy with many citizens competing for public office. We also want them to do a good job once in office. That means that they should not be distracted by having to keep in mind the interests of major donors that had financed their campaigns.

Public campaign financing will free our legislators and other state office holders from obligations to major private donors and will allow them to concentrate on the work they were elected to do.

Please find a way for us to have public campaign financing in Connecticut.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elona Vaisnys
78 Wayland Street
North Haven, CT 06473

To the Government Administration & Elections Committee:

We in CT cannot let the hard work and leadership of our Governor and GAE Committee fall by the wayside in the process of revising the law's component necessary to comply with the Court's ruling. Public financing of campaigns in CT has been a beacon among the states for its excellence and effectiveness.

As a member of the League of Women Voters, I and thousands of members like me advocated for public campaign finance for many, many years before it was achieved. Now, the public support CEP has requires concerted, responsible and immediate action on the part of our legislature and governor.

Thank you very much in advance for your leadership and support.

Charlotte Shapiro
628A Heritage Village
Southbury CT 06488

Dear GAE Committee Members:

I am glad to hear that you and the Governor are making repair and restoration of the Citizens' Election Program a priority. Having worked for campaign finance reform as a member of the GAE Committee and supported the establishment of the Citizens' Election Program during my entire legislative career, I would consider it a real disaster if the program were not available to those running for office this year. I urge you to make whatever changes are necessary to have the program back in operation as quickly as possible . Please do not wait for the Circuit court decision or whatever action Congress may eventually take.

Hoping for immediate action,

Nancy Beals
255 Ridgewood Ave.
Hamden, CT 06517

To the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Pua Ford. I live in Bethany and am a member of the League of Women Voters of Amity.

I write to support the preservation of public financing for election campaigns in Connecticut. I offer thanks to Governor Rell and the Government Administration and Elections Committee for their strong support on this matter. I hope that our other public officials will recognize the need to act now to amend the Citizens Election Program.

I took up this issue recently with a state legislator I respect and admire. I was dismayed by his remarks, that corporations do not contribute all that much on state election campaigns, "no more than \$1,000." In the arena of election campaigns, this may be small potatoes, but for most citizens it is huge. Our family tries to stay aware of the political process and get behind candidates in whom we believe, but we have never given more than \$100 on any campaign.

I have also heard the argument that the funds devoted to public campaign finance would be better spent on reading programs and other good social endeavors. Clean elections are the best means to keep our officials focused on social good.

I am also a novice member of the state League's Public Issues Team. I have only spent one season trying to match League arguments with those of opposing lobbyists, people who can be in Hartford pressing their point of view full-time. League advocates and our allies often must attend to other jobs and can only be present on special occasions like this hearing. The Citizens Election Program cannot by itself right the balance between corporate interests and those of ordinary humans, but we still hope it will keep the imbalance from being overwhelming.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Pua Ford
Media Issues Specialist
Public Issues Team
League of Women Voters of Connecticut
8 Valley Road
Bethany, CT 06524-3410

Dear GAE Committee members:

Please build a consensus among your fellow legislators for providing immediate reform of Connecticut's CEP, and for its continued adequate funding.

Connecticut's public financing law is too important to throw away, and I believe that every day the legislature delays in fixing it puts it at greater and greater risk, especially if, as seems likely, the 2nd Circuit agrees with the trial court in the Green Party case that the law is unconstitutional/unfair to third parties, and even more so if it finds that the law is also unconstitutional/unfair to lobbyists and state contractors who are now barred from donating at the state level.

While I do not favor throwing money at frivolous campaigns, I hope that you can find a way, consistent with the federal Court's decision, to permit serious third-party candidates to have reasonable access to the CEP. If the standards were the same for all candidates, I do not believe that Democrats or Republicans would be harmed.

Jean Rabinow
17 Fairview Avenue
Trumbull, CT 06611-2703

I want as a member of the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County to urge you to support CEP. Please do not delay in supporting public financing of campaigns. It is among the most crucial of our problems.

Mildred Pond
153 West Shore Road
New Preston, CT 06777-1412

Dear Legislators –

I urge you to support the Citizens Election Program in the budget. I listened to Gov. Rell's presentation of her budget and applaud her plan to examine government and its various departments and expenditures with a bipartisan Committee. I am well aware that you all have spent endless hours deciding what to cut and what to preserve in the budget.

For the sake of future generations of residents and voters please do whatever is necessary to keep the financing of campaigns in the hands of the CITIZENS and not the CORPORATIONS and their lobbyists. A number of states have maintained this type of program and it is important for Connecticut to do the same.

Thank you and best wishes.

Carol A. Waxman
1255 Fairfield Beach Road
Fairfield, CT 06824

Please support legislation to support campaign finance reform. There is no good government when it all revolves about having wealth and working for financial support instead of for the welfare of the people and good governing.

Elaine M. Suchman, Ph.D.
3 Putnam Hill, #3H
Greenwich, CT 06830-5704

As a citizen of Connecticut, I am for Campaign Finance Reform.

The present system of a constant request for funds for each candidate has become not only a burden but a travesty on the public as well as the candidate. It is one thing for a candidate to spread his or her stance on issues, it's another to have them responsive to big money and therefore are not truly representing the public. The Supreme Court of the United States have also given big money of companies the leeway for a legislature that will become completely corrupt.

It's the right of the citizens of be represented properly!

A. J. Markley
16 Wyngate Road
Greenwich, CT 06830-4032

Dear Legislators and members of the Judiciary Branch,

The Supreme Court's recent decision reversing decades of restraint against corporate giving that would now influence the outcome of election results, was, to me, an egregious act of such dire and unprecedented proportion that I find myself dumbstruck at such political malfeasance. That it comes not at the hands of our enemies, but, unbelievably, at the hands of the very people entrusted to interpret and protect our laws, is further inconceivable to me. It is a national shame!

In a country that was proudly built on strong democratic principles, and on such premises as voting rights that assured one vote per citizen, and which gave our citizens the right to vote, we have, through this most recent travesty of justice, now, in essence, provided multiple additional ways for those who are monied and privileged to sway the outcomes of our elections in their favor, in ways that cannot be matched by the masses of our people through their meager, and now almost meaningless votes.

Even non-citizen owned and operated corporations can now "vote" with such magnitude and power as to significantly impact the outcome of this country's elections. That our forefathers devoted and gave their lives to protect the very rights our own Supreme Court Justices have just blithely given away is virtually beyond belief, or even the understanding of any person with even a shred of patriotism about what this country has stood for since the beginning of our history.

I urge our Executive and Legislative branches of government to take all necessary and possible actions to design measures that will limit the potential damage to our country, and to the vast majority of our citizens', which our Supreme Court has foisted upon us. Please act to ensure that America remain a country "of the people, by the people and for the people" and not a country of the wealthy, for the wealthy and by the wealthy, regardless of their interests, country affiliations, or lack of interest in the principles upon which our great country, America, was built.

Stephanie R. Paulmeno, MS, RN, NHA
Principal & CEO
Global Health Systems Consultants, LLC
13 Arcadia Road, Suite 7

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To: Government and Elections Committee
From: Naomi Schiff Myers, President
League of Women Voters of Greenwich
Re: Support for Citizens Election Program

The League of Women Voters of Greenwich strongly supports the public financing of campaigns and therefore urges you to protect the Citizens Election Program (CEP) and work to "fix" the law NOW so that the program no longer discriminates against minority party candidates and is fully operable for the 2010 elections. We applaud the Governor's proposal to preserve the law and the GAE Committee for making a discussion of the fix of the CEP a priority. We urge you to vote to repeal the "Reversion Clause" (Section 9-717) of the law that would send us back to the pre-reform days of no clean elections. Once the clause is repealed, then please vote to amend eligibility requirements to respond to the ruling.

The Greenwich League believes that our legislators need to be responsible to the people who elected them, their constituents, and not to lobbyists and special interests who provide funds in order to influence their votes. We believe that it is essential that Connecticut maintain this voluntary public financing program that limits the role of special interest money in the political process.

Naomi Schiff Myers
President
League of Women Voters of Greenwich
P. O Box 604
Greenwich, CT 06836
Personal Address:
15 Palmer Lane
Riverside, CT 06878

I strongly support public financing of campaigns. Please help preserve this important program.

Barbara McSpadden
46 Carriglea Drive
Riverside CT 06878

My husband and I rejoiced when the Citizen Election Program became reality in 2005. We were further pleased to see how well the program worked in the 2008 elections, the first time it has been used in a state-wide election. The statistics speak for themselves! We were dismayed to hear the CEP is now in danger.

We support the public financing of campaigns. We want the program to be preserved although we understand that some changes will have to be made to the grants and other procedures. We are pleased to see the Governor's strong support of the Program. And we thank the Committee for making CEP a priority and for taking action now. Let's get the fix done on February 22! Many thanks!

Don and Jara Burnett
299 Riverside Avenue
Riverside, CT 06878

To the Legislators:

I would like to add my voice to the call for quick and concerted work to fix the Citizens Election Program. I advocate public financing of elections. When faith in our elected representatives is at an all time low, let Connecticut be a beacon for fairness and keeping the process free from undue monetary influence. I support the high priority that the Governor and GAE have placed on fixing the CEP. Many thanks,

Cynthia T. Anderson
22 Marlow Court
Riverside, CT 06878

To: Government and Elections Committee
From: Stephen A. Myers
Re: Support for Citizens Election Program

I strongly support the public financing of campaigns and therefore urge you to protect the Citizens Election Program (CEP) and work to "fix" the law NOW so that the program no longer discriminates against minority party candidates and is fully operable for the 2010 elections. I applaud the Governor's proposal to preserve the law and the GAE Committee for making a discussion of the fix of the CEP a priority. I urge you to vote to repeal the "Reversion Clause" (Section 9-717) of the law that would send us back to the pre-reform days of no clean elections. Once the clause is repealed, then please vote to amend eligibility requirements to respond to the ruling.

I believe that our legislators need to be responsible to the people who elected them, their constituents, and not to lobbyists and special interests who provide funds in order to influence their votes. I believe that it is essential that Connecticut maintain this voluntary public financing program that limits the role of special interest money in the political process. Please vote to maintain this important program.

Stephen A. Myers
15 Palmer Lane
Riverside, CT 06878
203-637-3892

Connecticut has led the way for Campaign Finance Reform.
Don't stop now.
Thanks to Gov Rell and the GAE Committee for preserving the CEP.
Now fix it.

Jo Ann Davidson
519 Harvest Commons
Westport CT 06880

CEP must be a priority if we are ever going to restore the people's trust in government and have a legislature that is free to focus on real legislative reform and problem solving. We need a legislature people can believe in. I support CEP!

Victoria Wyndham
249 Black Rock Turnpike
Redding CT 06896-2103

It's important to the citizens of Connecticut that CEP be fixed. Increased public financing of campaigns is crucial for a healthy democracy and healthy government.

Jake DeSantis
30 Mark Twain Lane
Redding, CT 06896-2227

I support the campaign for citizen election program CEP. Please add my name to the voters of Connecticut who support clean elections.

Rosanna Caridad
3284 Meadow Ridge
Redding, CT 06896-3228

Campaign reform is essential in order to let the people be heard, instead of having their voices drowned out by the cacophony of large corporations. We need a legislative process that cannot be purchased by powerful special interests, but instead meets the needs of the populace.

Dr. Candace R. Benyei, Pres.
Whimsy Brook Farm, Ltd.
29 Giles Hill Rd.
Redding, CT 06896
203-938-3760 (Tel)
203-938-0632 (Fax)
www.whimsybrookfarm.com

I applaud the Governor and GAE Committee for making CEP a priority. I want public financing of campaigns and I urge concerted and immediate action until a fix is passed. Connecticut can be a leader and a fine example for the rest of the country to follow. Thank you.

Nancy Faesy
10 Kellogg Drive
Wilton, CT 06897

To Connecticut Legislators:

I'm a Wilton resident who wholeheartedly supports the Citizens' Election Program and campaign finance reform in Connecticut. I urge you to support it with your vote, as well. Please act quickly to fix inequities in the law, protect our state from reverting to pre-reform days, and keep the CEP funded!

The legislature belongs to the people, not to corporations, unions, and special interests. Let's not revert back to the days when lobbyists for the largest contributors ruled the Capitol. Keep our elections clean and keep our legislators accountable to all their constituents with public funding for campaigns. Please protect the Citizens' Election Program!

Sincerely,

Carole Young-Kleinfeld
68 St. John's Rd.
Wilton, CT 06897