CT NOW Disappointed in Judge Underhill Ruling

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For Immediate Release

Hartford— The CT Chapter of the National Organization for Women (CT NOW) is disappointed in U.S. District Court Judge Stefan Underhill’s ruling which essentially overturns Connecticut’s landmark system of public financing of elections.

Connecticut’s Citizens Election Program has already made strides in encouraging more women to run for office. In fact, according to the Connecticut Secretary of State, a record breaking 102 women ran for public office in 2008, the first year public financing was available to legislative races.

“Public financing of campaigns has proven its ability to remove many of the traditional barriers to running for office, especially for female candidates. Without access to the ‘good old boys network’ and with the added responsibility of caring for their families while working to raise needed funds for their campaigns, many women have found themselves left out of the political process,” said Michelle Noehren, CT NOW Co-President.

Maine and Arizona, two other states with a system of public financing have also reaped the benefit of more women running for political office. According to a report from Common Cause, in Maine, the number of women running for the state legislature has increased 18% since the creation of their Clean Elections program, and in both Maine and Arizona women running for office used public funds at a higher rate than their male counterparts.

“Judge Underhill’s ruling is a step backwards for Connecticut women. We cannot return to politics as usual where a citizen’s ability to run a viable campaign is determined by their access to private campaign funds.”
contributors
and their ability to dial for dollars" said Noehren.

About
CT NOW: CT NOW believes that the personal is indeed political;
therefore it strives to impact and change attitudes, beliefs, and policies
that
harm all women by fighting for political, economic, and social justice
through
education, organizing and action. This purpose includes, but is not limited
to,
equal rights and responsibilities in all aspects of citizenship, public
service, employment, education, family life, and it includes freedom from
discrimination because of race, gender or perceived gender, ethnicity,
origin,
age, marital status, sexual preference/orientation, physical ability/health
status, or parenthood.

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