

## Each Vote is Important

Many people explain their failure to vote by saying a single vote doesn't make a difference. Here are some ways in which a single vote has made history-in regular elections, in votes of Congress, or in Electoral College tallies.

- Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams were each elected president by one-vote margins in the Electoral College.
- One vote brought Texas into the Union and admitted California, Oregon, and Washington to statehood.
- One vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment in 1868.
- In 1876, with the presidential election thrown into the House of Representatives, Rutherford B. Hayes won by a single vote, cast by an Indiana congressman who himself had been elected by a one-vote margin.
- One vote made Tennessee the 36th state to ratify the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave women the right to vote in 1920.
- One vote saved the Selective Service from being eliminated in 1941, only weeks before Pearl Harbor was attacked.
- A change of one vote per precinct in three states would have made Hubert Humphrey president rather than Richard Nixon in 1968.

*Never underestimate the power of one vote!*

## For More Information:

Addresses and phone numbers for your town's registrars of voters and town clerk are listed in the government pages of your local phone book or on your town's Web site. Your town clerk can provide the names of political party chairpersons of local town committees.

The following organizations may provide helpful information about voter registration and elections through their Web sites.

- League of Women Voters of CT ([www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org))
  - Directory of Elected Officials
  - General information on voting, candidates, and state government
- State of Connecticut ([www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov))
  - Executive, judicial, legislative branches of state government
  - State Capitol information
  - Infoline
- CT General Assembly ([www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov))
  - Proposed legislation and calendar
  - Contact information for legislators
  - Dates of public hearings/meetings
- Secretary of the State ([www.sots.ct.gov/](http://www.sots.ct.gov/))
  - General elections information
  - Online voter registration
  - Absentee ballot applications

Contact:

**Office of the Secretary of the State**  
Division of Election Services  
30 Trinity Street, Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: (860) 509-6100; 1-800-540-3764  
TDD: (860) 509-6191; 1-800-303-3161  
Fax: (860) 509-6127  
[www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov)

## What is the League of Women Voters?

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in their government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League members are men and women of every age, race, background, and political perspective. They believe that informed citizens are essential to effective government in a democracy.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut Education Fund, Inc., is a tax-deductible 501(c)(3) organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service.

For more information from the LWVCT, or to locate a local League in your area:

Phone: (203) 288-7996  
Fax: (203) 288-7998  
E-mail: [lwvct@lwvct.org](mailto:lwvct@lwvct.org)  
Web site: [www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org)

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# A Guide to Voter Registration and Election Procedures in Connecticut

*Making Democracy Work for You*



**League of Women Voters  
of Connecticut  
Education Fund, Inc.  
1890 Dixwell Avenue, Suite 113  
Hamden, CT 06514-3183  
[www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org)**

## Who May Register To Vote in Connecticut?

In Connecticut, you must complete a voter registration form to become registered to vote in federal, state, and local elections. In Presidential elections, non-registered U.S. citizens may vote for President/ Vice President using a Presidential Ballot, available from their town clerk.

■ Any U.S. citizen who is a bona fide Connecticut resident and will be 18 years old on or before election day may register to vote.

■ If you have been convicted of a felony, you should consult the registrar of voters in the town where you live for more information about registering to vote or restoring your voting rights.

## Where and When May I Register to Vote?

You may register to vote as soon as you move into a residence: there is no waiting period to be eligible. However, there are deadlines to enable election officials to prepare voter lists.

You may complete a voter registration card at any town/city hall in Connecticut or pick one up at libraries, the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, other state agency offices, and on the Internet: [www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov). Mail your card to **Registrar of Voters**, your town of residence.

■ **Election:** Your application must be postmarked or received by a voter registration agency by the 14th day before an election. You may register in person at your own town/city hall with your registrar of voters until 7 days before an election.

■ **Primary:** Your application must be postmarked or received by your registrar of voters, or by a voter registration agency, by the 5th day before a primary. You may apply in person to your registrar until 12 noon on the last business day before a primary.

■ **If you are temporarily or permanently disabled,** you may have a voter registration form mailed to you or may request your registrar of voters to come to your residence.

## Must I Ever Re-Register to Vote in Connecticut?

You must re-register when you move to a new town within Connecticut. Also, notify your registrars of voters if you change your name or if you move within a town because your polling place may change.

## Where and When Do I Vote?

You are assigned to a specific polling place according to your address. Contact your local registrars for the location of your polling place.

State and national elections are held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in even-numbered years. Municipal elections, held in odd-numbered years, are scheduled in November in most Connecticut towns. Some towns hold elections in May.

Non-registered or non-resident property owners may be able to vote on certain local tax issues or for town budget votes. Call your registrars for information.

Polls are open for voting from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Any person in line by 8 p.m. may vote. For voting on town referenda, such as local budget votes, polling locations and hours may vary. Call your registrars for details.

## Who May Vote in a Primary?

A primary is a runoff between candidates within a political party for the nomination for an office.

Any registered voter who enrolls in a political party may vote in that party's primary to choose candidates to represent it in an election. The parties set their own rules and presently allow only party members to vote in a primary.

## Should I Join a Political Party?

Political parties provide an organization of voters who share similar views on many issues and provide a vehicle for local action. Joining a party does not obligate you to vote for that party's endorsed candidates. Only party members may vote in primaries and nominate candidates for election through a caucus, town committee, or convention process. Joining a party enables you to participate:

■ at the state and national levels as an elected delegate to the party's conventions.

■ at the local level to choose delegates to conventions, to nominate municipal candidates, or to serve on the party's town committee. Many town committees nominate and endorse candidates for municipal offices, boards, and commissions.

To join a political party, you may designate a party affiliation either when you register or any time thereafter. You can drop or change your party affiliation by notifying your registrars by using a new mail-in registration card.

If you change parties, your party privileges become effective after 3 months. A list of major and minor parties in Connecticut is available from the Office of the Secretary of the State.

## How Do I Vote If I Can't Get to the Polls on Election Day?

If you are a registered voter, you may vote by absentee ballot if you are unable to vote in person because of:

- illness or physical disability
- active service in the armed forces of the US
- absence from town during all election hours
- religious beliefs forbidding secular activity on primary or election days
- service as an election official at a polling place other than your own.

An application for an absentee ballot is available from your town clerk or from the Secretary of the State's Web site at [www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov). Any voter already out of town or serving in the armed forces may request that an application be mailed. Allow enough time to receive and complete the application as well as to return the completed ballot by election day.

Voting by absentee ballot has privacy protections similar to voting by machine: your name will not be connected to your vote when it is tallied.

For emergency use of an absentee ballot, call your town clerk. A party-enrolled registered voter may request an absentee ballot application for a primary; any registered voter may request one for a local referendum or for an election.