



The League of Women Voters
of Connecticut®

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Contact:

Cheri Quickmire, cquickmire@commoncause.org or 860-539-6846

Carol Reimers, 646-648-0192

Gov. Malloy Must Veto Budget Bill and Protect Citizens' Election Program

Statement by Common Cause in Connecticut Executive Director Cheri Quickmire and League of Women Voters of Connecticut President Carol Reimers

In the strongest possible terms, Common Cause in Connecticut and the League of Women Voters of Connecticut condemns the the Connecticut legislators who voted to destroy Connecticut's landmark Citizens' Election Program (CEP) in last night's budget votes. Governor Malloy must protect the program and veto this harmful budget.

Defunding the CEP reverts to a system that opens the doors to a Wild West of special interest dominance and unlimited spending. The program saves the state money, opens the door for more people to run for public office, and is national model in how to effectively bring positive change to our elections. Gov. Malloy must reject this attempt to return to the bad old days of "Corrupticut."

The Connecticut Citizens' Election Program was passed to address rampant corruption in the state and to give everyday people a bigger voice in politics and the policymaking process. Its passage by a bipartisan coalition of legislators and Republican Governor Rell and successful implementation made the state a national leader in creating a democracy that works for all of us.

"As voters from across the political spectrum become increasingly angry about the power of big money in our politics, the last the thing state lawmakers should do is take us backwards," said **Carol Reimers, President of the League of Women Voters of Connecticut.**

In multiple studies we have seen that the Citizens' Election Program has allowed candidates and elected officials to spend more time with their constituents, broadened the donor base to be more reflective of the state's diverse population,

and opened up the process to allow more people to run for office who would otherwise be blocked by the cost of entry. In short, it has created a stronger democracy in Connecticut.

The Citizens' Elections Program has allowed candidates to spend less time dialing for dollars from wealthy special interests. It has made politicians in the state more accountable to the people they are elected to represent—their constituents. With expansion of the bottle bill and collection of escheats—bills previously blocked because of the power of special interests in the state—the system has been cost-effective too.

"There are difficult choices that must be made regarding the budget this year, but safeguarding the integrity of our state's elections is not one of them," said **Cheri Quickmire, Executive Director of Common Cause in Connecticut**. "Defunding this program will give wealthy interests more influence in Connecticut elections and make it harder for regular people to be heard in the halls of government."

The people of Connecticut now must contact Gov. Malloy and urge him to veto the budget bill that passed last night and protect the Citizens' Election Program.

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***Common Cause in Connecticut** is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. We work to create open, honest, and accountable government that serves the public interest; promote equal rights, opportunity and representation for all; and empower all people to make their voices heard in the political process.*

***The League of Women Voters of Connecticut** is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy.*