

## Voting and Elections

Voting is a great responsibility, so it pays to be informed about each candidate.

To obtain information about incumbents (legislators currently in office and running for reelection), state and federal elected officials often have websites where you can obtain biographical information and their position on issues. Also, challengers often set up websites as well, so it pays to do a search of the internet.

Remember that in order to vote in an election, you must first be registered. In the state of Connecticut, you may obtain information on registering to vote from the office of the Secretary of State [www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov), or your town hall. Libraries and universities also provide voter registration.

**\*\*\*It is important to note that there is a deadline for registering to vote in both primaries and general elections. You have until up to the day before to register to vote in any primary, and until the 7th day before any general election. General elections are held on the first Tuesday in November. \*\*\***

The process is generally fast and simple, and you will be required to provide valid identification.

If you are unable to be in your town on election-day, you may inquire about using an absentee ballot to mail in your vote. Note, that there are certain rules regarding absentee ballots so be certain to read the form. Ballots may be obtained from your town hall.

## Additional Resources

Useful websites for additional information also include the following:

- League of Women Voters [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)
- U.S. House of Representatives [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)
- U.S. Senate [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
- Thomas (Library of Congress) [www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov) You will be able to search federal voting records here as well as track legislation.
- Project Vote Smart also compiles independent information on candidates running for office [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)
- The Connecticut General Assembly provides links to CT state legislator's home pages, as well as voting history and current bill status. [www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov)
- For local elections, visit your town website, town library, or town hall.

You may also find information about the ideals of the two major parties here:

- Republicans [www.gop.gov](http://www.gop.gov)
- Democrats [www.dems.gov](http://www.dems.gov)

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**\*\*Membership dues made this brochure possible. Please consider joining CHC so that we may continue to serve the industry.**

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## **Elections**

## **THE CONNECTICUT HORSE COUNCIL INC.**



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The Connecticut Horse Council Inc,  
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## **The Election Process:**

Election Day is the first Tuesday in the month of November. This was initially established in 1845. The month of November was chosen because at that point, the country was still primarily agrarian. Farmers had to work the fields in summer and plant in spring. November was also still early enough in winter to get to the polling place without having to worry about unimproved roads being made impassible due to bad weather conditions.

On Election Day, you will be required to provide valid picture identification, such as your driver's license. Your name will be matched against a list of voters for that district, and you will be directed to the voting booth. Towns used to use different means of casting ballots, which ranged from hand ballots to lever machines. Now newer electronic voting machines have taken their place. Regardless of which method is used, there will be instructions posted nearby so that you can review the process before casting your vote.

## **Absentee Ballots:**

If you are unable to get to your polling place for health or other reasons, you may request an absentee ballot, which you can use to mail in your vote.

## **Does My Vote Count?**

YES! Most people remember the "hanging chads" of the 2000 presidential election, during which votes had to be

repeatedly recounted due to the close ballot tallies. In 1997, Vermont State representative Sydney Nixon was seated as an apparent one vote winner, 570 to 569. Mr. Nixon resigned when the State House determined, after a recount, that he had actually lost to his opponent Robert Emond 572 to 571.

## **Campaign Contributions & Funding**

If you would like to see who contributed to a federal candidate's campaign, you may locate campaign finance reports and data on the Federal Election Campaign (FEC) website at [www.fec.gov/disclosure.shtml](http://www.fec.gov/disclosure.shtml), and from the agency's Public Records Office, (800) 424-9530 (press 2, when prompted). State election offices also provide access to reports filed by candidates running in that state.

Some organizations also create "Political Action Committees" (PACs). These are vehicles that are used to help fund a candidate's campaign. Many employers and trade organizations have created PACs.

To make a contribution to a candidate, contact the candidate's party committee for contribution information. Be aware that typically campaign contributions are not tax deductible. Also, certain persons are prohibited from donating to election campaigns. If you are unsure if you are permitted to make a donation to a particular candidate, Please consult with the Secretary of State's office.

## **Choosing Candidates**

Sometimes choosing a candidate can be difficult. Do not fail to vote because you cannot decide—voting is too important. There are steps you can take to come to a decision about whether to vote for a candidate:

Check with organizations that you belong to, and see if they support a particular candidate. If they do, find out why.

If a candidate is an incumbent, you can check their past voting record on issues that are of importance to you, such as taxes, employment, animals or open space. Visit the state & federal websites listed on the reverse of this brochure to obtain voting records.

Most candidates today have websites: visit these websites and review their stance on issues. Also, many candidates will debate in public, often dates and places of debates will be posted on their websites.

It is also helpful to review the candidate's party affiliation website for information on that party's viewpoints.

If you are unable to find the information you are looking for, contact the candidates directly and ask them about their positions on various issues. Often the best way to do this is in writing—either by email or letter. It will give the candidate the time to consider your questions and respond in detail.

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