

For State Representative - 132<sup>nd</sup> District

For More Information on Candidate Positions

Candidates	Party	Web Site	Facebook	Twitter
Dru Giorgiadis	D	Vote4Dru.com	vote4Dru	@Vote4Dru
Brenda Kupchick	R, I	Brendakupchickforfairfield.com	Brenda Kupchick for State Representative	@BrendaKupchick

**Dru Giorgiadis** (Democratic)

Website: [www.vote4dru.com](http://www.vote4dru.com)

Facebook: Dru Giorgiadis for State Representative

Twitter: @vote4dru132

*Why are you running for this office?*

I'm running for State Representative because I genuinely care about people and finding real solutions to problems. Connecticut's economy has changed, and we need to change with it. I was raised by a single mom who brought up three girls on \$12,000 a year. My family worked to make ends meet and, in the face of our budgetary crisis, Connecticut needs to do the same. I know the value of money and how to advocate for myself and the people I care about. And I apply time, focus, and determination to everything I do. As a community leader and activist, I've learned that if you want to make a difference, you've got to roll your sleeves up and do the work. That's exactly what I've done in Fairfield and I'll bring that same work ethic when I'm representing you in Hartford.

*What are your top 3 legislative priorities?*

Connecticut's budget deficit will be nearly a billion dollars in 2017. Our credit rating has plummeted due to reckless borrowing, making it harder for us to afford important programs. I will push for greater accountability in state spending to ensure that our tax dollars are used effectively and Fairfield gets its fair share. And I will work to develop the economic vibrancy of Connecticut's cities to make them stronger contributors to growth. We need fiscal responsibility, not politics as usual. Education is the cornerstone of Connecticut's vibrant economy. I am committed to securing a brighter future for our children by championing stronger schools statewide, restoring Fairfield's educational funding, and keeping property taxes in check. Patients in Connecticut are still over-prescribed highly addictive painkillers. I will work to further limit access and enforce strict penalties for excessive distribution of prescription pain medicine, while improving access to rehabilitation and treatment.

*Do you believe there are barriers to voting in Connecticut? If so, what would you do to eliminate them?*

The most significant barrier to voting in Connecticut is our lack of early voting. It is time for us to join the other 33 States that have already taken this step to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to exercise their most important Constitutional right. The success of our Democracy

hinges upon an active, engaged electorate. Other states that have that have taken this step to combat low turnout have been successful. As a former commuter who caught the 6:07 AM train into NYC and often didn't return home until 7:30, I understand the need for early voting firsthand. As the hours of salaried jobs expand, commutes become longer, and the schedules of hourly workers grow increasingly unpredictable, it is becoming clearer than ever that we need to adopt early voting to protect the rights of Connecticut's citizens.

*4. What do you propose as specific, achievable strategies for balancing the state budget? Discuss up to three such strategies.*

Connecticut's debt is one of the greatest challenges we face. In 2017 our deficit will be nearly a billion dollars, and that number is projected to increase over the next three years. Unsustainable borrowing has destroyed our credit and created an unstable business environment. We need to put a lid on this practice, pay down our debt, reduce our long-term liabilities, and adopt higher accountability standards. We need to make smart investments in education and infrastructure to keep attracting new businesses—and their tax revenue—to our state. Connecticut relies too heavily upon property taxes; I support exploring new revenue models to make our cities vibrant contributors to our State economy. And I will push for greater transparency and efficiency in state spending, empowering the Office of Fiscal Analysis to evaluate and publish the impact of every line item to ensure that our tax dollars don't go to waste.

*5. What achievable strategies do you advocate to address CT's underfunded liabilities, such as bonded indebtedness, and state employee and teacher pensions and post-employment benefits? Discuss up to three such strategies.*

Connecticut's historically underfunded liabilities have compromised our fiscal health. It is crucial that we honor our past commitments to state employees. And it is equally important that we commit to full funding our long-term liabilities, covering recurring costs with recurring revenue. Hartford has been managing the budget poorly for two decades, and kicking our habit of kicking the can will not be easy. But we can start by bringing standards of compensation, post-employment benefits, and state employees per capita in line with those of other states in our region. We should do a better by our teachers to attract young families to our aging state. And we must reduce borrowing until our debt per capita becomes sustainable. The transition from band-aid solutions to long-term responsibility needs to start now. These changes will make Connecticut competitive, creating job growth and a business-friendly environment that benefits Fairfield and communities across our state.

*6. Some businesses claim state tax codes and regulations are a bigger headache for business owners than state tax rates. Do you agree? What specifics would you propose to tackle the issue near term in ways that aid business and spur job growth?*

Red tape stifles small businesses. Some regulation makes us safer: consumer protection laws keep food and medicine safe for our families; anti-trust laws promote competition, allowing start-ups to compete with larger corporations; and environmental laws stop companies from dumping carcinogens into our rivers and atmosphere. But overly robust regulation can stifle the most crucial drivers of Connecticut's recovery: innovation, entrepreneurship, and job growth. If elected, I will work hard to balance these interests, making it easy for new businesses to come to Connecticut and for existing ones to expand. We can reduce bureaucratic inefficiency by simplifying our rules and making them easier to navigate online, replacing the messy network of

agency websites with a central, searchable system. We should streamline our licensing process by lowering fees and shortening forms. And we must simplify our tax code, make it more transparent, and improve the quality of tax resources for business owners.

**Brenda Kupchick** (Republican, Independent)

Facebook: Brenda Kupchick for State Representative

Website: [www.BrendaKupchickforFairfield.com](http://www.BrendaKupchickforFairfield.com)

Twitter: BrendaKupchick

*1. Why are you running for this office?*

I first ran for local office because I was tired of local politicians ignoring the concerns of my neighbors and friends. After founding a group that successfully worked to have the public's voice included in town decisions on education, I started to pay attention to the state legislature. Seniors, young people and those of us in between are facing serious challenges in Connecticut. Residents write, call and tell me in person they're worried and many are making plans to leave Connecticut. People are frustrated with the direction our state has gone; they don't like waste, arrogance or concentrated power in any one person or party. I do this work to be a common sense voice, to listen, learn and lead on issues important to the people of my hometown. Simply put, I run because I care. I believe a more balanced legislature can turn our state around.

*2. What are your top 3 legislative priorities?*

**Jobs/Economy:** The majority in the legislature has created an unsteady environment. The jobs Connecticut regained after the 2008 recession were mostly lower paying jobs. Of the 55,000 jobs lost paying more than \$80,000, only 8,200 have returned. We need to promote tax policy that encourages business investments, jobs, innovation and productivity.

**Budget:** The legislature's most important job is to develop and pass responsible budgets. It is imperative to set fiscal policy that's sustainable, business-friendly, and can support core government functions like public safety, education, transportation, infrastructure, protecting our environment, and caring for our seniors and our most vulnerable citizens.

**Transportation:** I believe infrastructure and transportation upgrades are vital if we want to increase our economic competitiveness. Our state's transportation infrastructure is in desperate need of improvements. In Fairfield County, commute times are extremely long due to overcrowded highways and inadequate Metro-North services. We need to prioritize investing in transportation.

*3. Do you believe there are barriers to voting in Connecticut? If so, what would you do to eliminate them?*

I believe Connecticut has worked hard to increase voter registration and access. We have Election Day registration in Connecticut allowing citizens to register and vote on Election Day. We also have automatic voter registration which should add more voters to our state's rolls and increase opportunity to vote. We have given residents access to check if they are registered online and allow online registration which makes it much easier than the paper process of the past. In addition, Connecticut requires canvassing of electors in order to make sure voter rolls are as up to date as possible.

*4. What do you propose as specific, achievable strategies for balancing the state budget?*

*Discuss up to three such strategies.*

Connecticut's debt is one of the highest in the country at \$22 billion. Over the past five years, the majority party doubled the amount of state borrowing. In this year's Republican alternative budget, we proposed reasonable levels of borrowing that would save more than \$1 billion over the first five years. We have over \$40 billion in unfunded liabilities. We need to make changes to the state's pension liability, such as excluding overtime pay from being factored in pension calculations. Moving new employees to defined contribution pension plans would result in significant savings. Finally, state employee healthcare benefits include zero deductible and five-dollar c/o pays for prescriptions. I supported a plan to set a fair moderate rate for state healthcare premiums that will save taxpayers over \$100 million a year and be more in line with the average citizen's healthcare costs

*5. What achievable strategies do you advocate to address CT's underfunded liabilities, such as bonded indebtedness, and state employee and teacher pensions and post-employment benefits?*

*Discuss up to three such strategies.*

The legislature's most important job is to develop and pass responsible budgets that are sustainable, business-friendly, and can support core government functions such as public safety, education, transportation, infrastructure and caring for our seniors and most vulnerable citizens. Connecticut's budget is perpetually in deficit because revenue estimates are coming in far lower than expected. All future budgets must be based off achievable revenue estimates. We also need to reduce debt service by instituting a bond allocation cap. Another crucial part is securing labor savings that roll out into the future including controlling excessive overtime costs and the exclusion of overtime and legislative mileage from the calculation of pension benefits. I support a budget plan that reduces spending and creates a more efficient government through consolidating redundancies. We must budget based on what we have, not what we wish we had and only borrow what we can afford to pay back.

*6. Some businesses claim state tax codes and regulations are a bigger headache for business owners than state tax rates. Do you agree? What specifics would you propose to tackle the issue near term in ways that aid business and spur job growth?*

As a small business owner, I live with the frustration of running a business in Connecticut every day. CBIA's 2016 Survey of Small Businesses shows widespread concerns over threats to profitability and growth, with over 40% of respondents listing state government regulations, mandates, taxes, and costs as major issues. The biggest drawbacks, respondents said, are the state's taxes (particularly the personal income tax), regulatory burdens, and an anti-business attitude. Nine out of ten surveyed businesses said state government policies do not help efforts of small businesses in Connecticut.

We should promote tax policy that encourages business investments, jobs, innovation, and productivity, but the most important factor in improving Connecticut's business climate is to stabilize the state budget. We can do this through setting and enforcing a constitutional spending cap, and implementing sustainable budget reforms. We also should use zero-based budgeting and focus on delivering core functions of government.