

For State Representative - 133rd District

For More Information on Candidate Positions:

Candidates	Party	Web Site	Facebook	Twitter
Cristin McCarthy Vahey	D, WF	Cristinmccarthyvahey.com	Cmv2016	@mccarthyvahey
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Cristin McCarthy Vahey (Democratic, Working Families)

Website: www.Cristinmccarthyvahey.com

1. Why are you running for this office?

After completing my first term as a State Representative for the 133rd district, I am eager to continue to serve my community and our state, collaborate with stakeholders and create solutions that will guide our state and all its residents toward a healthy and prosperous future. As a social worker, and with experience in local government, I believe in bringing together diverse groups of stakeholders who can listen to one another and create solutions.

Both Fairfield as a town and Connecticut as a state have many strengths. I believe that by building on those strengths and tapping into the diverse experience, education and passion of our populace, we will move forward together.

2. Top Three Legislative Priorities

Fighting for Economic Development and Job Creation

- Member of permanent Commission on Economic Competitiveness
- Championed LLC law, making Connecticut more competitive;
- Working closely with local businesses and economic development leaders

Strong Advocate for Public Schools and Higher Education

- Member, House Education Committee
- Championed Legislation to address outmoded student assessments;
- Worked with local advocates to develop Student Data Privacy legislation;
- Co-sponsored legislation to expedite approval of academic programs to meet industry needs through workforce training

Fighting to Revitalize our Transportation Infrastructure

- Advocating for public transit, trains and roadways that are safe, efficient and affordable and deigned with an eye towards our future;
- State leader for pedestrian and bicycle safety and accessibility

3. Do you believe there are barriers to voting in Connecticut?

The right to vote is one which must be promoted and protected. We should take whatever steps we can to insure that all eligible voters have access to the ballot each and every Election Day. During my husband's military service, we lived in a state that offered ballots by mail to any voter who made the request – no questions asked. Election Day Registration, early voting and no excuse absentee ballots are all ways to make voting more accessible to the voters of our state.

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

Discuss up to three such strategies.

Balancing the budget requires long term vision, not a short term fix. We must invest in education to grow a workforce that has the skills to meet the needs of the state's current and future business and economic growth. We must invest wisely in multimodal transportation that supports a vibrant business climate and technologies that reduce costs and our carbon footprint. We must continue the work we started to create innovation places, CT 500 and update the LLC legislation to help grow and expand Connecticut businesses. We must scrutinize all expenses and properly prioritize our needs.

The recent announcements from Sikorsky and Pratt & Whitney each adding 8,000 jobs are a step in the right direction towards business expansion and job growth. Wise investment in business growth and job creation, supported by a well-educated population and a reliable infrastructure, will result in sustainable long term revenue for Connecticut.

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.

Three of our state's Constitutional officers have outlined solutions to address our pension obligations. A collaborative approach that takes advantage of actuarial data, research and analysis will lead to the best long term solutions. I strongly support a strategy that encourages all parties to create an actionable solution to be tackled in steps, codified in legislation if necessary and implemented over several budget cycles. This will take leadership, vision and cooperation, but will result in protections for both our workers and taxpayers.

Connecticut's current liabilities are the result of decades of decisions by state leaders. To honor obligations that were made years ago to employees and communities, the recommendations made by our constitutional officers must be negotiated, agreed upon and put into action.

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 member of the permanent Commission on Economic Competitiveness, I join business, labor and academic leaders in addressing our state's business climate, economic growth and jobs.

This past year I worked closely with local experts to assure updates to Connecticut's woefully outdated LLC law. This statute, which I co-sponsored, will make it simpler for new businesses to file here in Connecticut. It creates a clear and predictable set of "default rules" that fill gaps not addressed previously.

Programs like the Entrepreneur's Learner Permit program the legislature passed last session and others like it will help to pave the way for new businesses.

In addition I was endorsed by the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. I will continue to fight for business growth, jobs, local grants and funding for local projects.

Raymond J. Neuberger (Republican, Independent)

1. Why are you running for this office?

I am running for State Representative in the 133rd district because as a young professional in Fairfield, I believe Connecticut needs to reverse course and not force residents and businesses to leave our great state. Current leadership has effectively driven corporate Connecticut and small business out-of-state, which has diminished our tax base, forcing the Fairfield taxpayers to shoulder a heavier tax burden. With a depleted tax roll and a swollen, budgetary payroll,

Connecticut can no longer afford to spend more than revenue raised. As we have seen, the result in fiscal irresponsibility only result in cuts to Connecticut's most vulnerable, from precious education money to levying unmanageable taxes on our hospitals threatening the services and care for all. There is no greater issue this year than rectifying the budgetary practices in Hartford that have led us into billions of dollars of deficit.

2. What are your top 3 legislative priorities?

1. To revitalize our economy by providing companies with incentives to operate business in Connecticut which will retain and attract more jobs for Connecticut employees.
2. To protect all education dollars from the state to local municipalities that have been cut as a result of improper budgeting and reckless spending.
3. To eliminate all wasteful spending like a study on the Mileage Tax and work with fellow legislators to vote on exorbitant state employee contracts that have not been voted on or considered by the legislature in 30 years.

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

I don't currently believe there are any barriers to voting in Connecticut. I fully support the right of all U.S., law-abiding citizens to vote.

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

In order to balance the budget, we need to increase revenue and decrease spending. Connecticut needs to start implementing policy in Hartford that facilitates business rather than impugning it. Legislators should implement zero-based budgeting so we are not funding programs that do not work or are completely inefficient.

On spending, we have to eliminate unnecessary waste like the Mileage Tax study and taxpayer funded campaigns. Curtailing state money used for political campaigns can save millions of dollars.

Furthermore, our legislature needs to start voting on all state employee contracts. We have been rubber stamping contracts for 30 years without mitigation. Some contracts entitle employees that work 15 minutes of overtime to 4 hours of compensation.

Rules and regulations on small business' need to be moderated. Between 2011 and 2014, Connecticut had a net loss of 44,000 people and \$5 billion tax dollars to other states according to the Yankee Institute.

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 very first measure to take is to make sure we don't add to underfunded liabilities, which seems to have been taken for granted amongst legislators over the last decade. Connecticut needs to move state pensions to a defined contribution benefit, like a 401k type plan. The state needs its 50,000 state employees to contribute substantially more to their healthcare.

In 2014, the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research stated that Connecticut offers its employees the best wages and benefits in the nation but unfortunately having both is unsustainable. Also, at the very least, the state must greatly reduce or completely eliminate overtime from the pension calculator. Gradual change shouldered by all 50,000 state employees will drastically reduce the unfunded liabilities placed on Connecticut.

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?

Both state tax rates and codes/regulations equally provide major hindrances to job production and business growth. I would have supported Republican amendments to the state budget which would have rolled back taxes on small businesses, restored cuts to state hospitals, reduced the tax on computer data processing, reduced the online sales tax, and eliminated the unitary tax, the tax that convinced General Electric (GE) to leave CT.

After 25 years since the state income tax was introduced, we've lost nearly 200,000 residents with an estimated loss in \$8.7 billion according to the Yankee Institute. As a state, we need a board or committee specifically tasked with the responsibility of learning the code and regulation specifics that led to a departure from CT but most importantly to recruit new enterprise to Connecticut. Job growth can only be achieved if we allow businesses to do business cost-effectively and without government intervention.