

For State Representative - 134<sup>th</sup> District

For More Information on Candidate Positions

Candidates	Party	Web Site	Facebook	Twitter
Frederick Garrity Jr.	D	Fredgarrity.com	/fredgarrity2016	@fredgarrity
Laura M. Devlin	R, I	Lauraforstaterep.com	/laura devlin for state representative	@lauradevlinct134

**Frederick Garrity Jr. (Democratic)**

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

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

The budget is required to be balanced every year, however it is the formula used, based on assumptive income projections not materializing that's the issue. Income taxes from the middle class are generally steady and predictable, a major flaw is income tax based on Wall Street gains from higher income brackets. The flux of unpredictable Wall Street gains taxed every year needs to be harnessed and balanced in a rainy day fund; using high income years to balance lower income years, creating real strategies and policies that are more predictable. When new legislators change tax laws, businesses can't plan investments, we need steady formulas that more accurately predict revenues, and most importantly reduce spending accordingly. We have to stop non mandatory spending when we are in a deficit. If we don't have it, we can't spend it. CT needs to be a State destination of choice for business.

*2. 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.*

A common theme to all our financial issues is creating policies that help attract companies to do more business in CT, thereby increasing revenues. We have to stop bonding beyond our means of safe or predictable return payment within our existing patterns of revenue income. Simply assuming tax increases to pay down our debt must cease. CT is in budgetary crisis management, accordingly, as a matter of necessity, a plan of priorities must work from high to low. By reducing current spending, we free up available capital for existing debt. Addressing current and future employee benefits to be in line with predicted revenue needs to be a priority. We can not balance a budget, or pay off our debt on the backs of our State employees, but in the same turn we need to be able to provide competitive wages and sustainable benefits for those employees.

*3. 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?*

I've talked with small business owners in Fairfield and Trumbull, they strongly reiterate the same message, that businesses need a level of predictability in their taxes that will be due for their own business plans to succeed. Constantly changing the tax codes, or creating retroactive

taxes, are just more straws in the bad camel's back that are crippling our local businesses. Businesses can not predict inventory costs, manpower, and operating costs if the tax codes and regulations are ever changing. Setting tax rates during the budget process is needed, but stopping the creation of new taxes over continued spending without the equal revenue stream, needs to become standard procedure. When revenues decline, spending should decline, we should not be looking for new ways to tax businesses to make up budget gaps. Frankly speaking, our businesses deserve consistent tax laws, resulting in attracting new businesses to the state.

**Laura M. Devlin** (Republican, Independent)

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

Facebook: Lauradevlinct134

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

I am running for re-election because I care about our local communities and our state. The ongoing tax and spend policies forced by the majority party in Hartford are pushing residents and businesses from our state and crippling our state's economy. I've lived in Fairfield for over 20 years. My husband and I were married here, and it's my children's hometown. Fairfield is where they were raised, educated and where they would like to earn a living and raise a family. But for them, like many others, Connecticut is unaffordable and jobs are scarce. This is a resounding theme I hear from voters – young and old – as I go door to door. I'm committed to continuing to work hard for Fairfield and Trumbull residents to address these issues in Hartford and return Connecticut to the great state it once was.

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

**Jobs/Economy** –Connecticut ranks at or near the bottom of most every list as a business unfriendly state. Let's help companies choose Connecticut by reducing or eliminating job killing business taxes and unnecessary regulations. When we encourage companies to come, stay and grow – they'll create jobs, contribute revenue and help turn our economy around. This includes hospitals and healthcare providers who have been under attack by the majority in Hartford.

**Taxes/Affordability** - Let's return to common sense budgeting and spending at the state level, like we do at home. Spend no more than you make and borrow only what you can afford to pay back.

**Transportation** - For people and businesses to choose Connecticut, we need a reliable transportation infrastructure. It's time to for a truly secure "lock box," to end special interest projects and start investing in the busiest commuter line in the country and the roads in Fairfield County.

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

As Americans, one of our most precious rights is that to vote. I believe strongly that every eligible person should exercise their right to vote and Connecticut's current laws support that. As a member of the Government, Administration and Elections committee, one of my priorities is ensuring the integrity around this privilege.

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

It's time to return to common sense budgeting and spending at the state level, like we do at home. Spend no more than you make and borrow only what you can afford to pay back. I propose:

Implementing a comprehensive spending cap – this was the deal made with voters and it should be kept. The accounting tricks that hide the real condition of our states' finances must end. Following the two largest tax increases in Connecticut's history, spending is up 26%. This is not sustainable as revenues continue to decline.

Reducing borrowing by establishing a bonding cap and ending the practice of selling bonds at a premium to cover operating expenses.

Privatizing certain state services to provide long-term savings. The DMV is a good example where a private company (AAA) is available to provide many services more effectively and efficiently.

*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.*

Today, 25% of state spending is tied to the fixed costs of pension contributions, debt service payments and retiree health contributions. Connecticut's unfunded liabilities must be addressed and our state's borrowing must slow.

We can do this by establishing a bonding cap and re-evaluating and prioritizing all currently funded projects that have yet to be started. In addition, the total compensation plans for Connecticut state employees should be reevaluated. The pay and benefit plans for Connecticut state employees outpace the private sector and exceed those of every other state in the nation. While I believe benefits promised to workers who have earned them should remain, we must make changes going forward, specifically for healthcare and retirement benefits.

*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?*

Connecticut ranks at or near the bottom of most every list as a business unfriendly state. Let's help companies choose Connecticut by reducing/eliminating job killing business taxes and unnecessary regulations, and providing predictability which will build confidence and lead to job growth. We should:

Evaluate existing regulations and reconsider those that are outdated or highly uncompetitive.

Ban retroactive tax increases – not only unfair, they contribute to unpredictability that makes it difficult for businesses to plan.

Repeal the Corporation Income Tax Surcharge and the Business Entity Tax to provide relief to both large and small businesses.

Reinstate the net operating loss carryforwards for corporations, especially important to the biotech industry, which requires large upfront investments.

End mandates on businesses and require "business impact statements" for bills before the legislature, that will provide an economic analysis on each bill – much like the local fiscal impact statements that are currently required before voting.