

For State Representative – 76th District

Myrna Watanabe (Democratic)

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Why are you running for this office?

I am running for state representative because most of this district has been sorely neglected by our current representation at both the state Assembly and Senate levels. I have the background, knowledge and skills to represent and fight for our district and to intelligently deal with state issues. As a college biology teacher with 30+ years of experience, mostly at the community college level, I see recent high school graduates in my classroom, and am aware of many of the educational deficits they have from being in a weak public educational system, especially in the cities. As an investigative science reporter, I have the skills to research and understand public policy issues, particularly related to science, such as global warming and mitigation of it, the state organization of public health services, identification and treatment of epidemics, etc. I will represent our towns and serve the state's residents.

What are your top 3 legislative priorities?

First, I would like to participate in the state's legally required reorganization of education and school funding. Our schools should not fail our children and educational funding should be fair. We can't have a failing school system for cities and stellar school systems in wealthier suburbs. All school systems in the state should be stellar. Second, and part of the first priority: I will support free community college for every person in the state who wants to attend. I see the struggles of my students: perhaps having two jobs, plus school and family responsibilities. Free community college for all would assist many of them. Third, I would like to see a one stop shop for small businesses, particularly those that are not in high tech fields, so that the state can aid them with tax breaks, grants, low-interest loans and lower licensing costs.

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

Yes, there are. We need to legislatively tackle election reform. We need: 1) a no-excuses absentee ballot (or, as done in Oregon and other places, a mail-in ballot for everyone); 2) lacking a mail-in ballot, early voting at times and days convenient for voters (late night hours, weekends); 3) we need to have legislative authority to make sure that towns and cities do not arbitrarily close polling places, making it difficult for minorities and the elderly to vote; 4) we need to make sure registration is easy. Motor voter is a start, but every single state or community government interaction should trigger an automatic registration of those not already registered, such as those registering a deed to a house, those paying personal property taxes, with one's state tax returns, etc.

John Piscopo (Republican)

No response received.