

2009 Voters Guide



The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford
www.lwvgh.org



Rob Durbin	Democrat
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Biographical Information:

I was born in Kansas into a hard-working family. My father, an oil driller, and my mother, a nurse, moved my family to Wasilla, Alaska, a few months after I was born. When I was fourteen, my family moved again to Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where my father ran a small business drilling residential water wells.

I was a beneficiary of terrific public schools. After high school, I worked my way through Harvard College, Oxford University, and the University of Virginia School of Law.

My wife, Nuala Droney, a lifelong West Hartford resident, and I are proud to own a home on Lemay Street, near Sedgwick Middle School. Like many young couples, we chose West Hartford for its schools, extraordinary town services, and safe neighborhoods. I now practice law at Reid & Riege, P.C., a Hartford law firm.

Response to Questions

1. Which West Hartford services can be reduced and still be viable (assume no increase in state aid)?

West Hartford's residents need and deserve the services the town provides. We should continue to explore safe, reasonable ways to lower the cost of services. We should also continue to find additional funding sources. For example, West Hartford recently replaced a significant number of traffic lights, at no cost to West Hartford residents, with federal funds.

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2. West Hartford and Bloomfield partner to operate the Health Department. What additional regional cooperative efforts could ease our economic situation?

State and federal funding exists for regional services such as job training and housing initiatives. We should pursue such initiatives provided they are cost-effective and do not create an unnecessary, additional layer of government. Further, West Hartford must remain as autonomous as possible and avoid entangling itself in complicated, long-term commitments.

3. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities of our changing demographics?

West Hartford must continue its tradition of providing one of the best public school systems in the country. We should also continue to support our veterans and to explore tax relief for our seniors. The state's property tax structure disproportionately impacts seniors and residents with fixed incomes. We need to work with the state to get our fair share of state funding and to obtain relief from unfunded state mandates.

4. If elected, what initiative would be your top priority?

Providing more and higher quality services to our residents without raising taxes by continuing to find (1) additional sources of state and federal funding and (2) safe, reasonable ways to lower the cost of services. West Hartford must continue to attract young professionals and families. At the same time, we must control spending and taxes to ensure that West Hartford remains affordable for all residents.

Issues at a Glance Grid Questions

1. Should West Hartford provide more incentives to assist and encourage small businesses? **YES**
2. Would you support reducing activities at senior centers to save money? **NO**
3. Should the town provide additional safe bike lanes? **YES**
4. Would you support an ordinance requiring developers to replant a tree for every tree removed in West Hartford? **YES**
5. Do you support prioritizing energy efficiency upgrades in the capital improvement budget? **YES**