

Darien League of Women Voters
Press Release
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By Joan V. Davis

League has Working Breakfast with State Legislators

The Darien League of Women Voters recently had two breakfasts with their legislators, State Senator Bob Duff and Representative John Ryan to discuss a broad range of issues of concern to Darien and, indeed, the whole country. The hostess for both occasions was Joyce Critelli. After coffee, bagels, pastries and fruit, over 25 LWV members questioned their elected officials about topics ranging from global warming to a later starting time for High School students. The exchange was a give and take discussion by which the League members could learn what was going on in Hartford and their legislators could hear first hand of the concerns of their constituents.

At the meeting on Wednesday, January 16, Senator Duff pointed out on the question of affordable housing, while cities such as Stamford and Norwalk had met the goal of 10%, Darien was “the only town in the immediate area that was seriously looking for a way to solve this issue.” He said that we were losing our young people because they couldn’t afford to live here. The cost of medical care, health insurance and a possible tax deduction for Long Term care insurance was also discussed, as was the push for “green” construction, solar heating and general education on ways individuals can conserve energy. When the starting time for High School was brought up Duff reflected on how much more alert he was as a teenager when he was a senior and started at 8:30 than when he had to be in class by 7:30. One problem, he pointed out, is that because of transportation scheduling, the elementary schools would have to start earlier and get home earlier which might cause problems for working Moms.

On Friday, January 18, Representative Ryan echoed Senator Duff’s concern about health care but he pointed out that we have a good record compared with other states, with only 7% of our population without insurance coverage. He thought the Eminent Domain bill was the most important legislative accomplishment this term. On the air pollution problem he said that Connecticut was part of a pact of Northeastern States to

cooperate in bringing down carbon emissions, but this is a national issue and he felt legislators needed to become more knowledgeable on energy issues. He spoke of other legislation in the Legislative “hopper” including a gun bill to identify manufacturers selling without controls and require handguns to have shell casings that would help law enforcement officials trace guns used in crimes.

Both Senator Duff and Representative Ryan emphasized the need for constituents to get involved and pressure the legislators to get laws passed. As Senator Duff said, “In our Democracy it takes everybody’s work to get bills through.” People concerned about specific issues need to get together and lobby the legislature to pass the desired laws.