
From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ PRESENTS WEST HARTFORD WITH 2006 "DEMOCRACY CHALLENGE CUP"

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today presented officials from the town of West Hartford with the 2006 Democracy Challenge Cup for having the best voter turnout among large cities and towns in Connecticut. Voters in West Hartford won their fifth Democracy Cup in seven years with a voter participation rate of 69.4 percent on Election Day this year.

"This is turning into a very familiar trip for me, coming to West Hartford every year to award the Democracy Cup. Once more, the people of West Hartford deserve to be commended for getting to the polls at such an impressive rate on November 7th, and am honored to present them the Democracy Cup trophy," Secretary Bysiewicz said. "A voter turnout rate of 69.4 percent – nearly seven out of every ten voters – is a very impressive number. Voting is the cornerstone of our Democracy and is our most precious civil right. When you choose to vote, you choose to have a say."

"I want to thank the candidates for office this year for running spirited, issues-based campaigns that brought people out to the polls this year. I also want to thank the grassroots efforts of the town committees and the campaigns for working so hard to encourage voter turnout," Secretary Bysiewicz added. "These efforts made this a great election year in Connecticut."

In addition to West Hartford, the Democracy Cup this year has also been awarded to Westport for having the highest voter participation rate of any medium-sized towns (72.7 percent), and to Union for having the highest voter participation rate of any small-sized cities or towns (78.8 percent). This is Westport's second Democracy Cup victory and Union's first. West Hartford previously won the Democracy Cup in 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, and 2006.

Co-sponsored by the East Haddam Civic Association in 2000, the Democracy Cup was created as a way to encourage voter participation in each year's elections. Under Democracy Cup criteria established by Secretary Bysiewicz, towns with fewer than 15,000 registered voters are considered small, municipalities with between 15,000 and 30,000 voters are considered mid-sized, and cities and towns with more than 30,000 registered voters are considered large.

“Connecticut's electorate was engaged right from the beginning of primary season this year,” Scot Mackinnon, the co-founder of the Democracy Cup whose East Haddam Civic Association sponsors the Democracy Challenge Cup for best voter turnout each year, said. “The turnout was amazing. Voters were certainly motivated to follow the issues this year. Campaign rallies had more of an old-fashioned feel to them this cycle, especially in the United States Senate race with plenty of stump speeches and voter-to-candidate contact.”

West Hartford Mayor Scott Slifka said, “We are very proud of the residents of West Hartford for once again demonstrating their commitment to the civic process. One of the best ways to measure the strength of a community is by the involvement of citizens in the Democratic process. In this regard, I am proud that West Hartford has few peers.”

Secretary Bysiewicz noted that since the Democracy Challenge Cup competition began in 2000, thirteen different towns have now won it.

“It is great for our democracy to see new towns stepping up each year and winning this challenge. In the seven years that we’ve awarded the Democracy Cup, at least one new winner has emerged each year,” Secretary Bysiewicz said.

West Hartford will keep the two-foot high Democracy Cup trophy at Town Hall for the next year as a result of winning this year’s challenge. A smaller version of the cup will be awarded to be kept by the town for years to come.

YEAR	SMALL TOWNS	MIDSIZE TOWNS	LARGE TOWNS
2000	Essex	Westport	West Hartford
2001	Washington	Trumbull	Waterbury
2002	Middlebury	Glastonbury	West Hartford
2003	Washington	Naugatuck	West Hartford
2004	Washington	Wethersfield	Fairfield
2005	Middlebury	Shelton	West Hartford
2006	Union	Westport	West Hartford

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