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- STATEMENT -

SECRETARY MERRILL STATEMENT FOLLOWING HARTFORD COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY REPORT CONCERNING PROBLEMS ON ELECTION DAY 2014

Hartford – Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today issued the following statement regarding the release of a report by a city of Hartford committee of inquiry looking into problems on Election Day November 4, 2014.

“I commend the Committee of Inquiry on its thorough work reviewing the facts and circumstances surrounding Election Day 2014 in the City of Hartford. Though painful, this is a necessary process that will ultimately result in positive changes moving forward. It is a process that will ultimately benefit Hartford's voters. This report outlines a series of failures that confirms what my office has unfortunately known since November: Hartford's Registrars of Voters were simply unprepared for Election Day in 2014. Not only were they unprepared, they never communicated to my office nor to the city clerk's office – to which they could have turned to both for help and additional resources – that there was any trouble brewing. This is simply unacceptable and defies all understanding. This report illuminates that along the journey towards this flawed Election Day, Hartford's registrars consistently planned poorly, made bad decisions or made no decisions at all.

No voter should ever appear at the polls on Election Day only to find that the polling is place is not up and running. The voters of our capital city – and every community in our state – deserve so much better. A healthy democracy demands competent, consistent conduct of elections that earn the respect of confidence of the public. We owe every voter in our state competent administration and preparation before every election, and Hartford clearly fell short of that mark in 2014. Unfortunately, this is not the first time there have been Election Day problems and violations concerning the conduct of elections in Hartford. This inquiry and the pending investigation by the State Elections Enforcement Commission will hold accountable those responsible for the negligence in administering the 2014 election, and impose consequences where appropriate. We are also in the process of examining our entire elections system in Connecticut to determine which statewide actions are required to prevent this type of failure in the future.”