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-PRESS RELEASE-

MERRILL PRAISES SENATE PASSAGE OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO OPEN THE DOOR TO MODERNIZING ELECTIONS

SECRETARY OF THE STATE SUPPORTS EMPOWERING LEGISLATURE TO ENACT EARLY
VOTING OR NO EXCUSE ABSENTEE BALLOT VOTING; MEASURE TO RETURN IN 2013
LEGISLATIVE SESSION

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today praised the Connecticut State Senate's passage of a resolution providing for an amendment to the Connecticut State Constitution empowering the General Assembly to enact greater flexibility in crafting election laws relating to absentee ballots, early voting and other options. House Joint Resolution No. 2 was endorsed by a vote of 21-14 in the State Senate today. The measure passed the Connecticut House on April 4, 2012 and will return for the 2013 legislative session. Passage of House Joint Resolution No. 2 in the 2013 legislative session will send the constitutional amendment to the ballot for ratification by the voters of Connecticut in November 2014.

"We now have a three-step process in place for changing the Constitution of our state to allow Connecticut voters cast their ballots in a way that works better with their busy mobile lives, and we have taken the major first step," said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut's Chief Elections official. "I commend both Senator Gayle Slossberg, the Senate chair of the GAE Committee, and Senate Majority Leader Marty Looney and Senate President Don Williams for their leadership in seeing this resolution through to passage. I look forward to raising this resolution again next year and giving the citizens of Connecticut the power to modernize our elections."

The amendment, House Joint Resolution 2, "Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Grant Increased Authority to the General Assembly Regarding Election Administration," would amend the state constitution by removing an 80-year-old provision that restricts absentee voting to those who are absent from the town, ill, disabled or forbidden by their religion from secular activity on Election Day. If passed, the legislature would be able to craft

laws making absentee ballots available in more circumstances or without voters needing a specific reason. So called “no excuse absentee balloting” is currently available in a majority of states. The amendment also would remove the requirement that in-person votes be collected on Election Day, a technical change that would permit the legislature to enact some form of early voting or mail-in voting. If the resolution had received $\frac{3}{4}$ support in the General Assembly this year, it would have been placed on the ballot this year.