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- PRESS RELEASE -

**MERRILL ENCOURAGES 17 YEAR-OLDS TO
REGISTER AND VOTE IN AUGUST 14TH
STATEWIDE PRIMARIES**

SECRETARY OF THE STATE REPORTS MORE THAN 2,600 17 YEAR-OLD VOTERS
ALREADY REGISTERED IN CT; CAN VOTE IN PRIMARY IF THEY WILL BE 18 BY
NOVEMBER 6TH GENERAL ELECTION

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today reminded seventeen-year-old voters who will turn 18 by the general election to register to vote so they can cast ballots in the August 14th, 2012 Connecticut Primaries. Voters who are 17, but will be 18 by the general election on November 6, 2012 are eligible to vote in this year's statewide primaries as the result of a Constitutional amendment passed in 2008. Since January 1, 2012, 2,520 17-year-olds have registered to vote in the state of Connecticut.

"Having more young people involved in Connecticut's elections is something to be celebrated," said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut's Chief Elections Official. "Since many current 17-year-olds will be 18 and eligible to vote by the November 6, 2012 general election, it is important that they too have a say in which candidates appear on that ballot. Already this year, nearly 20,000 citizens between the ages of 18-29 registered to vote and more than 2,500 17-year-olds have registered. The high level of participation by young voters is encouraging, and I hope the allowance of 17-year-olds to take part will create even higher voter turnout rates in Connecticut."

Article XXXI to the Connecticut Constitution, approved overwhelmingly by voters on November 4, 2008 states, "Any citizen who has not yet attained the age of eighteen years but who will have attained the age of eighteen years on or before the day of a regular election, who is otherwise qualified to be an elector and who has applied for admission as an elector in such manner as may be prescribed by law, may vote in any primary election..."

“In 2010, 17-year-olds made a difference in the state of Connecticut by allowing their voice to be heard at the polls,” said Secretary Merrill. “I am encouraging even more young people to register and vote in this primary. Instilling a sense of political awareness in this millennial generation is extremely important in fostering the future leaders of Connecticut. With our country facing challenges at home and abroad, with our difficult economic climate and state budget issues, there is no better time to encourage the youth to take part in the political process of our state and our country.”

Secretary Merrill is reminding any eligible voter in Connecticut who wants to cast a ballot in the August 14th, 2012 Connecticut statewide primaries that the deadline to register to vote is Monday, August 13th at 12:00 p.m. Only registered Democrats or Republicans can cast ballots in the primaries. Registration forms sent by mail must be received by local Registrars of Voters no later than Thursday, August 9th. Unaffiliated voters face those same deadlines to enroll in a major party if they wish to vote in the primaries.

TOTAL REGISTERED 17-YEAR-OLD VOTERS

Party	Count
Democratic	670
Green	2
Independence	1
Independent	52
Libertarian	5
Republican	507
Swing	1
Unaffiliated	1,405
=====	
Total:	2,643

17-YEAR-OLD VOTERS REGISTERED SINCE JANUARY 1, 2012

Party	Count
Democratic	634
Green	1
Independence	1
Independent	51
Libertarian	5
Republican	476
Swing	1
Unaffiliated	1,351
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Total:	2,520

Secretary Merrill encourages everyone to visit www.sots.ct.gov to learn how to register to vote, find polling locations, view candidate lists, and download absentee ballot forms.