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SECRETARY OF THE STATE
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**SECRETARY MERRILL, SENATOR
BLUMENTHAL, CONGRESSWOMAN ESTY JOIN
FEDERAL OFFICIALS IN NEW OUTREACH TO
VETERAN-OWNED CT BUSINESSES**

SECRETARY OF THE STATE JOINS FORCES WITH U.S. COMMERCE DEPT. EXPORT
ASSISTANCE CENTER AND FEDERAL SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION TO
CONNECT VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS WITH STATE AND FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today joined Connecticut U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty (CT-5), Anne Evans of the U.S. Commerce Department Export Assistance Center in Middletown and Seth Goodall, the New England Regional Director of the federal Small Business Administration to launch an unprecedented outreach to Connecticut's veteran-owned businesses. Secretary Merrill announced the new outreach at Winslow Automatics, Inc. in New Britain – a metal fabrication manufacturer and supplier to both civilian and military aircraft industries owned by U.S. veteran George Podlasek. As part of the outreach, Secretary Merrill's office will send an email blast to more than 120,000 Connecticut businesses, asking those owned by a military veteran to self-identify and directing them to a link for information at the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC). CERC will develop a comprehensive list of veteran-owned companies in the state in order to connect them with state and federal services specifically for entrepreneurs who are U.S. military veterans. assistance. The U.S. Census estimates there may be as many as 31,000 businesses in Connecticut started or owned by military veterans in Connecticut.

“On this Veterans’ Day, we salute and say thank you to every man and woman who has ever put on the uniform to defend our country,” said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut’s chief business registrar. “We should and must do everything we can to help and take care of our veterans when they come home. Many veterans go onto successful careers in business after they are finished being active duty military. This outreach is a way we can help thousands of Connecticut

veterans find state and federal assistance as they put their creative ideas into action as entrepreneurs. We should do whatever we can to help them succeed, earn a profit, and create jobs.”

Connecticut U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal – a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves – said, “Veteran-owned businesses like Winslow Automatics deserve our support, not only for the contributions and sacrifices of our brave servicemen and women overseas, but for the work they do here at home to create jobs and grow our economy. Reaching these businesses is the cornerstone of successful federal and state programs that assist veteran owned companies. Without a comprehensive list, we know there are veteran-owned businesses in our state that stand to benefit from existing federal and state programs, and I applaud the Secretary of the State for this proactive effort. I look forward to a continued partnership to ensure all of our returning heroes can take advantage of the services they have earned.”

Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty (CT-5) said, “People have fought and died to serve this country. It is our duty to provide support to our veterans when they come back, to make it easier for them to make our communities prosper by starting and succeeding in business. Many veterans have told me they would love to take advantage of federal programs we have available for them, but it needs to be easier to find out about what is available. This effort will make it it considerably easier for veterans to gain access to services and programs available for them to succeed.”

Robert Polito, Senior Vice President of Webster Bank – a lender with the federal Small Business Administration – said, “Anytime we have the ability to assist Veteran-owned businesses especially in the realm of exporting we should do our best to fully assist in moving their businesses forward.”

Secretary Merrill’s office has collaborated on numerous projects with the U.S. Commerce Department Export Assistance Center in Middletown under the leadership of Anne Evans to connect hundreds of thousands of Connecticut businesses with federal services to help state firms expand their exports into international markets. This collaboration has resulted in high participation in these programs among Connecticut businesses, ultimately leading to new sales agreements and revenue from overseas markets for a number of Connecticut’s high-tech firms and precision manufacturers. For more information about programs and services offered by the Connecticut District Export Council, visit www.ctexporters.com