



## DENISE W. MERRILL

SECRETARY OF THE STATE  
CONNECTICUT

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For more information:  
Av Harris (860) 509-6255  
Cell: (860) 463-5939

- PRESS RELEASE -

# SECRETARY MERRILL: CONNECTICUT IS READY TO VOTE!

SECRETARY OF THE STATE REVIEWS FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTION  
DAY; REMINDS VOTERS OF CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION ON THE BALLOT

**HARTFORD:** Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today declared that Connecticut is ready for its nearly 1.96 million active registered voters to cast ballots in tomorrow's 2014 general elections. At a news conference at the state capitol in Hartford, Secretary Merrill reviewed the Election Day Hotline, acceptable forms of voter identification, Election Day Registration procedures, reminded voters of the Constitutional amendment on the Connecticut ballot. Merrill was also joined by Connecticut Bar Association President, Attorney Mark Dubois, to outline a continued partnership to have a group of volunteer attorneys serve as designees on Election Day authorized to enter and review any polling place for compliance with state and federal election law.

"Once again I am very proud of the hard work and dedication of our local election administrators in Connecticut who have worked together with my office to make sure we are all ready to receive many voters tomorrow," said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut's chief elections official. "We are on the job for election day, and keeping an eye on things to make sure we will have an orderly election. We are expecting a turnout of 55% of registered voters tomorrow, and we will be ready to respond if any problems arise. I also want to thank the Connecticut Bar Association for providing our office with a corps of volunteer attorneys who can serve as the eyes and ears of my office should an issue at a local polling place require further examination. Any eligible citizens not yet registered can go to a central location in their city or town, register and vote tomorrow. I urge all eligible voters to cast their ballot tomorrow and make their voices heard. We will have a hotline up and running with our state and federal partners, so call or email us if you encounter any problems at the polls."

### Election Day Hotline:

Secretary Merrill once again released the Election Day Hotline in coordination with the State Elections Enforcement Commission and the United States Attorney's Office in Connecticut which is **1-866-SEEC-INFO** or **1-866-733-2463** in addition to an email hotline [elections@ct.gov](mailto:elections@ct.gov) should voters encounter any difficulties at the polls. Secretary Merrill's office will be conducting several coordination conference calls throughout the day with counterparts at the State Elections Enforcement Commission and federal

authorities to monitor any potential irregularities or problems at the polls. As voters head to the polls tomorrow, Secretary Merrill urged voters to go online at [www.sots.ct.gov/vote](http://www.sots.ct.gov/vote) to see where their polling place is located, view sample ballots from their town, or find a location for Election Day Registration.

### **Volunteer Attorney Program:**

Once again Secretary Merrill is working in concert with the Connecticut Bar Association pursuant to authority granted to her office in 2011 when the Connecticut General Assembly overwhelmingly passed [Public Act 11-46](#) which states, in part: "...the Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee, shall be allowed access to each polling place within the state during any municipal, state or federal election, primary or recanvass for the purpose of reviewing each polling place and recanvass for compliance with state and federal law." Volunteer attorneys from the Connecticut Bar Association will be on call throughout the state available respond if asked by Secretary Merrill's office. The designees will only be dispatched to a polling place if a particular problem is reported to the Secretary of the State's office and Secretary Merrill determines it is necessary to receive independent confirmation of reported information. Designees have no authority in the polling place other than to observe the local administration of elections and report back to Secretary Merrill on the compliance with state and federal election laws. The volunteer attorneys have been trained in election administration by the Secretary of the State's office, and have signed an agreement that they will not act in a partisan way on Election Day. In total, more than 100 Connecticut attorneys have volunteered to participate in the program, and are ready to serve in communities all over the state.

### **Voter ID/Election Day Registration:**

Secretary Merrill is also reminding voters to bring with them some form of identification when they go to cast a ballot. A driver's license will suffice in all cases but if a voter does not have a government issued photo ID then a bank statement, utility bill, paystub, social security card or other forms of identification are also acceptable. Voters should go online at [www.sots.ct.gov/vote](http://www.sots.ct.gov/vote) to see a complete list of acceptable forms of voter identification. Eligible voters in Connecticut who are not registered to vote can still vote through Election Day Registration, citizens are encouraged to go online to the Secretary of the State's website to search for the Election Day Registration in their city or town.

### **Constitutional Amendment on the Ballot:**

In addition to the many candidates on the ballot, Connecticut voters are also asked to weigh in on a Constitutional amendment. The question states: "**Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?**" If ratified by a simple majority of voters, the amendment would remove restrictive language on absentee voting from the state Constitution, permitting state lawmakers to change election laws to enact some form of early voting. A '**YES**' vote on this Constitutional question would not change any laws immediately, but it would permit the General Assembly to loosen our current restrictions on absentee voting and potentially enact some form of early voting, as 35 other states have done. A '**NO**' vote leaves our Constitution and our election laws as they currently are.

Currently under the Connecticut Constitution Article Sixth, voting is limited to "the day of the election" but the General Assembly is permitted to make provisions for those voters who cannot appear at their polling place "...because of absence from the city or

town of which they are inhabitants or because of sickness or physical disability or because the tenets of their religion forbid secular activity.” If ratified, the amendment would remove that language and it would give the General Assembly greater authority to pass a law allowing voters to cast their ballots without having to (1) appear at their polling place on Election Day or (2) provide a reason for voting by absentee ballot.

Polls will be open tomorrow from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. for Election Day 2014.