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SECRETARY MERRILL REFERS POSSIBLE CASE OF VOTER FRAUD IN NEW BRITAIN TO STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

SECRETARY OF THE STATE TAKES ACTION AFTER NBC 30 NEWS REPORT REVEALS
NEW INFORMATION ON MAN WHO TRIED TO VOTE TWICE ON ELECTION DAY 2013

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today referred to the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) for further review and investigation the actions of a voter registered in New Britain who may have committed voter fraud on Election Day November 5, 2013. As was reported to the SEEC previously, Paul A. DeFelice, (DOB 8/18/1970) is the voter who unsuccessfully attempted to vote twice on Election Day November 5, 2013 in New Britain and then in Berlin. New information uncovered in a news report by NBC 30 television, however, indicates that Mr. DeFelice may not have resided at the address he used to register and vote in New Britain. According to Connecticut General Statutes 9-357 and 9-358, it is a felony for any voter to falsify any of their personal information when registering to vote, or to fraudulently register to vote. These felonies are both punishable by fines, incarceration, and loss of voting rights. In a letter to SEEC Executive Director and General Counsel Michael Brandi, Secretary Merrill refers the case and the information back to the Elections Enforcement Commission for further review to determine whether Mr. DeFelice violated the law.

“We have zero tolerance for voter fraud in Connecticut,” said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut’s chief elections official. “This kind of situation is extremely rare in our state, but as Commissioner for Elections, I am compelled to report the information uncovered in the recent news report back to Elections Enforcement for further review. Local election officials and my office will always do whatever it takes to protect the integrity of the vote. In this critical election year, we all stand ready to ensure public confidence in our electoral process and hold accountable those who attempt to manipulate the vote.”

On Election Day November 5, 2013, Mr. DeFelice changed the spelling of his name on his voter registration from Paolo to Paul and changed his residential address from Berlin to New Britain in order to cast a ballot in New Britain that day. Later that same day, election officials in Berlin reported that he then attempted to vote at the Berlin Senior Center, his previous polling place,

under his previous name. Mr. DeFelice was unsuccessful in his attempt to vote twice, as poll workers in Berlin informed him that he was removed from the local voter list due to his new registration earlier that day in New Britain. This case was previously reported to SEEC but the commission declined to investigate further, noting that the mere attempt to vote twice does not violate any state laws. This prompted Secretary Merrill to file House Bill No. 5478 to criminalize the attempt to vote twice. HB 5478 passed the Connecticut House of Representatives on April 17, 2014 with near unanimous support. It now awaits action in the Connecticut State Senate.