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SECRETARY MERRILL PRAISES HOUSE PASSAGE OF BILL STRENGTHENING CONNECTICUT ELECTIONS

SECRETARY OF THE STATE AND CONNECTICUT REGISTRARS OF VOTERS LAUD
FINAL, OVERWHELMING PASSAGE OF SB 1051 TO IMPROVE ADMINISTRATION
OF LOCAL ELECTIONS

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today joined the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut (ROVAC) in praising the final, overwhelming passage of Senate Bill 1051 *“An Act Strengthening Connecticut Elections.”* With a vote of 126-20, Connecticut House lawmakers approved the measure and sent it on to Governor Dannel P. Malloy. If signed into law, Senate Bill 1051 establishes qualification standards and certification for Registrars of Voters in charge of local election administration, requires yearly training and also provides for removal from office for Registrars in extreme cases of negligence or dereliction of duty. The bill also improves the speed of collecting election results and permits local election officials to use online voter registration to sign up new voters for Election Day Registration. It also authorizes an automation system to reduce the expense and time spent on post-election audits.

“I am very proud of the Connecticut General Assembly for taking a major step in 2015 to improve the way we run elections in our state,” said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut’s chief elections official. “Establishing key benchmarks for registrars of voters will increase accountability in our entire election system and will help both voters and local election officials. It also advances long overdue technological enhancements that will modernize and streamline election management. I am grateful for the partnership with the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut and the leadership of GAE Committee chairmen Senator Steve Cassano and Representative Ed Jutila for helping to bring this very strong, bipartisan bill forward for a vote. I look forward to working together with Registrars of Voters to implement this new law. Our goal is to offer the best possible service to the voters of our state and this bill addresses the training, support

and accountability to do just that. This will greatly improve elections for Connecticut voters, and I look forward to Governor Malloy's signing it into law."

Melissa Russell, president of ROVAC, said, "The passage of 1051 gives registrars the technological tools and educational opportunities that will help strengthen and modernize our elections, while maintaining a bipartisan structure in our offices. The Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut (ROVAC) sincerely thanks the members of the GAE Committee who listened to registrars' concerns and helped all parties involved in this process find common ground on these very important issues. ROVAC looks forward to working with the Secretary of the State to implement the changes put forth in this legislation."

In addition to introducing new accountability measures, SB 1051 also quickens election results reporting by separating results from other statistics that often take longer to gather and report. The bill unifies voter registration deadlines to one week prior to Election Day, and permits local election officials to use the online voter registration system to enroll residents who are participating in Election Day Registration (EDR), which should help reduce EDR waiting times on Election Day. The mandated training and certification for registrars of voters would be designed and implemented by the Secretary of the State's office.