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- PRESS RELEASE -

MERRILL NAMES ATTORNEY CHRISTINE HORRIGAN AS HARTFORD ELECTION MONITOR

SECRETARY OF THE STATE GIVEN NEW AUTHORITY TO CONTRACT WITH
ELECTION MONITOR FOR HARTFORD TO OVERSEE CITY ELECTIONS, REPORT
ANY IMPROPRIETIES; HORRIGAN IS LONGTIME LEADER WITH THE CT LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today announced that she has named attorney and longtime Connecticut League of Women Voters leader Christine Horrigan of Litchfield as the new election monitor for Hartford. This is a new position created by the General Assembly last month. Horrigan's role will be to ensure that the election is properly managed in compliance with the law.

"We are fortunate to have such a qualified individual such as Christine Horrigan willing to take on the major responsibility of serving as election monitor for Hartford," said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut's chief elections official. "My office, Attorney Horrigan, the Hartford town clerk and registrars will work together to make sure voting in our capital city proceeds smoothly. By working together closely we can identify problems early, avoid an Election Day crisis and ensure that every eligible citizen has an opportunity to vote."

Attorney Horrigan said, "I am excited to have this opportunity to work closely with the office of the Secretary of the State, the registrars and City Hall to ensure that elections in Hartford are well managed and that all voters have the chance to cast their ballots in a fair, timely and efficient manner."

Christine Horrigan has been an attorney in Connecticut for more than 25 years, including nearly eight years as a volunteer election law and campaign finance specialist for the Connecticut League of Women Voters from 2004-2011, and as the League's Director of

Government Issues and Vice President for Public Issues. Horrigan is a certified election moderator and has served in such capacity in her hometown of Litchfield. According to statute, the Hartford election monitor will remain in place until January 1, 2017 unless the contract is terminated prior to that date by Secretary Merrill. Public Act 15-5 section 434 creating the position of election monitor was enacted by the Connecticut state budget implementer, but was originally proposed by Hartford State Representative Matt Ritter (D-1) and supported by the Hartford legislative delegation in the Connecticut General Assembly.

Representative Ritter said, "I would like to thank Secretary of State Merrill for her leadership and continued support for the appointment of an election monitor in the City of Hartford. The State of Connecticut, the Hartford delegation and the Secretary of State's Office are stepping up to the plate to ensure that the Election Day irregularities that occurred in Hartford in 2014 never happen again. I will never forget receiving emails and calls from neighbors who were unable to vote that day because of errors that could have easily been prevented. I believe that the election monitor will prove to be an invaluable asset to our City because it will permit a neutral party to detect and prevent any irregularities and improprieties in election procedures and management in Hartford."

According to the statute, the Hartford election monitor will be embedded in city hall but serve under the authority of the Secretary of the State. The statute provides the monitor with the authority to:

1. Conduct inspections, inquiries and investigations relating to any duty or responsibility under title 9 of the general statutes [election law] to be carried out by any official of the municipality or appointee of such official
2. Have access to all records, data and material maintained by or available to any such official or appointee
3. Immediately report to the Secretary of the State any irregularity or impropriety in the performance of any duty or responsibility

In practical terms, Secretary Merrill is expecting the election monitor to work with Hartford's Registrars of Voters and City Clerk to instruct and advise them on the preparations for primaries and elections, including the preparation of regular and absentee ballots, and the training of election officials and poll workers. The monitor is also expected to:

1. Oversee any communications between the registrars, clerks and other relevant offices related to election administration.
2. Ensure that Hartford election officials meet required deadlines for reports to be filed with the state.
3. Help registrars devise and implement a management plan for the successful execution of elections in Hartford that complies with state and federal election laws.