



DENISE W. MERRILL
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT



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Streamlined Motor-Voter Registration System Registers Nearly 15,000 New Voters In First Month

First Month Brings In More Voters Through DMV Than In a Typical Year

HARTFORD – More people registered to vote in the month after the streamlined motor-voter system started than at any comparable period in the past three years or even when comparing the combined total of voter registration applications from the DMV in 2013, 2014 or 2015, said Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill and the Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner Michael Bzdyra today when releasing the first review of the improved system.

From August 8 through September 7, there were 14,693 new voters who registered through the DMV's modernized voter registration system. The first month's total under the new system exceeds the number of voters who registered at the DMV in 2013, 2014 and 2015 combined. The number of new voters who registered at the DMV was 3,323 in 2013, 3,948 in 2014 and 2,703 in 2015.

In 2012, a presidential year, around 10,000 new voters registered at the DMV, though it is important to note that the older system did not create records as accurate as the current motor-voter program.

Secretary Merrill said, "Even while we know the collection of past data is an imperfect science, we do know this—more people will get registered to vote if we give them fast and easy opportunities to do so. The new system proves that. In addition, there is more technology available to government agencies to improve customer service and spare the public an unnecessary trip to town hall to update their voter registrations."

"We are very pleased with these numbers and the important path to voting they bring to all those signing up. Voting is critical for a healthy democracy," said DMV Commissioner Michael Bzdyra.

If the pace remains consistent, the number of voters registered at the Department of Motor Vehicles will likely reach or surpass the number of people registered by all other means combined. For example, in 2015, approximately 79,000 new voters registered by mail, online, in-person or by another means, a monthly average of around 6,583. In 2014, the monthly average was around 8,595. In 2012, a presidential year, the monthly average was around 16,450.

Cheri Quickmire, Executive Director of Common Cause in Connecticut said, “Common Cause is very pleased with the early success of the streamlined motor-voter system. Our democracy is faced with many challenges but none more important than making sure everyone who can vote is able to vote. Voting is the great equalizer—one person, one vote—which is why we’ve had to overcome obstacles to voting and now must extend the promise of democracy to more Americans.”

The program was made possible through an agreement between the Secretary of the State and the DMV to develop a streamlined motor-voter system. The document envisions a fully automated system within two years. In the interim, the existing streamlined system was introduced, which offers electronic prompts to the customer service agent at the DMV to provide a voter registration form as well as the capacity to autofill data from Motor Vehicles in order to make the transaction more efficient. In addition, the application can now be electronically transmitted to election officials, saving the DMV staff time on paper mail.

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