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## **STREAMLINED MOTOR-VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM APPROVED!**

**HARTFORD:** Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill celebrated a legislative committee's approval of a trailblazing motor-voter system that could bring automatic voter registration to Connecticut by January 1, 2018.

Secretary Merrill said, "We are on the cusp of doing something very important in the state of Connecticut. This system will bring hundreds of thousands of new voters onto the rolls and enhance democratic participation in our state. There is nothing we can do that will register more voters in a shorter period of time than streamlining our motor-voter registration system. This system will spare voters time, save the state money and will greatly expand the number of people registered to vote in our state. In addition, it is simply good customer service. Why send people to another agency when we can help them in a single transaction."

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993—known as the "motor voter act"—currently requires states to give people the opportunity to register to vote when they carry out a transaction with the Department of Motor Vehicles. The state is also obliged to send the voter registration to the appropriate official at the local level.

The Secretary of the State is proposing that transaction be modernized. Under the proposal, when a customer's information is entered into a computer by the Department of Motor Vehicles, it would auto-populate an electronic voter registration form (rather than a cumbersome paper registration application, which is currently used).

The customer is given an opportunity to opt-out of being registered and—if he or she declines to opt-out—will then affirm identity, attest to citizenship, choose to affiliate with a party (or not)

and sign. That information will then be electronically transmitted to an elections official, which is how the existing online voter registration functions.

In other states where this kind of system has been implemented, the state realized considerable cost savings on printing, postage and labor. It also made registering to vote at the Department of Motor Vehicles considerably faster.

The Government Administration and Elections Committee's approval, which envisions a start date in 2018, also proposes a report on the method, timeline and process for implementation to be produced by January 1, 2017.