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Online Voter Registrations in Connecticut Surge Following President Obama's American Idol Appearance

STAR POWER DRAWS VOTERS TO CONNECTICUT'S ONLINE VOTER
REGISTRATION SYSTEM AS PRESIDENT OBAMA APPEARS ON AMERICAN IDOL TO
URGE PEOPLE TO REGISTER TO VOTE

Hartford: Use of Connecticut's online voter registration system surged yesterday following President Obama's appearance on the series finale of American Idol. The President encouraged viewers to register to vote via vote.gov, a portal that links to states' online voter registration services.

Connecticut Secretary of the State Denise Merrill said, "We've already seen a record number of people register to vote online in 2016. But with President Obama and American Idol promoting the system we've seen an even greater bump over the last day. It never hurts to have a little star power on your side."

Online voter registration was launched in Connecticut in 2014 and swiftly engaged tens of thousands of people in the electoral system. However, this is the first time that online voter registration has been available to Connecticut voters in advance of a presidential contest, which is spurring record-setting use of the system.

For example, the online system was used 54,124 times to register voters, change addresses or switch parties in 2016—which includes more than 37,100 new voter registrations—versus 27,754 uses in all of 2015 (including 18,957 new voter registrations that year).

The Secretary of the State has seen the online voter registration system used an average of around 547 times per day since the start of 2016. However, use of the system increased to 1,258 times following President Obama's April 7 American Idol appearance.

President Obama said on American Idol last night, "For over a decade, this show has motivated millions of young Americans to vote, often and with enthusiasm. We should do the same in our lives as citizens of this country we love. Voting is the most fundamental and sacred right of our democracy. I believe it should be almost as easy as voting on American Idol, and we're working on that. But when we choose not to vote, we surrender that right. We surrender our voice to someone else. Not all of us can sing like Kelly Clarkson, but all of our voices matter. This show reached historic heights not only because Americans watched it, but because you participated in its success. The same is true of America. We reach our full potential when every American participates."