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**SECRETARY MERRILL REMINDS
CONNECTICUT VOTERS OF
CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION ON
NOVEMBER 4TH BALLOT**

SECRETARY OF THE STATE EXPLAINS THAT IF RATIFIED AMENDMENT WOULD
REMOVE CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON ABSENTEE BALLOTS; PERMIT
LAWMAKERS TO ENACT EARLY VOTING

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today reminded Connecticut voters that in addition to many candidates on the ballot Election Day November 4, 2014 there will also be a Constitutional question on every ballot in Connecticut. The question states: **“Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?”** If ratified by a simple majority of voters, the amendment would remove restrictive language on absentee voting from the state Constitution, permitting state lawmakers to change election laws to enact some form of early voting.

“I want to make sure every voter is aware that there is a constitutional question on the ballot this fall in addition to all the candidates,” said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut’s chief elections official. “A **‘YES’** vote on this Constitutional question would not change any laws immediately, but it would permit the General Assembly to loosen our current restrictions on absentee voting and potentially enact some form of early voting, as 35 other states have done. A **‘NO’** vote leaves our Constitution and our election laws as they currently are.”

In order to appear on the ballot this fall, the amendment was passed by a majority of the Connecticut General Assembly in two consecutive legislative sessions (2012 and 2013). As required by state election law, Secretary Merrill has also distributed to all local elections officials language containing the statewide ballot question and an accompanying explanatory text approved by the legislative committee on Government

Administration and Elections. By law, the text of the ballot question and the approved explanatory language must be displayed for voters at every polling place in Connecticut on Election Day November 4th.

Currently under the Connecticut Constitution Article Sixth, voting is limited to “the day of the election” but the General Assembly is permitted to make provisions for those voters who cannot appear at their polling place “...because of absence from the city or town of which they are inhabitants or because of sickness or physical disability or because the tenets of their religion forbid secular activity.” If ratified, the amendment would remove that language and it would give the General Assembly greater authority to pass a law allowing voters to cast their ballots without having to (1) appear at their polling place on Election Day or (2) provide a reason for voting by absentee ballot.

A full text of the constitutional amendment and accompanying explanatory language can be found online at www.sots.ct.gov/vote and the direct link to the information about the constitutional question can be found here:

http://www.sots.ct.gov/sots/lib/sots/electionservices/misc/explanatory_text_for_constitutional_amendment_sots_8_20_14.pdf

Secretary Merrill is also reminding eligible voters in Connecticut that there are less than three weeks to register to vote in order to cast a ballot in the November 4, 2014 general election. Specifically, voters who wish to register online or by mail must do so by Tuesday October 21st; and the final deadline to register to vote in-person at town or city offices is Tuesday October 28th. Secretary Merrill is encouraging every eligible Connecticut voter with a driver’s license to go online at <https://voterregistration.ct.gov> to register to vote securely and quickly. Secretary Merrill urges any U.S. citizen aged 18 or over to go online at www.sots.ct.gov/vote to find out if they are registered to vote, register to vote, find out where their polling place is located, or download an application for an absentee ballot if they will be out of town or physically unable to be in their polling place on Election Day Tuesday November 4, 2014. Polls will be open that day from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. statewide for the general election.