



DENISE W. MERRILL
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

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- PRESS RELEASE -

**SECRETARY MERRILL PRESENTS THE
CONNECTICUT BAR
ASSOCIATION WITH NATIONAL AWARD**

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill presented the Connecticut Bar Association with the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) Medallion Award for its groundbreaking work on elections monitoring and civics education.

Secretary Merrill said, “The work of the Connecticut Bar Association really is a model to the nation. Their team of volunteer lawyers advance democracy by giving hours of their time to the elections process.”

Connecticut Bar Association President, William H. Clendenen, Jr. said, “We are proud to accept this award on behalf of all of our hard working members who volunteered their time to uphold the right to vote for all citizens. Their involvement enabled Secretary Merrill to have neutral, nonpartisan observers provide assistance in protecting this hallowed Constitutional right.”

For several years, the Connecticut Bar Association has made volunteer attorneys available to the Secretary of the State on Election Day. In the event that problems arise—and the Secretary’s office deems it necessary to receive independent confirmation—the Secretary can dispatch volunteer attorneys to a particular polling place. The volunteer program was made possible by Public Act 11-46, which was passed overwhelmingly by the General Assembly in 2011.

In total, more than 100 Connecticut attorneys have volunteered to serve as on-call Election Day observers to ensure compliance with state and federal election laws. The volunteer attorneys have

been trained in election administration by the Secretary of the State's office, and have signed an agreement that they will not act in a partisan way on Election Day.

In addition, the Connecticut Bar Association has organized and run an innovative civics education program, which provides students in the state with a deeper understanding of the United States legal system. The Association's Civics Education Committee runs adult education programs, mock trial competitions, courtroom visits as well as an annual Law Day ceremony that highlights themes such as voting rights, the Magna Carta and equality.

The award was presented last night at a meeting of the Connecticut Bar Association's governing officers in New Britain.

The NASS Medallion Award was created to honor individuals, groups or organizations with an established record of promoting the goals of the National Association of Secretaries of State. In particular, it emphasizes contributions to one or more of the six following areas: elections, specifically voter education and participation; civic education; service to state government, in particular on the work of the office of the Secretary of State and a commitment to giving.

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