



DENISE W. MERRILL
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

June 12, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

I appreciate the attention you are paying to the increased threats posed to our election system, specifically the November elections. The federal government has evidence of persistent and evolving efforts to compromise these elections through cyberattacks, some of them sophisticated probes from hostile nation-states. While addressing this serious problem, we have the additional burden of dealing with COVID-19.

These are serious challenges, but nothing is more important to the functioning of our democracy than our ability to enable Connecticut citizens to vote freely and safely. Our commitment to ensure secure elections will require even more attention and work in 2020. I will do all that I can to support you in order to achieve safe, secure elections.

I am very pleased to share with you the good news that the Connecticut Military Department (CTMD) has agreed to work with us to assess our municipal cybersecurity infrastructure.

The CTMD has trained personnel able to look at our election cybersecurity systems and render advice based on what it finds. Using the current U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Cyber Resilience Review (CRR) Self-Assessment Package, the Guard is able to assess each municipality's cybersecurity posture regarding election infrastructure, policies, and procedures.

I have asked the CTMD to conduct municipal cybersecurity risk assessments related to election infrastructure. The CTMD will evaluate the CRR results and determine where it might productively conduct municipal assistance visits and complete risk assessments for you. The CTMD will offer you its evaluation of your election cybersecurity posture based on the DHS Cyber Resilience Review results and provide recommendations for enhanced or remedial action.

I want to make three things clear. First, the nature of the threats we face present an obligation to offer our assistance and resources, and not to leave you alone to fight potential nation-state intrusion by yourself, without essential expertise. Second, you continue to be the key manager of your elections; my office is in no way seeking to assume new duties or responsibilities. Finally, we know how strapped municipal budgets are right now, so we are offering these services without cost to your towns. We want you to operate as you have in the past with the

added help of evaluation and professional audits that can enable you to identify weaknesses and prepare for challenges we see coming at us at the state and municipal levels.

The CTMD will send you and the town elections officials a preliminary project plan describing the services to be offered to you, the contact personnel with whom you can discuss the needed work, and some guidance regarding how the Connecticut Military Department will work with you and with my office to overcome the new obstacles we face in the coming elections.

This year's general election will likely be the most difficult we have seen in recent memory, and I cannot think of a more important effort than to see that they succeed without interference or disruption. I am pleased to be able to make these additional CTMD services available. Please take full advantage of them.

My team and I are here to work with you and to respond to any questions you may have.

Thank you for your service to your municipality, to Connecticut, and to the democratic process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Denise W. Merrill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Denise W. Merrill