



**DENISE MERRILL**  
SECRETARY OF THE STATE  
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-PRESS RELEASE-

## **SECRETARY MERRILL HAILS HOUSE APPROVAL OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PAVE WAY FOR VOTING REFORM**

RESOLUTION CLEARS HOUSE 97-50; HEADS TO SENATE

**HARTFORD:** Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today applauded action by the state House of Representatives on a proposed constitutional amendment to allow the General Assembly greater flexibility in crafting election laws relating to absentee ballots, early voting and other options.

“I am very pleased that this amendment received such strong support in the chamber. The vote reflects what I have been hearing as I have been traveling the state for two years: our citizens would like options when they vote,” Merrill said.

“I wish to thank Speaker Donovan, Majority Leader Sharkey and Chairman Morin for their efforts in bringing this to the floor and getting it passed today. I look forward to the Senate taking up the amendment in the days ahead.”

The amendment, House Joint Resolution 2, “Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Grant Increased Authority to the General Assembly Regarding Election Administration,” would amend the state constitution by removing an 80-year-old provision that restricts absentee voting to those who are absent from the town, ill, disabled or forbidden by their religion from secular activity on Election Day. If passed, the legislature would be able to craft laws making absentee ballots available in more circumstances or enact “no excuse absentee balloting,” currently available in a majority of states. The amendment also would remove the requirement that in-person votes be collected on Election Day, a technical change that would permit the legislature to enact some form of early voting.

The resolution now heads for the state Senate. If passed there, it will be reconsidered by the General Assembly that convenes in 2013, and, if re-passed, would be a ballot question placed before voters in the 2014 statewide election. If the resolution had received  $\frac{3}{4}$  support in both chambers this year, it could have been placed on the ballot this year.

Merrill expressed disappointment that the super majority requirement could not be met this year. "I believe the voters deserved a chance to vote on this proposal in this fall's election, when there will be a big turnout for the presidential race. However, we are now moving in the right direction."