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-PRESS RELEASE-

MERRILL PRAISES HOUSE PASSAGE OF BILL ENACTING ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION, ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION

SECRETARY OF THE STATE LOOKS FORWARD TO SENATE PASSAGE OF HB 5024 THAT
WOULD MODERNIZE ELECTIONS, LEAD TO HIGHER VOTER PARTICIPATION

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today praised the Connecticut State House of Representatives passage of House Bill No. 5024 “An Act Concerning Voting Rights” a measure proposed by Governor Dannel P. Malloy that, if enacted, would allow eligible Connecticut residents to register to vote and cast ballots on Election Day, and it would also allow eligible Connecticut residents with a driver’s license to register to vote from any computer or mobile device with an internet connection. The House of Representatives approved the bill by a vote of 83-59. It now moves to the State Senate, where it can be enacted if passed before the conclusion of the current legislative session on May 9, 2012.

“This is a major step forward in our effort to modernize elections in Connecticut and increase voter participation,” said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut’s chief elections official. “I commend Representative Russ Morin, the House chair of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, Speaker Donovan and Majority Leader Sharkey for bringing this long overdue reform up for a vote and seeing it through to passage. I look forward to a debate and vote on this bill in the State Senate before the end of the current legislative session. Change is sometimes hard, but we have a voting system strong and secure enough to allow people to register from any computer or on Election Day. These are reforms that 10 other states have already enacted. Some states such as Maine, Minnesota and Wisconsin have had Election Day Registration on the books for decades, with no compromise in the security or integrity of their elections. These states have seen an increase in voter turnout, which we certainly need in Connecticut.”

If enacted, House Bill No. 5024 would also create an interface between the existing Centralized Voter Registration System and the database housed at the state Department of Motor Vehicles that would verify the identity of a voter wishing to register online prior to approval by the local

Registrar of Voters. Election Day Registration would only be available for November General Elections, not for primaries, starting in 2013.