DENISE MERRILL
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

For Immediate Release:
April 22, 2014

For more information:
Av Harris: (860) 509-6255
Cell: (860) 463-5939

- PRESS RELEASE -

MERRILL PRAISES HOUSE PASSAGE OF BILL TO TEST CUTTING EDGE SOFTWARE DEVELOPED BY UCONN TO AUTOMATE POST-ELECTION AUDIT PROCESS

SECRETARY OF THE STATE SECURED FEDERAL GRANT IN 2011 WORKING WITH UCONN CENTER FOR VOTING TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH TO DEVELOP SOFTWARE PROTOTYPE

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today praised the 99-43 vote of the Connecticut House of Representatives in support of House Bill No. 5492 "An Act Concerning a Demonstration Project for the Use of Electronic Equipment for Conducting Audits." The bill now goes onto the Connecticut State Senate and would launch a pilot program in the fall of 2014 to use a software prototype developed by computer scientists at the UConn Center for Voting Technology Research (VoTer) to automate the post-election audit process. The software works with high speed scanners to make facsimile images of the hundreds or thousands of paper ballots used on Election Day in each polling place to audit the results. Currently, state law mandates that towns audit election results by hand from 10% of the polling precincts in Connecticut chosen at random by the Secretary of the State.

"I am very grateful to the Connecticut House of Representatives and particularly to GAE Chairman Ed Jutila for moving this bill forward to launch a pilot program automating our post-election audits; this can potentially save municipalities millions of dollars over the long run," said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut's chief elections official. "Connecticut has the toughest post-election audit law in the country, and these audits ensure the accuracy of our optical scan voting technology. Our very talented team of computer scientists at UConn has developed state-of-the-art software that will greatly speed up the post-election audit process, saving towns and cities time and labor costs. It is a great idea and I strongly encourage the Senate to pass this bill so we can pilot the software this fall."

The research and development conducted at the UConn VoTer Center to write the post-election audit software was funded through a competitive grant of $230,000 from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, a federal body established as a result of the Help America Vote Act of 2002. The federal grants were awarded to states that presented proposals to improve the pre- and post-election testing of electronic voting machines and auditing of machine counts to ensure the integrity of election results. Connecticut was one of only four U.S. states to win the funding. If enacted, HB 5492 will launch a pilot program to automate post-election audits in three Connecticut municipalities following the November 4, 2014 general election.

-30-