



DENISE W. MERRILL
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT



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Connecticut Reaches Agreement with the US Department of Justice on Motor-Voter Registration System

HARTFORD -- Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill and the Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner Michael Bzdyra today announced an agreement with the US Department of Justice that outlines a plan to electronically register voters through the DMV. The agreement settles the matter out of court.

The terms of the agreement among the Secretary, the DMV and the DOJ, states that the Department of Motor Vehicles shall implement "an electronic voter registration system that integrates voter registration into its existing licensing transaction system for DMV and AAA customers, so that every application for a driver's license or non-driver identification, including renewal application, shall function as an application to register to vote, unless the customer chooses to opt-out of voter registration."

The document states the new system will begin operating on Monday, August 8. The memorandum of understanding lays out timelines, divisions of responsibility, trainings and performance monitoring.

Secretary Merrill said, "This is a major step toward ensuring that every eligible citizen is registered to vote. It also just represents good customer service to the people of Connecticut, who will be able to register to vote or update their registrations while conducting business with the DMV. It will help them carry out two tasks in a single transaction, removing the need to go to town hall or mail in updated information. I am thankful to Commissioner Bzdyra and his staff for their commitment to making this a reality."

"We are pleased to help make registering to vote easier because voting is what makes our democracy strong. Hard work by DMV and SOTS employees has resulted in this agreement, a rare out-of-court settlement of an NVRA enforcement matter," said DMV Commissioner Michael Bzdyra.

The agreement will improve the state's compliance with the federal National Voter Registration Act, which requires voter registration at DMV offices when eligible citizens seek a driver's license or state-issued ID card.

In addition, the DMV and the Secretary of the State have maintained discussions on systems modernization that will streamline the voter registration process at the DMV.

Last May, the Secretary of the State and the DMV inked an agreement to develop a streamlined motor-voter system that will automatically offer a voter registration application to those eligible citizens who go to DMV for license or state-issued identification card services. In that agreement, there were a series of interim steps identified that include producing a unified application for licensing and voter registration system. That system will be introduced to the public on August 8. However, some paper-based components will remain in the process. The Secretary of the State and the DMV will continue to work together to produce a faster, more efficient, automated system in the coming years.

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