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For Immediate Release:  
February 10, 2016

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## **SECRETARY MERRILL SEEKS TO END PRACTICE OF ‘PARTY PURGING’**

**HARTFORD:** Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill submitted draft language to the General Assembly’s Government Administration and Elections Committee (GAE) to repeal a statute that allows political parties, through local registrars of voters working in concert with town chairs, to expel members for a handful of activities.

Secretary Merrill said, “Getting kicked out of a political party could bar someone from voting in this year’s presidential primary. Our concern is that the current law could restrict someone’s right to vote. At the very least, people should ask themselves if our statutes are the right place for these kinds of processes. Should the state play a role, through elections officials, in deciding the ideological purity of political party members? We don’t think so.”

The so-called “lack of good-faith party affiliation” statute subjects any political party member to dismissal. Evidence of “lack of good-faith party affiliation” includes “enrollment in any other political party or organization, active affiliation with any other political party or organization, knowingly being a candidate at any primary or caucus of any other party or political organization, or being a candidate for office under the designation of another party or organization,” within certain time periods.

The GAE has until February 19<sup>th</sup> to raise a bill.