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SECRETARY MERRILL PROPOSES AUTOMATIC MOTOR-VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill proposed a groundbreaking new system that would automatically register people doing business with the Department of Motor Vehicles to vote.

Secretary Merrill said, “This would be a game-changer in Connecticut. We could make registering to vote more convenient, efficient and cost-effective. Moreover, this could bring countless new voters onto the rolls.”

The Secretary of the State submitted draft language to the legislature’s Government Administration and Elections Committee requesting that a bill be raised.

There are variations of automatic motor-voter registration currently in operation throughout the country. The Secretary of the State’s proposal would automatically register eligible Department of Motor Vehicles customers to vote unless they choose to opt out.

The data provided to the DMV would populate a voter registration form. An “e-signature” program would permit an electronic signature to be collected so the client could certify citizenship; accept or refuse to register to vote or affiliate with a party. The registration applications would be electronically transmitted to the Registrars of Voters.

Secretary Merrill announced the proposal at the Connecticut State Capitol with the League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford and Common Cause Connecticut.

Advocates for voting rights lauded the proposal.

“Automatic, permanent voter registration has the power to transform voting in America,” said Jennifer L. Clark, counsel in the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice. “We can tear down outdated and error-prone registration systems by automatically and securely registering every eligible citizen to vote. By passing this reform, the legislature will make Connecticut a model for other states.”