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BYSIEWICZ: WITH GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE, U.S. SENATE VACANCIES IN CONNECTICUT TO BE FILLED BY SPECIAL ELECTION

SECRETARY OF THE STATE LED DRIVE TO ENACT LONG OVERDUE ELECTION
REFORM RESTORING DEMOCRATIC RIGHT OF CONNECTICUT VOTERS TO
CHOOSE U.S. SENATORS

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today praised Governor M. Jodi Rell's signature of Senate Bill No. 913, An Act Concerning United States Senate Vacancies, which passed by overwhelming margins in both the state House and Senate. The law takes effect immediately and mandates that vacancies in the U.S. Senate in Connecticut be filled by special election to take place 150 days after a vacancy occurs. The law contains exceptions reserving a gubernatorial appointment in the event of 50 or more Senators perishing in a national catastrophe, or if the vacancy occurs during the final year of the Senator's term.

"Despite earlier reservations, Governor Rell has done the right thing and signed this long overdue election reform into law," said Secretary Bysiewicz. "This law places the critical decision of electing a U.S. Senator back in the hands of the voters where it has always belonged, and also provides a more than adequate timetable for parties to hold primaries and nominate candidates. By enacting this bill we avoid the kind of nepotism, cronyism and corruption seen in other states such as Illinois and Alaska when governors have misused their power to appoint Senators to vacant seats. This is a win-win for voters and for our state government, and I hope it serves as an example to other states."

Bysiewicz added, "The enactment of the Senate Vacancy law is especially gratifying for me personally, since I have fought for its passage both as Secretary of the State and previously as a lawmaker."

The enactment of Senate Bill No. 913 restores Connecticut law to what it was prior to 1947 and makes Connecticut the 6th state to require special elections to fill U.S. Senate vacancies, the others are Alaska, Oregon, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. U.S. House vacancies in Connecticut are filled by a special election within 60 days or 120 days in the case of a primary.