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**SECRETARY MERRILL PRAISES GAE
COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT OF BILLS TO
PENALIZE ATTEMPTED ILLEGAL VOTING
AND IMPROVE POST-ELECTION AUDITS**

HB 5478 WOULD MAKE IT A CRIME TO ATTEMPT TO VOTE TWICE ON
ELECTION DAY; HB 5492 WOULD AUTHORIZE A PILOT PROJECT TO
AUTOMATE POST ELECTION AUDITS SAVING TOWNS TIME AND MONEY

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today praised members of the General Assembly's Government Administration and Elections (GAE) committee for endorsing two legislative proposals aimed at improving the election process. The committee yesterday unanimously approved HB 5478, "An Act Concerning Attempted Illegal Voting." The bill would make it a crime to attempt to vote twice on Election Day. Although it is currently a crime to vote twice on Election Day, there is currently no law banning the attempt to vote twice. HB 5478 now moves onto the Judiciary committee for further review. By a vote of 7 to 5, the GAE committee yesterday also passed HB 5492 which would launch a pilot program to test cutting edge software developed by researchers at the University of Connecticut VOTER Center that if successful would automate the post-election audit process. A software prototype under development since 2011 at UConn would use high volume, high speed scanners to make images of thousands of ballots within minutes so the results could be tested against the optical scan vote tallies from Election Day. Currently, post-election audits are conducted through a hand count of ballots at 10% of all polling precincts following an election, with the results compared to the machine totals from Election Day.

"The GAE committee's passage of these two bills is good news for Connecticut voters and for local election officials," said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut's chief elections official. "We need to send a strong message that we will not tolerate any attempt to knowingly vote twice on Election Day. If enacted, HB 5478 would be a strong deterrent to any voter intent on committing fraud at the ballot box and would give the State Elections Enforcement Commission the tools they need to impose penalties on those who choose to violate the law."

Secretary Merrill continued, “We are also very encouraged by the groundbreaking research and new software developed by the UConn VOTER Center that has the potential to save municipalities in our state precious time and thousands of dollars by automating the post-election audit process. I thank the GAE committee for endorsing a pilot program for the new software and I urge the General Assembly to pass this bill soon so we can test this system with real post-election audits this fall.”

The impetus to ban attempted illegal voting follows an incident reported in the 2013 Municipal Elections when a voter presented themselves to register and vote on Election Day in New Britain, claiming they were a new resident of New Britain after moving from Berlin. Berlin election officials then reported that the same voter later that day then presented themselves to cast a ballot at their previous polling place in Berlin. After poll workers in Berlin informed the voter that they were no longer registered to vote in their town because they had registered in New Britain, the individual then left the polling place without being permitted to vote. Election officials in Berlin filed a complaint on the matter to the State Elections Enforcement Commission but were later told there was no punishable offense in the complaint, since the individual did not vote twice and it is not against the law to make such an attempt.