



ALEX PADILLA
CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

March 8, 2016

The Honorable Denise Merrill
Secretary of State, State of Connecticut
210 Capitol Ave #104
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

RE: HB 5514 (Automatic Voter Registration) - SUPPORT

Dear Secretary Merrill:

I am pleased to support your effort to establish automatic voter registration at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in Connecticut. Last year, I sponsored legislation to create automatic voter registration at California's DMV. The bill was signed into law and the new automatic system is scheduled to start registering voters in July of 2017. I believe the law will have a powerful impact on registering to vote the over 7 million eligible by unregistered Californians.

During legislative deliberations there were questions as to the technological feasibility of automatic voter registration. There were concerns that our DMV had too many technology projects in progress. However, the same year we introduced the legislation the DMV was appropriated funds to install electronic voter registration at every DMV field office. Once installed, customers will answer voter registration questions electronically. Their information will then be electronically submitted to our statewide voter registration database. This process is further facilitated by our existing online voter registration portal which established an electronic connection between the DMV and our voter registration database.

Given the upcoming technology upgrade and the existing link, our legislature felt comfortable advancing automatic registration. We believe that a coordinated implementation of the technology upgrade and automatic registration would result in a modern, first-class voter registration process that exceeds 1993 federal National Voter Registration Act ("Motor Voter") requirements.

The legislature did recognize the DMV's many competing technology priorities. Our automatic registration law provides DMV appropriate flexibility on implementation details. This bill expressly provides that DMV shall establish "a schedule and method" for electronic transfer of data in "a manner and method" to be determined by DMV, in consultation with the Secretary of State. To date, my office and the DMV are working together to seamlessly integrate the technology upgrade and automatic registration.

Please contact me with any questions at alex.padilla@sos.ca.gov or at (916) 653-6774.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Padilla". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alex" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Padilla".

Alex Padilla
California Secretary of State