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CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee

PUBLIC HEARING

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H.B. No. 5514 AAC The Department of Motor Vehicles and Automatic Voter Registration

Comments submitted by Gloria Bent, President League of Women Voters Connecticut

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT IS A NON-PARTISAN STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION COMMITTED TO EFFECTIVE PUBLIC POLICY AND THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN THEIR GOVERNMENT.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut appreciates the opportunity to comment in support of H.B. No. 5514, AAC The Department of Motor Vehicles and Automatic Voter Registration.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the political process must be open to all citizens and that the right to vote with confidence in the election process must be guaranteed for all. To achieve these goals, the LWVCT supports expanded opportunities for the registration of potential voters via the Internet and applications submitted through various state agencies.¹

H.B. 5514 is an expansion of voter registration opportunities that will be especially beneficial to those new to voting rolls and to those previously registered who have recently moved into or within the the state.

¹ LWVCT Impact on Issues 2013-2015, page 14.

Automatic Voter registration through the DMV is being implemented in states across the country because it is more efficient, more secure, and more economical than many earlier methods. A study done by the Social Sciences Research Council indicated that one-third of election administration budgets across the board go to the costs associated with paper driven voter registration. States that have taken the time and made the initial investment in implementing Automatic Voter Registration through the DMV have experienced significant long-term savings. The state of Delaware, for example, experienced a \$200,000 savings in the first year of implementation.²

The 2017 implementation date for this bill will provide the time to ensure security, accuracy, and an opportunity to link information systems that can support rather than duplicate each other, serving larger government-service purposes.

Further, research by the Secretary of the State estimates that such a system could result in an additional 400,000 registered voters.³

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports H.B. 5514 and urges its passage because of its potential for increasing voter registration, modernizing the state's registration system, and significantly reducing the costs of election administration.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments.

² THE COSTS OF MODERNIZING VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEMS: a Case Study of California and Arizona' conducted by the Social Sciences Research Council, 2013, revised 2015.

³Merrill seeks automatic voter registration at Connecticut DMV to hike turnout, New Haven Register, Steve Majerus-Collins, ctnewsjunkie.com, 02/18/16.