
From the Office of CT Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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BYSIEWICZ PRAISES SENATE PASSAGE OF DODD-McCONNELL

Says Connecticut must stand ready to seize opportunity

Connecticut Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz called the bipartisan Dodd-McConnell bill passed by the Senate today "the most important election reform measure since the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965."

Bysiewicz said Connecticut could benefit directly from the federal legislation in two ways through: 1) eligibility for funding for new voting technology; 2) federal funding for completion of the Secretary of the State's centralized voter registration system.

"This bill represents the most significant financial commitment ever to election reform from the federal government," she said. "As a state facing a budget deficit, it is important for Connecticut to seize this opportunity."

At the urging of Bysiewicz, Connecticut Senator Christopher Dodd included provisions encouraging states to establish centralized voter registration systems, which numerous national election studies have identified as the cornerstone of voting reforms.

"A centralized voter registration system is the best way to protect voters' rights and prevent fraud, and Connecticut is further along than most states," Bysiewicz said. "The lesson we learned from the historic 2000 election and the Florida recount is that every vote is precious and every voter must be treated equally."

Citing Connecticut's aging fleet of mechanical lever voting machines and the need to improve ballot access for disabled voters, Bysiewicz has also proposed testing touch screen voting technology this November. That bill is currently being considered by the state Legislature.

"Lever voting machines have proven reliable for almost a century in Connecticut, but unfortunately are no longer manufactured," Bysiewicz said. "Exploring new voting technologies is critical for our state and as a first step I would like to see us test computerized touch screen voting during the 2002 state elections."

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