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## **BYSIEWICZ: GOVERNOR SHOULD SIGN BILL TO FILL U.S. SENATE VACANCIES BY SPECIAL ELECTION**

SECRETARY OF THE STATE PRAISES OVERWHELMING HOUSE PASSAGE OF  
LONG OVERDUE ELECTION REFORM TO RESTORE DEMOCRATIC RIGHT OF  
CONNECTICUT VOTERS TO CHOOSE U.S. SENATORS

**HARTFORD:** Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today praised the Connecticut House of Representatives for overwhelmingly passing Senate Bill No. 913, An Act Concerning United States Senate Vacancies, and is urging Governor Jodi Rell to sign the bill into law. The bill was approved by the State Senate last week. If enacted, the bill would mandate that future vacancies in the U.S. Senate in Connecticut be filled by special election and would set up a special election for U.S. Senate 150 days after a vacancy occurs in Connecticut. It also 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.

“Only the voters of Connecticut should have the right to choose a successor if a U.S. Senate seat goes vacant,” said Secretary Bysiewicz. “We have seen cases of nepotism, cronyism and corruption when governors abuse the awesome power to appoint a U.S. Senator. All you have to do is look to the examples of states like Illinois and Alaska and you will find reason enough to make this simple but long overdue change to our state's election laws. This decision should rest in the hands of the people alone. This is not about politics whatsoever, this is a reform of our election laws that I have sought for the last 15 years. I urge the governor to sign this bill into law and avoid some of the political shenanigans that other states have experienced when dealing with a Senate vacancy.”

Under current law, the governor can appoint a successor if a Senate vacancy occurs. That successor either serves out the rest of the previous senator's term, or until a special election can be called to choose a replacement. Senate bill No. 913 would remove the authority of the governor to name a U.S. Senator. The bill would also provide enough time, with some exceptions, for parties to hold nominating conventions and primaries if necessary to determine their candidate for U.S. Senate.

In Connecticut, U.S. House vacancies are filled by a special election within 60 days or 120 days in the case of a primary. Senate bill No. 913 would restore Connecticut law to what it was prior to 1947, when U.S. Senate vacancies were filled by special election.