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PRESS RELEASE

**Secretary of State Jim Condos Thanks Legislature for
Passage of Election Day Voter Registration**

Montpelier, VT – Today, the Vermont Senate concurred with the House on S.29, which allows all eligible Vermonters the opportunity to register to vote up until and on Election Day.

Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos released the following response: *“At its core, this bill is about protecting one of the most fundamental rights in our democracy, the right to vote. The right to vote is granted and protected by both the Vermont and United States Constitutions.”*

As the state’s chief elections officer, it is my duty to ensure that that right is protected and afforded to all Vermonters to which it applies. Any barriers to the exercise of an eligible citizen’s right to vote that do not serve a legitimate purpose should be removed. That is what S.29 has accomplished today.

I am grateful to House Speaker Shap Smith and Senate Pro Tem John Campbell along with their respective committee chairs, Rep. Donna Sweaney and Senator Jeanette White for moving this bill to passage.

Every year, my Elections Division receives phone calls from citizens who missed the deadline but are otherwise completely eligible to vote. Before this bill, we had no reasonable answer for these Vermonters – hard-working, busy Vermonters who, while civically minded, have many other family and work obligations. Whether someone has just moved into town, or simply forgot to register because life is busy, every eligible voter should be encouraged to participate – no eligible voter should be denied the opportunity to vote.

Legislation enacting same day voter registration has been debated for more than a decade. It is not a decision that has been made lightly, or without deep consideration. The bill being sent to the Governor’s desk contains many provisions requested by town clerks to help ease the process of administering registrations on Election Day. Going forward, my Elections Division is committed to working closely with the clerks to ensure that this is implemented with minimal disruption and in a way that protects the integrity of the election.

The primary threat to the integrity of elections in Vermont is the prospect of continuing to turn away eligible Vermonters who are fully qualified to participate in the election. With the passage of S.29, the Legislature has eliminated that threat. Election Day Registration is good for democracy, and good for Vermont.

“Passage of S.29 – Election Day Registration is good for democracy, and good for Vermont.”

