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SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

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-STATEMENT-

SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ COMMITTED TO CLEAN ELECTIONS, REGARDLESS OF FEDERAL COURT RULING

SECRETARY OF THE STATE STRONGLY SUPPORTS PUBLIC FINANCING, SAYS
JETTISONING THE ENTIRE SYSTEM NOW WOULD CAUSE CHAOS FOR STATE
CANDIDATES

HARTFORD: Connecticut Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today issued this statement reacting to the decision by U.S. District Court Judge Stephen Underhill declaring Connecticut's public campaign financing law unconstitutional.

"This is an unfortunate decision at a very inopportune time for our political system. Many of us in Connecticut worked very hard to enact the nation's most aggressive clean elections law because we saw the corrosive and corrupting influence of big money in our political system. Through enacting campaign finance reform in Connecticut, we banned contributions from lobbyists and contractors and cleaned up the system. Public financing has worked extremely well so far: in the 2008 election cycle 83% of candidates for State Senate and 74% of candidates for the State House participated in the system. The Citizens' Election Program awarded grants to 236 candidates: 135 Democrats, 96 Republicans, 3 Independent and 2 Working Families party candidates. That means that instead of campaigning based on who is contributing the most money, candidates can focus on the issues. If there are problems with minor parties getting access to public financing, we can fix those through legislation. We should not, however, throw out the entire clean elections system because of minor party issues. We are already halfway through the 2010 election cycle, and jettisoning the entire public financing system now would cause chaos for candidates for the General Assembly and Constitutional offices next year. It would also allow contributions from lobbyists and contractors back into state campaigns, which is exactly what we don't want. I am committed to clean elections and public financing, and I believe our system is a model for the entire nation. I for one refuse to let this one ruling overturn all the progress we have made in cleaning up our political progress."