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Governor Brown Swears in Alex Padilla as California's 31st Secretary of State

SACRAMENTO – Former State Senator Alex Padilla was sworn in as California's 31st Secretary of State today. The oath was administered by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., at a simple ceremony held in the auditorium of the Secretary of State Building in Sacramento. Governor Brown served as California's 24th Secretary of State from 1971 to 1975.

The ceremony included an invocation by Sacramento Rabbi Mona Alfi and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Padilla's son Roman. The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials was the event sponsor and Executive Director Arturo Vargas welcomed those in attendance.

After taking his oath of office, Padilla gave brief remarks in which he acknowledged the other Secretary of State candidates, commending the civil nature of the race both in word and tone. "I want to acknowledge the candidates with whom I campaigned this past year. It was a civil affair. We held public debates, focused on the issues, and stayed positive. Most importantly, we respected the voters and engaged in a substantive dialogue about civic engagement," Padilla said.

Padilla called the transition to Secretary of State an opportunity for "a fresh start." He also laid out some of his top priorities for the office in the coming years. "As Secretary of State, my top three priorities will be increasing voter participation, making it easier to start a business, and protecting voting rights," Padilla said.

"I intend to be an active and visible Secretary of State and I couldn't be more excited about getting to work," Padilla said.

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The new Secretary made clear that partnerships would be required to achieve these and other goals. “From newspapers, television, and radio, to Silicon Valley and Hollywood, to academia and grass roots organizers, and the creative world of advertising, I want to work with everyone to raise awareness and consciousness about our civic duty to vote,” Padilla added.

The new Secretary also said he would work to give Californians more ways to cast their ballot by building on the popularity of voting by mail and embracing technology that facilitates voting centers.

The Secretary of State serves as California’s chief elections officer and custodian of the State Archives while also overseeing many filings for business, campaign finance, and lobbying activity. The Secretary of State commissions notaries public, administers the Safe at Home confidential address program for victims of certain crimes, maintains the Domestic Partners Registry, and more.

Alex Padilla made history in November when he was elected to serve as California’s first Latino Secretary of State and only the second Latino to be elected to statewide office in California. Nationwide only 15 Latinos hold statewide office.

After attending Los Angeles public schools, Padilla attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), graduating with a degree in mechanical engineering. He later served as a member of the MIT Corporation board. Winning a seat on the Los Angeles City Council at age 26, Padilla was soon elected by his peers as Council President, the first Latino to hold that position. When President of the City Council, Padilla also served as the President of the League of California Cities. Padilla served in the California State Senate from 2006 to 2014 where he developed a reputation for working across party lines to get things done. Padilla, 41, lives in the San Fernando Valley with his wife Angela and their two young sons.

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