

DEBRA BOWEN

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Calls Attention to Vital Safe at Home Services on 'Denim Day California'

SACRAMENTO – As California leaders today mark Denim Day California – a key event every April during Sexual Assault Awareness Month – Secretary of State Debra Bowen reminded Californians of the crucial services provided by the Safe at Home program.

“The Safe at Home confidential address program helps protect survivors of sexual assault and certain other crimes, allowing them to live free from fear,” said Secretary Bowen. “Safe at Home services have helped nearly 3,800 Californians start new lives and regain the security they deserve.”

The Secretary of State’s office assists survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking protect their identities through the Safe at Home program, which offers confidential mail forwarding, voter registration, school records suppression, and more to abuse survivors.

Denim Day is an annual day of solidarity against sexual violence, bringing attention to the infamous 1999 Italian Supreme Court decision to overturn a rape conviction because the victim was wearing jeans and, the court reasoned, invited the attack.

“Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Denim Day serve to remind us of the brave women, men, and children who have survived abuse, and the countless others who are still at risk,” said Secretary Bowen. “These events also serve to highlight the progress our society has made in respecting victims and taking their safety seriously.”

Established in 1999, the Safe at Home program works with enrolling agencies such as district attorneys’ offices, health clinics, and women’s shelters to protect the identities of eligible program participants. The program forwarded more than 330,000 pieces of mail in 2007.

Twenty-eight states have confidential mail-forwarding programs but California’s more extensive Safe at Home is widely considered a national model. Currently, approximately 2,100 people are enrolled in Safe at Home, most of whom are women and children.

For more information about Safe at Home and a county-by-county list of enrolling agencies, visit <http://www.sos.ca.gov/safeathome/>.

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