



# DEBRA BOWEN

## CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

DB10:100

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 28, 2010

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### Secretary of State Bowen Secures Permanence for Safe at Home Program as Domestic Violence Awareness Month Begins

**SACRAMENTO** – As Domestic Violence Awareness Month is set to begin later this week, Secretary of State Debra Bowen applauded the Governor's signing of Senate Bill 1233, which Secretary Bowen sponsored to make the Safe at Home confidential address program permanent.

"Since its inception in 1999, the Safe at Home Program has helped protect the addresses of nearly 5,000 survivors of domestic violence and other crimes," said Secretary Bowen. "Making Safe at Home permanent means that survivors no longer have to worry that the protections they rely on will disappear."

Safe at Home is a confidential address program that offers mail forwarding, voter registration, school records suppression and other services to many victims of abuse, stalking and sexual assault, as well as reproductive health care staff, volunteers and patients. A national model, the California program currently has more than 2,400 participants, 96 percent of whom are women and children.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month – a time to recognize the people who have suffered abuse while also remembering there are thousands more who are being hurt and intimidated, and either don't know how to get help or are too afraid to ask for it. From verbal, mental and physical abuse to stalking, domestic violence takes many forms. It occurs in every ethnic, racial, religious, age, national origin and sexual orientation group.

The Secretary of State's office works with approximately 225 enrolling agencies throughout California to assist victims in remaining hidden from their abusers and starting new lives free from fear. These agencies, which include district attorney's offices, shelters, crisis centers and health centers, assist with introducing victims to the Safe at Home program, as well as enrollment and follow-up.

Currently, 35 states have a confidential address program and with the signing of SB 1233, California becomes the 13<sup>th</sup> state to make such a program permanent.

For more information about the Secretary of State's Safe at Home confidential address program go to [www.casafeathome.org](http://www.casafeathome.org) or call (877) 322-5227.

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