

# DEBRA BOWEN

## CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

DB11:035

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 24, 2011

Contact: Shannan Velayas  
(916) 653-6575

### New State Archives Exhibit Opens on Eve of Women's Equality Day, Celebrates 100 Years of California Election Reforms

**SACRAMENTO** – As America prepares to celebrate 91 years of voting rights for women on the August 26 anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution, a new exhibition highlighting California's centennial anniversaries of direct democracy and women's voting rights was unveiled today at the California Secretary of State's office.

*The Spirit of 1911* exhibit displays many treasures from State Archives collections including photographs, maps, legislative and campaign materials, and other historical items that provide insight into the pivotal Progressive Era. Progressive reforms approved in a statewide special election on October 10, 1911, amended the state constitution to establish the initiative process (making California the tenth state to do so); granted women the right to vote (nine years before nationwide suffrage); and sought greater control of powerful corporations through government regulation. The exhibit covers Governor Hiram Johnson's enduring legacy; the politically dominant Southern Pacific Railroad; establishment of the Public Utilities Commission; and more.

"It's been one hundred years since California voters approved a set of constitutional amendments that forever altered the political, social and economic landscapes of the Golden State," said Secretary of State Debra Bowen, the state's chief elections officer and custodian of the State Archives. "This exhibit highlights the struggles of Californians who worked to overcome government corruption by giving themselves the ability to counter the Legislature and the Governor."

*The Spirit of 1911* exhibit is open to the public Monday through Friday (9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) and the first Saturday of each month (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) at 1020 O Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, in Sacramento.

The Secretary of State's office has been home to the State Archives since 1850. The State Archives maintains the complete records of the official acts of the legislative and executive branches of state government, as well as Golden State history in the form of tens of millions of documents, maps, photographs, film and audio recordings, and other treasures. For more information about the collections, or for assistance on a historical research project, go to [www.sos.ca.gov/archives](http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives).

###