



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **KEVIN SHELLEY**

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Shelley Vows for More Corporate Accountability and Increased Voter Participation as California's Next Secretary of State

*Pledges to Renew the Promise of American Democracy by Restoring Full Faith
in our Electoral Process and Confidence in our Economic System*

SACRAMENTO --- Surrounded by family, friends and hundreds of supporters, former Assembly Majority Leader Kevin Shelley (D – San Francisco) was officially sworn in as California's 28th Secretary of State at 2:30 p.m. today by California Supreme Court Associate Justice Kathryn Werderger.

In his Inaugural Address, Secretary Shelley acknowledged the challenges of coming into office in the midst of an economic crisis but still laid out an aggressive agenda that will not only increase voter participation, but will also expand the Secretary of State's Office to go farther in ensuring more corporate accountability and restoring confidence in our economic system.

"I launched my campaign for Secretary of State nearly two years ago – in the shadow of the Florida election disaster in which thousands of voters were disenfranchised and the history of our country was literally altered by a few errant votes," said Shelley.

"This country was founded on a promise – that every voice will be heard and every vote will be counted. Today, that promise is unrealized as millions of Americans stay home on Election Day – too discouraged or disconnected to make their voices heard. Despite the challenges ahead, I take this oath with confidence, even optimism."

As part of his pledge to increase participation and restore faith in the electoral process, Shelley vowed to pursue:

- An aggressive and ongoing campaign of voter education to help bring Californians back to the polls
- Extended polling hours and additional voting days to make it easier and more convenient to vote

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- A voters' Bill of Rights that guarantees qualified poll workers easy access to information and printed instructions in a voter's native language
- Online voter registration and, eventually, online voting
- A voter registration form in every high school diploma and in every new citizen packet
- The ability to vote at any polling place throughout California, regardless of where you live
- "Clean" campaigns that give the voters the information they need, not the mean spiritedness they despise

"I will work to make sure that Proposition 41 funds are spent efficiently and effectively so that California never becomes Florida," continued Shelley. "I will vigorously implement a major electoral reform I drafted – which gives every Californian the ability to become a permanent absentee voter, and helps boost voter participation by allowing every citizen the chance to vote by mail."

Shelley also vowed to expand and use the power of his office to increase corporate accountability in part by implementing the Investor Bill of Rights, which he wrote while in the Assembly and the Governor signed into law.

"The Secretary of State is more than the guardian of your voting system," said Shelley. "The office is also given the responsibility of overseeing corporate filings. In my administration, we will take that responsibility to the next level – making sure we also use the power of this office to ensure that companies doing business in California are held to the highest standards of ethical business practices.

"We can bring California back from the brink of economic disaster by growing our economy, creating jobs and promoting economic justice. But none of that is possible unless corporations are held to the standards necessary to restore the trust and confidence of American investors and consumers.

"It is with great honor that I take this oath – and take up the task of changing California by changing the way Californians vote," concluded Shelley.

A complete copy of Secretary of State Kevin Shelley's Inaugural Address is attached.

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SECRETARY OF STATE
KEVIN SHELLEY
STATE OF CALIFORNIA



Inaugural Address
by
The Honorable Kevin Shelley
January 6, 2003

(as prepared)

I'd like to pause for a moment of silence for the tragic passing of Joe Remcho, whose contributions to this state and to this office were incalculable.

Justice Werderger – it is an honor to be sworn into this office by someone who serves this state with such distinction.

As all of you can see, if ever you wish to set your spirits soaring – just go by Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco on any Sunday and hear Rev. Cecil Williams preach and the Glide Ensemble sing.

Harry – you restored the public's confidence in the office of Insurance Commissioner, and you have been a great friend to multiple generations of Shelleys.

Dolores – I will never forget our walk together on the road to Sacramento this past summer as you led the march to see historic protections for California farm workers signed into law.

Mr. Mayor – you have been a great mayor, a great mentor and a great friend. Thank you for every thing you have done.

And finally, to my family. I have been blessed with a wonderful mother, Thelma Shelley, a trailblazer in her own right. Two wonderful sisters, Kate and Joan-Maire Shelley. And the three greatest loves of my life, my wife Dominique and my son Jack and his little brother or sister due in August. They serve as my inspiration each and every day.

I launched my campaign for Secretary of State nearly two years ago – in the shadow of the Florida election disaster in which thousands of voters were disenfranchised and the history of our country was literally altered by a few errant votes.

My campaign grew and found a voice at a time when our country was first becoming aware of the extensive corporate fraud and abuse that has shaken the very foundations of our economy. Now, I take the oath of office at a moment when our state faces its greatest economic crisis since the Depression of the 1930's.

But despite the challenges ahead – I take this oath with confidence, even optimism. Because I know that I am here today because the voters of California joined us in support of a few simple and sacred principles. And I know these principles will see us through.

First – and most importantly – we pledged to help renew the promise of American Democracy by restoring full faith in our electoral process.

Next – we pledged that this office would be a state and national leader in the struggle to restore confidence in our economic system – confidence that has been shaken by corporate accounting tricks and outright fraud and abuse.

Finally – I pledged that as Secretary of State I would be an agent of change. Because I believe in my heart that to change California – we need to change the way Californians vote. And that is exactly what I will do.

This country is founded on a promise – that every voice will be heard and every vote will be counted. Today, that promise is unrealized as millions of Americans stay home on Election Day – too discouraged or disconnected to make their voices heard.

Bill Jones and I put partisan differences aside last March and worked together to pass California's Proposition 41, the historic Voting Modernization Act. Now, I have the responsibility and the honor of implementing this reform as Secretary of State. I will work to make sure that Proposition 41 funds are spent efficiently and effectively so that California never becomes Florida.

I will vigorously implement another major electoral reform I drafted – which gives every Californian the ability to become a permanent absentee voter, which helps boost voter participation by allowing every citizen the chance to vote by mail.

And I will make good on my promise to create a Youth Voter Corps that will help harness the energy of youth to bring young people back into our political system.

As all of you know – the Secretary of State is more than the guardian of our voting system. The office is also given the responsibility of overseeing corporate filings. In my administration, we will take that responsibility to the next level – making sure we also use the power of this office to ensure that companies doing business in California are held to the highest standards of ethical business practices.

Last year I wrote, and the Governor signed, the Investor Bill of Rights that increases corporate disclosure requirements and sets up a fund to compensate victims of corporate fraud. Now, as Secretary of State, I will implement that very same law.

I will make sure that the consumers of California have all the information they need on every business before they spend their hard earned dollars at the mall or invest their savings in the stock market.

We can bring California back from the brink of economic disaster by growing our economy, creating jobs and promoting economic justice. But none of that is possible unless corporations are held to the high standards necessary to restore the trust and confidence of American investors and consumers.

As Secretary of State, I will be an activist on behalf of California consumers, workers and investors to make sure that corporations and corporate leaders are accountable to us.

You know, despite the tough times Californians face at home, and the difficult challenges all America confronts abroad, I believe that this is the moment to recommit ourselves to our basic political beliefs.

When I was growing up, I had one political hero above all others. I was inspired as a young man and as a young elected official by a story I heard as a boy at home. It was the story of how one California State Senator stood up and fought against the internment of Japanese Americans, despite the political consequences and public hysteria.

That man believed our principles are worth fighting for – even when doing so had a personal cost.

That state senator was my father, Jack Shelley. And what he did then informs and inspires what I hope to do today.

Because I did not seek your votes to keep things the same. I came here to fight for change – starting with changing the way this state votes. Challenges abroad are never an excuse to stop needed change at home – and change is what we need.

I believe that an activist Secretary of State should take the lead in bringing millions of Californians back to our electoral system. That's why I will fight for:

- Extended polling hours and additional voting days to make it easier to vote. We don't live in a 9-5 work world any longer. Our voting should reflect the tight schedules of hardworking California families.
- A Voters' Bill of Rights that guarantees qualified poll workers, easy access to information and printed instructions in a voter's native language.
- Online voter registration and, eventually, online voting
- A voter registration form in every High School Diploma and in every new citizen packet.
- The ability to vote at any polling place throughout California, regardless of where you live.
- An aggressive and ongoing campaign of voter education to help bring Californians back to the polls. We have helped teach the public to stop smoking, to wear seatbelts and to recycle. We should use the same energy and moral authority to encourage every citizen to vote.

- And, Clean campaigns that give the voters the information they need, not the mean spiritedness they despise.

With your help and support, I plan to run an office that can meet the challenge of bringing millions of Californians back to their polling places.

Because I know that if you care about our environment, you need to care about bringing the young and disillusioned back to the polls.

If you care about justice for every working man and woman, you need to care about conducting elections in a way that gives hardworking Californians the time they need to cast their votes.

If you care about protecting the reproductive rights of every California woman, you need to care about making sure that every possible citizen is registered and every possible vote is cast.

If you care about protecting the rights of Senior Citizens, you need to care about making sure seniors have full access to their polling places.

In other words, if we care about the future of our state we need to care profoundly about the conduct of our elections.

Nearly 40 years ago this country passed the Voting Rights Act. With that act, we promised that every American could participate in our Democracy – regardless of race, religion, gender or generation.

That promise has not been met. But as long as I am Secretary of State, that promise will never be forgotten.

As your Secretary of State I will fight every day on behalf of poor people who have lost faith in this system

For those young people who never registered or never voted.

For working families too busy making ends meet to make it to the polls.

For seniors and the disabled who can't overcome the significant barriers that still exist in voting.

For immigrants who can't get help in their own language at their own polling place.

For consumers and taxpayers who are paying the price of corporate fraud and abuse.

I will fight for them – I will fight for you. So it is with great honor that I take this oath – and take up the task of changing California by changing the way Californians vote.

Thank you.