



# DEBRA BOWEN

## CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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### **WILL CALIFORNIA VOTERS BE HEADING TO THE POLLS IN FEBRUARY?**

### **SECRETARY OF STATE DEBRA BOWEN COMMENTS ON NEW MEASURE TO MOVE THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY TO FEBRUARY**

**SACRAMENTO** – California voters would play a more significant role in selecting the presidential nominees of each political party under a measure introduced today at the Capitol to move the state's presidential primary from the traditional June election date to the first Tuesday in February.

SB 113 (Calderon) leaves the legislative and congressional primary races on the June ballot, but moves the presidential primary to the first Tuesday in February in any year evenly divisible by four, beginning in 2008, meaning that if SB 113 becomes law, California's 2008 presidential primary will be held on February 5. Under the State Constitution, any initiative measure that has qualified for the ballot more than 131 days before a statewide election would also appear on that February ballot.

Secretary of State Bowen made the following comments after the bill was introduced:

“California is the largest state in the union and its nearly 16 million registered voters should have a stronger voice in choosing the presidential nominees for each party. However, running a statewide election, even if it's only for a handful of contests, is no small undertaking, and holding three statewide elections in the span of ten months will present a challenge to local elections officials, poll workers, and voters.

“The most immediate challenge involves the voting systems that have been certified for use in California. I'm going to be conducting a top-to-bottom review of the systems used in this state, and the federal government is looking at changes to the voting machine certification process as well. If the top-to-bottom review finds that significant changes need to be made, it would be difficult to implement them in time for a February primary election that's less than 13 months away, but I'm certainly looking forward to a broader discussion on the issue.”

A similar bill, AB 157 (Plescia), was introduced yesterday.