



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Applauds Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger for Expansion of Safe at Home Program

*Outlines major outreach effort to inform newly eligible Californians
about the Safe at Home Program*

SACRAMENTO, CA -- Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed SB 1062 to expand the Secretary of State's Safe at Home Program to include victims of sexual assault today.

"I commend the Governor for expanding the Safe at Home program to include victims of sexual assault. I am prepared to implement this expansion and let newly eligible Californians know about this important service.

"As an original author of the Safe at Home program I understand how important these protections are," Secretary McPherson said. "No Californian should have to live in fear that something as simple as opening a bank account or registering to vote will jeopardize his or her safety and I look forward to extending these protection services to them."

The Safe at Home Program gives victims of domestic abuse, stalking, reproductive health care workers and now sexual assault victims the opportunity to keep their addresses private via a confidential mail forwarding process administered by the Secretary of State. The program also allows eligible voters to keep their voter registration information confidential. SB 489, introduced by then-Senator McPherson, established the program in 1998. Secretary McPherson also authored SB 1318 in 2000, which allowed victims of stalking to be eligible Safe at Home program.

Under Secretary McPherson's leadership, the Safe at Home program was streamlined to drastically reduce the time required for enrollment and renewal. He also implemented changes to the program to reduce administrative costs, which will minimize the cost of the program expansion. Enrollment in Safe at Home now takes 1-2 days (down from 4-6 weeks) and a renewal takes less than 24 hours (down from 3-4 days).

Secretary McPherson is implementing the following to let newly eligible Californians know about the Safe at Home Program:

- Expanding outreach to new enrolling agencies

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- Creating a new, more accessible Safe at Home website that will act as a domestic violence and sexual assault portal to aid victims in locating support services, housing, financial aid and information on local shelters.
- Contracting with over 30 new enrolling agencies and training over 400 new domestic violence advocates on Safe at Home enrollment requirements and procedures.
- Hosting an October domestic violence month forum (part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month) designed to educate agencies, organizations and other stakeholders on available resources.
- Partnering with new stakeholders to increase public awareness of changes in the Safe at Home program.