



Safe at Home

MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

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Safe at Home Biennial Voting Report April 2009

Reporting period September 1, 2007 – December 31, 2008

Safe at Home Background

The Safe at Home address confidentiality program is managed by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. The program, which began September 1, 2007, is open to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and those who otherwise fear for their safety. Participants in Safe at Home are assigned a designated address (a PO Box in St. Paul) that can be used for all of their interactions with others as an important part of their personal safety plan. The designated address allows the participant to go about their daily life without disclosing their actual home or employment address. All private and public entities in the state of Minnesota must accept the Safe at Home address as the participant's actual address. Safe at Home receives a participant's mail and forwards all of their First Class Mail to them.

Safe at Home Voting Process Overview

Voting by Safe at Home program participants is governed by Minnesota Statutes, section 5B.06 and Minnesota Rule 8290.1400. The voting experience under Safe at Home is time-consuming and somewhat cumbersome. However, it is the only way participants can vote safely, without the need to share their name and address with others. It begins upon enrollment where each applicant is given the opportunity to register as an ongoing absentee voter. At least 45 days before a regularly scheduled election, and within two days after a special election is scheduled, Safe at Home sends absentee ballot applications to each participant with ongoing absentee ballot status. Upon receipt of a completed absentee ballot application, Safe at Home requests the ballot from the appropriate election jurisdiction without disclosing the voter's name and actual address. When Safe at Home receives the blank ballot, it is sent to the voter along with instructions, a secrecy envelope, an absentee ballot return envelope, and a postage-paid return envelope addressed to Safe at Home. The voter then returns the ballot to Safe at Home in the envelopes provided. When the ballot is received, Safe at Home performs a name and signature match, and determines whether the certification on the absentee ballot return envelope was properly completed. If it is, the envelope with the voter's name and address is separated from the secrecy envelope containing the absentee ballot. Safe at Home certifies that the ballot was cast by a program participant, and that the voter's certification was properly completed. The Safe at Home certification and the secrecy envelope are placed together in a larger envelope and sent to the appropriate county auditor, who sends the ballot to the precinct to be counted. Election judges in the precinct are required to accept the ballot, if the certification has been properly completed.

Pursuant to Minnesota Rule 8290.1400, subpart 13, Safe at Home determined on March 31, 2009 that none of the Safe at Home participants who had cast ballots in any election since the inception of the program were also recorded in the statewide voter registration system as having voted using the usual process in that election.

The following is a report of the activities of participants who voted through the Safe at Home program from September 1, 2007 through December 31, 2008. In all cases, Safe at Home staff followed the procedures outlined above.

Voting through the Safe at Home Program

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Ballots returned on or before Election Day
certification competed accurately?

<u>Ballots Requested</u>	<u>Total Returned</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Arrived Late</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>
4	2	0	0	2	0%
15	9	9	0	0	60%
33	27	24	2	1	73%
0	-	-	-	-	-