



## Safe at Home

### MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

Mark Ritchie

## Safe at Home Biennial Voting Report April 2011

January 1, 2009 - December 31, 2010

### Safe at Home Program Overview

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. The designated address allows the participant to go about their daily life without disclosing their actual home, employment, or school address. All private and public entities in the state of Minnesota must accept the Safe at Home address as a participant's actual address. Safe at Home receives participants' mail and forwards all of their First Class Mail to them, and assists them with their interactions with third parties should problems arise when giving the Safe at Home address to others. Staff also work with third party stakeholders to ensure legal compliance and to make sure their business practices accommodate the safety needs of Safe at Home participants.

### Safe at Home Voting Process Overview

Voting by Safe at Home program participants is governed by *Minnesota Statutes*, section 5B.06 and *Minnesota Rules*, section 8290.1300. The voting experience under Safe at Home is time-consuming and somewhat cumbersome. It is, however, 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 through Safe at Home. At least 45 days before an election, or within two business days after the scheduling of a special election, all registered Safe at Home absentee voters are identified by Safe at Home staff. Each registered voter is sent an *Absentee Ballot Request Form* with instructions to complete it and return it to the Safe at Home office if they wish to vote. Upon receipt of a completed ballot request form, staff request the ballot for the appropriate jurisdiction without disclosing the voter's name or actual address. When Safe at Home receives the blank ballot, it is sent to the voter along with voting instructions, a secrecy envelope, an absentee ballot return envelope, and a postage-paid return envelope addressed to Safe at Home. The voter returns the ballot to Safe at Home in the envelopes provided.

When the ballot is received, Safe at Home performs a name, signature and identification number match and determines whether the certificate 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. The Safe at Home staff certify that the ballot was cast by a Safe at Home participant, and that the voter's certification was properly completed. The secrecy envelope, which remains sealed at all times, is placed in an envelope containing the certification statement. The statement is checked and the envelope is signed by the Safe at Home staff person. The certification envelope does not contain the participant voter's name or actual address, but it does contain the voter's local jurisdiction information. The completed certification envelope is sent to the appropriate county auditor, who provides the ballot to

the appropriate absentee ballot board. Election judges on the absentee ballot board are required to accept and count the ballot if the certification indicates the return envelope was properly completed.

Pursuant to *Minnesota Rules*, section 8290.1300, subpart 11, Safe at Home determined by March 31, 2009 and by March 31, 2010 that none of the Safe at Home participants who had cast ballots in any election during the preceding twelve months were also recorded in the statewide voter registration system as having voted using the traditional, non-Safe at Home voting process in that same election.

The following is a report of the activities of program voters from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010 provided in accordance with *Minnesota Rules*, section 8290.1300, subpart 14. In all cases, Safe at Home staff followed required procedures at all times.

### Safe at Home Voting Activity January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010

<b>SPECIAL ELECTIONS 2009</b>				
Ballots Requested	Total Returned On or Before Election Day	Certification Completed Accurately?	Success Rate:	Ballots That Arrived Late (after Election Day):
2	2	Yes: 2    No: 0	100%	0
<b>PRIMARY 2009</b>				
Ballots Requested	Total Returned On or Before Election Day	Certification Completed Accurately?	Success Rate:	Ballots That Arrived Late (after Election Day):
4	1	Yes: 1    No: 0	100%	1
<b>GENERAL ELECTION 2009</b>				
Ballots Requested	Total Returned On or Before Election Day	Certification Completed Accurately?	Success Rate:	Ballots That Arrived Late (after Election Day):
21	12	Yes: 12    No: 0	100%	0
<b>SPECIAL ELECTIONS 2010</b>				
Ballots Requested	Total Returned On or Before Election Day	Certification Completed Accurately?	Success Rate:	Ballots That Arrived Late (after Election Day):
1	0	Yes: 0    No: 0	N/A	0
<b>PRIMARY 2010</b>				
Ballots Requested	Total Returned On or Before Election Day	Certification Completed Accurately?	Success Rate:	Ballots That Arrived Late (after Election Day):
39	24	Yes: 22    No: 2	92%	1
<b>GENERAL ELECTION 2010</b>				
Ballots Requested	Total Returned On or Before Election Day	Certification Completed Accurately?	Success Rate:	Ballots That Arrived Late (after Election Day):
75	41	Yes: 41    No: 0	100%	1