

Statement on behalf of California Secretary of State Debra Bowen to the Cal Berkeley Democrats

Thursday, February 11, 2010

Thank you very much to the Cal Berkeley Democrats for inviting this statement on behalf of my candidacy. While I could not be here today, I am extremely appreciative of your continued support and look forward to an exciting campaign.

Since my election as Secretary of State, I have made it my top priority to make elections more secure, accurate, reliable, and accessible.

After taking office in 2007, I arranged a top-to-bottom review of California's voting systems to help ensure election integrity. As a result of the review, we restructured the use of direct recording electronic machines to increase voting security. The review has also served as a model for other states.

I have focused on establishing a more open and transparent government by increasing public access to election information through actions such as expanding phone and Internet services, offering webcasts and transcripts of public hearings, and creating a downloadable audio version of the state's voter information guide. Our office has also expanded the agency's availability through social media sources, such as YouTube and Facebook, and by allowing website visitors to sign up for RSS and Twitter feeds that send them updates on ballot measures, press releases, voting system developments, and communications with county elections officials.

Another top priority has been empowering voters by increasing voter registration and voter turnout. I established a multi partisan working group to help simplify California's official voter registration card, and in the 2008 statewide election 13.7 million Californians voted, which was over 79% of all registered voters. Additionally, our office has actively reached out to young voters through two Student Mock Elections held in 2008. According to civicyouth.org, the percentage of California voters ages 18-29 increased from 46% in 2004 to 53.1% in 2008.

In recognition of these efforts to ensure election integrity and government transparency, I was honored to receive the 2008 John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award, the nation's most prestigious honor for elected public servants who choose principles over partisanship.

Thank you again for providing me the opportunity to deliver a statement on behalf my candidacy for re-election as Secretary of State. I would be honored by your support so that we can continue our work to make California's elections system more transparent, increase confidence in the system, and bring more voters into the political process. Please visit www.DebraBowen.com for more information on my campaign along with links to my Twitter and Facebook profiles.