

**\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\***

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**Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie and Safe at Home  
Recognize Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project for its Efforts to Serve Those Seeking  
Safety**

**SAINT PAUL, Minn.—April, 16 2010**—Secretary of State Mark Ritchie recognized Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project for providing outstanding service to the community and for making exceptional contributions to the development and promotion of Safe at Home.

“Safe at Home is a critical program helping Minnesota families feel more safe and secure,” Ritchie said. “I thank Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project for their commitment to protecting those who feel that their safety is threatened. This program is helping hundreds of Minnesotans move forward to a brighter future and is well positioned to help hundreds more as our program grows.”

Safe at Home is an address confidentiality program that is available throughout Minnesota for people who fear for their safety such as victims of stalking or domestic violence. It is also available to those wanting safety for professional reasons such as judges, prosecutors, and other law enforcement personnel.

The program provides participants a substitute mailing address and mail-forwarding service to conceal their location. This confidential arrangement gives participants the ability to go about their daily lives without fear that an abuser may discover their actual address. Once enrolled, a participant's mail is delivered to Safe at Home's designated address and then forwarded by the program to the participant's actual physical address. By law, public and private entities must accept the Safe at Home address as the participant's true address.

Since the program began on Sept. 1, 2007, it has served over 600 people and currently serves 450 participants. Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project partnered with Safe at Home in 2009 employing 8 application assistants to serve residents throughout the state of Minnesota.

Safe at Home partners with community-based organizations whose mission consists of delivering direct advocacy services to participants. Minnesota's 140 application assistants act as a gateway to the program and provide services and referrals in most counties. Application

assistants must be employed by a community-based organization and are not paid, employed or contracted by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. However, application assistants must complete the office's Safe at Home training requirements.

"This program is a great example of a private and public partnership that works," concluded Ritchie. "The success of our program is the direct result of outstanding work produced by our community-based partners like Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project.

For more information about how to become a Safe at Home Application Assistant, visit: [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us) or call 651-201-1399.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Mark Ritchie is Minnesota's 21<sup>st</sup> Secretary of State. Downloadable press photograph available at: <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=4142>.

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