

# California Secretary of State, Dr. Shirley N. Weber

**Shirley Nash Weber, Ph.D.** was nominated to serve as California Secretary of State by Governor Gavin Newsom on December 22, 2020 and sworn into office on January 29, 2021. She is California's first Black Secretary of State and only the fifth African American to serve as a state constitutional officer in California's 170-year history.

Weber was born to sharecroppers in Hope, Arkansas during the segregationist Jim Crow era. Her father, who left Arkansas after being threatened by a lynch mob, did not have the opportunity to vote until he was in his 30s. Her grandfather never voted as custom and law in the South, before the Voting Rights Act of 1965, systemically suppressed voting by Blacks. Although her family moved to California when Weber was three years old, it was her family's experience in the Jim Crow South that has driven her activism and legislative work. She has fought to secure and expand civil rights for all Californians, including restoring voting rights for individuals who have completed their prison term.

Weber attended the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where she received her BA, MA and PhD by the age of 26. Prior to receiving her doctorate, she became a professor at San Diego State University (SDSU) at the age of 23. She also taught at California State University at Los Angeles (CSULA) and Los Angeles City College before coming to SDSU. She retired from the Department of Africana Studies after 40 years as a faculty member and serving several terms as department chair.

Before her appointment, Secretary Weber served four terms as an Assembly Member representing California's 79th Assembly District, which includes parts of the City of San Diego as well as several cities and communities in the San Diego region. Weber also served as a member and chair of the San Diego Unified School District and has twice served as a California Elector, including chairing the California College of Presidential Electors on December 14, 2020.

During her tenure in the Assembly, Weber chaired the Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee, Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Public Safety, and Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health. Weber was the first African American to serve as the chair of the Assembly Budget Committee. She also served as a member of the Standing Committees on Education, Higher Education, Elections, Budget, Banking and Finance.

In addition, Weber chaired the Select Committee on Campus Climate, which was created to examine and mitigate hate crimes on California's college and university campuses. The committee also explored student hunger, sexual assaults, homelessness, and freedom of expression. She formerly created and chaired the Select Committee on Higher Education in San Diego County, which explored the need for an additional higher education facility in San Diego and ways to improve the quality, affordability and equal access of higher education in the region.

From 2019 - 2020, she served as chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), which consists of the state's African American legislators and has the goal of promoting equal opportunity for California's African American community. Weber broke records during her tenure by garnering extraordinary support for CLBC's efforts and its projects.

Weber's genuine passion and tireless quest for equality and fairness in all sectors of life have resulted in her pursuit of reforms in education and criminal justice. Her equity-oriented legislation includes: school finance and accountability, classroom safety, ethnic studies, early learners, attendance and dropout rates,

quality instruction, law enforcements' use-of-force and body camera practices, reparations, the CalGangs' database, Affirmative Action, inclusive jury selection and instruction, predatory lending, resources for exonerees, restorative justice, racial profiling, among others. Weber has also pursued public policy changes related to health, senior citizens, veterans and military families.

Secretary Weber is a mother of two adult children, three grandchildren and was married for 29 years to the late Honorable Daniel Weber. She is number six in a family of eight children. Her Parents, David and Mildred Nash, are deceased. Her hobbies are reading and traveling.