



DEBRA BOWEN

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Secretary of State's Office Puts More Public Information at Your Fingertips

Bowen Adds Another Open-Government Tool to Robust Website

SACRAMENTO – As the start of Sunshine Week (March 14-20) draws near, Secretary of State Debra Bowen today offered a rundown of key information accessible through www.sos.ca.gov, and introduced a new feature listing campaign finance and lobbying activity filers who owe outstanding fines for late filings.

If a campaign or lobbying disclosure form, required under the California Political Reform Act, is filed with the Secretary of State after the statutory deadline, the filer is fined \$10 per day until the form is filed. To make it easier for the public to identify late documents and those responsible for them, a weekly updated listing of late filers with unpaid fines is now on the Secretary of State's website at www.sos.ca.gov/prd/outstanding-fines/outstanding-fines-info.htm.

“When disclosure statements are filed late or, in some cases, not at all, voters don't have access to important information they're entitled to see,” said Secretary Bowen, the state's chief elections officer. “Shining a light on late filers may add some powerful motivation for everyone to comply with the law.”

Since her first day on the job, Bowen has sought to make the Secretary of State's office more transparent by providing public access to a wide range of records and information for business entities, Uniform Commercial Code, elections, campaign finance, lobbying activity and the State Archives. One of Bowen's first acts was to commission a groundbreaking top-to-bottom review of voting technology and election auditing standards, during which she provided unprecedented access to details such as draft documents, testing experts' curricula vitae and testing security protocols, and provided opportunities for public input when none were required. (For more top-to-bottom review details, visit <http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Campaign/Candidates>).

Following is a roundup of key resources on the Secretary of State's website.

- Curious about who has made political contributions, who gets the money and how it's spent? For a list of who is running for what state office, committees the candidate controls, financial disclosure documents and more, go to <http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Campaign/Candidates>.

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- Campaign committees that have organized to support or oppose measures on California's statewide ballot disclose their income and expenditures at <http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Campaign/Measures>.
- Want to know who is trying to influence legislative or administrative actions, and how? Lobbyists, lobbying firms and entities that employ lobbyists file financial disclosure reports with the Secretary of State's Office on a quarterly basis throughout each two-year legislative session. Furthermore, the California Lobbying Directory, with lobbyist photos, affiliations and contact information, is now updated frequently and accessible online 24 hours a day. To connect the dots between businesses and organizations, lobbyists and California government leaders, log onto <http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Lobbying>.
- What are the key election deadlines? How many Californians are registered to vote? Which counties have the highest vote-by-mail participation? What initiatives are currently gathering petition signatures? Does a voter have the right to cast a ballot if not listed on the roster at a polling place? Election calendars, voter registration data, election turnout statistics, ballot measure details, laws and regulations, and much more are at www.sos.ca.gov/elections.
- The Secretary of State's office regularly sends written guidance to the state's 58 county elections officials – memos Secretary Bowen added to her online offerings at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ccrov/index.htm for people who want to track communiqués between government officials.
- The Secretary of State files and maintains records related to corporations, limited liability companies, partnerships and certain other business entities that wish to do business in California. For easy access to electronic versions of business forms, searchable lists of registered businesses, visit the California Business Portal at www.sos.ca.gov/business.
- The Secretary of State's office is the central filing office for certain financing statements and lien documents that establish priority in case of debtor default or bankruptcy. Research Uniform Commercial Code filings at www.sos.ca.gov/business/ucc.
- The Secretary of State is responsible for safeguarding California's history in the State Archives, which house a complete record of the official acts of the Legislature and executive offices, many politicians' personal papers, the original state constitutions and much more. Explore California's history at www.sos.ca.gov/archives and peruse a descriptive catalog of the millions of documents in the State Archives at <http://minerva.sos.ca.gov>.
- The Secretary of State's office offers updates on ballot measures, voting systems, advisories to county elections officials and more in automatic-feed formats. To sign up for email, RSS feeds or Twitter feeds, go to www.sos.ca.gov/multimedia.