



DEBRA BOWEN

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Secretary of State Bowen Further Boosts Campaign & Lobbying Transparency by Offering Data in Additional Format

SACRAMENTO – In addition to making campaign finance and lobbying data accessible in a variety of ways on a custom-built public website, on CD-ROM, and on paper, the California Secretary of State is now offering the raw data online for people with technical ability to create their own databases.

“Following the money in politics and government is essential for making informed decisions at the ballot box,” said Secretary of State Debra Bowen, California’s chief elections official. “The Secretary of State website is always evolving to ensure that everyone, from the occasional user to the information technology expert, can obtain public information in the way most useful to them.”

Launched in 2000, the Secretary of State’s California Automated Lobbying and Campaign Contribution and Expenditure Search System (CAL-ACCESS) at <http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov> offers detailed up-to-date information in HTML, PDF, and Microsoft Excel formats about who has worked to influence legislative or administrative actions, who has made political contributions, who gets the money, and how it is spent. Now the full raw data, presented in tab-delimited text files from corresponding tables in the CAL-ACCESS database, will be updated daily and available through the same website.

“With the influence of campaign money far too pervasive in our government, we commend Secretary Bowen for working with the public to make it easier to see the forces influencing California’s lawmakers,” added Daniel G. Newman, co-founder and president of MapLight. “May the Secretary of State’s action today serve as a model to all states and cities to release public data to support a more transparent, responsive democracy.”

The California Secretary of State provides paper and electronic filing capability for individuals, firms, and businesses involved in campaign financing or lobbying services. The California Fair Political Practices Commission creates and regulates the more than 30 campaign finance and lobbying activity forms required by law.

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