



**SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.**

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

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January 15, 2026

The Honorable Scott D. Wiener  
Chair, Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 553  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel  
Vice Chair, Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 553  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anna M. Caballero  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 412  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Buffy Wicks  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
1021 O Street, Room 8220  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairpersons Wiener, Gabriel, Caballero, and Wicks:

Attached is the Secretary of State's quarterly status report on the progress of the CAL-ACCESS Replacement System (CARS) Project, in accordance with Government Code section 84602(c). Previous reports are posted on the Secretary of State's office website at [www.sos.ca.gov/administration/agency-reports/cal-access-replacement-project-cars-agency-reports](http://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/agency-reports/cal-access-replacement-project-cars-agency-reports). If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact me or my staff, Margie Hieter, Division Chief, Political Reform Division, at (916) 653-6224, or the Secretary of State Legislative Affairs Unit at (916) 653-7244.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shirley N. Weber".

Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.  
California Secretary of State

Attachment

**Secretary of State's Quarterly Status Report  
CAL-ACCESS Replacement System Project  
Fiscal Year 2025-26, Quarter 2: October 2025 – December 2025**

**Introduction**

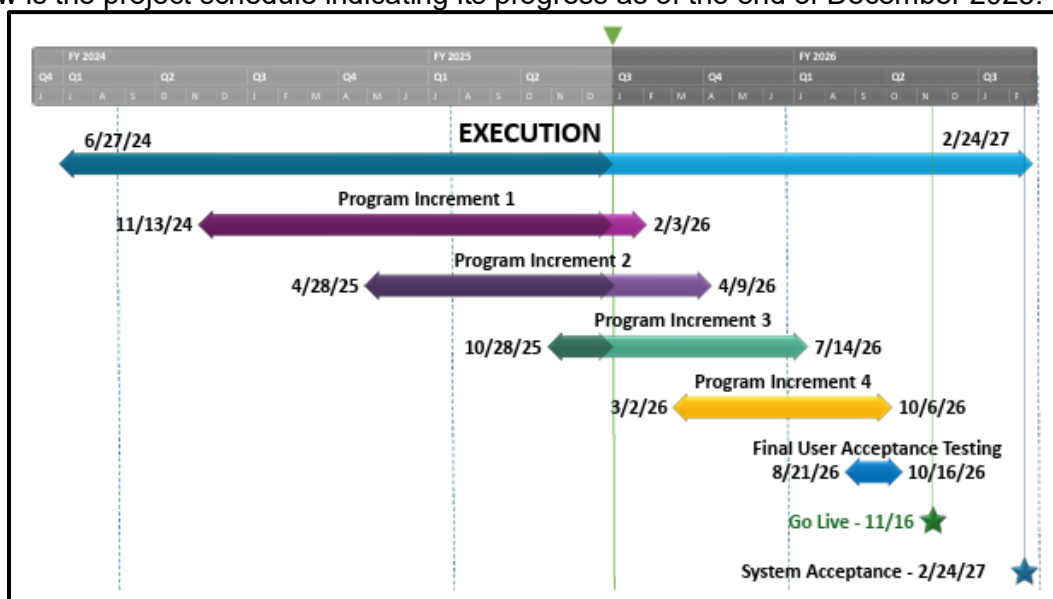
Senate Bill 1349 (Hertzberg—Ch. 845, Stat. of 2016) requires the Secretary of State (SOS), in consultation with the Fair Political Practices Commission, to develop and certify a comprehensive online filing system for campaign statements and reports. This system will ensure public access to campaign finance and lobbying information in a user-friendly, easily understandable format.

**Progress for the Period of October 2025 through December 2025**

The California Automated Lobbyist and Campaign Contribution and Expenditure Search System (CAL-ACCESS) Replacement System (CARS) Project made the following progress this past quarter (October 2025 through December 2025):

- Finishing user acceptance testing (UAT) of the Program Increment (PI) I functionality, which is the first of four PI's that comprise the completed CARS. This is a major milestone as it allows the SOS users to test the functionality to determine if it meets the requirements prior to implementing the new system. UAT not only validates that CARS application functionality performs correctly but also that CARS integrates accurately with the CAL-ACCESS legacy data. Formal acceptance of the PI deliverable is on track for February 3, 2026, completion.
- Began PI II UAT activities in December 2025 on the functionality that has been developed and is expected to be completed in March 2026.
- Initiated planning activities for the PI III and PI IV design and development effort, which includes the remaining CARS functionality such as client correspondence, system reporting, and the public search portal.

Below is the project schedule indicating its progress as of the end of December 2025.



During the reporting period, the CARS Project team continued work on several activities. A summary of activities currently underway is below:

- Regular engagement with the project's external stakeholders which includes in-depth previews of the new system's functionality.
- Application programming interface testing activities with the third-party software vendor partners who submit data electronically to the SOS.
- Regular engagement with the Fair Political Practices Commission including collaboration on programmatic decisions that affect CARS functionality.
- Data conversion and migration activities that ensure the legacy CAL-ACCESS data is accurately migrated to the new CARS.
- Organizational change management activities for CARS Project stakeholders to assess their readiness for change and prepare them for implementation of the new solution.
- Regular meetings with the SOS executive sponsor team and the Executive Steering Committee to brief them on critical project risks and issues and introduce topics that require their formal decision-making authority.
- Bi-Weekly Project Risk and Issue Meeting needed to manage risks and issues that arise during the project.
- Regular meetings with both the project's Independent Verification and Validation contractor and the California Department of Technology Project Approvals and Oversight team to discuss overall project health and risk and issue mitigation and resolution.
- Ongoing activities to ensure the stability of the legacy CAL-ACCESS until the new solution is implemented.

### **Scope, Schedule, and Budget**

**Scope:** The overall business scope of the CARS application has not changed during this reporting period. Any necessary changes to the CARS solution's functionality needed prior to CARS implementation are being managed via the project's formal change control process.

**Schedule:** The project has met its execution milestones during this reporting period per the project schedule.

**Budget:** The project operated within its approved appropriation of \$20.5 million during Fiscal Year 2025-26.