



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

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

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April 15, 2026

The Honorable John Laird  
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 Sabrina Cervantes  
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 Laird, Gabriel, Cervantes, 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 3: January 2026 – March 2026**

**Introduction**

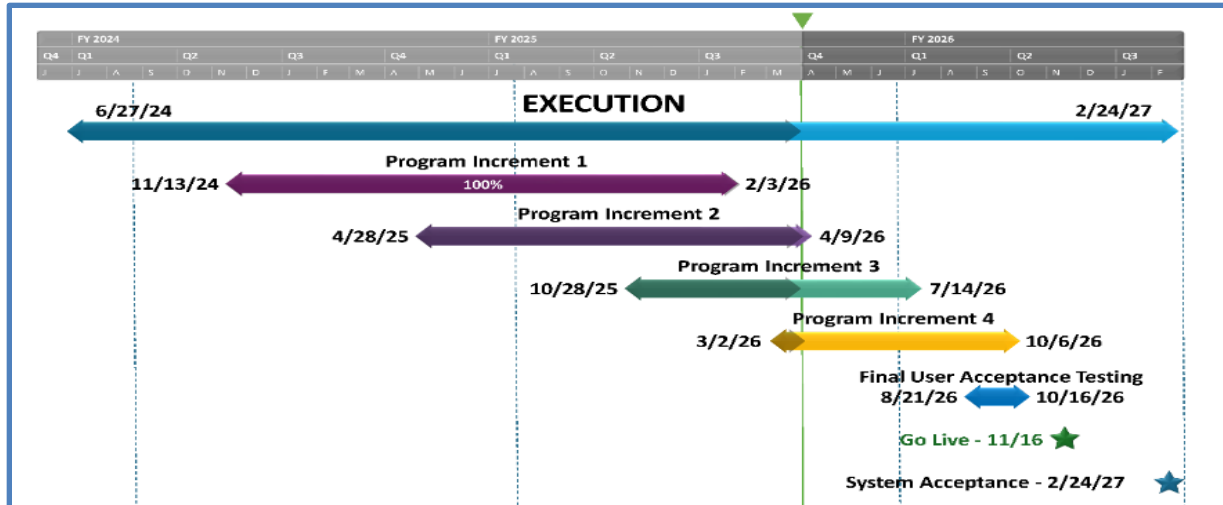
Senate Bill 1349 (Hertzberg—Ch. 845, Stat. of 2016) requires the Secretary of State (SOS), in consultation with the Fair Political Practices Commission, to develop and certify a comprehensive online filing system for campaign statements and reports. This system will ensure public access to campaign finance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

**Progress for the Period of January 2026 through March 2026**

The California Automated Lobbyist and Campaign Contribution and Expenditure Search System (CAL-ACCESS) Replacement System (CARS) Project made the following progress this past quarter (January 2026 through March 2026):

- On February 4, 2026, approved on schedule the first of four program increments that will comprise the new system. This approval represents a significant milestone, as Program Increment I fulfilled approximately 45 percent of the total system requirements.
- Completed user acceptance testing (UAT) of the Program Increment II functionality. The second program increment is on schedule for completion and approval in April 2026. The UAT activities are significant because they not only validate the CARS's application functionality against business needs but also ensure that CARS integrates with the converted and migrated CAL-ACCESS legacy data.
- Completed the design and development activities for Program Increment III, which includes functionality such as client correspondence and system reporting. UAT activities are scheduled to complete in May 2026.
- Began Program Increment IV's design and development effort, which includes the remaining functionality such as the public search portal.
- Supported user testing with public stakeholders from March 23, 2026, to April 3, 2026. The primary purpose of this testing was to elicit feedback from external stakeholders who will be using CARS once it is implemented in November 2026 to ensure it meets their business needs.

Below is the project schedule indicating the progress of CARS as of the end of March 2026.



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 system previews of the new functionality and presentations of the changes that CARS will deliver.
- Application programming interface test planning activities with the third-party software vendor partners who submit data electronically to the SOS. Formal data exchange testing will begin in April 2026.
- On-going engagement with the Fair Political Practices Commission, including collaboration on programmatic decisions that affect CARS functionality.
- Data conversion and migration activities that ensure all legacy CAL-ACCESS data is accurately migrated to 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, monitor project performance, and to 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 (IV&V) contractor and the California Department of Technology Project Approvals and Oversight team to discuss overall project health, risks 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. The necessary changes to the CARS’s solution 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 is operating within its approved appropriation of \$20.5 million during Fiscal Year 2025-26.