SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

Executive Office | 1500 11th Street | Sacramento, CA 95814 | Tel 916.653.7244 | www.sos.ca.gov

October 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. 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,

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

Attachment

Attachment

Secretary of State's Quarterly Status Report
CAL-ACCESS Replacement System Project
Fiscal Year 2026-27, Quarter 1: July 2026 – September 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 public online filing and disclosure system for campaign statements and reports. This system is intended to make campaign finance and lobbying information available in a user-friendly, easily understandable format.

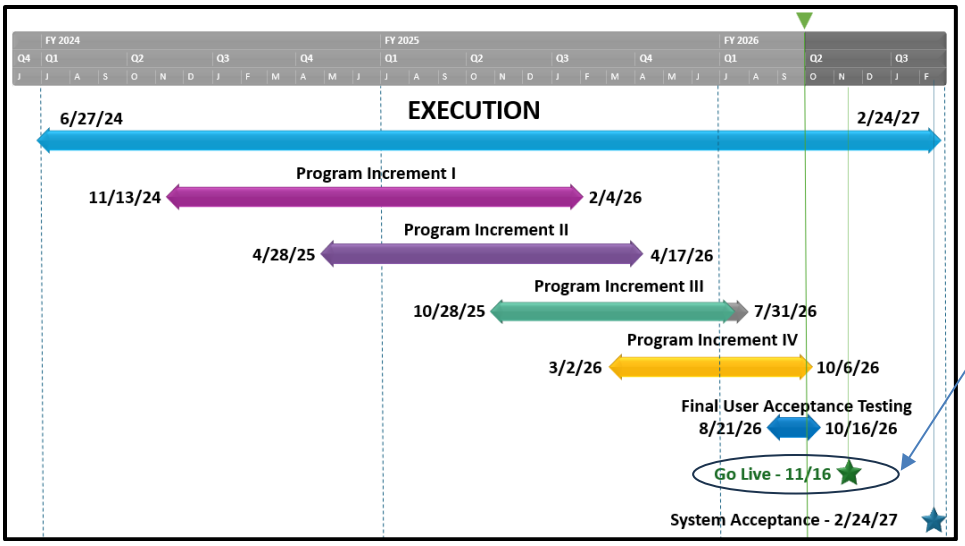
During end-to-end user acceptance testing, critical functionality gaps have been identified that adversely affect compliance with the Political Reform Act if the current go live date of November 16, 2026, is maintained. As a result, the project is working with its oversight control agencies to identify a viable go-live date that includes the development and testing needed to deliver the required functionality. Once it has been determined and vetted with the project's control agencies, the SOS will inform the JLBC of its decision.

Progress for the Period of July 2026 through September 2026

The California Secretary of State CAL-ACCESS Replacement System (CARS) Project continues to move forward. Last quarter (July 2026 through September 2026), the project made the following progress:

- Approved the third of the four Program Increments on July 31, 2026.
- Began final end-to-end User Acceptance Testing (UAT) needed to confirm that the CARS application meets all requirements and all criteria necessary for system certification.
- Continued the development activities for Program Increment IV functionality and several change requests that must be incorporated into CARS prior to go live, including updates required by recently enacted legislation.
- Initiated the second round of external stakeholder user testing with more than 80 volunteers. Like the first round, the project will solicit critical user feedback to optimize adoption of the new system as well as ensure a successful transition to the new CAL-ACCESS.
- Continued electronic data interface testing with third-party software vendors (TPSVs). This critical phase ensures partner readiness for go-live.
- Demonstrated key CARS features to stakeholders, highlighting public portal capabilities alongside core application functionalities.

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



Critical functionality gaps have been identified that will adversely affect compliance with the Political Reform Act if the current go live date of November 16, 2026 is maintained. The project is working to identify a viable go-live date that delivers the needed functionality.

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

- Regular engagement with the project's external stakeholders is ongoing, which includes in-depth system previews of the new functionality and presentations of the changes that CARS will deliver.
- Regular engagement with the Fair Political Practices Commission including collaboration on programmatic decisions that affect the project's functionality.
- Data conversion and migration activities that ensure all the legacy CAL-ACCESS data is accurately migrated to the new CARS. Any issues arising related to data migration and conversion are being actively evaluated and resolved to mitigate potential impacts to go-live readiness.
- Organizational change management activities for CARS Project stakeholders to keep them informed of progress via a monthly project newsletter.
- Regular meetings with the SOS executive sponsor team and the Executive Steering Committee to brief them on critical project risks and issues and highlight 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. The 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: During end-to-end user acceptance testing, critical functionality gaps have been identified that adversely affect compliance with the Political Reform Act if the current go live date of November 16, 2026, is maintained. As a result, the project is working with its oversight control agencies to identify a viable go-live date that incorporates the development and testing needed to deliver the needed functionality. The SOS will inform the JLBC of its decision once it has been determined and vetted with the project's control agencies.

Budget: The project is operating within its approved appropriation of $17.2 million during Fiscal Year 2026-27.