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Secretary of State: VoteCAL Project

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE





What Is the VoteCAL Project?

Project Description and Budget

- In 2002, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and mandated that each state have a single statewide automated voter registration database.
- States received federal funds to assist in the implementation and maintenance of these systems (and other mandates affecting the administration of federal elections). California originally received \$356 million in federal HAVA funds, of which a portion could be spent towards automation.
- The Secretary of State (SOS) proposed the VoteCAL system to meet the HAVA mandate. The VoteCAL system would serve as the state's single system for storing and managing the official list of registered voters in California.
- Currently, counties maintain voter registration data autonomously in various election management systems that do not interact with one another. No state system exists yet that can meet the mandated requirements of HAVA.

Budget Request

- The budget for SOS requests \$11.6 million in spending authority for 2011-12 from the Federal Trust Fund to continue the VoteCAL project. This is in line with the current approved project document that details the project's total cost and schedule.

Project Expenditures

- To date, project costs total about \$7.3 million (this includes estimated costs for the current year).



Project Timeline and Status

Timeline

- January 2006—The Department of Finance approved the VoteCAL project, which at the time was estimated to cost \$69 million and be deployed by December 2009.
- December 2007—The procurement to secure a vendor to build the system commenced.
- September 2009—The SOS signed a contract with Catalyst Consulting Group to begin work on the VoteCAL system. Project cost estimates dropped to \$51 million (due to lower than estimated vendor costs) and the proposed completion date is February 2012.
- Spring 2010—The SOS raised concerns about Catalyst's performance, including its ability to meet contract deadlines. The SOS learned that Catalyst failed to obtain the contractually required performance bond before beginning work for the state.
- May 2010—The state terminated the contract with Catalyst.

Current Status

- The SOS is currently involved in a second procurement for a replacement vendor.
- The SOS estimates that it will take about 16 months to sign a new contract and begin building the VoteCal system.