

2024

IMPACT REPORT



CAL  **MATTERS**

Photo by Larry Valenzuela, CalMatters

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

It's been a year we won't forget at CalMatters.

Here are some highlights from 2024:

- We merged with [The Markup](#), a nonprofit news organization that uses investigative reporting, data analysis, and software engineering to challenge technology to serve the public good.
- [Digital Democracy](#) launched, giving Californians unprecedented access to state government.
- The inaugural [CalMatters Ideas Festival](#) was a major success that brought together over 80 speakers with 1,200 changemakers and influencers for two days in Sacramento.
- We produced our best-ever [2024 Voter Guide](#) and held more than 40 election education events, the most we've ever done, reaching millions of California voters.
- We launched new products including a [daily two-minute video segment](#) that airs on PBS SoCal. We call it SoCal Matters.
- We're collaborating with the newly launched [Los Angeles Local News Initiative](#) to deliver robust, independent news to Angelenos.

In this annual update, as we enter our tenth year, you'll read about some of the powerful stories we published and the impact our work had on the lives of Californians. You'll see how we've grown and how you can help. I hope you enjoy it.

Please know this is all possible thanks to your support. In gratitude,



Neil Chase, CEO



John Boland, Board Chair

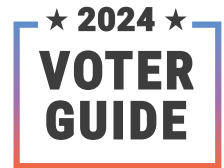
2024 SNAPSHOT

2K



People we engaged with at VotingMatters live events.

2M+



Users of our 2024 Voter Guide.

8M



People reached every month.

5,510



Members who pay to support our journalism.

670



Public records requests filed.

9



Total years we have been reporting on California politics and policy.

4



New laws landed on the governor's desk thanks to our reporting. He signed 3.

5



State agencies that took action after our stories.

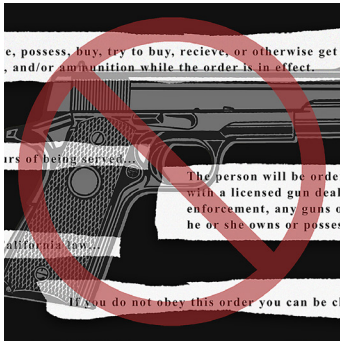
IMPACT: STORIES YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS



THE HUMAN COST OF CALIFORNIA'S MATERNITY WARD CLOSURES

Governor Newsom signed a law inspired by our reporting that will give communities more time to plan for the loss of maternity service, but vetoed a separate bill meant to slow closures of labor wards. [Read More](#)

Detranay Blakenship holds her child, Myla. Photo by Jules Hotz for CalMatters



GREATER PROTECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

In the wake of Robert Lewis' Outgunned series about the failure of courts and law enforcement to protect victims of domestic abuse from their armed abusers, SB899 was introduced and signed into law this year. [Read More](#)



BLACK WORKERS GET JOBS

After we reported that the city of Los Angeles had fallen short of its goal of hiring 200 Black workers, Mayor Karen Bass's office worked with the Black Worker Center to get 88 people waiting for employment hired quickly. [Read More](#)

Los Angeles Black Worker Center occupational safety training. Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Black Worker Center.



HIGHER FINES FOR WATER THIEVES

After our extensive reporting, AB460 was signed into law this year increasing the civil penalties water scofflaws may face. [Read More](#)

Arron "Troy" Hockaday, a council member of the Karuk Tribe. Photo by Martin do Nascimento, CalMatters

IMPACT: DIGITAL DEMOCRACY



[Digital Democracy](#) is our unprecedented, custom-built AI tool that tracks every word spoken in Sacramento public hearings, every dollar donated to politicians, every bill introduced, every vote cast and more. The easy-to-use web portal allows Californians to learn about their legislators and their decisions. The data is also scanned daily by artificial intelligence to identify story ideas for reporters.

Next year, the AI story ideas tool will be shared with reporters throughout California and we'll be building Digital Democracy in other states. Up next: **Texas!**

In its first few months, Digital Democracy gave CalMatters reporters, and our readers, a remarkable look inside the operation of state government, the power of special interests, and the secrets behind policy decisions. They include:

- [Democrats vote “no”](#) less than 1% of the time, leading critics to complain that difficult decisions are made in private and rubber-stamped in the legislative process.
- Instead of voting “no,” legislators often don’t vote, even when they’re present. Non-votes count as a “no,” so more than 40 bills died this session when legislators stayed silent. [CBS TV](#) reported that advocates for Fentanyl legislation learned from Digital Democracy that their bill died from non-votes.
- [Tribal casinos won a controversial vote](#) on gambling legislation after giving more than \$90,000 to six legislators just weeks before their vote on a key committee.
- [Seven legislators missed more than a quarter](#) of their opportunities to vote in 2024 including one who missed more than two-thirds of her votes. The 21 legislators who attended the Democratic National Convention missed more than 50 votes.
- [Despite California’s climate goals](#), Big Oil still wins most of its fights in the Legislature thanks partly to an alliance with a powerful labor organization.

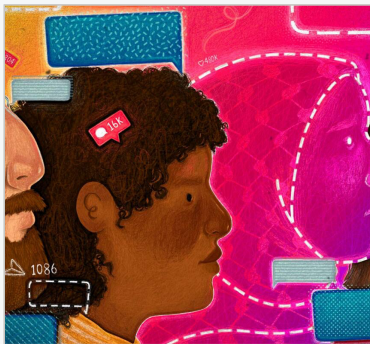
The Markup: Impact

The Markup seeks to have a particular type of impact—one that involves making journalism actionable. **Here are just a few examples of The Markup’s impact in 2024:**



L.A. Is Changing How It Scores “Vulnerability” of Unhoused People

After we revealed racial bias in LA’s housing intake system, local politicians passed legislation and are pressing for a more equitable approach. [Read More](#)



Demoted, Deleted, and Denied: There’s More Than Just Shadowbanning on Instagram

After we found Instagram suppressing content on the Israel-Hamas war, the tech company restored content that had not violated their policies. [Read More](#)



Vietnamese YouTuber Is Filling Information Voids with Newsmax and Breitbart

After our investigation, second-generation Vietnamese Americans duplicated our in-person misinformation workshops across the country. [Read More](#)



Department of Education Sued Over FAFSA Data Shared with Facebook

After our investigation, the Department of Education was sued for not sharing its previous correspondence with Facebook. [Read More](#)

CAL MATTERS AWARDS

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EMMY AWARDS

Winner, Criminal Justice

BEST OF THE WEST AWARDS

First Place, Business & Financial Reporting

CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM AWARDS

Four First Place Awards including best Investigative and Environment Reporting

The Markup Awards

ONLINE JOURNALISM AWARDS

Three First Place Awards including General Excellence, Small Newsroom

SIGMA AWARD

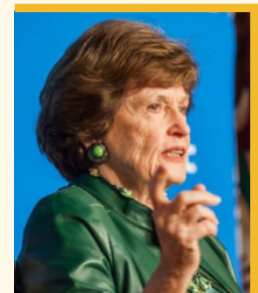
Winner, L.A. Homelessness investigation

PHILIP MEYER JOURNALISM AWARD

First Place, Best uses of social science research methods

“ During my time in the California State Senate (1984-93), I watched as the number of reporters covering the legislature declined, leaving residents less informed about state government. Ten years ago, I discovered CalMatters and subscribed to its newsletter.

After the COVID-19 pandemic and the irresponsible \$30 billion loss, I was pleased to support CalMatters’ accountability desk to investigate government actions and advocate for change. ”



Becky Morgan,
CalMatters Donor



“I encourage readers to spread the word about CalMatters and support quality journalism.”

— Becky Morgan, Donor

INCLUDE US IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN

Leave a legacy and share your appreciation of an informed and engaged public by including us in your estate plans.

Other ways to support us include gifts of stock, donor advised funds, and IRA distributions. We're a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization so your gifts are tax deductible. Please consider making a contribution to support our work at calmatters.org/gifts or contact Kate Looby at kate@calmatters.org.