

2025

IMPACT REPORT



OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

This year, **CalMatters turned 10 years old** — a milestone that marks not just longevity, but lasting impact.

What began as a small team with a big idea has become California's most trusted source for nonpartisan news and civic understanding. As we reflect on our first decade, we're proud of what we've built, and even more focused on the work ahead.

In 2025, we:

- **Helped Californians vote with confidence** through our Special Election Voter Guide, reaching millions statewide.
- **Provided clarity** about the impact of the federal leadership changes that brought immigration raids, military presence, deep cuts to Medi-Cal, and more.
- **Released our first short documentary**, [Operation: Return to Sender](#), exposing the human and economic impact of immigration enforcement in California.
- **Launched the** [CalMatters Knowledge Hub](#), a one-stop resource connecting readers, educators, and policymakers to the data and context behind our reporting.
- **Hosted nine CalMatters Live events** across the state, bringing communities together for smart, solutions-focused conversations.
- **Welcomed a new managing editor**, John D'Anna, as we wished longtime managing editor Vicki Haddock well in her retirement.

As we look to our next decade, our mission remains the same: to help Californians understand their state and make government more transparent, accountable, and responsive.

Thank you for making this work possible. Your support fuels independent journalism that informs, inspires, and strengthens California's democracy.

Here's to the next ten years — and the Californians we serve.



Neil Chase, CEO



Hema Sareen Mohan, Board Chair

CalMatters' journalism breaks through echo chambers. It brings Californians together. It holds all levels of government and lawmakers accountable. And it inspires new laws that work toward a better California. To see the full impact of our work, [visit calmatters.org/impact](https://calmatters.org/impact).



BIRTHING CENTER LICENSING STREAMLINED

For two years, CalMatters has reported on the [closure of dozens of maternity wards and birthing centers](#), leaving large parts of California without labor and delivery care. This year, Governor Newsom signed Assemblymember Mia Bonta's "Freedom to Birth Act," a law designed to streamline licensing requirements that have prevented birth centers from gaining state approval — and therefore from receiving insurance or Medi-Cal reimbursement.

A newborn baby Martin Luther King Community Hospital in Los Angeles. Photo by Jules Hotz for CalMatters



ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW SIGNED

In response to a CalMatters story that exposed that lawmakers were not required to tell the public if they were negotiating or had accepted a job with an organization trying to get something from the Legislature, Assemblymember Tasha Boerner introduced [a bill to require disclosure](#). The Governor signed the bill into law bringing greater transparency to state government.

State Capitol in Sacramento. Photo by Fred Greaves for CalMatters



BORDER PATROL RETRAINING REQUIRED

CalMatters exposed significant discrepancies between official accounts of a Kern County immigration raid and reality. Following a lawsuit from the ACLU and our reporting, a federal judge ordered the Department of Homeland Security to [stop its warrantless immigration sweeps](#) in Central California. The department also [agreed to retrain more than 900 agents](#) on how to comply with the Constitution.

Sergeant Gregory Bovino at El Centro Border Patrol headquarters. Photo by Kevin Clancy, Evident.



FINANCIAL-AID FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS

Citing CalMatters reporting, [nine U.S. representatives called](#) on U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon and Attorney General Pam Bondi to investigate financial aid fraud at California's community colleges. [We reported](#) that fake students have stolen more than \$10 million in federal aid and more than \$3 million in state aid in the last 12 months, [more than double](#) the amount stolen the previous year.

The headquarters of the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C. Photo by Mark Schiefelbein, AP Photo



LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

After a CalMatters investigation, Assemblymember Matt Haney introduced a [bill requiring health insurance plans to wait at least 28 days](#) after approving a patient to go into a substance use treatment center before they reassess whether the patient can remain there. Haney said his bill was inspired by CalMatters' story on Ryan Matlock, a young man who died of a fentanyl overdose not long after his health plan decided to stop covering his residential treatment.

Illustration by Gabriel Hongsdusit, CalMatters



LAWMAKERS CALL FOR SHELTER OVERSIGHT

Our reporting on homeless shelter failures revealed that cities and counties have been ignoring a state law requiring basic shelter safety and sanitation checks. State lawmakers then introduced [a bill to increase shelter oversight](#). CalMatters was also first to report on a Fremont city ordinance that would have punished people for “aiding and abetting” homeless encampments. One month later, the council removed the clause.

Illustration by Adriana Heldiz, CalMatters



FAMILIES ARE REUNITED

After reading a CalMatters article about homeless people voting, two families were able to reconnect with relatives they'd been searching for. A woman found her sister after losing contact with her in 2019. Another woman found her father. In addition to [sharing the stories of these two families](#), CalMatters also created a resource on [what to do if your loved one is homeless](#).

Sisters Julie Crossman and Nanie Crossman reunite in West Oakland. Photo by Marisa Kendall, CalMatters



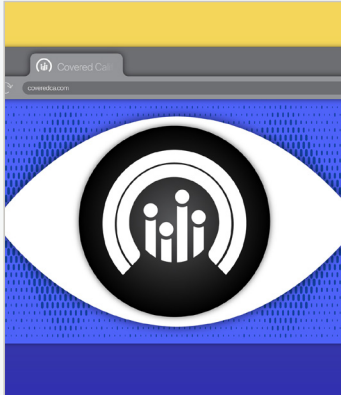
DRIVING PRIVILEGES SUSPENDED OR REVOKED

Our investigative reporters [identified about 400 cases](#) in which vehicular manslaughter convictions weren't listed on driving records, largely because the courts failed to report that information. After reporters asked county courts across the state about these cases, 32 courts so far have reported more than 275 missing convictions to the DMV and nearly 200 drivers who've killed had their licenses suspended or revoked.

Photo Illustration by Gabe Hongsdusit, CalMatters; Larry Valenzuela CalMatters/CatchLight Local

The Markup: Impact

The Markup's approach, now merged with CalMatters, ensures that we rigorously challenge both technology and the policy around it to serve the public good on a national and local level.



Congressman Calls For Investigation

After [our forensic testing found](#) that Covered California shared sensitive personal information with LinkedIn, such as whether an applicant was pregnant, blind or disabled, or used a high number of prescription medications, the agency removed LinkedIn trackers from its site. The agency also admitted that it also shared the last four digits of people's Social Security numbers. A [class action lawsuit](#) was filed, and California Congressman Kevin Kiley, citing our story, asked the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate whether Covered California violated HIPAA.



States Stop Sharing People's Personal Health Data

After our investigation into Covered California, we audited the websites of all 19 states that independently operate their own online health exchange — we found that [four states exposed](#) visitors' sensitive health information. After our reporters reached out, Nevada's health exchange stopped sending the names and dosages of visitors' prescription medications to Snapchat and Massachusetts stopped telling LinkedIn whether visitors were pregnant, blind or disabled.



Companies Stop Hiding Their Opt-Out Pages

After [we revealed](#) that many data companies were hiding their opt-out pages from Google search — effectively making it harder for people to delete their data online — more than 10 companies stopped the practice and made opt-outs more accessible. Following our reporting, [United States senator Maggie Hassan](#) demanded that five of the top firms explain their decisions and commit to removing the code.



National Legislation Introduced

After last year's joint investigation by Outlier Media and The Markup found that despite a 2019 Michigan law banning ZIP code-based pricing, insurance companies continued to use Michigan drivers' location to set rates, U.S. House representatives from California, Michigan and New Jersey [co-sponsored a bill](#) to outlaw such pricing methods across the country.

DIGITAL DEMOCRACY: IMPACT



- **Expanded to Hawai'i.** Now, Californians and [Hawai'i](#) residents alike can search through every word uttered in public hearings, every dollar given to a politician, every bill introduced and every vote taken in their state legislatures.
- **Launched My Legislator.** We built a weekly newsletter to let you know what your California state legislators said, voted on, introduced and more. An updated version will be available starting in January 2026.
- **We're a finalist for a \$9 million prize.** Digital Democracy was one of five finalists chosen from 375 entries for the Trust in American Institutions Challenge. After going through a rigorous review process, we'll find out in April if we've won, but making it to this stage is already an honor.
- **We won an Emmy.** Our collaboration with CBS-TV was honored with an Emmy award from the Northern California chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. The video piece, "[Using new AI, grieving moms discover California lawmakers killed popular fentanyl bill by *not* voting](#)" told the story of how moms advocating for fentanyl legislation were upset to learn through Digital Democracy that their bills died when legislators declined to vote. The story used data from Digital Democracy to show that instead of directly voting against a bill, Democrats often killed bills by declining to vote.

Lawmakers are paying attention to Digital Democracy and CalMatters.

After our reporting showed that lawmakers rarely vote "no," [three lawmakers decided to buck protocol](#) and vote against their colleagues' bills.

Assembly member Robert Garcia, a freshman Democratic lawmaker representing the Rancho Cucamonga area, said he decided to vote "no" instead of not voting after reading a [CalMatters story on Democratic Assembly member Mike Fong](#) of Alhambra who had never voted "no" in two years as a lawmaker.

"No knock on Mr. Fong," Garcia said. "But I did feel that if you're ... going there to Sacramento, it's to know the bills and to take a position and, you know, and not be on the sidelines."

“

The My Legislators newsletter is excellent and necessary. It makes it so easy to review the actions of my elected officials without sorting through multiple websites.

-Bill, Santa Barbara

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CAL MATTERS AWARDS

★ ONLINE JOURNALISM AWARDS ★

Winner, Best Medium-sized Newsroom

POYNTER JOURNALISM PRIZES

Winner, Punch Sulzberger Prize for Journalism Innovation

GOLDEN STATE JOURNALISM AWARDS, SACRAMENTO PRESS CLUB

Four First Place Awards including Daily Capitol Beat, Environment, and Opinion and Commentary

SOCIETY FOR NEWS DESIGN

Award of Excellence, Experimental for our 2024 Voter Guide TikTok filter

2025 IMPACT SNAPSHOT



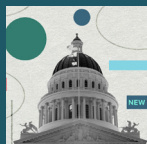
6,304

Members who pay to support our journalism.



94

Number of times CalMatters was mentioned in the legislature this year.



8

New laws introduced thanks to our reporting.



7

State agencies that took action after our stories.


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I was originally introduced to CalMatters by a leading political philanthropist and his efforts to bring transparency and accountability to California's government. As an industry analyst, watching the ascendancy of big tech platforms, I knew that the traditional for-profit newspaper business model was in trouble and that the result would be an informational void. Fortunately, **CalMatters was the right idea at the right time**: a non-profit journalistic enterprise able to step into the informational vacuum left by the traditional newspaper model.



Ken Broad,
Industry Analyst &
CalMatters Publisher's
Circle member

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“In celebration of CalMatters’ 10th anniversary—and to help meet the 2025 gift match—I increased my support this year. I’m proud to fund a journalism internship that will help prepare the next generation of journalists.”

— Ken Broad, Donor

Join us in building an informed California.

Become a member of the **CalMatters Byline Society** — a special community of supporters who have included CalMatters in their estate plans to sustain our mission for the future.

CalMatters is here to serve Californians today — and tomorrow. By leaving a gift to CalMatters in your will, you’ll help ensure that Californians will continue to have access to trusted news for generations to come.

We’re a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please consider making a contribution to support our work at calmatters.org/gifts or contact Kate Looby at kate@calmatters.org.