



Information About Release of Confidential Voter Information

California Gov't Code § 6254.4,
California Elections Code §§ 2184, 2185, 2188, 2194, 18109

The street address, telephone number, driver's license (or identification card) number, precinct number and certain other information about registered voters is confidential under California law.

The Department of Elections may disclose confidential voter information to:

- any candidate for federal, state, or local office,
- any committee for or against any initiative or referendum measure for which legal publication is made,
- any person for scholarly purposes: students working on theses, professors researching voting patterns, and other academics involved in research are entitled to purchase or view the information for such purposes,
- any person for journalistic purposes: members of the press are permitted by the law to have access to all voter registration information,
- political purposes: for example, persons wishing to communicate with voters concerning legislation, vendors who provide voter registration information only to candidates, ballot measure committees, and political parties, and persons or organizations communicating with the voters about political issues, whether or not this use is in conjunction with a specific election,
- governmental purposes, as determined by the Secretary of State: the jury commissioner, the district attorney or public defender, or other governmental agencies have access to the confidential information

Before the Department of Elections may publicly disclose confidential voter information to a requester, the requester must complete and sign, under penalty of perjury, the attached application, and include the following:

- The requester's complete name, printed or typed.
- The requester's complete residence address and business address, including the street and number.
- The requester's telephone number.
- Reason for the request.
- A copy of the requester's driver's license, state identification card or other identification approved by the Secretary of State.

If the requester submits an application on behalf of another person or organization, the requester must also include:

- The complete name, address and telephone number of the person, organization, company, committee, association, or group requesting the confidential voter registration information.
- The name and title of the person authorizing the requester to request the confidential voter registration information.

The requester must also:

- Specifically identify the voter registration information requested.
- Specifically describe the intended use of the information requested.

The Department of Elections has the right to request supporting documents in order to release confidential voter registration to the requestor. Supporting documentation may include but is not limited to the following:

- Written request on an organization's letterhead or educational institution's letterhead;
- Authorized principal officer or professional educator/administrator acknowledging who the applicant is and the purpose of the request and signed by the same;
- The intent for use of the voter file must be specific and concise describing exactly how the file is to be used;
- Copy of the student I.D. or media I.D. if for scholarly or journalistic purposes

It is a misdemeanor to misuse or permit the misuse of confidential voter registration information.

Examples of who does NOT have access to confidential voter registration information:

- Persons (such as private investigators, skip tracers, process servers, and attorneys) seeking to locate individuals, unless those persons are employed by or on contract with a public agency.
- Persons seeking to locate lost relatives

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