

**Questionnaire for candidates for the office of  
California Secretary of State**  
Statewide Direct Primary Election, June 3, 2014

Please return this questionnaire electronically to [contact\\_us@phdemclub.org](mailto:contact_us@phdemclub.org) no later than **Wednesday, March 26**. We will make these questionnaires available to our members before the forum/endorsement meeting.

**Candidate name: Leland Yee**  
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Please write a brief response ( $\leq 250$  words) to each question.

1. What do you see as the 3 top priorities for the next California Secretary of State, and what ideas do you have for addressing these priorities once you are in office?

I believe the top three issues pertaining to the office of Secretary of State are making our elections more inclusive, our government more open, and the office more effective at serving the public. My Online Voter Registration bill has brought nearly a million new voters onto the rolls in our state since its launch in September of 2012. I hope to continue my work to get everyone eligible registered to vote, and tools such as online and same day registration make it easier to get far more people involved.

I believe a transparent government is an honest government, and will continue to use technological advances to increase the public's access. I have fought to open up government, from the UC/CSU system to state contracts to campaign finance. I've expanded the Brown Act, protected whistleblowers, and was the sole Democrat to vote to save the Public Records Act when a measure hamstringing it was snuck into the budget. I've authored two bills to improve the Cal-Access system as it is woefully out of date considering the valuable information it contains about lobbying and campaign finances.

Many business owners have told me that delays at the Secretary of State's office are hurting them financially. Those same technological advances that make it easier to keep track of what government is up to can be used to reduce the amount of red tape that businesses currently have to navigate with the Secretary of State's office. With our economy still in recovery, no business should be prevented from getting started because the state can't process paperwork in a timely manner.

2. How would you deal with voters' concerns in the aftermath of *Citizens United* about the

corrupting influence of big (getting bigger each election cycle) money in politics?

First, let me say that Citizens United was one of the worst decisions the Court has made in recent years, and it continues to have a devastating impact on our democracy. I've been a co-author of the DISCLOSE Act every time it's been introduced, and I will continue to push for its passage until it is signed into law. Ultimately, I believe the best means of fighting against the corrupting influence of money in politics is stronger requirements for transparency and disclosure. PG&E's push to ban public power, T. Boone Pickens' phony green energy money grab, and the insurance industry's Trojan horse Prop 37 all crashed and burned once voters became aware that these initiatives were clearly pushed only to supplement the bottom lines of private interests. The more we can do to expose donations from sources such as the Koch brothers, the more we can undermine the effectiveness of those donations. My bills to improve Cal-Access have made it easier to see where money is going in our elections, but more must be done. More regular filing periods will make it harder to hide dirty money from the public and the press, and more improvements are necessary so donations can be tracked by donor instead of only by candidate. Until we can get the Court to slow the flow of money into our democracy, we must work to expose the men behind the curtain so their influence can be checked.

3. Why are you better suited to serve as California's top election official than any other candidate?

In 2011, my SB 397 allowed Californians to register to vote online. Since then, a million Californians have taken advantage of this service, bringing many new voices into our political dialogue. Given that the Secretary of State is the chief elections officer for California, I believe the top priority of the position must be getting everyone possible involved in the political process. I have carried legislation to expand Saturday voting options, increase the availability of Vote By Mail drop off boxes, and worked to make those drop off boxes more secure. I've fought homophobic attacks in political campaigns, pushed for accurate translations of Asian names on the ballot to prevent trickery and fraud, and authored resolutions supporting the Voting Rights Act and Senator Boxer's LINE Act. I've worked to improve the Cal-Access system, and have fought for a wide range of open government laws throughout my career. I have a proven track record of utilizing technology to improve the function of government. Above all, I will fight for our right to vote and keep our state from going down the dark road that Ohio, Texas, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina have gone down to restrict access to the ballot. I have fought for progressive causes for 25 years, and would be honored to have your support as I continue that fight as Secretary of State.

Thank you for your time and commitment. We look forward to seeing you April 1st.