



OpenGovernment

Non-Profit Funding Prospectus - January 18th, 2010

I. Summary

The Participatory Politics Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to create free & open-source software for civic engagement. Our flagship project is OpenCongress.org, the most-visited not-for-profit website in the country for transparency in the federal U.S. Congress.

Our next major project, OpenGovernment.org, is a non-partisan public resource for transparency at any level of government: state, city, local, international, and more. **Finally, a version of OpenCongress for your state.**

OpenGovernment is launching in 'beta' in January 2011 as a joint project with the Sunlight Foundation. This beta version starts with a full suite of information for five state legislatures: California, Louisiana, Maryland, Texas, and Wisconsin. Over the next year, PPF seeks non-profit funding support to roll out OpenGovernment to the following:

- All 50 U.S. states - bringing our uniquely user-friendly transparency model to state houses across the country
- Dozens of major U.S. cities - some of which already offer open municipal data, others of which are just starting
- County & town government institutions, such as neighborhood block associations and other local communities
- Other countries -- OpenGovernment can be a global platform -- international entities like the U.N., and beyond...

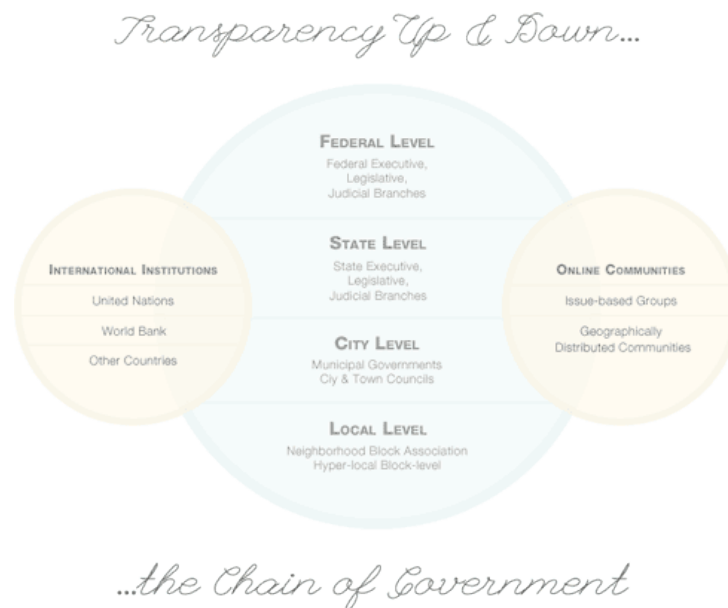


II. Our Background & Mission

Conceived in 2004, the main problem that OpenCongress sought to address was a lack of accessible information online about bills, votes, and issues in the U.S. Congress. The official website of Congress, THOMAS, published raw data about legislation, but not in ways that are compliant with the community-generated Principles of Open Government Data, not in sufficiently timely ways, and not on webpages that were proven to be user-friendly. (More than 15 years after THOMAS' launch, it still doesn't come close to doing any of these things.)

OpenCongress addressed this problem -- as much as possible given the inherited technical limitations of Congressional data sources -- by combining official government information with news & blog coverage from around the open Web, campaign contribution info, public participation tools, and more. The resulting open-source OpenCongress web application enables individuals and organizations to track and share information about what's really happening in Congress. Since its launch in 2007, OpenCongress has grown to become the most-visited government transparency website in the United States, and is proud to be an active contributor to a burgeoning ecosystem of open-government resources online. OpenGovernment is independent from any government entity, candidate for office, or political party.

Ever since PPF conceived of OpenCongress in 2004, we foresaw that this model of aggregating disparate data sources into a user-friendly web interface could be productively applied to other entities: state legislatures, city councils, neighborhood associations, international institutions, governorships, secretaries of state, supreme courts, circuit judges, public-mission institutions such as schools & hospitals, foreign countries with more-or-less democratic systems of governance, and more.



In other words, we often received the quite-sensible question, "When will there be an OpenCongress for my state?" Or, "... for my city?" Or, "... for my neighborhood?" Or, ... "for my country?" We're happy to say we're on-track to answer that question. We're working with the staff at Sunlight Labs and many volunteers on the community-driven

Open States Project, with the goal of establishing a data standard and collecting machine-readable data streams for all 50 U.S. State Legislatures. These data streams will provide official government info to GovKit, the open-source application that combines it with other publicly-available data sources and social wisdom from around the open Web. GovKit, in turn, will power the OpenGovernment website: essentially, free and non-partisan versions of OpenCongress for all fifty state legislatures and a dozen major cities, with even more local versions planned.

So while our code has always been 100% open, we now have an even better answer to the question, "How do I make an OpenCongress for my (state, city, town, or country)?" OpenGovernment was designed to bring the OpenCongress model of transparency down to state and local governments. We cleaned-up the OpenCongress code base for OpenGovernment, bringing over some parts and writing lots of new code in Ruby on Rails, making it better-documented and more modular. We also simplified the web design and foregrounded more of our user-friendly participation tools along with our unique data offerings. We offer OpenGovernment to the public commons as a free, libre, and open-source model for open standards and future government transparency projects -- contributions warmly welcomed and remixes encouraged. Together, we can inspire people to ask, "When is my city going to be on OpenGovernment.org?", and then collaboratively and continually roll out new city resources across the country, building momentum towards a new standard of openness in public life.

The ultimate mission of OpenGovernment is to ensure that all three branches (executive, legislative, and judicial) at every level of government (federal, state, city, local, and more) comply with the Principles of Open Government Data. Public data can and should be public, immediately and in full, and it can and should be made accessible to everyone online, so as to increase trust in the political process. From this foundation of open government data, an entire ecosystem of public-interest tools can grow and evolve. Transparency, in turn, can create new opportunities for meaningful civic engagement in our representative democracy. Greater day-to-day civic engagement and citizen watchdogging, we believe, will result in reduced corruption in government, better public policy outcomes, and stronger democratic institutions.

Writing in early 2011, the situation with official websites for U.S. state legislatures is nearly exactly as it was with THOMAS in 2004. Unfortunately, almost no U.S. state government makes its data available in ways that are compliant with the Principles of Open Government Data, or even close. Out of the 49 bicameral state legislatures in the U.S. and one unicameral body (that of Nebraska), only one single chamber -- one entity out of 99, namely the New York State Senate -- makes its legislative data available in ways that sufficiently comply with the community-generated Principles of Open Government Data. Every other chamber of state government remains insistently closed-off from its constituents, refusing to release public data (legislative actions, votes, bill analysis -- not to mention campaign contributions) online in ways that are truly open, despite the readily available technical means to do so. State legislatures, in other words, make public data "defective by design". Open-source software, open standards, flexible copyright licensing, and easily-findable technical best practices make it possible for any branch of state government to comply with the OpenGovData Principles in a relatively short period of time ... given, of course, that the political & institutional will exists to do so. And that's just to address the back-end data issues... on the front-end, the status quo for state-level government websites is a mishmash of non-standards-based, poorly-designed websites that don't do nearly enough to keep the public at large informed. They're simply unacceptably user-unfriendly. The proof of this is how rarely they're used (linked-to and discussed) even on more-or-less-niche political blogs, much less in casual political conversation.

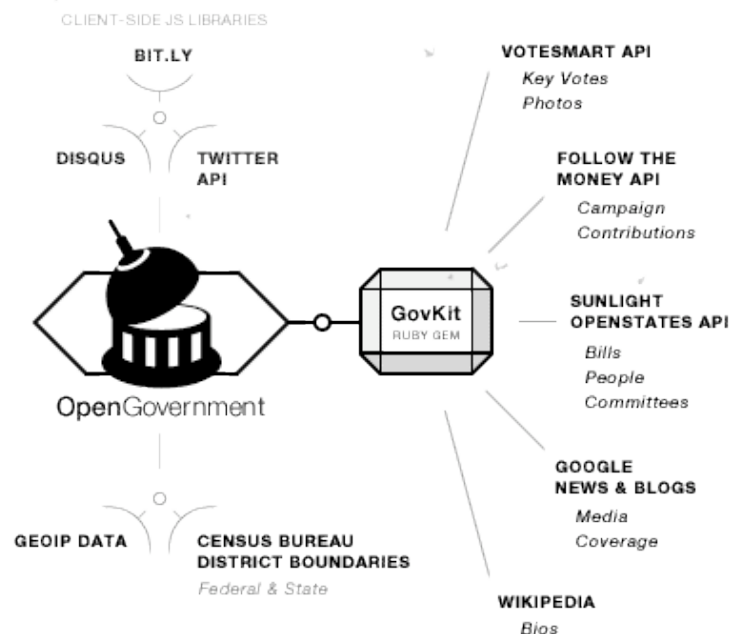
More background: There's too much money in politics, and not enough full public transparency buttressed by strong ethics rules and comprehensive electoral reform. As a result, trust in government institutions like the U.S. Congress is trending ever-lower, and voting rates are unacceptably depressed. As public opinion agency Gallup put it in July, the "2010 Confidence in Institutions poll finds Congress ranking dead last out of the 16 institutions rated this year. Eleven percent of Americans say they have 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in Congress, down from 17% in 2009 and a percentage point lower than the previous low for Congress, recorded in 2008."

If we were tasked with re-designing American democracy for the 21st century, we would revamp these arcane systems and bring them up to widely-accepted technical standards. Keeping in touch with your elected officials in government should be as easy as keeping in touch with friends on a social networking website such as, say, Facebook. There's no compelling reason why this should not be the case unless you're a stakeholder in the status quo -- a lobbyist or a political insider or an elected official who depends on the system remaining "defective by design". Looking ahead, open-source software and the Internet (and libre data and flexible copyright licenses) give us the tools we need to make all public data available to the public, immediately and in full. Such a radical degree of transparency is first necessary in order to restore public trust in government and increase civic engagement.

III. Current Status of OpenGovernment

OpenGovernment, like OpenCongress, uniquely aggregates a variety of data sources and presents them in a user-friendly web interface (while also making structured data available in bulk and via a free API). All outside information contained on OpenGovernment pages, including official government information, is cited to its primary source-- while the app brings together many different data sources, it does not edit or manipulate outside data in any way before presenting it.

An overview of OpenGovernment's data sources is below, first visualized and then detailed:



Our Data Sources:

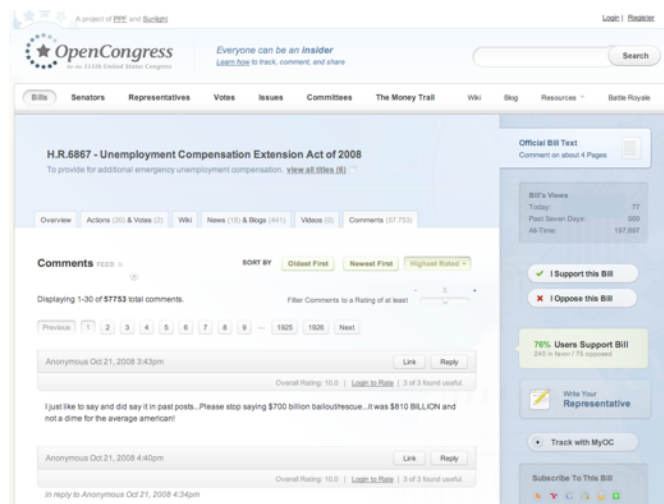
1. Official government information from the community-driven Open States Project, coordinated by Sunlight Labs. This project collects data about state legislative activities, including bill summaries, votes, sponsorships, legislators, and committees.
2. News and blog citations of bills & legislators from Google News & Blog Search
3. Campaign contribution data from the non-profit, non-partisan website of the National Institute on Money in State Politics (NIMSP), FollowTheMoney.org, via TransparencyData. Forthcoming, we seek to bring in much more state-level money-in-politics data from MAPLight.org, as seen in their MAPLight.org/California state site, as well as the innovative public accountability wiki project, LittleSis.org
4. Issue group ratings and official member contact information (where available) from the non-partisan Project VoteSmart and their API.
5. Social media mentions from the Twitter API, with other social media services (e.g. Facebook, the open-source application ThinkUp, Identi.ca, Diaspora, and others) to come.
6. Legislator biographies from Wikipedia and "how state gov works" resources via the Ballotpedia wiki, among others
7. Video - to be crowdsourced for each state on the Miro Community platform, a project of the non-profit Participatory Culture Foundation.
8. U.S. Congressional data from THOMAS and other sources via our data partner GovTrack, also via our own OpenCongress API, the Sunlight Labs Congress API, and the OpenGovernment Community Project on the OpenCongress Wiki (built on semantic MediaWiki).
9. Geographic maps of districts from the U.S. Census Bureau, with planned enhancements to come (viz., making the maps dynamic, as seen in typical Google Maps) via the open-source GeoServer.

About PPF

1. The Participatory Politics Foundation (PPF) conceived of, maintains, and builds OpenCongress.org, the most-visited government engagement website in the U.S. and likely the world. PPF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to create websites that provide opportunities for continual engagement with government. Our office is in New York City, and we work with a web-based staff and volunteers in every corner of the country.
 - a. OpenCongress combines official government data with news coverage, blog analysis, public comments, participation tools, and more to give you the real story behind what's happening in Congress. The site is free, open-source, non-profit & non-partisan, and operates as a joint project of PPF and the Sunlight Foundation.
 - b. Summary of key metrics: OpenCongress recently surpassed 1 million visits per month, with an active community of more than 150,000 registered users, more than 300 volunteer programmers and evangelists on our development e-mail list-serv, and a sizable community on social media. The site's extensive RSS feeds, free widgets, and open API receive millions of requests for data every day. The site's traffic rank, user activity, and search engine authority continue to grow sharply linearly across the board.
 - i. Just as importantly, the site has emerged as the go-to, user-friendly resource for journalists, political bloggers, issue-based organizations, and casual web users to track and share the best information about their interests in Congress. In other words, OC doesn't only reach political wonks -- it reaches the long tail of web users with any political interests imaginable. Tagline: "Everyone can be an insider".
 - ii. OpenCongress is routinely linked from sites large & small (NYT, WaPo, Gannett News Sites, Washington Observer-Reporter, student newspapers such as Kansan.com), political blogs (TPM, Instapundit,

DailyKos, HuffPo, RedState), social networking services (Twitter, Facebook, StumbleUpon), tech sites (BoingBoing, Slashdot, Digg), membership groups (EFF, MoveOn, SaveTheInternet), and local political blogs across the country (e.g. “Reporting Michigan”, “Progress Illinois”, and many thousands of others).

iii. As an example of the type of engagement that OpenCongress makes possible, please consider H.R. 6867 in the previous 110th session of the U.S. Congress, a bill to extend unemployment benefits. Web users all over the country affected by the recession were seeking information about this kitchen-table topic, and what emerged was a great success: close to 60,000 comments were left in the comment forums for this one bill alone ::



(source :: http://www.opencongress.org/bill/110-h6867/comments?comment_sort=rating)

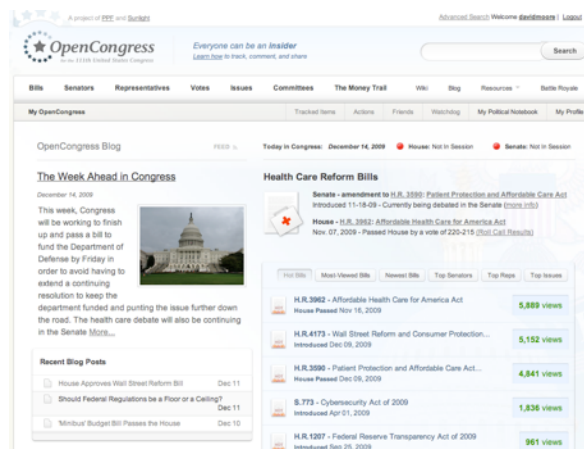
... organic user communities arose to trade updated information and analysis of the bill's key provisions and implications for all 50 states. Because OpenCongress is open-source and our data is portable, PPF was able to extricate the key insights from the comment forum and re-publish them in a publicly-editable wiki project, called Unemployment Wiki, that arose from user participation as a leading resource on these issues.

iv. One of the most-asked questions from our users is the following: “OpenCongress is great -- when will there be a version for my state and city?” This question is followed closely by visitors abroad asking, “When will there be a version for my country?” As our code base has matured and user community has grown, we’re now ready to scale in every direction -- up-and-down-and-horizontal -- towards the logical extension of bringing the OpenCongress model down to your neighborhood level.

Statement of Needs

1. The public needs free and open-source web tools to make government accessible on the local level (OpenGov-ernment) in the same ways that OpenCongress makes the U.S. Congress more accessible on the federal level.
 - a. Free, because this public-spirited mission is non-commercial and to encourage the widest possible use by web surfers -- both politically-inclined and political neophytes (the latter especially!).

- b. Open-source, because openness yields success through a positive brand aura (openness = collaboration), provides an incentive for volunteers, and is designed to be remixed at hyper-local levels and in unique ways for other communities.
2. Making government data more accessible through the OpenGovernment model of aggregated social wisdom and user-friendly interfaces offers the following resources to web users from a variety of backgrounds ::
 - a. Learn about what government does and why it matters -- basic education, research, helpful primers, explanations, wiki background, narratives, and useful summaries. Web visitors naturally “filter up” the most useful info via “Web 2.0” best practices, made available in structured data formats for other web developers thanks to integrated “semantic Web 3.0” practices.
 - b. Share this info with their online communities through built-in peer-to-peer communication and one-click re-publishing to popular social sharing services (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, etc.).
 - c. Get Engaged through user-friendly & encouraging interface choices -- comment on a bill, click “aye” or “nay” in support or opposition to a bill, give an approval rating to a Member of Congress -- i.e., take an action on the site as a first step down the path to being a citizen participant.
 - d. Contact Government - use the above-laid groundwork as stepping stones to greater citizen engagement, where individuals can stay in continuous communication with their elected officials at all levels of government. This paradigm shift away from predominantly election-oriented practices of politics by average citizens and towards a healthier, more mutually responsive political landscape will bring benefits to each of the stakeholders: the public will feel empowered in holding their democratically-elected representatives accountable; for their part, Members of Congress and government officials will have better feedback and rich public opinion input on which to base their decisions. This mutually-beneficial outcome between the body politic and our representatives is central to PPF’s mission in opening up politics:



(Homepage :: www.opencongress.org/)

3. Currently, there is a shortage of free and open-source web resources that exist for individuals and organizations to track and share information about their state & local governments -- i.e., in most cases, there is no recognized website for a reader of national political news to get engaged with the work of her state Senate or city council.
 - a. Many state & city governments have an official web presence, but as with the website of the federal Library of Congress, THOMAS, these sites are woefully inadequate to encourage meaningful public par-

ticipation. In fact, most state- and city-level government sites fall far, far short of THOMAS' low bar of transparency, usability, and community. OpenGovernment does not seek to replace these official sites, of course, but rather to provide an outside community to demonstrate how local governments can follow best practices and open up their publishing of legislative data to the public, journalists, and other watchdog groups.

- b. Local news outlets typically cover the politics of the State House & City Hall, but are always in need of more tracking & research tools, as well as other free distribution outlets for their journalism. These news outlets will benefit from the automatic aggregation of links about state-and-city level politics that's a core function of OpenCongress and OpenGovernment. The broad audience of web users will encounter links to their sites in a supportive context and have the opportunity to "vote up" the most helpful analysis from their writers.
- c. Local journalists could use a rich, objective, free resource for linking to legislation at the local level, following "what's hot", subscribing to free RSS and email updates for tracking bills and votes, and generally taking the public temperature. In this way, the collective actions and comments of the open-access OC community generate facts and ideas that can inform and add context to existing political coverage.
- d. Most importantly, there is no web-based dashboard for citizens to get engaged with their elected officials at all levels, up and down the chain: town, city, county, state, and federal representatives. Various web-sites, including OpenCongress and local news sites, offer pieces of this equation in different states, but there is no recognized, user-friendly web destination for the civic experience as a whole. The public at large needs a go-to resource for getting involved in their entire government and their local communities.

OpenGovernment moves us closer to the goal of having a resource for government that is as user-friendly and collaborative as, say, Facebook is for your social network, or Twitter is for rapid dissemination of information and opinion, or as iTunes is for sorting and organizing your media files. The public deserves a tool for government that is as robust and usable as other online services we use every day.

IV. OpenGovernment.org

1. OpenGovernment.org is based on the same open-source code base that powers OpenCongress.org, the proven resource for transparency and engagement with the federal U.S. legislature.
 - a. The OpenGovernment model scales in every direction: down, to state and local government; up, to international entities such as the United Nations or World Bank; and horizontally, to other countries with democratic governments, non-profits like the Knight Foundation, academic institutions, businesses in seek of grassroots engagement, and many more conceivable uses. OpenGovernment.org is not simply a set of discrete web resources, but rather, an open platform for civic engagement overall, free and customizable for any imaginable community.
 - b. The sites will syndicate each other's content and extensively link back and forth. User accounts on one will authenticate on the other, creating a seamless user experience between them. A user who creates a free account with either OC or OG will be able to see, on her profile, a comprehensive set of information about her U.S. Senators, her U.S. Representative, her elected officials in the State Legislature, and for many major cities, her elected officials in City Government (e.g., City Councilpeople, Ward Alderpeople, etc.)

2. For city-level data, PPF seeks funding support in order to adapt customized code on OpenGovernment for local levels of government, starting with city councils.
 - a. Just as with the state-level project, the necessary first step is for PPF programmers to settle on a working data standard for city-level data (to the extent advisable, certainly based on and closely replicating the state-level feeds). The new CivicCommons community, with whom we're in coordination, and many others will certainly need to have input on this and will be warmly invited to contribute towards a new standard. CivicCommons is an exciting and necessary part of the ever-growing #opengov landscape, and we'll develop hand-in-hand with them.
 - b. Following establishing the community-generated standard, PPF programmers will work with existing communities of open-source developers in cities that are already doing work around this cause. Many cities are close to or currently working on an open data standard for city-level legislation, and the open-source development community around OpenGovernment.org will provide incentives and technical support for these greater efforts. For example, see: CivicCommons; CodeCamp.org, with initiatives in Southern California, Southwest Florida, Philly, NoVa, Tampa, Iowa, Silicon Valley; and more.
 - c. However, we won't restrict our partner cities to major population centers only -- dozens of smaller cities across the country will be worked on so as to bring existing data publishing up to the standard for inclusion on OpenGovernment.org, and further documentation of the OG code will continually make it easier for volunteer programmers to create their own versions in parallel with the community development process. For example, city-level government transparency has recently been considered by cities such as St. Petersburg, Boulder, Ann Arbor, Palo Alto, Santa Cruz, and Salt Lake City. All in all, any city or town, large or small, will have the opportunity and direction to create a valid data stream for further inclusion on the OpenGovernment.org hub. The potential target cities are legion, so we'll seek efficiencies by picking the low-hanging fruit -- and we have great flexibility in specific cities to target for the second and third wave of development and rollout (see below).

3. With additional resources and continued development, OpenGovernment.org will seek to offer the same core feature set as OpenCongress for state and local governments ::
 - a) Read about bills, votes, Members, issues, and more in a user-friendly format
 - b) Usable searching of the site for colloquial terms & interests
 - c) Read uniquely-aggregated news & blog coverage of every bill and Member, sorted by date and/or usefulness as rated by the open user community
 - d) See visualizations of bill status and votes (roll call results) in clickable pie charts
 - e) Campaign contribution information for every Member of Congress (at the federal level, via OpenSecrets and MAPLight; at the state-level, via FollowTheMoney and other local partners).
 - f) Read, comment, permalink, and compare the full bill text and previous versions in viewer
 - g) Track Congress via RSS and personal "My OpenCongress" (MyOC) profiles of "tracked items"
 - h) Share pages & info via built-in social sharing tools, e.g. Digg, Facebook, etc.
 - i) Create widgets or Facebook app of bills / Members / issues they're tracking, or support/oppose
 - j) Vote "aye or nay" on Bills via MyOC
 - k) Give personal approval ratings to Members via MyOC
 - l) Comment on Bills, Members, Committees., Issues etc. and see others' comments & votes in Recent Site Actions
 - m) Find and Make Friends on MyOC with users in their state, district, and nationwide...
 - n) Share personal affiliations, location, and preferred contact info on MyOC profile pages

- o) Rate other users' comments & news articles & blog posts -- offering a unique venue for true peer-to-peer communication
 - p) Bookmark and share relevant content from OC or around the web using “My Political Notebook”
 - q) Easily contextualize what's hot in Congress on a number of fronts via Hot Bills pages or Battle Royale sortable rankings
 - r) Compare any two members' votes head-to-head
 - s) Read, edit, contribute to, and query OpenCongress Wiki content for every Member, committee, hot bills, and more.
4. The goal behind each city page on OpenGovernment will be to both involve the local developer and advocacy community in being active on the site, and also to partner with allies for early beta-testing and outreach.
- a. The model will be one where new cities are rolled-out continually as their data standards come on-line, providing an attractive public narrative and buildup to future releases.
 - b. This exciting model creates the possibility of pitting different states and cities against each other in friendly-yet-motivational competitions (or games) for meeting the open data standard. It provides citizens with a concrete demand for their elected officials, and provides government representatives with an achievable deliverable to showcase to their constituents as a symbol of their commitment to accountability. The question, “When is our city joining OpenGovernment.org?”, or, “Why aren’t we on OpenGovernment.org yet?” is a powerful motivation for all stakeholders to open up their city governments and get involved in politics.
 - c. As highlighted at our meeting this past week, training for journalists and target publishers is a key component to facilitate adoption of these new web tools, so PPF will collaborate with Knight’s community in order to accompany launches with support -- both over the web (webinars), freely available case studies, volunteer evangelists, and in-person training where possible ::

H.R.3590 - Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Legislative Vehicle)
To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the first-time homebuyers credit in the case of members of the Armed Forces and certain other Federal employees, and for other purposes.

Version	Word Count	Changes From Previous Version	Percent Change
Introduced in House	989	n/a	n/a
Engrossed in House	899	3	20%
Placed on Calendar Senate	970	8	5%
Amendment in Senate	353,330	753	99%

Display Version: Amendment in Senate

Rollover any line of text to comment and/or link to it.

Calendar No. 175
111th CONGRESS
1st Session
H. R. 3590

AMENDMENT NO. 2786

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES
October 8, 2009
Received and read the first time
October 13, 2009
Read the second time and placed on the calendar

AN ACT
—111th Cong., 1st Sess.

View Bill Overview
Official info, comments, more

Bill's Views
Tracker: 535
Post Seven Days: 4,839
All Time: 21,947

☒ I Support this Bill
☐ I Oppose this Bill

31% Users Support Bill
62 in favor / 160 opposed

My Regional Officials
Rep. Mike Veldegaris (D-AZ)

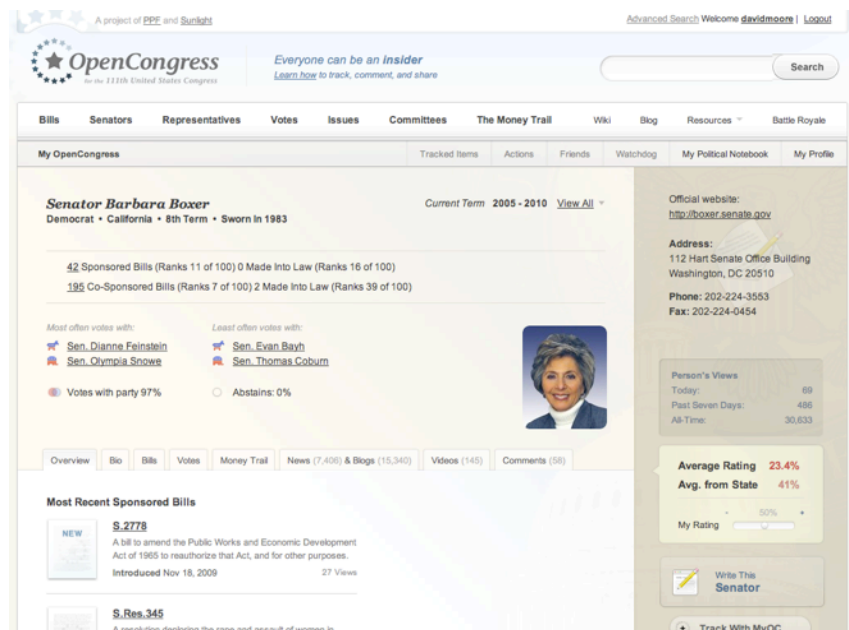
Subscribe To This Bill
☐ Get Email Alerts

Share This Bill

(screenshot: bill text viewer of H.R. 3590, Senate's health care reform bill)

5. International Expansion of the OpenGovernment Platform

As OpenGovernment moves out of beta and rolls out to other locales, other countries around the world will have both a proven back-end data format and front-end user interface on which to base their efforts towards open government. Individuals from scores of countries all over the world, such as Brazil, Mexico, and Italy, have written PPF to seek advice on developing versions of OpenCongress & OpenGovernment for the public benefit of their countries. One of the major stumbling blocks to date in their efforts has been the lack of publicly-available data, but OpenGovernment should prove a compelling example to other countries of the type of rewarding engagement that's possible with open web tools. Public institutions such as hospital, school systems, and even privately-held companies could remix the OpenGovernment code for non-commercial uses in order to filter up suggestions from their grassroots constituents.



(screenshot: profile page of Sen. Barbara Boxer)

V. How PPF Works

1. PPF currently operates as an agile, web-based, six-person development team composed of one program manager, two programmers, a web designer, a wiki editor, and an outreach coordinator / blogger. We seek to replicate much of this proven structure in the first year of OpenGovernment.org development, with appropriate tweaks -- a slightly greater emphasis on programming time to create & standardize city-level data streams, and a slight corresponding increase in outreach time for training.

- a. Creating municipal-level data streams and building fully-functional versions of OpenCongress at the local level will require the work of at least two-full time programmers, supported by a full-time project manager, a part-time designer, and evangelized by a full-time outreach coordinator to target audiences. Along the way, this development team will work closely with volunteers in all 50 states and dozens of cities in order to har-

ness their contributions and expertise. In the end, the total number of code contributors to OpenGovernment will number in the dozens, and volunteer beta-testers and evangelists will number in the hundreds across the country.

- b. Additional materials, such as sample info designs for city-level versions, open data specs, and draft development budgets are all available upon request -- email PPF Executive Director David Moore: david@ppolitics.org. Also, further web page mockups or drafts of OpenGovernment and the "citizen dashboard" user experience can be created in order to help better visualize our vision of user-friendly online engagement.

VI. Summary of Outcomes ::

1. New websites based at OpenGovernment.org, along with the existing OpenCongress.org, for individuals and organizations to learn about, comment on, and share the best info about their entire chain of government.
2. A new base of open-source code OpenGovernment.org makes it easy and rewarding for web developers to adapt other data inputs into the OpenGovernment model of engagement (e.g. hyper-local communities, other countries, other entities, etc.).
3. A popularized, peer-reviewed, and proven open data standard for governments at all levels to comply with in taking steps towards transparency and responsiveness.
4. A rich resource for journalists and bloggers to draw upon for research, tracking what's hot in their communities, combating systemic or personal corruption, linking for their web audience, and re-publishing for public knowledge about government.

I appreciate your consideration of this proposal and welcome your feedback and input. Please feel free to contact me any time to discuss these ideas in more detail, I'm available at your convenience and love trading ideas.

On behalf of PPF, we're passionate about making local government more open, and we have a proven foundation on which to build and extend this effort. We very much hope to partner with funding partners to bring the great potential of open government into people's lives and into their communities over the next two years.

Sincerely,

-David

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<http://participatorypolitics.org/> || <http://www.participatorypolitics.org/projects/> || @ppolitics

<http://www.opencongress.org/> || <https://github.com/opencongress> || @opencongress

<http://opengovernment.org> || <https://github.com/opengovernment> || @open_gov

Add'l screenshots:

1. Existing bill page on official .gov CA website, user-unfriendly:

I want to [search](#) again.

Documents associated with AB 1000 in the 2009-2010 Session

[Status](#) - 02/03/2010 1247 bytes

[History](#) - 02/02/2010 1608 bytes

Bill Text

In order to view the PDF version of the bill text documents, you may need a [free viewer](#) from Adobe.

[Introduced](#) - 02/27/2009 [HTML](#) - 33752 bytes [PDF](#) - 188734 bytes

Analyses

[Assembly Committee](#) - 05/12/2009 - 7521 bytes

[Assembly Committee](#) - 04/24/2009 - 32396 bytes

[Assembly Committee](#) - 04/21/2009 - 23758 bytes

Votes

[Assembly Committee](#) - 04/27/2009 - 927 bytes

2. Sample bill page on OpenGovernment-CA, with beta-version design styling:

The screenshot shows the OpenGovernment.org website interface for the California Assembly Bill ACR 68. The page is titled "California Assembly Bill ACR 68: Relative to Public Service Recognition Week." and includes a sidebar with navigation links such as Overview, Votes and Actions, News & Blog Coverage, Social Media Mentions, Interest Groups, Videos, Comments, Bills, People, Issues, and Money Trail. The main content area displays the bill's status, sponsors (72 Sponsors), bill text (2009ACR6899INT, 2009ACR6899AMD, 2009ACR6899ENR, 2009ACR6899ChP, 2009ACR6897AMD), subject areas, recent actions, and recent votes. The recent votes section shows a bar chart with 40 all votes, 29 yes votes, 1 no votes, and 10 other votes.

More CA state-leg screenshots:

Committee page :



California State Senate
Home Senators Legislation Committees Schedules Offices/Caucuses Audio/TV Faqs/Links

~Standing Committees~
Education

Sub-Committees
Information

Education Committee meets every Wednesday at 9:00 am in Room 4203.

JURISDICTION: Bills relating to education, higher education, and certificated educational personnel.

Members:
[Senator Alan Lowenthal \(Chair\)](#)

Addresses & Staff:
Staff Director:
Daniel Alvarez
Principal Consultants:
Kathleen Chavira
Beth Graybill and Lynn Lorber
Assistants:
Barbara Montero and Vanessa Cisneros
Phone:
(916)651-4105
Room 2083

Home Senators Legislation Committees Schedules Offices/Caucuses Audio/TV Faqs/Links
Please send any questions or comments about this site to WebMaster@sen.ca.gov

Vote page :

UNOFFICIAL BALLOT
MEASURE: AB 1000
AUTHOR: Ma
TOPIC: Employment: paid sick days.
DATE: 04/27/2009
LOCATION: ASM. JUD.
MOTION: Do pass and be re-referred to the Committee on Appropriations.
(AYES 7. NOES 3.) (PASS)

AYES

Feuer Brownley Evans Jones
Krekorian Lieu Monning

NOES

Tran Knight Nielsen

ABSENT, ABSTAINING, OR NOT VOTING

... compare to OpenGovernment (beta) page of free public participation tools on bill pages ::

California Assembly Bill

ACR 68: Relative to Public Service Recognition Week.

[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Like](#) [RSS](#) All Actions [RSS](#) Major Action [Email Alerts \(coming soon\)](#) [WRITE](#)

0 total views 0 in the last 7 days 0 in the last month. Session: 2009-2010

Status

[Introduced](#) [Referred to Committee](#) [LAW](#)

72 Sponsors [See all](#)


Sam Blakeslee, Ph.D., coauthor

Bill Text


[20090ACR6899INT](#)
[20090ACR6898AMD](#)
[20090ACR6896ENR](#)
[20090ACR6895CHP](#)
[20090ACR6897AMD](#)

... and OG's more intelligible Issue index pages ::

California Issues

The California State Legislature officially assigns issue areas to legislation. Generally speaking, though, the bill-to-issue mapping used by the 50 U.S. state legislatures are unstandardized and byzantine. Below we're showing the issue areas used most frequently in this state, those assigned to bills four or more times. Click the link at the bottom of the page to view all of the many thousands of bill subjects -- some very specific, others very broad.

Our goal is to make arcane bills easier to find and follow through the issue areas that the public already knows. Towards this end, we seek non-profit funding support to manually assign the most-viewed bills in this state to one or more of the 46 legislative issue areas as determined by the non-partisan [Project VoteSmart](#) -- [read how you can help](#).



Bill Subjects

- [Agriculture and Food](#)
- [Animal Rights and Wildlife Issues](#)
- [Budget, Spending, and Taxes](#)
- [Business and Consumers](#)
- [Campaign Finance and Election Issues](#)
- [Civil Liberties and Civil Rights](#)
- [Commerce](#)
- [Crime](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Environmental](#)
- [Family and Children Issues](#)
- [Federal, State, and Local Relations](#)
- [Gambling and Gaming](#)
- [Government Reform](#)
- [Guns](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Housing and Property](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples](#)

Overview of bill page features made possible for the public benefit on OpenGovernment:

The screenshot displays the OpenGovernment.org interface for California Assembly Bill ACR 68. The sidebar on the left offers navigation options like Overview, Votes and Actions, News & Blog Coverage, Social Media Mentions, Interest Groups, Videos, 0 Comments, Bills, People, Issues, and Money Trail. The main content area features a title 'ACR 68: Relative to Public Service Recognition Week.' and a status bar with 'Introduced' and 'Referred to Committee' stages. Below the status bar, there are 72 sponsors listed, including Sam Blakeslee, Ph.D., coauthor. The bill text section lists several versions: 20090ACR6899INT, 20090ACR6898AMD, 20090ACR6896ENR, 20090ACR6895CHP, and 20090ACR6897AMD. A 'Recent Actions' table is also visible at the bottom.

Annotations on the screenshot include:

- Permalinks to official legislative actions & roll calls** (pointing to the top navigation bar)
- Bill pages offer built-in social sharing buttons, RSS feeds, and the ability to contact your elected officials, all at your fingertips** (pointing to the social sharing buttons)
- Real-world context through news, blog buzz, Twitter mentions, and more** (pointing to the News & Blog Coverage link in the sidebar)
- One-of-a-kind public comment forums facilitate peer-to-peer communication and self-organizing around bills** (pointing to the 0 Comments link in the sidebar)
- The body of the bill page presents its official government info with the unique at-a-glance "bill status" bar from OpenCongress** (pointing to the status bar)



OpenGovernment