

# State Health Insurance Exchange To Be Voter Registration Hub

Error

---

MAY 17, 2013

On Wednesday, California Secretary of State Debra Bowen (D) made California the first state to designate its health insurance exchange as a voter registration agency -- a move that some Republicans fear could benefit Democrats, the [Sacramento Bee reports](#) (Sanders, Sacramento Bee, 5/17).

## Background

Covered California -- the state's health insurance exchange -- primarily will serve individuals and small businesses.

Supporters hope that the exchange will function similar to websites like Amazon and Expedia so that users will be able to choose between various health plans through an easily navigable online store.

The exchange is expected to open for registration in October ([California Healthline](#), 5/15).

Many of Covered California's clients are expected to be low- and moderate-income families.

## **Designating Exchange as Voter Registration Hub**

Shannan Velayas, a spokesperson for Bowen, said that a 1993 federal law requires states to designate agencies and offices providing public assistance or disability services as voter registration agencies.

The exchange's designation as a voter registration hub means that millions of Californians who contact Covered California will be given an opportunity to register to vote.

Velayas said, "This is about making sure that all eligible Californians are offered the chance to register to vote."

### **GOP Response**

Senate Minority Leader Robert Huff (R-Diamond Bar) said that he supports the idea of Californians registering to vote but that targeting specific populations creates the possibility of a partisan advantage.

He said, "It does beg the question about whether it's a systematic attempt to try to empower people more predisposed to vote their way," adding, "And that would be concerning to us" (Sacramento Bee, 5/17).

Read more: <http://www.californiahealthline.org/articles/2013/5/17/state-health-insurance-exchange-to-serve-as-voter-registration-hub.aspx#ixzz2TZG8I8ld>

---