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| The History of Requests

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| In California |
| silhouette photo of coconut trees under pink and orange skyPublic Record Requests have been foundational to the Golden State from the very beginning. Ever since California’s constitution was ratified in 1879, citizens have had a right to access public information. Article I section 3 states:*“The people have the right of access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business, and, therefore, the meetings of public bodies and the writings of public officials and agencies shall be open to public scrutiny.”*Prioritizing citizen access to information is vital to holding a government accountable. This commitment to accountability was present in the drafting of the constitution and has persisted through California’s history. In 1968, then-governor Ronald Reagan signed into law the California Public Records Act, to “safeguard the accountability of government to the public.” This law was later referenced in the California Supreme Court case CBS v. Block, where it was stated:*“Implicit in a democratic process is the notion that the government should be accountable for its actions. In order to verify accountability, individuals must have access to government files. Such access permits checks against the arbitrary exercise of official power and secrecy in the political process.”*This was not the first time that a Californian would have to fight in court to protect the people’s right to public records and it certainly will not be the last. Our state has a long legacy of keeping our leaders accountable that has been present since our founding and the preservation of that legacy is central to everything we do here at Transparent California.  |

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