

- 8) Provides that any unspent FY 2026-27 program funds remain available for use during FY 2027-28.
- 9) Adds personal information protections for data collected through the program, consistent with the Information Practices Act.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Likely absorbable costs (General Fund and the Data and Innovation Services Revolving Fund) to the Office of Data and Innovation (ODI) to codify and administer the Engaged California Program. ODI reports it can absorb the requirements of this bill within existing resources. The Engaged California Program is currently operating administratively within ODI; this bill codifies the program in statute effective January 1, 2027, and adds governance, reporting, and operational requirements.
- 2) Unknown, potentially significant workload impact on other state agencies (General Fund, special funds), plausibly exceeding \$150,000 annually in the aggregate. Section 12815(q)(7) requires state agencies identified by ODI as having relevant knowledge or expertise on a selected topic to coordinate with ODI on outreach, community engagement, and communications, and to provide any necessary data and information. These obligations are imposed on state agencies whose identities depend on the topics selected; the bill provides no funding for the affected agencies. The magnitude is unknown and varies by topic, but could be material for agencies repeatedly engaged for high-volume or technically complex deliberations.

COMMENTS:

The Engaged California Program is a digital public engagement platform that ODI uses to gather structured public input on policy topics. Participants opt in to deliberations on a defined topic, receive balanced background information, engage in structured dialogue, and produce actionable recommendations for state agencies and policymakers. ODI uses targeted outreach to ensure participation reflects the demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity of California, with particular focus on those most impacted by the topic under consideration. The program has been deployed administratively in two prior engagements: a Los Angeles fire recovery effort, in which impacted residents helped identify and prioritize recovery needs, and a statewide workforce engagement, in which state employees provided input on improving service delivery. The author argues that the program is currently vulnerable to reduction or elimination based on changes in administration and seeks to codify it in statute to ensure its continuation across administrations.

The Privacy and Consumer Protection committee analysis notes that, because the program was established administratively, it did not include a role for the Legislature in topic selection or appropriation of funding. Recent amendments establish Secretary of Government Operations approval for topics recommended by the ODI director, authorize the Speaker and the President pro Tempore to submit topics for deliberation, remove a continuous appropriation, expand annual reporting requirements, and add personal information protections for program data.

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