

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5993

As of January 11, 2000

Title: An act relating to open public meetings.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to open public meetings.

Sponsors: Senators Benton, Rossi, Zarelli, Stevens, Johnson and Finkbeiner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 1/20/2000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The Open Public Meetings Act establishes the requirements for the meetings of public agencies to be considered open to the public for purposes of validating any action taken at the meeting. Specific requirements for agendas and the time that must be allotted for public comment are not addressed. Meetings are not required to be held within the territory over which the public agency has jurisdiction.

Summary of Bill: In order to save any action taken at a meeting of a public agency from being null and void, the agenda for the meeting must indicate that final action may be taken at that meeting. In order for a meeting to be open and public, the agenda must be posted in advance and be specific enough to indicate the subject matter or action to be taken.

Each agenda item must be allotted at least 15 minutes for public comment. The public comment must be distributed proportionately among the persons desiring to comment if more than five people wish to speak to any one agenda item, with each person having at least three minutes if five or less persons comment. Written comments must be accepted in addition to oral comments.

The governing body of the public agency holding the meeting is allowed to require persons who wish to comment to identify themselves.

Meetings must be held within the territory over which the public agency has jurisdiction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.