
**State Government & Tribal
Affairs Committee**

HB 1444

Brief Description: Creating the public records exemptions accountability committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Kessler, Rodne, Chandler, Upthegrove, Williams, Miloscia and O'Brien; by request of Attorney General.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Public Records Exemptions Accountability Committee.

Hearing Date: 2/2/07

Staff: Alison Hellberg (786-7152).

Background:

The Public Records Act requires that all state and local government agencies make all public records available for public inspection and copying unless they fall within certain statutory exemptions. The provisions requiring public records disclosure must be interpreted liberally and the exemptions narrowly in order to effectuate a general policy favoring disclosure.

Summary of Bill:

The Public Records Exemptions Accountability Committee (Committee) is created to review all exemptions from public disclosure.

The Committee will consist of 13 members, including:

- a representative appointed by the Governor;
- a representative appointed by the Attorney General;
- a representative appointed by the State Auditor;
- a representative of local government, to be selected by the Governor;
- a representative of a statewide media association, to be selected by the Attorney General;
- a member of the Senate, to be selected by the Senate majority leader;

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- a member of the Senate, to be selected by the Senate minority leader;
- a member of the House of Representatives, to be selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- a member of the House of Representatives, to be selected by the House of Representatives minority leader; and
- four members of the public, to be selected by the nine other members.

Members of the public shall be selected with consideration given to diversity of viewpoint and geography.

By August 1, 2007, the Code Reviser shall provide the Committee with a list of all exemptions from public disclosure, both from the Public Records Act and from other parts of the code. The Committee will meet to discuss the exemptions and recommend repeal or amendment of the exemptions to the appropriate committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Beginning in 2008, the Code Reviser shall provide the Committee with a list of exemptions not codified in the Public Records Act. The Committee will discuss the exemptions and make recommendations to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.