HOUSE BILL REPORT
SSB 5049

As Passed House:
April 11, 2025

Title: An act relating to the public records exemptions accountability committee.

Brief Description: Concerning the public records exemptions accountability committee.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, J., McCune and Fortunato).

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
State Government & Tribal Relations: 3/18/25, 3/25/25 [DP].
Floor Activity:
Passed House: 4/11/25, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Modifies the quarterly meeting requirement of the Public Records Exemptions Accountability Committee to require four meetings annually.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Mena, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Waters, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Doglio and Farivar.

Staff: Connor Schiff (786-7093).

Background:

The Public Records Act (PRA) requires state and local governmental agencies to make all

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written records available for public inspection and copying upon request unless a record falls within an exemption under the PRA or another statute that exempts or prohibits disclosure of specific information or records. Over 500 specific references in the PRA or other statutes provide exemptions from public disclosure.

The Public Records Exemption Accountability Committee (Committee), known as the Sunshine Committee, periodically reviews these exemptions and provides recommendations as to whether specific exemptions should be continued, modified, scheduled for sunset review, or terminated. By November 15 of each year, the Committee provides a report to the Governor, the Attorney General, and the Legislature with its annual recommendations. The Committee meets in public and considers input from interested parties. The Committee must meet at least once a quarter and may hold additional meetings at the call of the chair or by a majority vote of the members of the Committee.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that the Public Records Exemptions Accountability Committee meet at least once a quarter is modified to require at least four meetings annually.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This change allows the Public Records Exemption Accountability Committee (Committee) to have greater flexibility in scheduling its meetings. This flexibility is necessary to accommodate Committee members who are legislators. Legislators were not able to attend the Committee meeting in February, which meant that the Committee was not able to meet quorum. This change would allow the Committee to do its important work.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Jeff Wilson, prime sponsor; and Rowland Thompson, Sunshine Committee.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.