



The Municipal League of King County
810 Third Avenue, Suite 224
Seattle, WA 98104

Hon. Christine Gregoire
Governor, State of Washington
Legislative Building, PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Hon. Rob McKenna
Attorney General
1125 Washington St. SE
PO Box 40100
Olympia, WA 98504-0100

March 14, 2005

Dear Governor Gregoire and Attorney General McKenna,

We are writing on behalf of the Municipal League of King County to express our major concerns about the Public Disclosure bills now being considered by the Washington State Legislature.

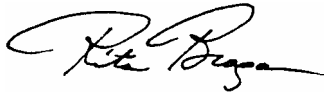
The Municipal League's Issues Management Committee has heard from speakers representing a variety of viewpoints on this topic, and has given the matter of Public Disclosure reform considerable thought. The issue of Public Disclosure is complex and volatile. As such it deserves a careful, analytic review of actual problems and their potential solutions, before "fixes" are put in place legislatively. To that end, we propose that you work together to convene a balanced committee of stakeholders to work through the issues and bring a package of reasonable reforms to the 2006 legislative session for enactment, if analysis shows they are needed.

Anecdotes abound detailing alleged abuses of the Public Disclosure Act by governments and, alternatively, describing apparent harassment by document requestors. It is important to determine whether these anecdotes represent serious patterns of abuse or are infrequent anomalies, before designing and enacting legislative remedies to them. The particular nature of this topic calls for balanced analysis and broad input prior to imposing remedies.

Differing viewpoints all have validity, but this issue could greatly benefit from a careful analysis that could lead to reforms appropriate to the extent of actual problems. The stakeholders group that we recommend might include such members as: the Association of Washington Cities, Washington Association of Counties, school districts and other local governments, state government, civic groups (e.g. the League of Women Voters), advocacy groups (e.g. Citizens for Open Government and the Evergreen Freedom Foundation), and more neutral organizations such as the Bar Associations. These interests could be brought together to work on this problem, with an emphasis on ensuring balance of viewpoints. There should be a time certain for completion of the group's work, and agreement that all recommendations would be brought forward for legislative consideration. If the group is convened soon, it would have time to do a thorough job of analysis and deliberation before the 2006 session begins.

The Municipal League appreciates your serious consideration of our proposal. The citizens of Washington State will be well served in the years ahead by balancing the need to ensure citizen access to government with the need for government to be able to operate efficiently and effectively in the service of its citizens. We stand ready to assist this effort in any way we can.

Sincerely,



Rita Brogan, Chair



Lucy Steers, Issues Chair

Cc: Sen. Lisa Brown, Senate Majority Leader
Sen. Bill Finkbeiner, Senate Minority Leader
Rep. Frank Chopp, Speaker of the House
Rep. Bruce Chandler, House Minority Leader
Rep. Lynn Kessler, House Majority Leader