

COIN Legislative Session Worksheet for 2023

Bill Number: [SB 510](#)

Brief Description of Bill:

Oregon's Department of Justice outlines the purpose of our state's open records laws: they are to "promote democracy and transparency. Oregonians have a right to know how their government works and spends money." This bill essentially provides more stable funding for the Public Records Advocate, who is supposed to help people with public records requests. Such an entity might become an irritant to politicians, who could then cut its funding.

BACKGROUND: The office of the Public Records Advocate (PRA) was created by Senate Bill 106 (2017). It is an "independent office within the executive department, separate and distinct from any other state agency" (ORS 192.461). The PRA is appointed by the Public Records Advisory Council (ORS 192.481) for a term of four years and may be reappointed to consecutive terms. The PRA appoints a Deputy, to whom the PRA may delegate authority. The PRA and the Deputy must be in good standing with the Oregon State Bar.

The PRA provides facilitated dispute resolution services between public records requesters and custodians, when requested; provides trainings to state agencies and local governments about requirements and best practices for processing and responding to public records requests; and is a voting member of the Public Records Advisory Council.

Senate Bill 510 directs the Public Records Advocate to estimate its biennial costs to carry out its duties on or before January 1 preceding the start of a biennium, and to assess those costs to public bodies in state government.

Name of Point Person who completed this form: Dan Meek

Email address if you are willing to be contacted with questions about this bill: dan@meek.net

Last Updated: 4-15-23

1. Research topic – please highlight which category best fits your bill:

● Climate Energy Environment	● Education
● Housing/Houselessness	● Transportation
● Campaign Finance Reform	● Economics
● Immigration/Social Justice	● Crime/Criminal Justice
● Healthcare/Gun Safety	● Other: Good Government

COIN Legislative Session Worksheet for 2023

2. The bill's Legislative champions – sponsors, co-sponsors:

Representative Janelle Bynum (D) and Senator Kim Thatcher (R)

3. The bill's legislative opponents: None so far; it passed out of the Joint Ways and Means Committee unanimously and will likely be up for a vote in the full Senate the week of 4-17-23.

4. What advocacy groups are supporting this bill and why are they supporting it? Provide contact information if available. Good government groups.

5. What groups are opposing this bill and why are they opposing it? None that I can find.

6. What is the likelihood that the bill will pass? Based on the unanimous vote for it in the Joint Ways and Means Committee, it looks like it will pass.

7. What is your recommendation regarding whether COIN should take a position on this bill? You may want to consider the following criteria but are not required to do so:

COIN should endorse this bill. It will help increase transparency in government by making public records more accessible to the public.

- a. Does COIN or other progressive groups across the state care strongly about this issue?
- b. Does this bill protect or expand the rights of marginalized populations?
- c. Does this bill help change the rules and structures of the democratic system to make it work better?
- d. Is this an issue area that is entirely controlled by the states or an issue over which states have a great deal of power?
- e. Is this fight winnable?
- f. Would constituent power add value and make a difference?
- g. Other considerations?

8. List the relevant dates concerning the bill(s). (scheduled committee hearings, votes, lobby days, other scheduled advocacy, phone banks, post card parties, etc.)

Scheduled for a vote in the Senate the week of 4-17, and then it moves to the House.

COIN Legislative Session Worksheet for 2023

9. What activities does the advocacy group wish to mobilize COIN members or other activists to engage in? (phone calling, post cards, emails, LTEs, lobby days, other?)

We're not recommending much effort at this time because it looks like this bill will pass.

10. Are there any media contacts?

Randy Stapilus, Oregon Capital Chronicle -

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2023/03/15/oregons-open-records-laws-supposedly-aim-for-transparency-but-are-complicated/>

11. Is there any other important information about your bill?