

HCS SB 953 -- OPEN RECORDS AND MEETINGS LAW

SPONSOR: Scott (Stevenson)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 6 to 0.

This substitute changes the laws regarding the Open Meetings and Records Law, commonly known as the Sunshine Law. In its main provisions, the substitute:

- (1) Specifies that only members of a public governmental body, their attorneys and staff assistants, and any necessary witnesses will be permitted in any closed meeting of the governmental body;
- (2) Specifies that "cause of action" means evidence that a lawsuit has been filed, although not yet served, or communication from a party to the public body stating that litigation will be filed unless certain demands are met; and
- (3) Extends the expiration date on the provisions regarding the public safety exceptions to the Sunshine Law from December 31, 2008, to December 31, 2012.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the extension of the sunset exemption for the Open Records Law for public safety projects is needed to ensure the safety of Missourians and prevent public access to sensitive documents.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Scott; and Missouri School Boards Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.