



## OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

### **For Immediate Release**

Monday, June 12, 2017

### **Oregon House sends bill establishing records request deadlines to Governor's desk**

**Salem, Ore.** - The Oregon House of Representatives today approved SB 481, legislation establishing deadlines for public agencies to meet when handling public records requests. Proponents of the bipartisan legislation, which was a product of Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum's Public Records Task Force, touted the bill as a positive step forward in an ongoing effort to modernize Oregon's public records laws.

"Oregon's public records laws are antiquated and in serious need of a tune up," said Rep. John Huffman (R-The Dalles), who served on the task force that developed the bill and has helped shepherd it through the legislative process. "By establishing statutory deadlines for government agencies to respond to records requests, we are taking a meaningful step forward in our efforts to promote access to public documents. While SB 481 is by no means a be-all-end-all reform bill, it is a good bill, and hopefully the first of several public records bills adopted this session."

SB 481 requires government agencies to acknowledge records requests within five business days, and requires the records retrieval to be completed within 10 business days after the date of acknowledgement. The legislation allows agencies to exceed the statutory deadlines under certain circumstances, but requires the agency to issue the requester a written explanation for the delay along with an estimated date of completion. SB 481 also requires the Oregon Department of Justice to establish and maintain a public list of Oregon's 550-plus public records exemptions.

In addition to SB 481, lawmakers are also considering SB 106, which would establish a public records advocate position within state government, as well as HB 2101, which would require lawmakers to regularly review and authorize Oregon's long list of public records exemptions.

"I am hopeful that we can find a way to advance SB 106 and HB 2101 before the end of the session," concluded Rep. Huffman. "Public access to government records is essential to maintaining public trust. It's long past to bring our transparency laws into the 21st Century."

SB 481 passed the House by a vote of 52-0. The bill now heads to Governor Brown's desk, where it is expected to be signed into law.

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