



**REPRESENTATIVE JULIE PARRISH
OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE DISTRICT 37**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 25, 2015

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Rep. Julie Parrish Files Priority Bill to Open More Government Records and Help Oregon Citizens Access Their Government

House Bill 3505 Greatly Expands Transparency And Access To Public Records; Removes Exemption From Records Requests While Legislators Are In Session

Salem, OR – Representative Julie Parrish (R-West Linn/Tualatin) today filed a priority bill to create updated standards for public records and remove from exemption a provision in the law that allows Oregon legislators to stonewall on public records requests during session.

House Bill 3505 seeks to address numerous flaws in Oregon’s public records laws by:

- Requiring legislators to respond to public records requests during session;
- Reducing fees for documents, particularly digital documents that can be transferred to requestors electronically;
- Reducing response times and creating a mechanism for requestors to better understand the where their requests are in the process;
- Waiving fees after a request has not been met within three weeks of the initial request;
- Creating a hard-stop presumption of records denial after six weeks, which would allow a requestor to commence the civil process for public records access according to current statutes; and,
- Requiring public records created through private emails, texts, or social media accounts like Facebook Instant Message or Twitter Direct Message features be moved onto a public server within 30 days of the time the record was created.

“Oregon was ranked as being one of the most transparent states in the nation, but what happened with Governor Kitzhaber has exposed a huge weakness in our ability to provide our citizens with a more open and transparent government,” stated Rep. Parrish. “It’s clear our statutes are outdated and do not have proper provisions for records being created electronically across a wide variety of platforms, from email to social media tools, and we’re losing the digital public record.”

Rep. Parrish further explained that there should be no stonewalling the public for records requests by either using time or fees as a deterrent. “It’s a real problem when Oregon citizens are having to pay arbitrary fees for documents that were created and retained with tax dollars. This bill reflects a nominal materials charge to access public records and ends the practice of using fees as a mechanism to kill a public records request.”

Rep. Parrish expects HB 3505 to be directed to the House Committee on Rules once it is introduced on the House Floor later this week. “If we leave this legislative session without a major overhaul of our public records law, I think any trust Oregon voters might still have after everything we’ve just been through will

be entirely eroded by our lack of attention to this very real problem. We certainly have many issues to consider, but good government starts with honesty and transparency.”

Representatives Knute Buehler, Jodi Hack, and John Davis are additional sponsors of HB 3505.

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