

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 491 w/CS An exemption from public records and public meetings requirements for certain information held by the Florida Institute of Human and Machine Cognition

SPONSOR(S): Benson

TIED BILLS: HB 315

IDEN./SIM. BILLS: SB 1414(c); CS/SB 1770 (s)

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) Higher Education (Sub)	5 Y, 0 N	Tilton	Bohannon
2) Education K-20	26 Y, 0 N w/CS	Tilton	Bohannon
3) Education Appropriations (Sub)			
4) Appropriations			
5)			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 491 w/CS creates a public records exemption for certain information relating to research conducted by or through the Florida Institute of Human and Machine Cognition, Inc., or any authorized and approved subsidiary of the corporation. HB 491 w/CS also creates a public records exemption for all identifying information of a donor or prospective donor to the corporation or a subsidiary who wishes to remain anonymous.

HB 491 w/CS also creates a public meetings exemption for meetings of the corporation and its subsidiaries at which the confidential and exempt information is presented or discussed.

HB 491 w/CS has a contingent effective date of July 1, 2003, if HB 315 or similar legislation is adopted during the 2003 legislative session or any extension thereof and becomes law.

This document does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill sponsor or House of Representatives.

STORAGE NAME: h0491c.edk.doc

DATE: April 15, 2003

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. DOES THE BILL:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Reduce government? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Lower taxes? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Expand individual freedom? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Increase personal responsibility? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Empower families? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

For any principle that received a “no” above, please explain:

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

Divisions Of Sponsored Research

The Florida Board of Governors has authorized each state university to create divisions of sponsored research to serve the function of administration and promotion of the programs of research, including sponsored training programs, of the university at which they are located. These divisions are under the supervision of the university president. Current law provides an exemption from public disclosure for certain records relating to activities of the divisions of sponsored research. Materials that relate to methods of manufacture or production, potential trade secrets, potentially patentable material, actual trade secrets, business transactions, or proprietary information received, generated, ascertained, or discovered during the course of research conducted within the state universities is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1), F.S., except that a division of sponsored research must make available upon request the title and description of a research project, the name of the researcher, and the amount and source of funding provided for such projects.¹

Direct Support Organizations

Current law also authorizes state university direct support organizations. These organizations are not-for-profit corporations that are organized and operated exclusively to receive, hold, invest, and administer property and to make expenditures to or for the benefit of a state university, a research and development park, or a research and development authority affiliated with a state university. The identity of donors who wish to remain anonymous must be protected. All records of the organization other than the auditor’s report, management letter, and any supplemental data requested by the State Board of Education, Auditor General, or OPPAGA is confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1), F.S.

Florida Institute of Human & Machine Cognition

The Florida Institute of Human & Machine Cognition (IHMC) was established in 1990 as an interdisciplinary research unit of the University of West Florida (UWF). According to IHMC’s 2002 Annual Report, the institute employs 98 researchers and staff investigating a broad range of topics related to understanding cognition in both humans and machines with a particular emphasis on building computational tools to leverage and amplify human cognitive and perceptual capacities. IHMC researchers receive funding from a wide range of government and private sources. The annual report

¹ Section 1004.22, F.S.

indicates that current funding in force exceeds \$23 million. IHMC reports that research partners have included entities such as the National Science Foundation, NASA, Army, Navy, Air Force, Noikia, Sun Microsystems, Fujitsu, Procter & Gamble, Boeing, and IBM among others.

As an organizational unit of UWF, IHMC enjoys any public records and public meetings exemptions afforded a state university.

Effect of the Bill

HB 315 w/CS establishes the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Inc., in law as a not-for-profit corporation at the University of West Florida and permits the corporation to create not-for-profit subsidiaries.

HB 491 w/CS is linked with HB 315 w/CS and makes the following information held by the corporation or an authorized and approved subsidiary confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1), F.S., and s. 24, Art. I of the State Constitution:

1. Materials that relate to methods of manufacture or production; potential trade secrets; patentable material; actual trade secrets as defined in s. 688.002, F.S.; or proprietary information received, generated, ascertained, or discovered during the course of research conducted by or through the corporation and its subsidiaries and business transactions resulting from such research.
2. Any information received by the corporation or a subsidiary from a person from another state or nation or the Federal Government which is otherwise confidential or exempt pursuant to the laws of that state or nation or pursuant to federal law.
3. Any information received by the corporation or a subsidiary in the performance of its duties and responsibilities which is otherwise confidential and exempt by law.
4. All identifying information of a donor or prospective donor to the corporation who wishes to remain anonymous.

HB 491 w/CS requires the corporation to permit access to such confidential and exempt information or materials to any governmental entity that needs the information in order to perform its duties and responsibilities. The bill also requires these entities to keep such information confidential and exempt.

HB 491 w/CS provides that the portion of a meeting of the corporation and the portion of a meeting of a subsidiary during which information made confidential and exempt by the bill is presented and discussed are exempt from s. 286.011, F.S., and s. 24(b), Art. I of the State Constitution.

HB 491 w/CS provides for future review and repeal of the exemptions and provides a statement of public necessity.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Creates a public records exemption for certain information held by the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Inc., or an authorized and approved subsidiary of the corporation. Creates a public meetings exemption for that portion of a meeting of the corporation and that portion of a meeting of a subsidiary at which information made confidential and exempt by the bill is presented or discussed.

Section 2. Provides a statement of public necessity.

Section 3. Provides a contingent effective date.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable.

2. Other:

Public Records Law

Article I, s.24(a), Florida Constitution, guarantees every person a right to inspect or copy any public record of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Section 119.07(1), F.S., also guarantees every person a right to inspect, examine, and copy any state, county, or municipal record.

Public Meetings Law

Article 1, s. 24(b), Florida Constitution, provides that all meetings of any collegial public body of the executive branch of state government or of any collegial public body of a county, municipality, school district, or special district, at which official acts are to be taken or at which public business of such body is to be transacted or discussed must be open and noticed to the public. Section 286.011, F.S., provides that all meetings of any board or commission of any state agency or authority or of any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution at which official acts are to be taken are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times. In addition, s. 286.011, F.S., provides that no resolution, rule, or formal action is to be considered binding except as taken or made at such meeting. The board or commission must provide reasonable notice of all such meetings.

Exemptions to public records and public meetings laws

The Legislature may provide by general law for the exemption of records and meetings from the requirements of Article I, s. 24, Florida Constitution. The general law must state with specificity the public necessity justifying the exemption (public necessity statement) and must be no broader than necessary to accomplish its purpose.

Open Government Sunset Review Act of 1995²

The Open Government Sunset Review Act of 1995 provides that a public records or public meetings exemption may be created or maintained only if it serves an identifiable public purpose, and may be no broader than is necessary to meet one of the following public purposes:

- a. Allowing the state or its political subdivisions to effectively and efficiently administer a governmental program, which administration would be significantly impaired without the exemption;
- b. Protecting sensitive personal information that, if released, would be defamatory or would jeopardize an individuals' safety (only the identity of an individual may be exempted under this provision); or
- c. Protecting trade or business secrets.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On April 14, 2003, the Committee on Education K-20 adopted a strike-everything amendment and reported HB 491 favorably with a CS. The committee substitute addresses the concerns identified in previous analyses on the original bill by identifying the custodian of the records, narrowing the exemptions, and more closely aligning the public necessity statement with the exemptions provided by the bill.

² Section 119.15, F.S.