

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

BILL: SB 1066
 INTRODUCER: Senator Richter
 SUBJECT: Public Records/Dental Workforce Surveys
 DATE: April 1, 2013 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	McElheney	Stovall	HP	Favorable
2.	Naf	McVaney	GO	Pre-meeting
3.	_____	_____	RC	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

SB 1066 makes confidential and exempt from public records requirements all personal identifying information contained in records provided by dentists or dental hygienists in response to dental workforce surveys and held by the Department of Health (DOH). The bill specifies circumstances under which the confidential and exempt information must be disclosed.

The bill provides for review and repeal of the exemption pursuant to the Open Government Sunset Review Act. The bill also provides a statement of public necessity as required by the Florida Constitution.

Because this bill creates a new public records exemption, it requires a two-thirds vote of each house of the Legislature for passage.

This bill creates two undesignated sections of law.

II. Present Situation:

Public Records Laws

The Florida Constitution provides every person the right to inspect or copy any public record made or received in connection with the official business of any public body, officer, or

employee of the state, or of persons acting on their behalf.¹ The records of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches are specifically included.²

The Florida Statutes also specify conditions under which public access must be provided to government records. The Public Records Act³ guarantees every person's right to inspect and copy any state or local government public record⁴ at any reasonable time, under reasonable conditions, and under supervision by the custodian of the public record.⁵

Only the Legislature may create an exemption to public records requirements.⁶ Such an exemption must be created by general law and must specifically state the public necessity justifying the exemption.⁷ Further, the exemption must be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. A bill enacting an exemption may not contain other substantive provisions⁸ and must pass by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting in each house of the Legislature.⁹

The Open Government Sunset Review Act (the Act) prescribes a legislative review process for newly created or substantially amended public records or open meetings exemptions.¹⁰ It requires the automatic repeal of such exemption on October 2nd of the fifth year after creation or substantial amendment, unless the Legislature reenacts the exemption.¹¹ The Act provides that a public records or open meetings exemption may be created or maintained only if it serves an identifiable public purpose and is no broader than is necessary to meet such public purpose.¹²

¹ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(a).

² *Id.*

³ Chapter 119, F.S.

⁴ Section 119.011(12), F.S., defines "public records" to mean "all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency." Section 119.011(2), F.S., defines "agency" to mean as "any state, county, district, authority, or municipal officer, department, division, board, bureau, commission, or other separate unit of government created or established by law including, for the purposes of this chapter, the Commission on Ethics, the Public Service Commission, and the Office of Public Counsel, and any other public or private agency, person, partnership, corporation, or business entity acting on behalf of any public agency." The Public Records Act does not apply to legislative or judicial records (*see Locke v. Hawkes*, 595 So.2d 32 (Fla. 1992)).

⁵ Section 119.07(1)(a), F.S.

⁶ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c). There is a difference between records the Legislature designates as exempt from public records requirements and those the Legislature designates *confidential and exempt*. A record classified as exempt from public disclosure may be disclosed under certain circumstances (*see WFTV, Inc. v. The School Board of Seminole*, 874 So.2d 48 (Fla. 5th DCA 2004), review denied 892 So.2d 1015 (Fla. 2004); *City of Riviera Beach v. Barfield*, 642 So.2d 1135 (Fla. 4th DCA 2004); and *Williams v. City of Minneola*, 575 So.2d 687 (Fla. 5th DCA 1991)). If the Legislature designates a record as confidential and exempt from public disclosure, such record may not be released, by the custodian of public records, to anyone other than the persons or entities specifically designated in the statutory exemption (*see Attorney General Opinion 85-62*, August 1, 1985).

⁷ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c).

⁸ The bill may, however, contain multiple exemptions that relate to one subject.

⁹ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c).

¹⁰ Section 119.15, F.S. An exemption is substantially amended if the amendment expands the scope of the exemption to include more records or information or to include meetings as well as records (s. 119.15(4)(b), F.S.). The requirements of the Act do not apply to an exemption that is required by federal law or that applies solely to the Legislature or the State Court System (s. 119.15(2), F.S.).

¹¹ Section 119.15(3), F.S.

¹² Section 119.15(6)(b), F.S.

Workforce Surveys

The DOH currently administers an optional workforce survey which dentists and dental hygienists may complete as part of their licensure renewal. For the 2009-2010 licensing cycle, the first time that this survey was offered, 89 percent of all dentists with active licenses responded.¹³ The survey was expanded to include dental hygienists for the 2010-2011 licensing cycle, and 87.9 percent responded.¹⁴

Unlike dentists and dental hygienists, physicians are required to respond to physician workforce surveys as a condition of license renewal.¹⁵ All personal identifying information contained in records provided by physicians in response to these workforce surveys is confidential and exempt under s. 458.3193, F.S., concerning allopathic physicians, and s. 459.0083, F.S., concerning osteopathic physicians.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill provides that all personal identifying information contained in records provided by dentists or dental hygienists licensed under ch. 466, F.S., in response to dental workforce surveys and held by the DOH is confidential and exempt¹⁶ from public records requirements. Such information must be disclosed:

- With the express written consent of the individual, to whom the information pertains, or the individual's legally authorized representative;
- By court order upon a showing of good cause; or
- To a research entity, if the entity seeks the record or data pursuant to a research protocol approved by the DOH.

Such a research entity must maintain the records or data in accordance with the approved research protocol, and enter into a purchase and data-use agreement with DOH. The agreement must restrict the release of information that would identify individuals, limit the use of records or data to the approved research protocol, and prohibit any other use of the records or data. Copies of records or data remain the property of the DOH.

The bill authorizes the DOH to deny a research entity's request if the protocol provides for intrusive follow-back contacts, does not plan for the destruction of confidential records after the research is concluded, is administratively burdensome, or does not have scientific merit.

¹³ DOH, *Report on the 2009-2010 Workforce Survey of Dentists*, available at: http://doh.state.fl.us/Family/dental/OralHealthcareWorkforce/2009_2010_Workforce_Survey_Dentists_Report.pdf (last viewed March 31, 2013).

¹⁴ DOH, *2013 Bill Analysis, Economic Statement, and Fiscal Note for SB 1066*, on file with the Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee.

¹⁵ Section 381.4018, F.S. Language requiring the submission of physician workforce surveys for license renewal can be found in s. 458.3191, F.S., for allopathic physicians and s. 459.0081, F.S., for osteopathic physicians.

¹⁶ There is a difference between records the Legislature designates as exempt from public record requirements and those the Legislature deems confidential and exempt. See footnote 6.

The bill provides for repeal of the exemption pursuant to the Open Government Sunset Review Act on October 2, 2018, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature. It also provides a statement of public necessity as required by the Florida Constitution.¹⁷

The bill will take effect upon becoming a law.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

Not applicable. This bill does not appear to impact county or municipal government.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

Vote Requirement

Section 24(c), Art. I of the Florida Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of each house of the Legislature for passage of a newly created public records or public meetings exemption. Because this bill creates a new public records exemption, it requires a two-thirds vote for passage.

Public Necessity Statement

Section 24(c), Art. I of the Florida Constitution requires a public necessity statement for a newly created public records or public meetings exemption. Because this bill creates a new public records exemption, it includes a public necessity statement.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill could create a minimal fiscal impact for the DOH, because staff responsible for complying with public records requests could require training related to the new public records exemption. In addition, the DOH could incur costs associated with redacting the

¹⁷ Section 24(c), Art. I of the Florida Constitution.

confidential and exempt information prior to releasing a record. The costs would be absorbed, however, as they are part of the day-to-day responsibilities of the DOH.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.