

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 7002

INTRODUCER: Criminal Justice Committee

SUBJECT: OGSR/Active Criminal Intelligence or Criminal Investigative Information

DATE: January 9, 2018

REVISED: 1/10/18

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
	<u>Erickson</u>	<u>Jones</u>		CJ Submitted as Committee Bill
1.	<u>Brown</u>	<u>Caldwell</u>	<u>GO</u>	Favorable
2.	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u>RC</u>	

I. Summary:

SB 7002 provides an Open Government Sunset Review for certain portions of a meeting held by a duly constituted criminal justice commission. Specifically, the current public meetings exemption applies to those portions of a meeting at which members discuss active criminal intelligence information or active criminal investigative information that could foreseeably be considered, or is currently being considered by the commission. A duly constituted criminal justice commission is an advisory commission created by local ordinance to examine local criminal justice issues.

The original public necessity statement for the bill provides that without the public meetings exemption, the purpose of the public records exemption for criminal investigative information could be defeated. Further, members must be able to freely discuss exempt information to make sound recommendations on strategies and actions that best protect public welfare. Although only two surveyed counties indicate that they have a duly constituted criminal justice commission, the justification upon which the public records exemption is based remains valid. For this reason, the bill reenacts the public meetings exemption.

If the bill passes, this information will continue to be exempt from public meetings.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2018.

II. Present Situation:

Public Records Law

The Florida Constitution provides that the public has the right to inspect or copy records made or received in connection with official governmental business.¹ This applies to the official business of any public body, officer, or employee of the state, including all three branches of state government, local governmental entities, and any person acting on behalf of the government.²

In addition to the Florida Constitution, the Florida Statutes provide that the public may access legislative and executive branch records.³ Chapter 119, F.S., constitutes the main body of public records laws, and is known as the Public Records Act.⁴ The Public Records Act states that

it is the policy of this state that all state, county and municipal records are open for personal inspection and copying by any person. Providing access to public records is a duty of each agency.⁵

According to the Public Records Act, a public record includes virtually any document or recording, regardless of its physical form or how it may be transmitted.⁶ The Florida Supreme Court has interpreted public records as being “any material prepared in connection with official agency business which is intended to perpetuate, communicate or formalize knowledge of some type.”⁷ A violation of the Public Records Act may result in civil or criminal liability.⁸

The Legislature may create an exemption to open meetings requirements by passing a general law by a two-thirds vote of the House and the Senate.⁹ The exemption must explicitly lay out the public necessity justifying the exemption, and must be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the exemption.¹⁰ A statutory exemption which does not meet these two criteria may be unconstitutional and may not be judicially saved.¹¹

¹ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(a).

² FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(a).

³ The Public Records Act does not apply to legislative or judicial records. *Locke v. Hawkes*, 595 So. 2d 32 (Fla. 1992). Also see *Times Pub. Co. v. Ake*, 660 So. 2d 255 (Fla. 1995). The Legislature’s records are public pursuant to s. 11.0431, F.S. Public records exemptions for the Legislature are primarily located in s. 11.0431(2)-(3), F.S.

⁴ Public records laws are found throughout the Florida Statutes.

⁵ Section 119.01(1), F.S.

⁶ Section 119.011(12), F.S., defines “public record” 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” 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.”

⁷ *Shevin v. Byron, Harless, Schaffer, Reid and Assoc. Inc.*, 379 So. 2d 633, 640 (Fla. 1980).

⁸ Section 119.10, F.S. Public records laws are found throughout the Florida Statutes, as are the penalties for violating those laws.

⁹ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c).

¹⁰ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c).

¹¹ *Halifax Hosp. Medical Center v. New-Journal Corp.*, 724 So. 2d 567 (Fla. 1999). In *Halifax Hospital*, the Florida Supreme Court found that a public meetings exemption was unconstitutional because the statement of public necessity did not define

When creating a public records exemption, the Legislature may provide that a record is ‘confidential and exempt’ or ‘exempt.’¹² Records designated as ‘confidential and exempt’ may be released by the records custodian only under the circumstances defined by the Legislature. Records designated as ‘exempt’ may be released at the discretion of the records custodian under certain circumstances.¹³

Open Meetings Laws

The Florida Constitution provides that the public has a right to access governmental meetings.¹⁴ Each collegial body must provide notice of its meetings to the public and permit the public to attend any meeting at which official acts are taken or at which public business is transacted or discussed.¹⁵ This applies to the meetings of any collegial body of the executive branch of state government, counties, municipalities, school districts or special districts.¹⁶

Public policy regarding access to government meetings also is addressed in the Florida Statutes. Section 286.011, F.S., which is also known as the “Government in the Sunshine Law,”¹⁷ or the “Sunshine Law,”¹⁸ requires all meetings of any board or commission of any state or local agency or authority at which official acts are to be taken be open to the public.¹⁹ The board or commission must provide the public reasonable notice of such meetings.²⁰ Public meetings may not be held at any location that discriminates on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, origin, or economic status or which operates in a manner that unreasonably restricts the public’s access to the facility.²¹ Minutes of a public meeting must be promptly recorded and open to public inspection.²² Failure to abide by open meetings requirements will invalidate any resolution, rule

important terms and did not justify the breadth of the exemption. *Id.* at 570. The Florida Supreme Court also declined to narrow the exemption in order to save it. *Id.* In *Baker County Press, Inc. v. Baker County Medical Services, Inc.*, 870 So. 2d 189 (Fla. 1st DCA 2004), the court found that the intent of a statute was to create a public records exemption. The *Baker County Press* court found that since the law did not contain a public necessity statement, it was unconstitutional. *Id.* at 196.
¹² If the Legislature designates a record as confidential, such record may not be released to anyone other than the persons or entities specifically designated in the statutory exemption. *WFTV, Inc. v. The School Board of Seminole*, 874 So. 2d 48 (Fla. 5th DCA 2004).

¹³ A record classified as exempt from public disclosure may be disclosed under certain circumstances. *Williams v. City of Minneola*, 575 So. 2d 683 (Fla. 5th DCA 1991).

¹⁴ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(b).

¹⁵ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(b).

¹⁶ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(b). Meetings of the Legislature are governed by Article III, section 4(e) of the Florida Constitution, which states: “The rules of procedure of each house shall further provide that all prearranged gatherings, between more than two members of the legislature, or between the governor, the president of the senate, or the speaker of the house of representatives, the purpose of which is to agree upon formal legislative action that will be taken at a subsequent time, or at which formal legislative action is taken, regarding pending legislation or amendments, shall be reasonably open to the public.”

¹⁷ *Times Pub. Co. v. Williams*, 222 So. 2d 470, 472 (Fla. 2d DCA 1969).

¹⁸ *Board of Public Instruction of Broward County v. Doran*, 224 So. 2d 693, 695 (Fla. 1969).

¹⁹ Section 286.011(1)-(2), F.S.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Section 286.011(6), F.S.

²² Section 286.011(2), F.S.

or formal action adopted at a meeting.²³ A public officer or member of a governmental entity who violates the Sunshine Law is subject to civil and criminal penalties.²⁴

The Legislature may create an exemption to open meetings requirements by passing a general law by a two-thirds vote of the House of Representatives and the Senate.²⁵ The exemption must explicitly lay out the public necessity justifying the exemption, and must be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the exemption.²⁶ A statutory exemption which does not meet these two criteria may be unconstitutional and may not be judicially saved.²⁷

Open Government Sunset Review Act

The Open Government Sunset Review Act (referred to hereafter as the “OGSR”) prescribes a legislative review process for newly created or substantially amended public records or open meetings exemptions.²⁸ The OGSR provides that an exemption automatically repeals on October 2nd of the fifth year after creation or substantial amendment; in order to save an exemption from repeal, the Legislature must reenact the exemption.²⁹ In practice, many exemptions are continued by repealing the sunset date rather than reenacting the exemption.

The OGSR 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.³⁰ An exemption serves an identifiable purpose if it meets one of the following purposes *and* the Legislature finds that the purpose of the exemption outweighs open government policy and cannot be accomplished without the exemption:

- It allows the state or its political subdivision to effectively and efficiently administer a program, and administration would be significantly impaired without the exemption;³¹
- Releasing sensitive personal information would be defamatory or would jeopardize an individual’s safety. If this public purpose is cited as the basis of an exemption, however, only personal identifying information is exempt;³² or
- It protects trade or business secrets.³³

²³ Section 286.011(1), F.S.

²⁴ Section 286.011(3), F.S.

²⁵ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c).

²⁶ FLA. CONST., art. I, s. 24(c).

²⁷ *Halifax Hosp. Medical Center v. New-Journal Corp.*, 724 So. 2d 567 (Fla. 1999). In *Halifax Hospital*, the Florida Supreme Court found that a public meetings exemption was unconstitutional because the statement of public necessity did not define important terms and did not justify the breadth of the exemption. *Id.* at 570. The Florida Supreme Court also declined to narrow the exemption in order to save it. *Id.* In *Baker County Press, Inc. v. Baker County Medical Services, Inc.*, 870 So. 2d 189 (Fla. 1st DCA 2004), the court found that the intent of a statute was to create a public records exemption. The *Baker County Press* court found that since the law did not contain a public necessity statement, it was unconstitutional. *Id.* at 196.

²⁸ Section 119.15, F.S. Section 119.15(4)(b), F.S., provides that an exemption is considered to be substantially amended if it is expanded to include more information or to include meetings. The OGSR does not apply to an exemption that is required by federal law or that applies solely to the Legislature or the State Court System pursuant to s. 119.15(2), F.S.

²⁹ Section 119.15(3), F.S.

³⁰ Section 119.15(6)(b), F.S.

³¹ Section 119.15(6)(b)1., F.S.

³² Section 119.15(6)(b)2., F.S.

³³ Section 119.15(6)(b)3., F.S.

The OGSR also requires specified questions to be considered during the review process.³⁴ In examining an exemption, the OGSR asks the Legislature to carefully question the purpose and necessity of reenacting the exemption.

If, in reenacting an exemption, the exemption is expanded, then a public necessity statement and a two-thirds vote for passage are required.³⁵ If the exemption is reenacted without substantive changes or if the exemption is narrowed, then a public necessity statement and a two-thirds vote for passage are *not* required. If the Legislature allows an exemption to sunset, the previously exempt records will remain exempt unless provided for by law.³⁶

Open Government Sunset Review of the Public Meetings Exemption for a Closed Portion of a Designated Criminal Justice Commission

Active criminal intelligence information³⁷ and active criminal investigative information³⁸ are exempt from public disclosure.³⁹

In 2013, the Legislature created s. 286.01141, F.S.⁴⁰ Section 286.01141(2), F.S., closes from the public the portion of a meeting of a duly constituted criminal justice commission⁴¹ at which members of the commission discuss active criminal intelligence information or active criminal

³⁴ Section 119.15(6)(a), F.S. The specified questions are:

- What specific records or meetings are affected by the exemption?
- Whom does the exemption uniquely affect, as opposed to the general public?
- What is the identifiable public purpose or goal of the exemption?
- Can the information contained in the records or discussed in the meeting be readily obtained by alternative means? If so, how?
- Is the record or meeting protected by another exemption?
- Are there multiple exemptions for the same type of record or meeting that it would be appropriate to merge?

³⁵ FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c).

³⁶ Section 119.15(7), F.S.

³⁷ “Criminal intelligence information” means information with respect to an identifiable person or group of persons collected by a criminal justice agency in an effort to anticipate, prevent, or monitor possible criminal activity. Section 119.011(3)(a), F.S. Section 119.011(3)(c), F.S., provides that certain information is not criminal intelligence information, such as the time, date, location, and nature of a reported crime. Criminal intelligence information is “active”: (1) as long as it is related to intelligence gathering conducted with a reasonable, good faith belief that it will lead to detection of ongoing or reasonably anticipated criminal activities; or (2) while such information is directly related to pending prosecutions or appeals. Section 119.011(3)(d), F.S. The word “active” does not apply to information in cases which are barred from prosecution under the applicable statute of limitation. *Id.*

³⁸ “Criminal investigative information” means information with respect to an identifiable person or group of persons compiled by a criminal justice agency in the course of conducting a criminal investigation of a specific act or omission, including, but not limited to, information derived from laboratory tests, reports of investigators or informants, or any type of surveillance (s. 119.011(3)(b), F.S.). Section 119.011(3)(c), F.S., provides that certain information is not criminal investigative information, such as the time, date, location, and nature of a reported crime. Criminal investigative information is “active”: (1) as long as it is related to an ongoing investigation which is continuing with a reasonable, good faith anticipation of securing an arrest or prosecution in the foreseeable future; or (2) while such information is directly related to pending prosecutions or appeal (s. 119.011(3)(d), F.S.). The term “active” does not apply to information in cases which are barred from prosecution under the applicable statute of limitation. *Id.*

³⁹ Section 119.071(2)(c)1., F.S.

⁴⁰ Chapter 2013-196, L.O.F.

⁴¹ A “Duly constituted criminal justice commission” is an advisory commission created by municipal or county ordinance whose membership is comprised of individuals from the private sector and the public sector and whose purpose is to examine local criminal justice issues (s. 286.01141(1)(a), F.S.).

investigative information that is currently being considered by, or which may foreseeably come before the commission. Section 286.01141(2), F.S., also requires a criminal justice commission to publicly disclose that it discussed this type of information in the closed portion of a public meeting. This public meetings exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and stands repealed on October 2, 2018, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.⁴²

In creating the exemption, the Legislature articulated the following reasons for the exemption:

It is the finding of the Legislature that it is a public necessity that the portion of a meeting of a duly constituted criminal justice commission at which members of the commission discuss active criminal intelligence information or active criminal investigative information currently being considered by, or which may foreseeably come before, the criminal justice commission be made exempt from public meeting requirements. If the meetings at which exempt information is discussed were open to the public, the purpose of the exemption from public records requirements found in chapter 119, Florida Statutes, would be defeated. The members of a criminal justice commission must be able to hear and discuss exempt information freely in order to make sound recommendations regarding strategies and activities that are best suited to protect the welfare of the people of this state. The ability to conduct meetings at which members can freely discuss and fully understand the details of active criminal intelligence information and active criminal investigative information is critical to the ability of a criminal justice commission to operate effectively.⁴³

Open Government Sunset Review Survey

In conducting the OGSR, staff with the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice and the House Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee distributed a survey to counties and municipalities.⁴⁴ Twenty survey responses were received. Two respondents, Miami-Dade County and Palm Beach County indicated in their survey responses that they have a “duly constituted criminal justice commission” as defined in s. 286.01141(1)(a), F.S.

The Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council was created in 1978 and codified via ordinance in February 2014⁴⁵:

⁴² Section 286.01141(3), F.S.

⁴³ Section 2, ch. 2013-196, L.O.F.

⁴⁴ The survey and responses are on file with the Senate Committees on Criminal Justice and Governmental Oversight and Accountability. Unless otherwise indicated, all information relevant to duly constituted criminal justice commissions is from the survey responses. The Florida Association of Counties and the Florida League of Cities assisted legislative staff by distributing the surveys. Counties responding to the survey: Brevard; DeSoto; Escambia; Madison; Miami-Dade; Monroe; Okaloosa; Okeechobee; Palm Beach; Pinellas; Seminole; St. Lucie; Sumter; and Walton. Municipalities responding to the survey: Hampton; Inverness; Lake Helen; Long Boat Key; Sanibel; and St. Petersburg. Staff also contacted the Broward County Crime Commission and determined that the commission was not created by ordinance, and therefore not a “duly constituted criminal justice commission” as defined in s. 286.01141(1)(a), F.S. The commission is organized as a Florida 501 C-4, non-profit corporation. See <http://www.browardcrime.org/aboutus.html> (last visited on Dec. 14, 2017).

⁴⁵ Miami Dade County Ord. No. 14-17, ss. 1-8, adopted February 4, 2014, did not specify provisions intended for use. For purposes of classification, these provisions were included as Miami-Dade County Code of Ordinances, ch. 2, art. CXLIX,

The general purpose of [the council] is to encourage and facilitate the coordination and cooperation among various agencies and municipalities within Miami-Dade County with crime prevention/intervention strategies, criminal and juvenile justice activities, and other activities related to criminal justice.⁴⁶

The Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission was created in 1988 pursuant to an ordinance adopted in 1988.⁴⁷ The commission:

prioritizes its projects at its Annual Planning Meeting in February of each year. The issues discussed at the meetings center around the progress on these priorities which in the past few years have been our reentry program, community engagement, behavioral health issues in the system, body worn camera deployment amongst our local law enforcement agencies, the implementation of a validated risk assessment instrument for pretrial detention decision-making, our jail population and efforts to reduce it, law enforcement information sharing systems, and the Batterers' Intervention Program. In addition, other topics include current legislation and countywide crime statistics.⁴⁸

Neither of the two councils has closed any portion of their meetings to discuss active criminal intelligence information or active criminal investigation information. Because the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council has not used the exemption, Miami-Dade County did not render an opinion on whether the exemption should be reenacted. In contrast, Palm Beach County does support reenactment:

While the [Criminal Justice Commission] has never needed to use the exemption, there are always new issues to address. The [Criminal Justice Commission] is committed to data-driven policy-making and may require the exemption for future meetings.⁴⁹

Attorney General Opinion on Exempt Status of Meetings of County Criminal Justice Commission

When asked for an advisory opinion on whether active criminal intelligence and investigative information is exempt from discussions in public meetings, the Attorney General concluded that the exempt status of this information under public records law does not imply an exemption from

ss. 2-2166—2-2173. See https://library.municode.com/fl/miami_-_dade_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH2AD_ARTCXLIxDAAMCRJUCO_S2-2166CRPU (last visited on Dec. 11, 2017).

⁴⁶ Response from Miami-Dade County to the Staff OGSUR Survey.

⁴⁷ Palm Beach County Ord. No. 88-16, adopted Aug. 16, 1988, effective Aug. 29, 1988, amended the Palm Beach County Code of Ordinances by adding provisions designated as Palm Beach Code of Ordinances, ch. 2, art. V, div. 5, ss. 2-216—2-221. See <http://discover.pbcgov.org/criminaljustice/PDF/CJC%20Ordinance.pdf> (last visited on Dec. 14, 2017).

⁴⁸ Response from Palm Beach County to the Staff OGSUR Survey.

⁴⁹ *Id.* Subsequent to its survey response, the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission confirmed that the commission approved the recommendation to reenact the exemption, which was pending approval by the commission at the time the survey response was received. E-mail from Kristina Henson, Executive Director of the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission (Oct. 2, 2017) (on file with the Senate Committees on Criminal Justice and Governmental Oversight and Accountability).

the public meetings requirement of s. 286.011, F.S. As such, an exemption from the public meetings requirement must be expressly provided.⁵⁰

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill provides an Open Government Sunset Review for certain portions of a meeting held by a duly constituted criminal justice commission. Specifically, the current public meetings exemption applies to those portions of a meeting at which members discuss active criminal intelligence information or active criminal investigative information that could foreseeably be considered, or is currently being considered by the commission. A duly constituted criminal justice commission is an advisory commission created by local ordinance to examine local criminal justice issues.

The original public necessity statement for the bill provides that without the public meetings exemption, the purpose of the public records exemption for criminal investigative information could be defeated. Further, members must be able to freely discuss exempt information to make sound recommendations on strategies and actions that best protect public welfare.

Reenacting the public meetings exemption would allow for a duly constituted criminal justice commission to discuss active criminal intelligence information or active criminal investigation should the need arise for such discussion; repeal of the exemption would preclude such discussion because the commission would not be able to reveal the contents of this type of exempt information in a public meeting.

Although only two surveyed counties indicate that they have a duly constituted criminal justice commission, the justification upon which the public records exemption is based remains valid. For these reasons, the bill reenacts the public meetings exemption.

If the bill passes, this information will continue to be exempt from public meetings.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2018.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

The bill reenacts an existing public records exemption for the portion of a meeting of a duly constituted criminal justice commission at which members of the commission discuss active criminal intelligence information or active criminal investigative information that is currently being considered by, or which may foreseeably come before,

⁵⁰ Fla. AGO 93-41 (June 7, 1993).

the commission. A simple majority vote of the members present in each house of the Legislature is required for passage of the bill.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 286.01141 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.