

Sunshine bill still alive; legislator records exempt

Bipartisan support of idea 'exciting'

Thanks to all of you for your kind thoughts and cards last month after my fall! For someone who works on her computer every day, having a broken wrist — the right one at that — has been extremely frustrating. I'm just trying to take it slowly knowing that by next month most of this difficulty will be over.

Meanwhile, soon we'll know whether we have been successful changing the sunshine law this legislative session. I have mixed feelings about this bill. Before the session ends in mid May, the bill may not look like it does right now. I just hope any changes made will help you cover local government.

Of great interest was the vote in the House on April 21 on a proposed amendment to the law that would have pulled the individual Missouri legislators under the auspices of the bill. As you know, the legislature has taken the position that while the law applies to the legislature as a whole, it does not apply to individual legislator's records.

By a vote of 79 to 81, the motion to add legislators' records to the law was defeated. You might want to consider how your legislator voted on this issue and talk to him or her over the summer about this vote.

These legislators voted FOR the amendment: Atkins, Aull, Biermann, Bringer, Brown (30), Brown (73), Burnett, Calloway, Carter, Casey, Chappelle-Nadal, Colona, Corcoran, Curls, Dixon, Dusenberg, El-Amin, Englund, Fallert, Fischer (107), Frame, Grill, Harris, Hodges, Holsman, Hoskins (121), Hughes, Hummel, Jones (63), Kander, Kelly, Kirkton, Komo, Kratky, Kraus,

Kuessner, Lampe, Largent, LeBlanc, LeVota, Liese, Low, McClanahan, McDonald, McNeil, Meadows, Meiners, Morris, Nasheed, Norr, Oxford, Pace, Quinn, Roorda, Rucker, Salva, Scavuzzo, Schieffer, Schoemehl, Schupp, Shively, Silvey, Skaggs, Spreng, Still, Storch, Swinger, Talboy, Todd, Walsh, Walton Gray, Webb, Webber, Wildberger, Witte, Wood, Yaeger, Yates, and Zimmerman.

Those who voted AGAINST the amendment were: Allen, Bivins, Bandom, Brown (149), Bruns, Burlison, Cooper, Cox, Cunningham, Davis, Day, Deeken, Denison, Dethrow, Dieckhaus, Diehl, Dougherty, Dugger, Emery, Ervin, Faith, Fisher (125), Flanigan, Flook, Franz, Funder-

burk, Gatschenberger, Grisamore, Guernsey, Guest, Hobbs, Hoskins (80), Icet, Jones (89), Jones (117), Keeney, Kingery, Koenig, Lair, Lipke, Loehner, McGhee, McNary, Molendorp, Munzlinger, Nance, Nieves, Nolte, Parkinson, Parson, Pollock, Pratt, Riddle,

Ruestman, Ruzicka, Sander, Sater, Schaaf, Schad, Scharnhorst, Schlottach, Schoeller, Self, Smith (14), Smith (150), Stevenson, Stream, Sutherland, Thomson, Tilley, Tracy, Viebrock, Wallace, Wasson, Wells, Weter, Wilson (119), Wilson (130), Wright, and Zerr. Also voting in opposition to the amendment was Speaker of the House Ron Richard.

Three legislators were absent for the vote: Brown (50), Leara and Vogt.

Legislators gave several reasons for opposing this amendment. One thought was that if the bill had passed the House and gone to the Senate with this amendment on it, it would have been "dead on arrival," so the vote was politically expedient to keep the bill moving.

Rep. Parkinson commented on the *Post-Dispatch's* political blog that he voted against it because he felt it would have exposed to public scrutiny private, personal communication directed to him from constituents, without their consent.

There remain, clearly, a lot of questions about the scope of such an amendment and how it should be applied. But, bottom line, I do think it's an amendment that bears additional study by state legislators, and I hope the day comes when the legislature finds a way to let sunshine into the operations of its members.

In the meantime, I salute those legislators who are comfortable taking a position that the public's business should be done in the open. It's exciting to know that this vote did receive bipartisan support by a near majority of our legislature.



Jean Maneke, MPA's Legal Hotline attorney, can be reached at (816) 753-9000, jmaneke@manekelaw.com.

Missouri Press Association / Missouri Press Service

802 Locust St., Columbia, MO 65201-4888

(573) 449-4167 / Fax: (573) 874-5894 / www.mopress.com

STAFF

Doug Crews: Executive Director, dcrews@socket.net

Greg Baker: Advertising Director, gbaker@socket.net

Kent M. Ford: Editor, kford@socket.net

Connie Whitney: cwhitney@socket.net

and Jennifer Plourde: jplourde@socket.net: Advertising Sales & Placement

Karen Philp: Receptionist, Bookkeeping, kphilp@socket.net

Kristie Williams: Member Services, Meeting Planning, kwilliams@socket.net

Rachael Heffner: Graphic Designer, rheffner@socket.net

Michael Daugherty, Advertising, Website Administrator, mداugherty@socket.net