

Sternig Home

From: Sternig Home <lmsternig@charter.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2016 7:46 PM
To: DOA Public Records Board Comments
Cc: Blessing, Matthew T - WHS; Ferguson, Paul M - DOJ; Naab, Bryan S - LAB; Schmidt, Melissa A - LEGIS
Subject: Public Records

Greetings...

I wish to add my concerns about recent efforts to diminish the transparency of the actions of our state government. In particular I am concerned about the change in the definition of "transitory records".

To be sure, electronic communications such as emails, Facebook posts, and text messages have become common forms of communicating ideas and have replaced written communications in many areas of business, education, and government. That does not change the importance of making those types of communications between government officials or entities available to the scrutiny of the public being represented and served. Just because a communication is expedited by use of electronic messaging does not diminish its importance in the decision-making process of government.

All communications, whether electronic or written, that are part of the work of government officials must be open to the public.

Communications which are not open to the public are dangerous in that the will of the general public can be ignored and replaced with the will of a few who may wield influence over those responsible for governing for the common good. The public good is not served when discussions and decisions are not being accomplished in "the light of day".

I urge you to utilize whatever resources are available to assure that all communications between and/or with government officials be open to the public. The medium of communications using emails, text messages and the like does not constitute "transitory records" and all messages, whether written or transmitted electronically, should be retained and made available to the public.

I will be carefully watching developments of this issue. Although I live in what some regard as a Republican Party stronghold, this issue is beyond party partisanship and reaches the core of how government must be responsible to the people it serves.

-Michael Sternig
705 North Street
West Bend WI 53090

P.S. Just because I am communicating using an email does not diminish the importance of this message, nor the anticipated public access to it because of its communication with public officials. It is not "transitory".

