Danbarb Laptop

From: Danbarb Laptop <danbarb@charter.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2016 6:33 AM
To: DOA Public Records Board Comments
Subject: Rescind your action

To all members of the
Public Records Board:

I am submitting these comments to urge the board to:

1. **Rescind** its previous action in August 2015 regarding the definition of "transitory" communications, thereby rendering meaningless our state's Open Records Law when it applies to tweets, text messages and other modes of electronic communications.

2. **Restore** the primacy of the public's right to know, and right to review, any and all communication by our elected and appointed officials.

The norms of our society are changing. In today's fast-paced world, the work of business and government is being conducted more and more frequently online, through emails and via alternative means of communications such as texting, Twitter and other similar modes. As this trend accelerates, it is incumbent upon your board to set strict limits upon public officials' use — and abuse — of these communication modes in an attempt to conduct their business behind a veil of secrecy. It is strictly improper for public officials to use electronic, "transitory" communication methods to conduct public business, then to destroy those communications because they fall under the definition of "transitory" communications established by your board.

Not only does the board's previous action defeat the spirit of Wisconsin's record of open and honest government, it provides those who would abuse their offices an unintended — I hope — form of "cover" allowing them to claim that electronic records of texts or tweets are not subject to open records requirements.

In my view, all such communications are, indeed, subject to open records requirements. If the Open Records Board takes a different view, then the decisions and record of those actions, themselves, must be conducted in a public forum and must be subject to the state's open records statute.

Wisconsin's Open Records Law has been under assault for several years, and a majority of citizens of the state are unhappy with politicians who seek to promote "revisions" or "reviews" of the statute. The Open Records Law has been a cornerstone of Wisconsin's record of good government for decades. There is no reason to change it now, and there is every reason to preserve it, and to expand it where necessary, to meet the challenges posed by the changing practices of communicating in a digital world.

Sincerely,
Daniel B. Peterson
5797N Mutters Road

Stone Lake, WI 54876