

Ed Ritger

From: Ed Ritger <eritger@ritgerlaw.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2016 7:44 PM
To: DOA Public Records Board Comments
Subject: "Secretizing" Government Electronic Records

I write this e-mail as a small town Wisconsin lawyer expressing strong objection to your decision last summer to limit public access to text messages, e-mails, Facebook posts and other electronic communications by public employees.

For nearly 38 years I have practiced law in rural Wisconsin representing farmers and other individuals, businesses and local governments. That experience has caused me to appreciate the importance of honesty and transparency in conducting ethical transactions as well as promoting public confidence in the integrity of the legal system. I have also witnessed the dawning of the electronic age where now a substantial part of all of the documents and correspondence we produce in our small town office is conveyed by electronic means.

For government to close the door on public access to electronic records will have an immediate and growing long term impediment to public access to government activity. There is already a substantial amount of communication done electronically and the future will certainly bring much more.

If you allow restrictions on public access to electronic communications by government employees, it will irreparably damage public confidence in our government system, not to mention the policy decisions which government employees are apparently trying to hide.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Ritger

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