
SENATE BILL 6351

State of Washington

62nd Legislature

2012 Regular Session

By Senators Prentice, Swecker, and Haugen

Read first time 01/18/12. Referred to Committee on Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to the inspection and copying of any public record;
2 amending RCW 42.56.565; and adding a new section to chapter 42.56 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 42.56.565 and 2011 c 300 s 1 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 (1) A court shall not award penalties under RCW 42.56.550(4) to a
7 person who was serving a criminal sentence in a state, local, or
8 privately operated correctional facility on the date the request for
9 public records was made, unless the court finds that the agency acted
10 in bad faith in denying the person the opportunity to inspect or copy
11 a public record.

12 (2) The inspection or copying of any ~~((nonexempt))~~ public record
13 ~~((by persons serving criminal sentences in state, local, or privately
14 operated correctional facilities))~~ may be enjoined pursuant to this
15 section.

16 (a) The injunction may be requested by: (i) An agency or its
17 representative; (ii) a person named in the record or his or her
18 representative; or (iii) a person to whom the requests specifically
19 pertains or his or her representative.

1 (b) The request for injunction must be filed in: (i) The superior
2 court in which the movant resides; or (ii) the superior court in the
3 county in which the record is maintained.

4 (c) In order to issue an injunction, the court must find that:

5 (i) The public record request was made to harass or intimidate the
6 agency or its employees;

7 (ii) Fulfilling the request would likely threaten the security of
8 correctional facilities;

9 (iii) Fulfilling the request would likely threaten the safety or
10 security of staff, inmates, family members of staff, family members of
11 other inmates, or any other person; (~~or~~)

12 (iv) Fulfilling the request may assist criminal activity; or

13 (v) The agency can demonstrate that it faces significant burden in
14 fulfilling the public record request.

15 (3) In deciding whether to enjoin a public record request under
16 subsection (2) of this section, the court may consider all relevant
17 factors including, but not limited to:

18 (a) Other public record requests by the requestor;

19 (b) The type of public record or records sought;

20 (c) Statements offered by the requestor concerning the purpose for
21 the public record request;

22 (d) Whether disclosure of the requested public records would likely
23 harm any person or vital government interest;

24 (e) Whether the public record request seeks a significant and
25 burdensome number of documents;

26 (f) The impact of disclosure on (~~correctional facility~~) security
27 and order at an agency, the safety or security of (~~correctional~~
28 ~~facility~~) agency staff, inmates, or others; and

29 (g) The deterrence of criminal activity.

30 (4) The motion proceeding described in this section shall be a
31 summary proceeding based on affidavits or declarations, unless the
32 court orders otherwise. Upon a showing by a preponderance of the
33 evidence, the court may enjoin all or any part of a request or
34 requests. Based on the evidence, the court may also enjoin, for a
35 period of time the court deems reasonable, future requests by:

36 (a) The same requestor; or

37 (b) An entity owned or controlled in whole or in part by the same
38 requestor.

1 (5) Before filing a request for an injunction pursuant to
2 subsection (2)(c)(v) of this section, an agency shall notify the public
3 record requestor that it intends to seek an injunction. The requestor
4 shall be allowed fifteen days to revise its public record request. If
5 the requestor submits a revised public record request, the agency may
6 still seek judicial review without allowing the requestor to further
7 revise the request.

8 (6) The agency shall continue to fulfill the request in a manner
9 consistent with the public records act until the court issues a
10 decision on the injunction request, unless the court orders otherwise.

11 (7) An agency shall not be liable for penalties under RCW
12 42.56.550(4) for any period during which an order under this section is
13 in effect, including during an appeal of an order under this section,
14 regardless of the outcome of the appeal.

15 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 42.56 RCW
16 to read as follows:

17 (1)(a) An agency may adopt a policy limiting the number of hours
18 that agency must devote to responding to public records requests to
19 prevent excessive interference with its other essential functions if it
20 makes the following documents publicly available:

21 (i) Agency budgets for the current and past three fiscal years;

22 (ii) Agendas and minutes for all public meetings for the past three
23 fiscal years;

24 (iii) Salary schedule for all current positions and the names of
25 all employees;

26 (iv) Resolutions and ordinances; and

27 (v) Contracts that exceed thirty-five thousand dollars that are
28 currently in place or that terminated in the past three fiscal years.

29 (b) For a local agency this policy must be in the form of adopted
30 legislation and for state agencies it must be in the form of an adopted
31 rule.

32 (2) Tasks subject to the limit in this subsection include the time
33 it takes to search for responsive records and review and redact
34 responsive records. It does not include time spent in litigation or
35 time spent by an attorney providing legal advice regarding records.
36 The policy may include rules on setting priorities on what requests

1 will be fulfilled in what order based on the size of the request and
2 the number of other requests from that requester made in the preceding
3 twelve months.

4 (3) When an agency adopts rules pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of
5 this section, any time that agency anticipates that it will take more
6 than sixty calendar days to fulfill a request, the agency must inform
7 the requester of the factors that go into this time estimate, including
8 a list of all other pending requests. The agency's time estimate is
9 subject to court challenge pursuant to RCW 42.56.550(2).

10 (4) For any legislation or rule adopted pursuant to subsection
11 (1)(b) of this section, the value of the time allotted may not equal
12 less than one percent of the agency's annual operations and maintenance
13 budget and must be based on the average salary of the person primarily
14 assigned to process requests. In no case may an agency adopt a rule
15 that allows it to spend fewer than five hours per month responding to
16 requests.

17 (5) For agencies with a general fund budget that exceeds one
18 million dollars, documents are publicly available if they are
19 accessible through a central web site. For agencies with budgets under
20 one million dollars, documents are publicly available if they are
21 produced for inspection within five business days of being requested.

--- END ---