

Action Alert

Oppose HB1640

Broad Public Records Exemptions for TN Office of Homeland Security

HB1640 allows the TN Office of Homeland Security to keep records of its investigations confidential forever including the evidence gathered and potentially even the judicial records. This “forever confidential exemption” is considerably more closure of records than is allowed for other law enforcement in the state. These existing policies provide a balance between the discretion required of law enforcement and the public's right to know when investigations are concluded.

Talking Points:

- The Office of Homeland Security should be required to follow the established public records policies used by other law enforcement in the state. These existing policies provide a balance between the discretion required of law enforcement and the public's right to know when investigations are concluded.
- The bill appears to impact judicial records by taking sealing decisions out of the hands of judges.
- As a new state agency, the Office of Homeland Security is being given broad powers. The public should be able to monitor its actions.

The House Public Service Sub-committee will be voting on Wednesday, March 18. Please call or email their office right away and urge them to vote no on HB1640. It is okay to leave a message. Be sure to say if you are a constituent.

Members of the House Public Service Committee

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