



# The Public Records Advisory Council supports the passage of SB 1506

## Overview

SB 1506:

- Changes the way that the Public Records Advocate is hired
- Declares the independence of the Advocate's office within the Executive Branch
- Broadens the Council's authority to weigh in on legislation relating to public records law
- Creates a system of electing council leadership instead of the Advocate acting as de facto chair

## Background

- The Office of the Public Records Advocate and the Public Records Advisory Council were created by Senate Bill 106 (2017).
  - The Public Records Advocate mediates disputes between public records requestors and public bodies, provides free training on public records laws and best practices, and leads the Public Records Advisory Council.
- The Council works with the Advocate and the State Archives Division to study and make recommendations concerning the Advocate's role, as well as practices, procedures, exemptions, and fees related to public records.

## Conclusion

- SB 1506 enshrines the Office of the Public Records Advocate as independent within the Executive Branch.
- This bill would allow the Public Records Advisory Council to recruit and appoint a successful candidate to be Oregon's next Public Records Advocate. The law as currently written allows the Council to recruit for and pass along three names to the Governor.
- Right now ORS 192.483(1)(d) says that the Council "shall periodically . . . [m]ake recommendations on changes in law, policy or practice that could enhance transparency in public process and government, and facilitate rapid dissemination of public records to requesters." However, the statute is silent on how or to whom the recommendations should be made. The new language allows the Council to directly request the introduction of legislation through legislators, rather than proposing legislation only through the Governor's process. The new process would allow the Council to definitively pursue an independent legislative process.

The Council would appreciate your support on this important proposal to ensure the independence of the Advocate and the Council's work.

## Questions? Please contact:

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