



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 12, 2019

To: [House Committee On Judiciary](#)
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Chair
Representative Chris Gorsek, Vice-chair

Re: [HB 2431](#) – Annual agency reporting on public records requests – **Support**

The League of Women Voters supports open access to government agency information as provided by our public records laws.

The League supports HB 2431, which requires each state agency to provide basic information about how they have handled public records requests over the previous year. A report from each agency would be supplied to the Attorney General, the Public Records Advocate and the public records subcommittee of Legislative Counsel Committee on four kinds of information:

- 1) the number of records requests received,
- 2) the number of requests not completed within 15 days as required by law,
- 3) the number that were overdue by more than 60 days, and
- 4) the number of requests that were granted a fee waiver or reduction and the number denied.

The report should not be a great burden on state agencies because the information is quite basic. Yet it could be most useful, as it is hard to make process improvement without good data. The data would be used, presumably, to evaluate where efforts are most needed to educate an agency on how best to handle public records requests in a fair, prompt and responsive manner. It could also be used to determine which agencies are overburdened with requests, and whether steps might need to be taken to educate typical records requesters on how to narrow their searches so as not to unduly burden a small or busy agency. In addition, the very fact that an annual report will be required should prompt agencies to respond in a timely fashion and encourage modest fees.

Good data is essential in evaluating whether our citizens, researchers and/or the press are getting the information they need in a timely fashion. Our democracy depends on open access to government information in order to hold it accountable and responsive to our needs. Annual public records reporting will prompt agencies to do their best to respond to these needs. The League of Women Voters hopes you will SUPPORT HB 2431.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

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