

CHAPTER 1185
OPEN RECORDS LAW REVISION
S.F. 2294

AN ACT relating to the examination of government records by providing for the procedures for their examination, for enforcement of those procedures, for the availability of certain records, and for the duties of the lawful custodians and providing for civil damages.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. Section 68A.1, Code 1983, is amended by adding the following new unnumbered paragraphs:

NEW UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH. The term "government body" means this state, or any county, city, township, school corporation, political subdivision, tax supported district or other entity of this state, or any branch, department, board, bureau, commission, council, committee, official or officer, of any of the foregoing or any employee delegated the responsibility for implementing the requirements of this chapter.

NEW UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH. The term "lawful custodian" means the government body currently in physical possession of the public record. The custodian of a public record in the physical possession of persons outside a government body is the government body owning that record. Each government body shall delegate to particular officials or employees of that government body the responsibility for implementing the requirements of this chapter and shall publicly announce the particular officials or employees to whom responsibility for implementing the requirements of this chapter has been delegated. "Lawful custodian" does not mean an automated data processing unit of a public body if the data processing unit holds the records solely as the agent of another public body, nor does it mean a unit which holds the records of other public bodies solely for storage.

Sec. 2. Section 68A.2, Code 1983, is amended by striking the section and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

68A.2 RIGHT TO EXAMINE PUBLIC RECORDS.

1. Every person shall have the right to examine and copy public records and to publish or otherwise disseminate public records or the information contained therein. The right to copy public records shall include the right to make photographs or photographic copies while the records are in the possession of the custodian of the records. All rights under this section are in addition to the right to obtain certified copies of records under section 622.46.

2. A government body shall not prevent the examination or copying of a public record by contracting with a nongovernment body to perform any of its duties or functions.

Sec. 3. Section 68A.4, Code 1983, is amended to read as follows:

68A.4 HOURS WHEN AVAILABLE. The rights of citizens persons under this chapter may be exercised at any time during the customary office hours of the lawful custodian of the records. However, if the lawful custodian does not have customary office hours of at least thirty hours per week, such right may be exercised at any time from nine o'clock a.m. to noon and from one o'clock p.m. to four o'clock p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays,

unless the citizen person exercising such right and the lawful custodian agree on a different time.

Sec. 4. Section 68A.5, Code 1983, is amended to read as follows:

68A.5 ENFORCEMENT OF RIGHTS. The provisions of this chapter and all rights of citizens persons under this chapter may be enforced by mandamus or injunction, whether or not any other remedy is also available. In the alternative, rights under this chapter also may be enforced by an action for judicial review according to the provisions of the Iowa administrative procedure Act, if the records involved are records of an "agency" as defined in that Act.

Sec. 5. Section 68A.7, unnumbered paragraph one, and subsections 1 and 2, Code Supplement 1983, are amended to read as follows:

The following public records shall be kept confidential, unless otherwise ordered by a court, by the lawful custodian of the records, or by another person duly authorized to release such information:

1. Personal information in records regarding a student, prospective student, or former student of the maintained, created, collected or assembled by or for a school corporation or educational institution maintaining such records.

2. Hospital records, and medical records, and professional counselor records of the condition, diagnosis, care, or treatment of a patient or former patient or a counselee or former counselee, including outpatient.

Sec. 6. Section 68A.7, Code Supplement 1983, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 18. Communications not required by law, rule, or procedure that are made to a government body or to any of its employees by identified persons outside of government, to the extent that the government body receiving those communications from such persons outside of government could reasonably believe that those persons would be discouraged from making them to that government body if they were available for general public examination. Notwithstanding this provision:

a. The communication is a public record to the extent that the person outside of government making that communication consents to its treatment as a public record.

b. Information contained in the communication is a public record to the extent that it can be disclosed without directly or indirectly indicating the identity of the person outside of government making it or enabling others to ascertain the identity of that person.

c. Information contained in the communication is a public record to the extent that it indicates the date, time, specific location, and immediate facts and circumstances surrounding the occurrence of a crime or other illegal act, except to the extent that its disclosure would plainly and seriously jeopardize a continuing investigation or pose a clear and present danger to the safety of any person. In any action challenging the failure of the lawful custodian to disclose any particular information of the kind enumerated in this paragraph, the burden of proof is on the lawful custodian to demonstrate that the disclosure of that information would jeopardize such an investigation or would pose such a clear and present danger.

Sec. 7. Section 68A.8, Code 1983, is amended by striking the section and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

68A.8 INJUNCTION TO RESTRAIN EXAMINATION.

1. The district court may grant an injunction restraining the examination, including copying, of a specific public record or a narrowly drawn class of public records. A hearing shall be held on a request for injunction upon reasonable notice as determined by the court to persons requesting access to the record which is the subject of the request for injunction. It shall be the duty of the lawful custodian and any other person seeking an injunction to ensure compliance with the notice requirement. Such an injunction may be issued only if the petition supported by affidavit shows and if the court finds both of the following:

- a. That the examination would clearly not be in the public interest.
 - b. That the examination would substantially and irreparably injure any person or persons.
2. An injunction shall be subject to the rules of civil procedure except that the court in its discretion may waive bond.

3. In actions brought under this section the district court shall take into account the policy of this chapter that free and open examination of public records is generally in the public interest even though such examination may cause inconvenience or embarrassment to public officials or others. A court may issue an injunction restraining examination of a public record or a narrowly drawn class of such records, only if the person seeking the injunction demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that this section authorizes its issuance. An injunction restraining the examination of a narrowly drawn class of public records may be issued only if such an injunction would be justified under this section for every member within the class of records involved if each of those members were considered separately.

4. Good faith, reasonable delay by a lawful custodian in permitting the examination and copying of a government record is not a violation of this chapter if the purpose of the delay is any of the following:

- a. To seek an injunction under this section.
- b. To determine whether the lawful custodian is entitled to seek such an injunction or should seek such an injunction.
- c. To determine whether the government record in question is a public record, or confidential record.
- d. To determine whether a confidential record should be available for inspection and copying to the person requesting the right to do so. A reasonable delay for this purpose shall not exceed twenty calendar days and ordinarily should not exceed ten business days.
- e. Actions for injunctions under this section may be brought by the lawful custodian of a government record, or by another government body or person who would be aggrieved or adversely affected by the examination or copying of such a record.
- f. The rights and remedies provided by this section are in addition to any rights and remedies provided by section 17A.19.

Sec. 8. Section 68A.9, Code 1983, is amended by adding the following new unnumbered paragraph:

NEW UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH. An agency within the meaning of section 17A.2, subsection 1 shall adopt as a rule, in each situation where this section is believed applicable, its determination identifying those particular provisions of this chapter that must be waived in the circumstances to prevent the denial of federal funds, services, or information.

Sec. 9. **NEW SECTION. 68A.10 CIVIL ENFORCEMENT.**

1. The rights and remedies provided by this section are in addition to any rights and remedies provided by section 17A.19. Any aggrieved person, any taxpayer to or citizen of the state of Iowa, or the attorney general or any county attorney, may seek judicial enforcement of the requirements of this chapter in an action brought against the lawful custodian and any other persons who would be appropriate defendants under the circumstances. Suits to enforce this chapter shall be brought in the district court for the county in which the lawful custodian has its principal place of business.

2. Once a party seeking judicial enforcement of this chapter demonstrates to the court that the defendant is subject to the requirements of this chapter, that the records in question are government records, and that the defendant refused to make those government records available for examination and copying by the plaintiff, the burden of going forward shall be on the defendant to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

3. Upon a finding by a preponderance of the evidence that a lawful custodian has violated any provision of this chapter, a court:

- a. Shall issue an injunction punishable by civil contempt ordering the offending lawful custodian and other appropriate persons to comply with the requirements of this chapter in

the case before it and, if appropriate, may order the lawful custodian and other appropriate persons to refrain for one year from any future violations of this chapter.

b. Shall assess the persons who participated in its violation damages in the amount of not more than five hundred dollars nor less than one hundred dollars. These damages shall be paid by the court imposing it to the state of Iowa if the body in question is a state government body, or to the local government involved if the body in question is a local government body. A person found to have violated this chapter shall not be assessed such damages if that person proves that the person either voted against the action violating this chapter, refused to participate in the action violating this chapter, or engaged in reasonable efforts under the circumstances to resist or prevent the action in violation of this chapter; had good reason to believe and in good faith believed facts which, if true, would have indicated compliance with the requirements of this chapter; or reasonably relied upon a decision of a court or an opinion of the attorney general or the attorney for the government body.

c. Shall order the payment of all costs and reasonable attorneys fees, including appellate attorneys fees, to any plaintiff successfully establishing a violation of this chapter in the action brought under this section. The costs and fees shall be paid by the particular persons who were assessed damages under paragraph "b" of this subsection. If no such persons exist because they have a lawful defense under that paragraph to the imposition of such damages, the costs and fees shall be paid to the successful plaintiff from the budget of the offending government body or its parent.

d. Shall issue an order removing a person from office if that person has engaged in two prior violations of this chapter for which damages were assessed against the person during the person's term.

4. Ignorance of the legal requirements of this chapter is not a defense to an enforcement proceeding brought under this section. A lawful custodian or its designee in doubt about the legality of allowing the examination or copying or refusing to allow the examination or copying of a government record is authorized to bring suit at the expense of that government body in the district court of the county of the lawful custodian's principal place of business, or to seek an opinion of the attorney general or the attorney for the lawful custodian, to ascertain the legality of any such action.

5. Judicial enforcement under this section does not preclude a criminal prosecution under section 68A.6 or any other applicable criminal provision.

Sec. 10. NEW SECTION. 68A.11 FAIR INFORMATION. This section may be cited as the "Iowa fair information practices Act." It is the intent of this section to require that the information policies of state agencies are clearly defined and subject to public review and comment.

1. Each state agency as defined in chapter 17A shall adopt rules which provide the following:

a. The nature and extent of the personally identifiable information collected by the agency, the legal authority for the collection of that information and a description of the means of storage.

b. A description of which of its records are public records, which are confidential records and which are partially public and partially confidential records and the legal authority for the confidentiality of the records. The description shall indicate whether the records contain personally identifiable information.

c. The procedure for providing the public with access to public records.

d. The procedures for allowing a person to review a government record about that person and have additions, dissents or objections entered in that record unless the review is prohibited by statute.

e. The procedures by which the subject of a confidential record may have a copy of that record released to a named third party.

f. The procedures by which the agency shall notify persons supplying information requested by the agency of the use that will be made of the information, which persons outside of the agency might routinely be provided this information, which parts of the information requested are required and which are optional and the consequences of failing to provide the information requested.

g. Whether a data processing system matches, collates or permits the comparison of personally identifiable information in one record system with personally identifiable information in another record system.

2. A state agency shall not use any personally identifiable information after July 1, 1988 unless it is in a record system described by the rules required by this section.

Sec. 11. NEW SECTION. 68A.12 POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS. A political subdivision or public body which is not a state agency as defined in chapter 17A is not required to adopt policies to implement section 68A.11. However, if a public body chooses to adopt policies to implement section 68A.11 the policies must be adopted by the elected governing body of the political subdivision of which the public body is a part. The elected governing body must give reasonable notice, make the proposed policy available for public inspection and allow full opportunity for the public to comment before adopting the policy. If the public body is established pursuant to an agreement under chapter 28E, the policy must be adopted by a majority of the public agencies party to the agreement. These policies shall be kept in the office of the county auditor if adopted by the board of supervisors, the city clerk if adopted by a city, and the chief administrative officer of the public body if adopted by some other elected governing body.

Sec. 12. The legislative council shall establish an interim study committee to review the recommendations of the report of the governor's committee on the Iowa public records law during the 1984 legislative interim.

Approved May 4, 1984