



Open Meetings / Open Records

H.B. 397 County Priorities - Looking Ahead to 2012

On May 26, 2011 the ACCG General County Government Committee met to address HB 397, which proposes significant changes to Georgia's open meetings and open records laws. This legislation was introduced during the 2011 session of the Georgia General Assembly and action is expected to be taken on the bill during the 2012 session. Over 40 county commissioners, attorney's, managers/administrators and clerks from all over the state attended the meeting.

Attendees were then broken up into three discussion groups in the morning, then three discussion groups in the afternoon. Each discussion group was charged with developing recommendations both to enhance HB 397 and the current law in specific areas.

The overall group then prioritized, by importance to them, the specific recommendations proposed by the respective discussion groups. The results of that voting/prioritization can be found in the List of Attendees' Recommended Priorities: the top 10 are listed below. For additional information go to www.accg.org

ACCG General County Government Committee's Top 10 Recommended Priorities

1. Require full payment for records requests before obligation to service new requests arises
2. Protect attorney client privilege to fullest extent
3. Expand the attorney client privilege to all legal advice (not just pending or potential litigation)
4. Remove the presumption of a meetings violation imposed by the mere gathering or communication between 2 or more board members
5. Lower the \$500 prepay threshold to \$100-\$250
6. Clarify attorney client privilege to include preparation for mediation or arbitration
7. Provide that all records that are exempted are located in one section of the act
8. Eliminate rules concerning future and recurring requests
9. Clarify the applicability of meetings act to e-communications between elected board members
10. Allow the imposition of a base fee for all record retrievals (even those below 15 minutes)

For additional information or to provide feedback, contact:

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