

Public Records

S.2120 An Act to Improve Public Records



Summary

- 1 Reduces costs for a records requestor, and ensures timely compliance with public records requests. It also prohibits charging for records if the agency or municipality does not provide the records within 15 days of the request or does not respond to the requestor within ten days.
- 2 Limits the amount that state agencies and municipalities can charge for production of the records. The limits are set at 5 cents per page for copies, down from 20-50 cents per page under current law, plus the cost of a storage device.
- 3 Finally, the bill requires state entities and encourages municipalities to post online many commonly requested public records. In addition, records are required to be provided in electronic format unless requested otherwise.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Jason M. Lewis (D-Winchester)



Senator Jason M. Lewis
@SenJasonLewis

Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health



Senator Joan B. Lovely
@SenJoanLovely

Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight



Senator Donald F. Humason, Jr.
@SenDonHumason

Senate Minority Whip
Conference Committee Member



This Legislation was passed on
February 4, 2016

STATUS



Signed Into Law

The new law brings Massachusetts into line with 47 other states and the federal government by allowing attorney's fees to be awarded to plaintiffs who are victorious in court when denied records.

RESPONSE

**The
Boston
Globe**

"In tackling public records reform this year, a committee of legislators has tried to strike a balance: predictable, timely, and fair access to records, with manageable rules for government in responding."

- *Boston Globe, Editorial*

"Government transparency and accessibility are fundamental to a healthy democracy. This important reform legislation will help bring the Commonwealth into the 21st century and strengthen the public trust in our government institutions."

- *Senator Jason M. Lewis*



INFOGRAPHICS

PUBLIC RECORDS

- Quicker Responses
- Lower Charges
- Effective Remedies

ACCESS REFORM

#PublicRecords



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