

# Transparency legislation offers opportunity for positive change



*The 2016 legislative session is a challenging one. With so many controversial issues needing the Legislature's attention, government transparency is a rare, noncontroversial issue that impacts each and every Kansan. Open government bills offer an opportunity to do something significant for the people and improve Kansas government.*

## Top Open Government Opportunities:

**Senate Bill 361.** This bill fixes the loophole in the current Kansas Open Records Act (KORA) that allows public officials to conduct state business on private email to avoid disclosure. This is a critical bill to the public's trust. The bill would essentially make most communication involving state business accessible under the law, even if produced on private devices. We strongly support Senate Bill 361.

**House Bill 2573.** This bill takes a significant step forward in opening the legislative process up to more people all across Kansas. With the ability to listen to certain committee hearings or legislative proceedings live online, more Kansans will be able to participate in or follow the work of their elected representatives. The issue of streaming has been discussed for several years, but we encourage legislators to take action in 2016. We strongly support House Bill 2573.

**Senate Bill 98.** This bill addresses a real obstacle to obtaining many public records: cost. It is the product of two years of work to address KORA cost containment. With an amendment from the Kansas Press Association, this bill would limit costs for taxpayers and media for obtaining information deemed in the public's interest. Requests from commercial interests would still be subject to higher fees. We support Senate Bill 98, with KPA amendment.

**Substitute for Senate Bill 18.** This bill designates law enforcement body and vehicle camera videos as a law enforcement record. While we would prefer a designation more easily obtained by the public, this language will provide a mechanism for requesters to seek these important videos. We support Sub Senate Bill 18.

**House Bill 2545:** This bill was designed as a "clean-up" bill" to correct a small glitch in the probable cause affidavits change that passed the Legislature in 2014. This bill requires that the full or redacted affidavit be put in the public court file when it is released by a judge. This will eliminate the need for redundant records requests. We strongly support House Bill 2545.

*Open Kansas is a non-profit, non-partisan initiative to ensure access to public records and champion transparency in state government. The following organizations support the Open Kansas Initiative:*

Sunshine Coalition for Open Government  
Kansas Association of Broadcasters  
Kansas Press Association  
Mainstream Coalition  
Kansas Head Start Association  
Tiny-K Alliance  
Women for Kansas  
Kansas Action for Children  
Interhab  
Disability Rights Center of Kansas  
Kansas Health Foundation  
Sunflower Foundation  
Wyandotte Health Foundation  
Kansas Center for Economic Growth  
Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City  
Kansas League of Women Voters  
Kansas Appleseed  
United Methodist Health Ministry Fund  
Communities Creating Opportunity  
El Centro  
Kansas Association of Community Action Programs  
Southeast Kansas Community Action (SEK-CAP)  
East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corporation (ECKAN)  
Unified Government of  
Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Metro Organizations for Racial and Economic Equity  
Thrive Allen County  
Practical Bioethics  
Healthcore Clinic