

Public Officials and Employees

H.B. 257

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Hoops and Claggett

Effective date: April 9, 2025

- Authorizes members of certain public bodies to conduct and attend meetings and hearings virtually, by video conference or any other similar electronic technology, when certain conditions are met.
- Permits members of public bodies to attend meetings or hearings virtually when the public body has adopted certain policies, including methods by which members of the public may observe and attend meetings and hearings.
- Prohibits public bodies from attending a meeting or hearing virtually if the meeting or hearing involves a vote to approve a major nonroutine expenditure or significant hiring decision, or a vote on a tax issue or tax increase, or if the board members are compensated for or elected to their positions on the board.
- Prohibits public bodies from holding or attending hearings virtually without the consent of all parties to the hearing.
- Permits public bodies otherwise prohibited from holding or attending virtual meetings due to member compensation or election to attend a virtual meeting in which multiple public bodies are participants, provided the meeting is not for the purpose of voting on a major nonroutine expenditure, significant hiring decision, or tax issue or increase.
- Provides that a member of a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) board does not have to be present in person at a meeting in order to be part of a quorum or to vote if the JEDD board holds a virtual meeting in accordance with continuing provisions for other similar boards.
- Specifically allows the Public Employees Retirement System, the Board of Trustees of the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund, the School Employees Retirement Board, and the State Highway Patrol Retirement Board to meet virtually when they adopt a particular policy.

H.B. 265

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Wiggam and Hall

Effective date: April 9, 2025

- Establishes that each state agency is for all purposes to be considered in exclusive possession, custody, and control of its own records.
- Establishes that a state agency or public official is not to be considered a party to any litigation unless either the agency or official intervenes in the litigation or is named in the

case caption in conjunction with a pleading specifying factual allegations against the agency or official giving rise to at least one justiciable claim.

- Requires a person allegedly aggrieved by a violation of the Public Records Law to transmit a complaint to the public office or person responsible for public records allegedly responsible for the violation before bringing a claim in court.
- Establishes a three-day period in which a public office or person responsible for public records may cure or address an alleged violation of the Public Records Law, and prohibits a person allegedly aggrieved from filing a court action under the Public Records Law before the period expires.
- Makes statutory damages under the Public Records Law unavailable to certain incarcerated persons.
- Specifies “public record concerning a criminal investigation or prosecution concerning what would be a criminal investigation or prosecution if the subject of the investigation were an adult” includes certain designated public service worker records, making certain incarcerated individuals unable to request them unless certain requirements are met.
- Exempts the following records from disclosure under the Public Records Law:
 - The work schedules of designated public service workers;
 - Redaction request forms;
 - Affidavits submitted to a county auditor by a designated public service worker, a qualifying former designated public service worker, or the spouse of either, requesting the county auditor to remove the individual’s name from certain publicly available documents.
- Allows a qualifying former designated public service worker to request that a public office redact the former worker’s address from any record made available to the general public on the internet, and to request that a county auditor remove the individual’s name from certain publicly available documents.
- Prohibits vexatious litigators from requesting public records without the leave of a court and a court order.
- Permits a public office or person responsible for public records to require identification from a public records requestor if the office or person knows or has reasonable cause to believe that the requestor is a vexatious litigator.
- Clarifies that the contents of a presentence investigation report or part of a presentence investigation report may be shared between courts.