

Senate Bill 413

*Written Testimony of Erik Arneson
Executive Director, Office of Open Records*

Provided for the Senate State Government Committee public hearing on June 14, 2016

Chairman Folmer and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing the Office of Open Records to submit this written testimony regarding Senate Bill 413.

As you know, the Office of Open Records operates – and was designed to operate – in a manner unlike any other quasi-judicial or adjudicatory body in the Commonwealth. The vast majority of appeals we receive are filed by average citizens who are *not* represented by attorneys. The appeal process established in the Right-to-Know Law works so well, in large part, because it's simple. (And the vast majority of RTK disputes are resolved by the OOR – fewer than 10 percent of our decisions are appealed to court.)

Given the OOR's unique structure, I would respectfully request that Section 501(c) of the bill be amended to include the following language on page 11, between lines 4 and 5:

(3) Proceedings before the Office of Open Records.

This would ensure that the OOR can continue to operate in a way that has been proven to work for both citizens and agencies.

Again, thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me at earneson@pa.gov or (717) 346-9903.

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