

Citizen Watchdog Training

with

American Watchdogs, Inc.

www.AmericanWatchdogs.org

Sanford, Florida – June 15, 2021



RESOURCES OF INTEREST

[National Freedom of Information Coalition](#) – [NFOIC Sample FOIA](#) – [NFOIC Florida](#)

[Title XIX](#) – [Chapter 286](#) - PUBLIC BUSINESS: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

[Section 24 of the Florida Constitution - SECTION 24.](#) Access to public records and meetings.

(a) **Every person has the right to inspect or copy any public record made or received in connection with the official business** of any public body, officer, or employee of the state, or persons acting on their behalf, except with respect to records exempted pursuant to this section or specifically made confidential by this Constitution. This section specifically includes the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government and each agency or department created thereunder; counties, municipalities, and districts; and each constitutional officer, board, and commission, or entity created pursuant to law or this Constitution.

(b) All meetings of any collegial public body of the executive branch of state government or of any collegial public body of a county, municipality, school district, or special district, at which official acts are to be taken or at which public business of such body is to be transacted or discussed, shall be open and noticed to the public and meetings of the legislature shall be open and noticed as provided in Article III, Section 4(e), except with respect to meetings exempted pursuant to this section or specifically closed by this Constitution.

(c) This section shall be self-executing. The legislature, however, may provide by general law passed by a two-thirds vote of each house for the exemption of records from the requirements of subsection (a) and the exemption of meetings from the requirements of subsection (b), provided that such law shall state with specificity the public necessity justifying the exemption and shall be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. The legislature shall enact laws governing the enforcement of this section, including the maintenance, control, destruction, disposal, and disposition of records made public by this section, except that each house of the legislature may adopt rules governing the enforcement of this section in relation to records of the legislative branch. Laws enacted pursuant to this subsection shall contain only exemptions from the requirements of subsections (a) or (b) and provisions governing the enforcement of this section, and shall relate to one subject.

(d) All laws that are in effect on July 1, 1993 that limit public access to records or meetings shall remain in force, and such laws apply to records of the legislative and judicial branches, until they are repealed. Rules of court that are in effect on the date of adoption of this section that limit access to records shall remain in effect until they are repealed.

History.—Added, C.S. for C.S. for H.J.R.'s 1727, 863, 2035, 1992; adopted 1992; Am. S.J.R. 1284, 2002; adopted 2002.

[Title X Chapter 19](#) PUBLIC RECORDS

(3) If public funds are expended by an agency in payment of dues or membership contributions for any person, corporation, foundation, trust, association, group, or other organization, *all the financial, business, and membership records of that person, corporation, foundation, trust, association, group, or other organization which pertain to the public agency are public records and subject to the provisions of s. 119.07.*

- [Google Scholar](#)
- [Duck Duck Go](#)
- [Casetext](#)
- [Westlaw](#)
- [Lexis Nexis](#)
- [College of Law – Florida State University](#)
- [Florida Supreme Court Law Library](#)
- [Florida Law Libraries](#)
- [Law.Justia.com](#)
- [www.courtlistener.com](#)

Edgar County Watchdogs: www.ecwd.press

American Watchdogs, Inc.: www.americanwatchdogs.org

Search Local Government Vehicle License Plates (IL, IN, OH): www.govplates.com

Search public employee payroll / expenditures: www.openthebooks.com

Florida Attorney General:

- OPINIONS: <http://myfloridalegal.com/opinions>
- SUNSHINE LAW:
<http://myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf/Main/DC0B20B7DC22B7418525791B006A54E4>
- SUNSHINE MANUAL – includes the Law Enforcement Guide:
<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/sun.nsf/sunmanual>

Florida Chief Financial Officer – Annual Financial Reports:
<https://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/aa/localgovernments/>

Florida Statutes:
<http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>

Citizen Advocacy Center: <https://www.citizenadvocacycenter.org/>

[Florida First Amendment Foundation](#)

[Florida Commission on Ethics -](#)

All elected state and local public officers are required to file a financial disclosure form and many appointed board members also must file. There are certain state and local employees who are also subject to the disclosure filing requirement because of the position they hold or because they have purchasing authority that exceeds \$35,000. [See Sections [112.3144](#) and [112.3145](#), Florida Statutes]

Select Florida Supreme Court cases on sunshine laws – Open Meetings:

“[Sunshine law] having been enacted for the public benefit, should be interpreted most favorably to the public” [Canney v Alachua County \(1973\)](#)

“[Sunshine law] should be construed so as to frustrate all evasive devices” [Palm Beach v Gradison \(1974\)](#)

“[Sunshine law] must be broadly construed to [advance] its remedial and protective purpose” [Wood v Marston \(1983\)](#)

Meeting of 2 or more public officials of the same public body is a public meeting – even the legislature – even a party caucus of elected officials

Art III Para 4 of the Florida Constitution (Porkchop Gang – one county one vote – reason constitution was changed)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tn8j-igC7vg>

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PORK CHOP GANG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jBBd3p4xao>

Creation of Florida’s modern constitution:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIIxAgV5vQ>

What type of public record are you interested in?

- **Filed ethics statements**
- **Credit card statements and receipts**
- **Cell phone statements**
- **All telephone numbers**
- **All email addresses – Emails sent and received**
- **Compensation – of public officials and of public employees**
- **Perks of public officials (insurance, vehicle allowance, cell phones)**
- **Adopted compensation resolutions**
- **Lists of public vehicles**
- **Vehicle use policies**
- **Meeting Agendas**
- **Meeting Minutes**
- **Policies and Ordinances**
- **Bills / expenses paid**
- **Annual Financial Reports**
- **All boards and committees**
- **Campaign expenses/contributions**
- **Business registration records**

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