
State Government Committee

SB 6171

Brief Description: Concerning civil penalties for knowing attendance by a member of a governing body at a meeting held in violation of the open public meetings act.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Liias and Benton; by request of Attorney General.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the penalty for a member of a governing body violating the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) from \$100 to \$500.
- Adds a \$1,000 penalty for any subsequent violation of the OPMA by a governing body member who was previously penalized.

Hearing Date: 2/23/16

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

The Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) requires public access to attend all meetings of the governing body of a state or local agency or subagency that involves the transaction of official business. Any law, rule, regulation, or directive adopted by a governing body must be at an open meeting. The governing body must set a regular meeting schedule by law or rule and make meeting agendas available no less than 24 hours before a regular meeting.

The member of a governing body who attends a meeting in violation of any provision of the OPMA with knowledge of the violation may be charged a civil penalty of \$100 assessed by a superior court judge. Any person may bring an action to enforce such a penalty.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The penalty against the member of a governing body attending a meeting in violation of the OPMA is increased from \$100 to \$500. Any member who has previously been assessed a penalty is subject to a \$1,000 penalty for any subsequent violation of the OPMA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.