

---

**State Government Operations &  
Accountability Committee**

---

**HB 2329**

**Brief Description:** Clarifying that the state auditor and the joint legislative audit and review committee are among the entities that are exceptions to the provisions prohibiting disclosure of department of social and health services information.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Hunter, Alexander, Jarrett, Haigh, Nixon, Chase, Haler, Wallace, Kagi, Green and Dunn.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Clarifies that the State Auditor and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee are among the entities that are authorized to review those Department of Social and Health services records and communications that are otherwise exempt from disclosure.

**Hearing Date:** 1/11/06

**Staff:** Kathryn Leathers (786-7114).

**Background:**

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers programs that provide a myriad of services to citizens in need of assistance, including the elderly, disabled, low-income, and children at risk of abuse or neglect. Except in limited circumstances, the DSHS and its employees are prohibited from disclosing agency records and communications, and from otherwise disclosing the contents thereof. One of the exceptions to this prohibition allows disclosure for purposes directly connected with the administration of its program. In judicial proceedings, non-administrative records and communications are generally deemed privileged. A second exception provides that disclosure of non-administrative records and communications may be disclosed, subject to confidentiality requirements, to: duly designated representatives of approved private welfare agencies, public officials, and members of legislative interim committees and advisory committees when such members are performing duties related to the administration of public assistance services.

**Summary of Bill:**

The State Auditor is specifically identified as one of the public officials who is authorized to access the DSHS records and communications that are otherwise not subject to disclosure. The joint legislative audit and review committee is specifically identified as one of the legislative

committees authorized to access the DSHS records and communications that are otherwise not subject to disclosure.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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