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Aug. 14, 2018

Dear Members of the Open Records Ad Hoc Committee,

TCOG's mission is simple: Promote and preserve transparency in government. Citizens have a right to know what their government is doing. And openness promotes accountability, as well as contributes to better understanding of public policy decisions.

The number of exemptions has grown dramatically from 89 when the last legislative review occurred in 1988 to more than 538 today — 30 years later. Some of the exemptions are broad and vague and have led to disputes. Some were passed with scant information provided lawmakers, and with little notice to the public. Others are more straightforward and the need for the exemption is obvious.

We are grateful for your time and effort on this committee, and hope to be of help in sorting out how best to serve the interests of transparency. Enclosed in this packet are:

- Printout of the TCOG slideshow presentation
- Florida's law as a sample of an exemption sunset policy
- 1988 report on exemptions by the Committee on Open Government
- 2007 report by the Joint Study Committee on Open Government
- TCOG's Keys to Open Government, published 2015
- Executive Summary of TCOG's Public Records Policy Audit, May 2018
- Summary of TCOG recommendations

Sincerely,

Deborah Fisher

Executive Director

Tennessee Coalition for Open Government

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Tennessee Coalition for Open Government

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"To preserve and improve access to public information"