

Freedom Of Information Commission's Statement In Opposition To Proposed Bill No. 837, An Act Concerning Various Fees

The stated purpose of the legislation is to implement the Governor's budget recommendations.

The bill as proposed would increase the fee for copying public records through the use of a hand-held scanner from ten to fifteen dollars for an individual to pay each time the individual copies records at the agency with a hand-held scanner.

Over the last decade, the Connecticut Freedom of Information (FOI) Commission has experienced an increase in the volume of cases involving devices, including portable scanners and copiers. Charges relating to using a scanner should not be viewed as a convenient way to recoup any lost copying costs.

The FOI Commission believes that the proposed increase would present an unnecessary financial barrier to obtaining access to government documents to which the public is entitled and for which there is no cost to any government agency. In this regard, society's increased use of technology should enhance the citizenry's access to public records, not restrict it.

While the FOI Commission recognizes the need for the State of Connecticut to increase revenue, there is no legitimate reason to increase fees relating to scanning public documents.

For these reasons the reference in the bill that relates to increasing the fees for using a hand-held scanner (line 80) should be defeated.

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