

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION STATEMENT
ON RAISED BILL 1096, AN ACT CONCERNING GOVERNANCE OF THE
STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER**

March 15, 2013

The Freedom of Information Commission submits this statement in support of Raised Bill 1096 to the extent that the bill would increase transparency and accountability in government.

Specifically, the proposal establishes the State Education Resource Center (SERC) as a quasi-public agency subject to the state code of ethics laws and to the rules, regulations and restrictions on purchasing, procurement, personal service agreements and disposition of assets. The proposal also requires SERC to annually submit a yearly budget, projected revenue statement and financial audit to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly.

Raised Bill 1096 also delineates that the purposes of SERC shall be to assist the State Board of Education in providing programs and activities that will promote educational equity and excellence, including, but not limited to, programs and activities concerning early childhood education, improving school and district academic performance, and closing the academic achievement gap between socio-economic subgroups. The Commission believes that such programs and activities aimed at quality education in Connecticut are clearly of public concern.

The public has a right to know how the public's business is being conducted, including, but not limited to, funding, spending and decision-making in the area of education. Accordingly, as SERC is performing and advancing the public's business with respect to education, it ought to be subject to public scrutiny.

Further, in order to avoid any confusion as to whether SERC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, the Commission suggests that the legislature *explicitly* set forth in the proposal that SERC shall be considered a public agency for the purposes of Chapter 14 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

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