

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION STATEMENT ON
RAISED BILL 253, AN ACT CONCERNING
POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES.**

February 29, 2016

The Freedom of Information Commission **opposes** the confidentiality provisions of RB 253, *An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries*. The proposed bill makes confidential a candidate's letter of objection provided to the Secretary of State, as required by RB 253, concerning a registrar of voters' change in a polling place or polling places. RB 253 also prohibits identification of the candidate in the Secretary of State's notice of objection provided to the registrars of voters and each candidate seeking nomination to an office in the primary. Under the proposed bill, a polling place cannot be changed if a candidate files such a letter of objection with the Secretary of State.

The FOI Commission questions the purpose of permitting a candidate for public office to remain anonymous in his or her opposition to a change in polling place where that opposition significantly affects the conduct of an election. Elections and primaries should be as open a process as possible. Wouldn't a candidate's position on changing a polling place be something the voting public has the right to know?

The FOI Commission believes that the confidentiality provisions of RB 253 compromise the democratic process, including the principles of open government, where there is no apparent need to do so. For these reasons, the Commission urges the rejection of the confidentiality provisions in RB 253.

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