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**2025 Sunshine Op-Ed**

**It’s time to pass FOIA reforms**

by State Senator Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield) and State Senator Ed McBroom (R-Waucedah)

It feels like our politics are more divided than ever. But if you listen closely to what residents on both the left and right are saying, there is a common theme: A demand for a more transparent and accountable government.

Our legislation to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in Michigan achieves just that.

Through FOIA, the public can request the behind-the-scenes documents – emails, memos, agendas, schedules, and more – from their city or township hall, their school district, county officials, and state departments to better understand how the government decisions that impact them are made.

Who did your mayor meet with? What did your school board members send to each other? Did the county follow through on the issue you brought up? Residents can find all of that out through FOIA.

But shockingly, Michigan’s law does not subject our governor and state legislators to those same record requests, thereby blocking the public from seeing the inner workings of our State Capitol Building.

All 50 states have FOIA, but Michigan is nearly alone in the country with those outrageous and glaring exemptions for the executive and lawmakers. This contributes to why [our state ranks worst in the country in government ethics](https://publicintegrity.org/politics/state-politics/state-integrity-investigation/michigan-gets-f-grade-in-2015-state-integrity-investigation/). When state government officials operate in the dark, [scandals](https://apnews.com/article/michigan-marijuana-board-bribery-3299a13d408bf05d15526c6ecce955d7) in Lansing continue to [persist](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2025/02/27/michigan-house-speaker-lee-chatfield-political-fund-embezzlement-trips-miami-las-vegas-bahamas/79294902007/).

Nearly a decade ago, as representatives in the Michigan House – a Democrat from metro-Detroit and a Republican from the Upper Peninsula – [we joined together to introduce legislation](https://www.mlive.com/news/2016/03/bipartisan_lawmakers_aim_to_in.html) that finally includes the governor’s office and legislature in Michigan’s FOIA to bring sunshine to state government.

Our bills passed in the House, [but the Senate refused to take it up](https://www.freep.com/story/opinion/columnists/brian-dickerson/2017/02/03/meekhoff-foia-michigan-legislature-bill/97396962/). Then we were both elected to the Senate, where we passed our legislation last year, [but the House wouldn’t move on it](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2024/12/29/michigan-house-speaker-joe-tate-hindered-ethics-foia-dark-money-reforms-democrats-matt-hall/77175276007/).

This year, we introduced our legislation as the very first bills of the new session: [Senate Bills 1 and 2](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2025/01/08/michigan-senate-foia-freedom-of-information-legislature-governor-transparency-legislation/77554234007/). They passed overwhelmingly in January and were swiftly sent over to the House, where they currently sit.

It’s past time for the full legislature – Republicans and Democrats – to come together to act on these bills. The public should not have to wait any longer.