

Citizens for Wayne A. Strnad

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**Statement to the Press
By
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House Bill 1057 is but a feeble attempt to show that something is being done to make Illinois Government and local municipalities more open to the citizens in discussing public business. It is illusory at best, for the very definition of a “public body” and “meeting” has remained stagnant pretty much since its inception.

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Open Meetings Act. Redefines a "meeting" to include gatherings, whether in person or by telephone call, electronic means, or other means of interactive communication, of a majority of a quorum of the members of a public body held for the purpose of discussing public business (now, a gathering of a majority of a quorum of the members of a public body held for the purpose of discussing public business).

This quote can be found at:

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=1057&GAID=8&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=15757&SessionID=50&GA=94>

The problems with this are many because the act is only applicable when there is a majority of a quorum of members of a public body.... For example, in Chicago an alderman can have a meeting and advertise it through various means such as passing out flyers, running a public service announcement in a local newspaper, etc. Under the current version of the Open Meetings Act, including HB 1057 if passed, people can still be barred from attending.

Alderman Reboyras, through his mouthpiece Carlos who is lining up a double pension at taxpayers' expense, barred three residents of the 30th Ward from attending his "State of the Ward" address, despite the fact that public business was discussed pertaining to how taxpayers' money will be spent. Mind you, it was a one way show complete with slides. Public input was not encouraged because Reboyras only allowed five (5) questions from the community. He also refused to hand over data pertaining to the "Venue" that every alderman must submit and every alderman gets paid to complete, at taxpayers' expense, despite the fact a Freedom of Information Act request was submitted.

Reboyras then used the Chicago Police Department (officer Hodge) to tell the residents that this is not an open meeting. Police reinforcements were called in to help violate their first amendment constitutional rights.

The Open Meetings Act should be expanded in its definition to exclude the words "of a majority of a quorum of the members of a public body." Exclusion of those words would subject every elected official and subcommittee of any committee, including the

committee, to abide in the Open Meetings Act. This would indeed help make government more open and invoke more discussions at these aldermanic shindigs, usually referred to as the “State of the Ward.”

HB2321, introduced by Rep. Michael J. Madigan - Barbara Flynn Currie - Jack D.

Franks, still leaves in place those restrictions.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan has refused to come forth and issue an opinion on the open meetings act, despite numerous requests.

If your state senators and representatives don't care to expand the definition by removing those few words, then vote them out of office. Start with the state's version of Daley, Michael J. Madigan.

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