

1 Sec. ##. 1 V.S.A. § 315 is amended to read:

2 § 315. STATEMENT OF POLICY; SHORT TITLE

3 (a) It is the policy of this subchapter to provide for free and open examination of records
4 consistent with Chapter I, Article 6 of the Vermont Constitution. Officers of government are
5 trustees and servants of the people and it is in the public interest to enable any person to review
6 and criticize their decisions even though such examination may cause inconvenience or
7 embarrassment. All people, however, have a right to privacy in their personal and economic
8 pursuits, which ought to be protected unless specific information is needed to review the action
9 of a governmental officer. Consistent with these principles, the General Assembly hereby
10 declares that certain public records shall be made available to any person as hereinafter provided.
11 To that end, the provisions of this subchapter shall be liberally construed to implement this
12 policy, and the burden of proof shall be on the public agency to sustain its action.

13 (b) The General Assembly finds that public records are essential to the administration of
14 State and local government. Public records contain information that allows government
15 programs to function, provides officials with a basis for making decisions, and ensures continuity
16 with past operations. Public records document the legal responsibilities of government, help
17 protect the rights of citizens, and provide citizens a means of monitoring government programs
18 and measuring the performance of public officials. Public records provide documentation for the
19 functioning of government and for the retrospective analysis of the development of Vermont
20 government and the impact of programs on citizens.

21 (c) This subchapter may be known and cited as the Public Records Act or the PRA.

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