

Rep. Maida Townsend, D-South Burlington  
Chair – House Government Operations Committee  
Montpelier, Vt.

Dear Rep. Townsend,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify about S-128, a proposal to expand the reasons for going into secret session under Vermont's Open Meeting Law.

This legislation is relatively new to us. Your invitation is believed to be the first notice we received that this was being considered. We do not seem to find any invitation from the Senate for a hearing this year.

On initial glance and with some preliminary discussion, the Vermont Press Association may be willing to support the change, but we have not heard enough about the bill.

While some safety issues might be proper for secret sessions, general discussion, like whether the state needs to buy cameras for the statehouse should be a more transparent discussion. As legislators like to say, "The Statehouse is the People's House."

I was hoping to be able to attend the hearing on Thursday, but as you know I am on the mend from a hospital procedure. Your committee might not want a face-to-face discussion tomorrow with all my stitches and the black, blue, purple and other colors on my face.

Please keep us in the loop and we will try to respond as this bill moves forward. In the meantime we will try to get more up to speed.

Thank you and the committee members for their time.

Mike Donoghue  
Executive Director  
Vermont Press Association  
(802) 310-7866