

SENATE BILL SUMMARY

Prepared by the Division of Legislative Information for the Senate Bill **AS ORIGINALLY FILED**. For more detail, see Senate Bill Analyses, if available, prepared by the Senate's professional committee staff.

SB 440 Legislative Process by Senator Gelber

Proposes amendments to the State Constitution relating to citizens' right to know how the legislature spends tax dollars. The State Constitution generally authorizes the public to inspect public records. The State Constitution also generally requires meetings of governmental bodies, including meetings of state legislative bodies, to be noticed and open to the public. The State Constitution authorizes the Legislature to adopt rules relating to public access to legislative documents and meetings. However, this amendment authorizes a person to challenge the reasonableness or interpretation of those rules in circuit court.

The amendment also includes the following:

(1) Provides that members of a legislative conference committee may discuss matters before the conference committee with other members of the committee only at a meeting that is noticed and open to the public.

(2) Prohibits the Legislature from considering amendments to bills, except technical amendments, during special sessions and the last five days of regular sessions, unless the amendments were adopted by a committee or authorized for introduction by a three-fourths vote of the membership of the house in which the amendments are offered.

(3) Replaces existing requirements for the format of appropriations bills with requirements to make appropriations bills more user friendly. Specifically, appropriations bills must clearly identify the purposes for the use of appropriated funds and contain references to detailed information and performance measures relating to the appropriation.

(4) Requires general appropriations acts to be the product of a joint conference committee.

(5) Clarifies that a two-thirds vote of the membership of each house is required to enact a new public records exemption or public meeting exemption. (See bill for details)