

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 449 CS Public Records Exemption
SPONSOR(S): Ambler
TIED BILLS: None **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1082

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) <u>Governmental Operations Committee</u>	<u>5 Y, 0 N, w/CS</u>	<u>Williamson</u>	<u>Everhart</u>
2) <u>Economic Development, Trade & Banking Committee</u>	<u>11 Y, 0 N</u>	<u>Sheheane</u>	<u>Carlson</u>
3) <u>Education Appropriations Committee</u>	<u>Withdrawn</u>		
4) <u>State Administration Council</u>		<u>Williamson</u>	<u>Bussey</u>
5) _____			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Florida law establishes the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute (Cancer Center) at the University of South Florida. The law also requires a Florida not-for-profit corporation (corporation) to govern and operate the Cancer Center. Records of the corporation and its subsidiaries are public records, though previous legislatures made some of the records confidential and exempt from public disclosure.

The bill expands the corporation's public records exemption to conform it to the public records exemption afforded state university divisions of sponsored research. It provides for future review and repeal of the exemption and provides a statement of public necessity.

The bill appears to have a minimal fiscal impact on state government. It does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local governments. See "FISCAL COMMENTS" section.

The bill requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting for passage.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Provide limited government – The bill decreases public access to records of the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

Florida law establishes the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute (Cancer Center) at the University of South Florida (USF). The law requires the organization of a Florida not-for-profit corporation (corporation) for the sole purpose of governing and operating the Cancer Center. Records of the corporation and its subsidiaries are public records.¹

Current law provides a public records exemption for proprietary confidential business information owned or controlled by the corporation or its subsidiaries. "Proprietary confidential business information" (CBI) means information that is "intended to be and is treated by the not-for-profit corporation or its subsidiaries as private and the disclosure of which would harm the business operations of the not-for-profit corporation or its subsidiaries."²

The public records exemptions for the corporation and USF's division of sponsored research differ. Because the corporation's affiliation with USF includes "significant coordination and joint development research discoveries", the differing public records exemptions have created confusion regarding the "scope of the protections of intellectual property enjoyed by" the corporation and USF.³ According to the Cancer Center, conforming the corporation's exemption to USF's division of sponsored research exemption would allow the Cancer Center to more effectively fulfill its legislative mandate in the area of cancer research.

Effect of Bill

The bill expands the public records exemption relating to trade secrets to include information relating to methods of manufacture or production, potential trade secrets, potentially patentable material, or proprietary information received, generated, ascertained, or discovered during the course of research conducted by the corporation or its subsidiaries. It further expands the exemption by making confidential and exempt information received by the corporation or its subsidiaries from an agency within this state or outside of Florida that is otherwise exempt or confidential.

The bill provides for future review and repeal of the exemption on October 2, 2010. It also provides a statement of public necessity.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1 amends s. 1004.43, F.S., relating to the public records exemption for the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute.

Section 2 provides a statement of public necessity.

¹ Section 1004.43, F.S.

² Section 1004.43(8)(b), F.S.

³ Letter to former Representative Haridopolos from the Cancer Center's Director of Governmental Relations, January 22, 2003.

Section 3 provides an effective date of “upon becoming a law.”

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None. The bill does not create, modify, amend, or eliminate a state revenue source.

2. Expenditures:

Unknown and likely minimal. See “FISCAL COMMENTS” section.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None. The bill does not create, modify, amend, or eliminate a local revenue source.

2. Expenditures:

None. The bill does not create, modify, amend, or eliminate a local expenditure.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None. The bill does not regulate the conduct of persons in the private sector.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill could likely create a fiscal impact on the corporation, because staff would have to be trained with regards to the additional categories of information that are being made confidential and exempt from public disclosure. In addition, the corporation could incur costs associated with redacting the additional categories of confidential and exempt information prior to releasing a record.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds. The bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities. The bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities have to raise revenue.

2. Other:

Article I, s. 24(c) of the State Constitution, requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting for passage of a newly created public records or public meetings exemption. Thus, the bill requires a two-thirds vote for passage.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

Public Records Law

Article I, s. 24(a), Florida Constitution, sets forth the state's public policy regarding access to government records. The section guarantees every person a right to inspect or copy any public record of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. The Legislature may, however, provide by general law for the exemption of records from the requirements of Article I, s. 24(a), Florida Constitution. The general law must state with specificity the public necessity justifying the exemption (public necessity statement) and must be no broader than necessary to accomplish its purpose.

Public policy regarding access to government records is also addressed in the Florida Statutes. Section 119.07(1), F.S., also guarantees every person a right to inspect, examine, and copy any state, county, or municipal record. Furthermore, the Open Government Sunset Review Act of 1995⁴ provides that a public records or public meetings exemption may be created or maintained only if it serves an identifiable public purpose, and may be no broader than is necessary to meet one of the following public purposes: 1. Allowing the state or its political subdivisions to effectively and efficiently administer a governmental program, which administration would be significantly impaired without the exemption; 2. Protecting sensitive personal information that, if released, would be defamatory or would jeopardize an individual's safety. However, only the identity of an individual may be exempted under this provision; or, 3. Protecting trade or business secrets.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES

On March 23, 2005, the Governmental Operations Committee adopted an amendment and reported the bill favorably with committee substitute (CS). The CS removes from the bill the public records exemption for information relating to business transactions resulting from research. The CS also made clear in the public necessity statement that the bill was expanding the current public records exemption for the corporation.

⁴ Section 119.15, F.S.