

HB 870 -- Sunshine Law

Sponsor: Harris (23)

This bill makes various changes to the Sunshine Law. In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Expands the definition of "public meeting" to include meetings conducted by conference call, video conference, Internet chat, or Internet message board;
- (2) Expands the definition of "public vote" to include votes conducted by telephone or any other electronic means;
- (3) Prohibits public governmental bodies from conducting votes at public meetings unless the question voted upon is put to that body's members at the same time and the public is allowed access to the vote;
- (4) Requires notice of public meetings conducted by telephone or other electronic means to identify the mode by which the meeting will be conducted and the designated location where the public may observe and attend the meeting;
- (5) Requires a public body, if it plans to meet by Internet chat, Internet message board, or other computer link, to post a notice of the meeting on the public body's web site in addition to its principal office; to notify the public how to access the meeting; and to ensure that reasonable access is granted to those members of the public that do not have access to a home computer;
- (6) Requires public bodies to allow public meetings to be recorded by audiotape, videotape, or other electronic means and allows the public body to establish recording guidelines;
- (7) Requires that when a public governmental body member transmits either a written or electronic message relating to public business to one or more members of that body so that, including the sender, a majority of the body's members are copied, the sender also must transmit the message to the custodian of records concurrently and in the same format. The messages received by the custodian will be public record subject to the exceptions of Section 610.021, RSMo; and
- (8) Allows e-mail or electronic requests for public records to be responded to in the same format.