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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 639 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY SIMMONS, MACKENZIE, D. COSTA, PICKETT, A. HARRIS,  
COX, FARRY, GABLER, M. QUINN AND HEFFLEY, FEBRUARY 27, 2017

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, FEBRUARY 27, 2017

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AN ACT

1 Amending the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), entitled  
2 "An act providing for access to public information, for a  
3 designated open-records officer in each Commonwealth agency,  
4 local agency, judicial agency and legislative agency, for  
5 procedure, for appeal of agency determination, for judicial  
6 review and for the Office of Open Records; imposing  
7 penalties; providing for reporting by State-related  
8 institutions; requiring the posting of certain State contract  
9 information on the Internet; and making related repeals," in  
10 preliminary provisions, further providing for definitions; in  
11 procedure, further providing for written requests; and, in  
12 judicial review, further providing for fee limitations.

13 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
14 hereby enacts as follows:

15 Section 1. Section 102 of the act of February 14, 2008  
16 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law, is amended by  
17 adding a definition to read:

18 Section 102. Definitions.

19 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
20 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
21 context clearly indicates otherwise:

22 \* \* \*

23 "Commercial purpose." The use of a record:

- 1           (1) for the purpose of selling or reselling any portion  
2           of the record;  
3           (2) to obtain names and addresses from the record for  
4           the purpose of solicitation; or  
5           (3) for any other purpose through which the requester  
6           can reasonably expect to make a profit.

7           \* \* \*

8           Section 2. Section 703 of the act is amended to read:

9           Section 703. Written requests.

10          (a) General rule.--A written request for access to records  
11 may be submitted in person, by mail, by e-mail, by facsimile or,  
12 to the extent provided by agency rules, by any other electronic  
13 means. A written request must be addressed to the open-records  
14 officer designated pursuant to section 502. Employees of an  
15 agency shall be directed to forward requests for records to the  
16 open-records officer. A written request should identify or  
17 describe the records sought with sufficient specificity to  
18 enable the agency to ascertain which records are being requested  
19 and shall include the name and address to which the agency  
20 should address its response. [A]

21          (b) Reason for request.--Except as provided in subsection  
22 (c), a written request need not include any explanation of the  
23 requester's reason for requesting or intended use of the records  
24 unless otherwise required by law.

25          (c) Commercial purpose.--A written request for the  
26 duplication of a record shall include a statement indicating  
27 whether or not the requester intends to use the record for a  
28 commercial purpose.

29          Section 3. Section 1307 of the act is amended by adding a  
30 subsection to read:

1 Section 1307. Fee limitations.

2 \* \* \*

3 (e.1) Records to be used for a commercial purpose.--

4 (1) In responding to a request for records that will be  
5 used for a commercial purpose, an agency may charge a  
6 requester additional standard fees for the search, review and  
7 duplication of the records. The fees for records to be used  
8 for a commercial purpose must be reasonable, must be approved  
9 by the Office of Open Records and may not be established with  
10 the intent or effect of excluding persons from access to  
11 records or duplicates thereof or of creating profit for the  
12 agency.

13 (2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to:

14 (i) a request made for records that are subject to  
15 the fees under subsection (b)(4);

16 (ii) a request by an individual employed by or  
17 connected with a newspaper or magazine of general  
18 circulation, weekly publication, press association or  
19 radio or television station, for the purpose of obtaining  
20 information for publication or broadcast; or

21 (iii) a request by a nonprofit organization for the  
22 purpose of conducting educational research.

23 \* \* \*

24 Section 4. This act shall take effect in 60 days.