

CHAPTER 286

PUBLIC BUSINESS; MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

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286.001 Reports statutorily required; filing, maintenance, retrieval, and provision of copies.—

(1) Unless otherwise specifically provided by law, any agency or officer of the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of state government, the State Board of Community Colleges, the Board of Regents, or the Public Service Commission required or authorized by law to make reports regularly or periodically shall fulfill such requirement by filing an abstract of the report with the statutorily or administratively designated recipients of the report and an abstract and one copy of the report with the Division of Library and Information Services of the Department of State, unless the head of the reporting entity makes a determination that the additional cost of providing the entire report to the statutorily or administratively designated recipients is justified. A one-page summary justifying the determination shall be submitted to the chairs of the governmental operations committees of both houses of the Legislature. The

abstract of the contents of such report shall be no more than one-half page in length. The actual report shall be retained by the reporting agency or officer, and copies of the report shall be provided to interested parties and the statutorily or administratively designated recipients of the report upon request.

(2) With respect to reports statutorily required of agencies or officers within the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of state government, the State Board of Community Colleges, the Board of Regents, or the Public Service Commission, it is the duty of the division, in addition to its duties under s. 257.05, to:

(a) Regularly compile and update bibliographic information on such reports for distribution as provided in paragraph (b). Such bibliographic information may be included in the bibliographies prepared by the division pursuant to s. 257.05(3)(c).

(b) Provide for at least quarterly distribution of bibliographic information on reports to:

1. Agencies and officers within the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state government, the State Board of Community Colleges, the Board of Regents, and the Public Service Commission, free of charge; and

2. Other interested parties upon request properly made and upon payment of the actual cost of duplication pursuant to s. 119.07(1).

(3) As soon as practicable, the administrative head of each executive, legislative, or judicial agency and each agency of the State Board of Community Colleges, the Board of Regents, and the Public Service Commission required by law to make reports periodically shall ensure that those reports are created, stored, managed, updated, retrieved, and disseminated through electronic means.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to waive or modify the requirement in s. 257.05(2) pertaining to the provision of copies of public documents to the division.

History.—ss. 26, 28, 29, ch. 84-254; s. 12, ch. 92-98; s. 104, ch. 92-142; s. 29, ch. 95-196.

Note.—Section 55, ch. 95-196, provides that "[n]othing in this act shall be construed to authorize a state agency to discontinue the collection and maintenance of information contained in any required report repealed or modified by this act, unless the state agency is specifically authorized to discontinue such collection and maintenance pursuant to this act or another section of law."

286.0105 Notices of meetings and hearings must advise that a record is required to appeal.—Each board, commission, or agency of this state or of any political subdivision thereof shall include in the notice of any meeting or hearing, if notice of the meeting or hearing is required, of such board, commission, or agency, conspicuously on such notice, the advice that, if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be

based. The requirements of this section do not apply to the notice provided in s. 200.065(3).

History.—s. 1, ch. 80-150; s. 14, ch. 88-216; s. 209, ch. 95-148.

286.011 Public meetings and records; public inspection; criminal and civil penalties.—

(1) All meetings of any board or commission of any state agency or authority or of any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution, at which official acts are to be taken are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times, and no resolution, rule, or formal action shall be considered binding except as taken or made at such meeting. The board or commission must provide reasonable notice of all such meetings.

(2) The minutes of a meeting of any such board or commission of any such state agency or authority shall be promptly recorded, and such records shall be open to public inspection. The circuit courts of this state shall have jurisdiction to issue injunctions to enforce the purposes of this section upon application by any citizen of this state.

(3)(a) Any public officer who violates any provision of this section is guilty of a noncriminal infraction, punishable by fine not exceeding \$500.

(b) Any person who is a member of a board or commission or of any state agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision who knowingly violates the provisions of this section by attending a meeting not held in accordance with the provisions hereof is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(c) Conduct which occurs outside the state which would constitute a knowing violation of this section is a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(4) Whenever an action has been filed against any board or commission of any state agency or authority or any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision to enforce the provisions of this section or to invalidate the actions of any such board, commission, agency, or authority, which action was taken in violation of this section, and the court determines that the defendant or defendants to such action acted in violation of this section, the court shall assess a reasonable attorney's fee against such agency, and may assess a reasonable attorney's fee against the individual filing such an action if the court finds it was filed in bad faith or was frivolous. Any fees so assessed may be assessed against the individual member or members of such board or commission; provided, that in any case where the board or commission seeks the advice of its attorney and such advice is followed, no such fees shall be assessed against the individual member or members of the board or commission. However, this subsection shall not apply to a state attorney or his or her duly authorized assistants or any officer charged with enforcing the provisions of this section.

(5) Whenever any board or commission of any state agency or authority or any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision

appeals any court order which has found said board, commission, agency, or authority to have violated this section, and such order is affirmed, the court shall assess a reasonable attorney's fee for the appeal against such board, commission, agency, or authority. Any fees so assessed may be assessed against the individual member or members of such board or commission; provided, that in any case where the board or commission seeks the advice of its attorney and such advice is followed, no such fees shall be assessed against the individual member or members of the board or commission.

(6) All persons subject to subsection (1) are prohibited from holding meetings at any facility or location which discriminates on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, origin, or economic status or which operates in such a manner as to unreasonably restrict public access to such a facility.

(7) Whenever any member of any board or commission of any state agency or authority or any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision is charged with a violation of this section and is subsequently acquitted, the board or commission is authorized to reimburse said member for any portion of his or her reasonable attorney's fees.

(8) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1), any board or commission of any state agency or authority or any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision, and the chief administrative or executive officer of the governmental entity, may meet in private with the entity's attorney to discuss pending litigation to which the entity is presently a party before a court or administrative agency, provided that the following conditions are met:

(a) The entity's attorney shall advise the entity at a public meeting that he or she desires advice concerning the litigation.

(b) The subject matter of the meeting shall be confined to settlement negotiations or strategy sessions related to litigation expenditures.

(c) The entire session shall be recorded by a certified court reporter. The reporter shall record the times of commencement and termination of the session, all discussion and proceedings, the names of all persons present at any time, and the names of all persons speaking. No portion of the session shall be off the record. The court reporter's notes shall be fully transcribed and filed with the entity's clerk within a reasonable time after the meeting.

(d) The entity shall give reasonable public notice of the time and date of the attorney-client session and the names of persons who will be attending the session. The session shall commence at an open meeting at which the persons chairing the meeting shall announce the commencement and estimated length of the attorney-client session and the names of the persons attending. At the conclusion of the attorney-client session, the meeting shall be reopened, and the person chairing the meeting shall announce the termination of the session.

(e) The transcript shall be made part of the public record upon conclusion of the litigation.

History.—s. 1, ch. 67-356, s. 159, ch. 71-136; s. 1, ch. 78-365; s. 6, ch. 85-301; s. 33, ch. 91-224; s. 1, ch. 93-232; s. 210, ch. 95-148; s. 1, ch. 95-353.

286.0111 Legislative review of certain exemptions from requirements for public meetings and recordkeeping by governmental entities.—The provisions of s. 119.15, the Open Government Sunset Review Act of 1995, apply to the provisions of law which provide exemptions to s. 286.011, as provided in s. 119.15.

History.—s. 9, ch. 84-298; s. 2, ch. 85-301; s. 3, ch. 95-217.

286.0115 Access to local public officials.—

(1) **AUTHORITY.**—A county or municipality may adopt an ordinance or resolution removing the presumption of prejudice from ex parte communications with local public officials by establishing a process to disclose ex parte communications with such officials pursuant to this section or by adopting an alternative process for such disclosure. However, this section does not require a county or municipality to adopt any ordinance or resolution establishing a disclosure process.

(2) **DEFINITION.**—As used in this section, the term "local public official" means any elected or appointed public official holding a county or municipal office who recommends or takes quasi-judicial action as a member of a board or commission. The term does not include a member of the board or commission of any state agency or authority.

(3) **ACCESS PERMITTED.**—Any person not otherwise prohibited by statute, charter provision, or ordinance may discuss with any local public official the merits of any matter on which action may be taken by any board or commission on which the local public official is a member. If adopted by county or municipal ordinance or resolution, adherence to the following procedures shall remove the presumption of prejudice arising from ex parte communications with local public officials.

(a) The substance of any ex parte communication with a local public official which relates to quasi-judicial action pending before the official is not presumed prejudicial to the action if the subject of the communication and the identity of the person, group, or entity with whom the communication took place is disclosed and made a part of the record before final action on the matter.

(b) A local public official may read a written communication from any person. However, a written communication that relates to quasi-judicial action pending before a local public official shall not be presumed prejudicial to the action, and such written communication shall be made a part of the record before final action on the matter.

(c) Local public officials may conduct investigations and site visits and may receive expert opinions regarding quasi-judicial action pending before them. Such activities shall not be presumed prejudicial to the action if the existence of the investigation, site visit, or expert opinion is made a part of the record before final action on the matter.

(d) Disclosure made pursuant to paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) must be made before or during the public meeting at which a vote is taken on such matters, so that persons who have opinions contrary to those expressed in the ex parte communication are given a reasonable opportunity to refute or respond to the communication. This section does not subject local public officials to part III of chapter 112 for not complying with this subsection.

(4) **RULES.**—This section does not restrict the authority of any board or commission to establish rules or procedures governing public hearings or contacts with local public officials.

History.—s. 1, ch. 95-352.

286.012 Voting requirement at meetings of governmental bodies.—No member of any state, county, or municipal governmental board, commission, or agency who is present at any meeting of any such body at which an official decision, ruling, or other official act is to be taken or adopted may abstain from voting in regard to any such decision, ruling, or act; and a vote shall be recorded or counted for each such member present, except when, with respect to any such member, there is, or appears to be, a possible conflict of interest under the provisions of s. 112.311, s. 112.313, or s. 112.3143. In such cases, said member shall comply with the disclosure requirements of s. 112.3143.

History.—s. 1, ch. 72-311; s. 9, ch. 75-208; s. 2, ch. 84-357; s. 13, ch. 94-277.

286.021 Department of State to hold title to patents, trademarks, copyrights, etc.—The legal title and every right, interest, claim or demand of any kind in and to any patent, trademark or copyright, or application for the same, now owned or held, or as may hereafter be acquired, owned and held by the state, or any of its boards, commissions or agencies, is hereby granted to and vested in the Department of State for the use and benefit of the state; and no person, firm or corporation shall be entitled to use the same without the written consent of said Department of State.

History.—s. 1, ch. 21959, 1943; ss. 22, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 2, ch. 70-440; s. 15, ch. 79-65.

Note.—Former s. 272.01.

286.031 Authority of Department of State in connection with patents, trademarks, copyrights, etc.—The Department of State is authorized to do and perform any and all things necessary to secure letters patent, copyright and trademark on any invention or otherwise, and to enforce the rights of the state therein; to license, lease, assign, or otherwise give written consent to any person, firm or corporation for the manufacture or use thereof, on a royalty basis, or for such other consideration as said department shall deem proper; to take any and all action necessary, including legal actions, to protect the same against improper or unlawful use or infringement, and to enforce the collection of any sums due the state and said department for the manufacture or use thereof by any other party; to sell any of the same and to execute any and all instruments on behalf of the state necessary to consummate any such sale; and to do any and all other acts necessary and proper for the execution of powers and duties herein conferred upon said department for the benefit of the state.

History.—s. 2, ch. 21959, 1943; ss. 22, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 2, ch. 70-440; s. 16, ch. 79-65.

Note.—Former s. 272.02.

286.035 Constitution Revision Commission; powers of chair; assistance by state and local agencies.—

(1) The chair of the Constitution Revision Commission, appointed pursuant to s. 2, Art. XI of the State Constitution, is authorized to employ personnel and to incur expenses related to the official operation of the commis-

sion or its committees, to sign vouchers, and to otherwise expend funds appropriated to the commission for carrying out its official duties.

(2) All state and local agencies are hereby authorized and directed to assist, in any manner necessary, the Constitution Revision Commission established pursuant to s. 2, Art. XI of the State Constitution upon its request or the request of its chair.

History.—s. 1, ch. 77-201; s. 211, ch. 95-148.

286.036 Taxation and Budget Reform Commission; powers.—

(1) The Taxation and Budget Reform Commission appointed pursuant to s. 6, Art. XI of the State Constitution, is authorized to employ personnel and to incur expenses related to the official operation of the commission or its committees, and to expend funds appropriated to the commission for carrying out its official duties. Commission members and staff are entitled to per diem and reimbursement of travel expenses incurred in carrying out their duties, as provided in s. 112.061.

(2) All state and regional agencies and governments are authorized and directed to assist, in any manner necessary, the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission upon its request.

(3) All local governments are authorized to assist the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission in any manner necessary. Municipal and county governments are encouraged to cooperate with the commission, examine their taxation and budgetary policies, and submit recommendations to the commission in the form and manner prescribed by the commission.

(4) Each Taxation and Budget Reform Commission established pursuant to s. 6, Art. XI of the State Constitution and this section may not act or operate later than June 30 of the third year following the year in which the commission is required to be established.

(5) The Taxation and Budget Reform Commission is assigned, for administrative purposes, to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents is directed to expedite, where possible, the business of the commission consistent with prudent financial and management practices.

(6) The Legislative Auditing Committee may at any time, without regard to whether the Legislature is then in session or out of session, take under consideration any matter within the scope of the duties of the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission, and in connection therewith may exercise the powers of subpoena by law vested in a standing committee of the Legislature.

History.—s. 12, ch. 90-203.

286.041 Prohibited requirements of bidders on contracts for public works relative to income tax returns.—

(1) The state or any of its departments, agencies, bureaus, commissions, and officers and the counties, consolidated governments, municipalities, school districts, special districts, and other public bodies of this state, and the departments, agencies, bureaus, commissions, and officers thereof, shall not require, directly or indirectly, an audit or inspection of any federal or state income tax returns of any company, corporation, or person as a prior condition before entering into contracts with said company, corporation, or person to construct

any public work or to supply any materials, labor, equipment or services, or any combination thereof.

(2) Any person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.083, except that the fine shall not be less than \$100.

History.—s. 1, ch. 72-130.

286.043 Limitation on use of funds for discriminatory contract or bid specifications relating to car rental concessions at airports.—

No public funds shall be used by a unit of local government for the purpose of promulgating contract or bid specifications relating to car rental concessions at airports which would preclude a corporation authorized to do business in this state from submitting bids or entering into such contracts with such unit of local government. Nothing in this section shall prevent the local government from providing in such specifications a minimum annual guarantee of revenue to be paid to such unit of local government.

History.—s. 4, ch. 79-119.

286.23 Real property conveyed to public agency; disclosure of beneficial interests; notice; exemptions.

(1) Any person or entity holding real property in the form of a partnership, limited partnership, corporation, trust, or any form of representative capacity whatsoever for others, except as otherwise provided in this section, shall, before entering into any contract whereby such real property held in representative capacity is sold, leased, taken by eminent domain, or otherwise conveyed to the state or any local governmental unit, or an agency of either, make a public disclosure in writing, under oath and subject to the penalties prescribed for perjury, which shall state his or her name and address and the name and address of every person having a beneficial interest in the real property, however small or minimal. This written disclosure shall be made to the chief officer, or to his or her officially designated representative, of the state, local governmental unit, or agency of either, with which the transaction is made at least 10 days prior to the time of closing or, in the case of an eminent domain taking, within 48 hours after the time when the required sum is deposited in the registry of the court. Notice of the deposit shall be made to the person or entity by registered or certified mail before the 48-hour period begins.

(2) The state or local governmental unit, or an agency of either, shall send written notice by registered mail to the person required to make disclosures under this section, prior to the time when such disclosures are required to be made, which written request shall also inform the person required to make such disclosure that such disclosure must be made under oath, subject to the penalties prescribed for perjury.

(3)(a) The beneficial interest in any entity registered with the Federal Securities Exchange Commission or registered pursuant to chapter 517, whose interest is for sale to the general public, is hereby exempt from the provisions of this section. When disclosure of persons having beneficial interests in nonpublic entities is required, the entity or person shall not be required by the provisions of this section to disclose persons or entities holding less than 5 percent of the beneficial interest in the disclosing entity.

(b) In the case of an eminent domain taking, any entity or person other than a public officer or public employee, holding real property in the form of a trust which was created more than 3 years prior to the deposit of the required sum in the registry of the court, is hereby exempt from the provisions of this section. However, in order to qualify for the exemption set forth in this section, the trustee of such trust shall be required to certify within 48 hours after such deposit, under penalty of perjury, that no public officer or public employee has any beneficial interest whatsoever in such trust. Disclosure of any changes in the trust instrument or of persons having beneficial interest in the trust shall be made if such changes occurred during the 3 years prior to the deposit of said sum in the registry of the court.

(4) This section shall be liberally construed to accomplish the purpose of requiring the identification of the actual parties benefiting from any transaction with a governmental unit or agency involving the procurement of the ownership or use of property by such governmental unit or agency.

History.—ss. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ch. 74-174; s. 1, ch. 77-174; s. 72, ch. 86-186; s. 7, ch. 91-56; s. 212, ch. 95-148.

286.24 Termination of Bicentennial Commission; powers of Department of Commerce.—The Department of Commerce shall administer and enforce such grants and contracts, and shall be a successor in interest to such contracts, of the Bicentennial Commission of Florida as remain in effect at the time of its abolishment. The department shall have such powers and authority as may be necessary to protect the interests of the state in matters resulting from the programs and activities undertaken by the commission in fulfillment of its statutory responsibilities.

History.—s. 1, ch. 77-203; s. 178, ch. 81-259.

286.25 Publication or statement of state sponsorship.—Any nongovernmental organization which spon-

sors a program financed partially by state funds or funds obtained from a state agency shall, in publicizing, advertising, or describing the sponsorship of the program, state: "Sponsored by (name of organization) and the State of Florida." If the sponsorship reference is in written material, the words "State of Florida" shall appear in the same size letters or type as the name of the organization.

History.—s. 1, ch. 77-224.

286.26 Accessibility of public meetings to the physically handicapped.—

(1) Whenever any board or commission of any state agency or authority, or of any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or other political subdivision, which has scheduled a meeting at which official acts are to be taken receives, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, a written request by a physically handicapped person to attend the meeting, directed to the chairperson or director of such board, commission, agency, or authority, such chairperson or director shall provide a manner by which such person may attend the meeting at its scheduled site or reschedule the meeting to a site which would be accessible to such person.

(2) If an affected handicapped person objects in the written request, nothing contained in the provisions of this section shall be construed or interpreted to permit the use of human physical assistance to the physically handicapped in lieu of the construction or use of ramps or other mechanical devices in order to comply with the provisions of this section.

History.—s. 1, ch. 77-277; s. 1, ch. 79-170; s. 116, ch. 79-400; s. 1, ch. 81-268.

286.27 Use of state funds for greeting cards prohibited.—No state funds shall be expended for the purchase, preparation, printing, or mailing of any card the sole purpose of which is to convey holiday greetings.

History.—s. 1, ch. 92-21.