

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION No. 17-317

**RESOLUTION EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS
REGARDING THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT
AND OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT**

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee took action on Senate Bill Nos. 1045 and 1046, which amend the Open Public Meetings Act and Open Public Records Act, respectively, on June 29, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Committee released the bills to the full Senate without recommendation because the bills are unnecessary, unpopular with the public, and would result in significant financial and administrative burdens on municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the bills fail to adequately protect taxpayers, municipalities and, especially, municipal clerks from abusive, harassing, and purposefully confrontational individuals who submit voluminous requests for no legitimate reason; and

WHEREAS, the legislation would expand the Open Public Meeting Act to create impractical and burdensome requirements with respect to subcommittees and working groups established by the entire governing body, which would effectively limit the ability of small groups of local officials discussing issues of public concern for the purposes of informing the governing body; and

WHEREAS, under the bills, the responsibilities of municipal clerks, who the Legislature has already loaded with responsibilities beyond the scope of their office, would be stretched even further than current law requires without a single dollar of additional resources provided to, or authorized to be collected by municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the bills would impose a financial burden on municipalities that would not be offset by revenue source other than property tax, making the bills unfunded mandates prohibited by the New Jersey Constitution; and

WHEREAS, some municipalities are more quipped than others to meet the burdens that would be imposed by Senate Bill Nos. 1045 and 1046, however, without assistance of any kind from the States or the courts, every municipality would be on its own to meet the myriad new requirements of the law.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the governing body of the Township of Washington, Bergen County, that the Legislature is strongly urged to reject Senate Bill Nos. 1405 and 1406 and draft new legislation to modernize OPRA and OPMA while providing municipalities and clerks with the resources to effectuate these changes for the benefit of the public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution be filed with the legislative sponsors of Senate Bill Nos. 1045 and 1046 and Assembly Bill Nos. 2697 and 2699, the Speaker of the General Assembly, the President of the Senate, and the Governor, and all parties are urged to listen to the concerns of local officials and prevent Senate Bill Nos. 1045 and 1046 from becoming law.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON


Susan Witkowski
Township Clerk

BY 
Robert Bruno
Council President

DATED: October 30, 2017

MOTION		SECOND		COUNCIL	AYES	NAYES	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Bruno		Bruno		Bruno	X			
Calamari		Calamari		Calamari	X			
Cascio		Cascio	X	Cascio	X			
Sears		Sears		Sears	X			
Ullman	X	Ullman		Ullman	X			