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MSBA ⁸⁰⁰ Supports Sunshine Law

To The Editor:

I must take strong exception to the Oct. 14 editorial claiming the Missouri School Boards' Association has not supported the state's Open Meetings and Records Act, otherwise known as the Sunshine Law. In our workshops with newly elected school board members, we teach the importance of complying with the Sunshine Law and emphasize that school boards are obligated to conduct public business in public. We support the concept behind the law that meetings and records are open, unless they fall within the exceptions outlined in the law.

It is true that we have opposed legislation that would have required school emergency plans to be made available to the public. These plans often contain important information for first-responders in the case of an emergency. However, that information also might be helpful to those who would wish to cause harm to our students, teachers and other staff. I think any reasonable person can understand that making those documents available to the public could potentially jeopardize the safety and security of our students and teachers.

Our public schools belong to

the community and the public has a right to observe the business conducted by school boards except in specific circumstances provided in the Sunshine Law. Likewise, most school district documents should be available to the public. MSBA strongly supports these concepts and emphasizes their importance during our school board training programs as well as in the legal advice we provide to school board members.

Carter D. Ward
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