



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senator David J. Valesky's Bill Expanding Individual Access to State Records Signed into Law

DAVID J. VALESKY May 21, 2009

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SYRACUSE, N.Y.— The Governor of New York today signed into law new legislation sponsored by State Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) that will allow individuals to request record covered by the Personal Privacy Protection Law through electronic mail. Until now, a written request had to be submitted by an individual to receive information the state may maintain about that person.

“This new law is a win for open government advocates, and a win for any individual seeking access to personal record the state may keep on them,” said Senator Valesky, Vice President Pro-Tempore of the New York State Senate. “People have the right to know what is in their own records. Since e-mail communication has become mainstream, and it is appropriate that e-mail requests be treated the same as written requests for these purposes.

The new law, also requires state agencies to respond to requests via e-mail wherever possible.

The purpose of this new law is to increase transparency and accountability of state agencies, and to empower individual citizens to control and monitor how their government operates.

Last year, the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) was similarly amended to require agencies to respond to and transmit requested records via e-mail when they have the ability to do so.