



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

Legislation Promoting Transparency in Government Signed Into Law by Governor Kathy Hochul

SEAN ROSS COLLINS October 19, 2021

| ISSUE: **GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY, IMPROVING GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY, OPEN MEETINGS LAW, TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, GOOD GOVERNMENT**



The new law will take effect in 30 days

OCTOBER 19, 2021 (Carle Place, NY) – Today, **Governor Kathy Hochul** signed legislation aimed at boosting transparency in state and local government. The legislation, [S.1150a /A.1228a](#), introduced and passed in the State Legislature by **Senator Anna M. Kaplan** (D-North Hills) and **Assemblymember Amy Paulin** (D-Scarsdale), requires documents that are going to be discussed at open meetings by public bodies and local governments to be made available on request or posted on the government's website at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Senator Anna M. Kaplan said, "Public participation in open meetings is a cornerstone of our democracy and a vital opportunity for citizens to have their concerns heard and addressed by their representatives. In order for the public to have an opportunity for meaningful participation in the process, they need to have access to discussion materials in advance of any meeting, but unfortunately too many public bodies in New York State are using a weakness in our current law to skirt this important requirement. It's time that every public body across the state adopt this common-sense practice, and with this simple legislation, we will ensure that they do. I'm grateful for my partnership with Assemblywoman Amy Paulin on this important good-government measure and others, and I'm thankful for Governor Kathy Hochul's leadership in fighting to for a more transparent and open State Government."

The State's Open Meetings Law is intended to empower the public through the availability and accessibility of meetings of public bodies and includes a requirement that documents be made available to the public in advance of meetings. Unfortunately, vague language in the existing law has created loopholes that can be exploited by local governments seeking to avoid transparency.

In an analysis of 41 local governments conducted by the New York Coalition for Open Government, 15% were found to not be posting meeting documents at least 24 hours in advance of meetings.

The legislation, [S.1150a/A.1228a](#), adds language to section 103 of the Open Meetings Law to require meeting documents be available upon request or posted to the public body's website at least 24 hours prior to the open meeting at which such documents will be discussed. The new law will equip the public with more information so they can understand the actions and decisions of public bodies and hold authorities accountable.

The new law will take effect in 30 days.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S1150A

FOIL, [Open Meetings Law](#), [open meetings](#)

- Introduced
 - ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor
 -

Relates to making certain documents available for open meetings

January 07, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by [Anna M. Kaplan](#)

Do you support this bill?