



Friday, September 7, 2018

The Honorable Governor Edmund G. Brown
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senate Bill 1244 – Request for Approval

Dear Governor Brown,

I write you today on behalf of Firearms Policy Coalition, a fiercely non-partisan nonprofit organization that promotes individual liberty and sound public policy through litigation, research, education, grassroots outreach, and direct advocacy.

Senate Bill 1244 would make technical changes to the Public Records Act and replace instances of the term “plaintiff” with “requester” in some provisions, make conforming changes, and would specify that the provisions do not preclude the award of fees and costs pursuant to other provisions of law.

That is because “[p]ublic access laws serve a crucial function. Openness in government is essential to the functioning of a democracy. Implicit in the democratic process is the notion that government should be accountable for its actions. In order to verify accountability, individuals must have access to government files. Such access permits checks against the arbitrary exercise of official power and secrecy in the political process.” *City of San Jose v. Superior Court*, 2 Cal. 5th 608 (Cal. Supreme Court 2017) at 615 (quoting *International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers, Local 21, AFL-CIO v. Superior Court*, 42 Cal.4th 319, 328-329) (cleaned up).

Sadly, some government agencies cannot be trusted to refrain from abusing the laws in order to chill the public’s right to access government files. This bill provides a common-sense amendment to ensure that the Act’s fee-shifting language is not abused by a state or local government agency.

We are proud to support this bill and respectfully ask for your approval of Senate Bill 1244.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon Combs', written over a horizontal line.

Brandon Combs
President