



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TENNESSEE**

President
Marian Ott
Nashville

October 13, 2017

1st Vice President
Debra Gould
Nashville

Lee Pope
Office of Open Records Counsel
505 Deaderick Street, Suite 1700
James K. Polk Building
Nashville, TN 37243-1402

2nd Vice President
Rynn Dupes
Knoxville

Secretary
Judy Poulson
Knoxville

RE: Policy Banning Photos of Public Records

Dear Mr. Pope,

Treasurer
Lee Fairbend
Nashville

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee was dismayed by your office's interpretation of the Tennessee public records law that is encouraging state and local governments to ban use of cell phones and other modern technology to make copies of public records. This is particularly discouraging in light of the growing mistrust of government among people across the political spectrum – not allowing common sense use of everyday technology is just one more time government is out of step.

DIRECTORS

Kee Bryant-McCormick
Hendersonville
Leslie Collum
Murfreesboro
Anne-Marie Farmer
Nashville

The League supports the position articulated in the October 3 letter sent to you by the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government (TCOG). The League's mission is to stimulate informed citizen participation in government which is difficult to accomplish with barriers to information access. Similar to the proposal floated to charge the public to view public records, we view the banning or unreasonable limitation on the use of cell phones and similar technology to be akin to a "poll tax" on civic participation.

Jo Ann Garrett
Oak Ridge
Barbara Gay
Nashville
Sherry Hewlett
Memphis

Claudia Lever
Oak Ridge

The League notes the irony of an environmental agency proposing to ban photos and require paper copy of records! We applaud Senator Mike Bell for asking the agencies to reconsider the public records policies that would ban use of cell phones. We ask that your office review the arguments presented in the TCOG letter as well as consider the best interests of the citizens of Tennessee who wish to access public records in Tennessee and revise the guidance to encourage use of cell phones and similar technology for copying public records.

Joe McCaleb
Hendersonville

Lynn Questell
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Jo Singer
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Heidi Thomas
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Nashville

Sincerely,

Marian Ott
President

Cc: Vivian Shipe
Senator Mike Bell