

For Immediate Release
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**Audit Finds Illinois Public Bodies Routinely
Fail to Post Required Information Online**
Multiple Violations of Open Meetings Act Reported

The Citizen Advocacy Center partnered with the Illinois Press Association to survey public bodies' compliance with website notice requirements in the Illinois Open Meetings Act. The Illinois Open Meetings Act requires all public bodies that have a full time staff member to post and maintain three key pieces of information on their websites: 1) Notice of upcoming meetings, 2) Notice of proposed agendas and, 3) Approved meeting minutes. A random sampling of 20% of school districts, municipalities, counties, and townships for compliance found that local government websites continue to fail at meeting the posting requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

The results of the random sampling show that of the aggregate 756 public bodies that were surveyed, 385 have websites (51%). Of those 385 public bodies, 73% complied with posting notice, 57% complied with posting an agenda, and 48% complied with posting approved meeting minutes within the time constraints of the Act. Further, compliance with the Act's website posting provisions for those with at least one known full-time staff member had a 77% compliance rate with posting notice, 64% with posting agendas, and 54% with posting approved meeting minutes.

"Citizen engagement in local government pivots on timely notice of meetings and availability of meeting minutes. The local governments that fail to comply ultimately deprive the public of their right to attend open meetings," said Maryam Judar, Executive Director and Community Lawyer at the Citizen Advocacy Center. The Open Meetings Act states that it is Illinois policy that government exists to conduct the business of the public, and the public has a right to know about the conduct of their business. This policy is severely undermined by inadequate notice of public meetings and posting of meeting minutes. The Citizen Advocacy Center strongly encourages the Illinois legislature to adopt an enforcement mechanism to ensure for proper notice of meetings and posting of meeting minutes to allow for greater opportunity for the media and the public to participate in their local government and to hold public bodies accountable.

The full report may be viewed at the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/p4q3e6c>

The Citizen Advocacy Center is a 501 (c)(3) organization with a mission to build democracy by strengthening the citizenry's capacities, resources, and institutions for self-governance. The Citizen Advocacy Center engages in a multifaceted approach to building democracy through community organizing, coalition building, legal advocacy, civic education, and litigation to make government more accountable, accessible, and transparent.

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