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Illinois public notice bill terrible for state's taxpayers

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Posted: Sunday, February 22, 2015 12:00 am

There's a movement afoot in Springfield that would cripple the public's ability to keep track of what elected officials are doing.

public notices from newspapers and allow them to be posted on government websites.



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Not only are local legal notices posted in the “Notices” section under Classifieds on Quad-Cities Online, but the state’s newspapers supported legislation passed five years ago that requires every newspaper to post all public notices on a centralized, statewide website at no

PublicNoticeIllinois.com is the sole online location for every public notice published in newspapers around the state.

The proposed legislation seeks to do away with all of this. It would allow units of local government to post public notices on their own websites and not require newspaper publication. The bill would repeal the placement of public notices on one searchable statewide online database and result in public notices being scattered across more than 8,000 online locations.

Not one of you would make the effort to routinely check even the local government websites to see what your elected officials are up to. This bill takes 10 steps backward when it comes to good government. It eliminates a very important tool when it comes to helping the private sector monitor what the public sector is doing.

What's worse, government has a terrible track record when it comes to posting information online. Over and over again it has been shown that many local governments blatantly disregard the law when it comes to these postings.

An audit by the Citizens Advocacy Center studied over 750 public body websites in Illinois. The results showed a digital disaster where local governments are required by law (5 ILCS 120/2.02, Open Meetings Act) to post information on their websites.

complied with posting proposed meeting agendas and less than half (48 percent) complied with posting approved meeting minutes.

these notices are one of a number of revenue streams that support newspapers. But we and many other newspapers have already worked with local government to provide rates that are sometimes lower than those allowed by law and in my mind the public oversight issue far outweighs any savings that might be realized. The amount governments would save is insignificant in terms of their overall budgets.

significant percentage of their revenue. Taking them away could result in newspapers going out of business and with them any source of local news and reporters to serve as watchdog over government.





to keep residents apprised of government actions that affects their lives, jobs, schools and homes.

Every other state still requires notification of certain government actions be published in the newspaper. In 2009, Utah passed legislation to take public notices out of newspapers and in 2011 it was repealed because, just like in Illinois, local governments routinely failed

When local governments want to get news out to constituents, they don't bury it somewhere on a website -- they take it to the media. We are a proven and dependable source of

There are a lot of reasons this legislation is just bad public policy. We need more transparent local government, not less. State representatives and senators need to keep the

Roger Ruthhart is managing editor of The Dispatch and The Rock Island Argus. He can be reached at rruthhart@cconline.com

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
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Roland Popp
It seems like our Government officials are getting harder to speak to one on one. You can't ask questions, and you sure don't many answers. This is both parties. Our officials are getting further away from us, and we have

them do the same thing.

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Real Estate Auction

Thursday, July 2, 2015 – Time 5:30 PM
Location: 355 Third Street, Colma, CA

Mrs. Cindy Gray has decided to sell her great home, and an adjacent building lot at public auction. It will be offered in the following manner:

Panel #1: The two bedroom home with oak & hickwood appliances set, living room, main level bathroom and main level kitchen. There are approximately 1,000 sq. feet of living space on the main level, as well as full basement. A carport is attached to the house and there is a storage shed and cement padlock in the back yard. The lot size is roughly 45'X17'.

Panel #2: A 45'X17' building lot that is currently part of the above property. It lies right next to panel #1.

Panel #3: The combination of parcels 1 & 2.

Auctioneer's note: This home and adjacent property to be sold first in the cash deals. You are close to all the amenities and close to a major shopping area. You are right in the heart of the city. It is a large home with a beautiful very nice building. There is a great place to entertain family and friends, or just the biggest party in the world. You are right next to a wonderful park and child's land. It's a great place to raise a family.

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