

Daily Record Editorial

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Special form not needed

The state's Open Public Records Act has not really done what it was supposed to do. Yes, records are generally more accessible, but not quickly. The Government Records Council, which oversees and enforces the law, has a huge backlog.

What's worse is that the law known as OPRA also has given some public agencies an excuse not to make the most basic public records immediately available. Rather than do that, some agencies wait the full seven days the law gives them. The law says records on hand should be made public immediately, but that doesn't always happen.

Amid this backdrop, we recently saw some good news. A state appeals court ruled last week that standardized forms to request records are not necessary. Or in other words, someone can request to see the salary of the road department supervisor by writing a letter, or sending a fax or e-mail.

Would a "tweet" be permitted? The court did not say, but it should be. The requirement that a specific form be used was just a way for agencies to make access to these records more difficult. The court ruled the right way in saying that the public deserves "unfettered access to government records."