



## PAR says open governor's records

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A nonprofit group that researches government policy issues called for state legislators to back bills that would open more of the governor's records to public scrutiny.

"Current law stifles debate on major decisions by keeping important and useful information out of public view," the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana said in a news release.

PAR is a private, nonprofit research organization, funded by tax-deductible member contributions.

"The reports and analyses that help officials determine the effectiveness of programs and the prudence, human impact and feasibility of major changes are as useful to the public as they are to officials and should not be kept secret," the statement said.

Senate Bill 593, sponsored by state Rep. Robert Adley, R-Benton, is scheduled for hearing before the state Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee.

SB593 would roll back some of the changes made at Gov. Bobby Jindal's direction that PAR claims expanded the number of records kept off-limits from the public.

House Bill 307, sponsored by state Rep. Wayne Waddell, R-Shreveport, is a similar measure scheduled for a hearing before the House and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Jindal has said the changes he pushed during the 2008 and 2009 legislative sessions has made records more available.

"In the ongoing struggle to achieve more openness in the office of the governor, SB593 and HB307 generally aim to set reasonable limits on the existing exceptions in order to maximize public access while protecting only the most sensitive documents," the PAR statement said.

"Both bills would eliminate the exception for records specifically concerning budgeting while continuing a limited protection for records relating to pre-decisional decision making.

“Both bills also would narrow all remaining exceptions by prohibiting them from being applied to other state agencies and departments outside of the governor’s office,” the statement said.