



## **Our Views for May 24, 2010**

### More insight into decisions

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In the debate on open records in the Governor's Office, the Public Affairs Research Council has come down strongly on the side of improvements in the current session.

The exemptions the Governor's Office today enjoys are "overly broad and should be corrected before citizen confidence in government is further eroded."

The PAR comment on the debate also includes a welcome note on the importance of transparency about how decisions are made, and not just what the decisions turn out to be.

"Current law stifles debate on major decisions by keeping important and useful information out of public view," PAR noted. "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 debate about transparency is not about the desires of political insiders and the media, but about how much information citizens get about their government. The debate too often is reduced to arcane discussions of legalisms — and no more so than in the claim of the need for secrecy to protect the "deliberative process" of public officials.

That process ought to be as open as possible, for that process involves choices that deeply affect what government does.