

BACKGROUND

Under the Missouri Sunshine Law, all public meetings, records, votes, actions and deliberations of public governmental bodies are open to the public, unless otherwise provided by law.

In 2014, in a case between the National Council on Teacher Quality and the University of Missouri, the Court of Appeals for the Western District sided with the University, which argued that faculty members hold copyright ownership in their course syllabi, and therefore the syllabi are protected under the Federal Copyright Act and faculty do not have to make course syllabi readily available to the public.

Over ten percent of Missouri's general revenue is used to fund public higher education.

- For FY2017, the General Assembly appropriated over **\$1.3 billion** to higher education.
- Taxpayers have the right to know basic information on how their money is spent.
- The decision by the Missouri Court of Appeals sets a dangerous precedent that will allow public entities, funded by taxpayers, to bypass our state's Sunshine Law and shield copyrighted information from the public.

Parents and students do not have access to important course information.

- With in-state tuition at the University of Missouri over **\$10,000** and tuition for non-Missouri residents over **\$25,000**, parents and students should be able to easily access course information before making such a significant investment.

The Curriculum Transparency Act would require public colleges and universities to make **syllabi, reading lists, attendance requirements, extra credit opportunities and required homework or projects** available to the public on their websites.

How have other states dealt with sunshine requests of "copyrighted" syllabi?

The NCTQ requested information from colleges and universities nationwide in an effort to provide analysis on teacher education programs.

Only three school systems – in Missouri, Minnesota and Wisconsin – objected to the disclosure of the information and resulted in lawsuits filed by NCTQ.

The Minnesota court found in favor of NCTQ and the university system had to provide the syllabi. In Wisconsin, the parties came to a settlement, wherein not only did the university have to turn over the syllabi, but also were ordered to pay NCTQ over \$10,000 in fees and damages.