

# WHEN IS A PUBLIC NOTICE NOT PUBLIC?

Don't let Florida officials remove your right to know from the newspaper.



Proposed legislation SPB 7204 and HB 89 would remove your right to read public notices in newspapers – restricting them to government web sites only. The public's right to know cannot be abandoned in favor of presumed cost savings, which are elusive.

## Public Notices must be publicly accessible

- 53.6% of Floridian's over 65 do not have access to the internet\*
- 28.1% of African-Americans in Florida do not have access to the internet\*
- 34.6% of Hispanics in Florida do not have access to the internet\*

In addition to printed newspapers, Florida's newspapers provide a supplemental public notice web site, [www.floridapublicnotices.com](http://www.floridapublicnotices.com), allowing free and unlimited searchable access to public notices aggregated from Florida newspapers.

## Government posting of government notices on government websites takes away third-party neutrality

Making government officials responsible for notifying the public on their own websites carries with it a potential for abuse. For example, it may create the temptation to change or manipulate the timing of public notices. If a scheduled public notice is not published or contains false information, the newspaper is more likely to catch the mistake.

## Public Notices must be archived in a secure and accessible format

The internet does not provide as reliable an archival history of public notices as newspapers due to its vulnerability in the form of hackers, viruses, and downed servers.

## Governmental websites do not provide legal affidavits and written proof of publication and a secure and verifiable paper trail

State and local governments, attorneys and private citizens rely on this documentation to ensure that these notices were published timely and lawfully, as newspapers are required by law to do.

*\*Scarborough Research Multi-Market study 2010 Release 2*

