

Bill Number: [HB4466](#)

Lead Sponsor: Kelly Cassidy

This bill updates the FOIA language pertaining to public lists of available data by explicitly requiring the maintenance of database identification information needed to effectively query public lists maintained under 5 ILCS 140/5.

This is both a transparency and a data integrity measure. Currently, different bodies maintain databases of public material with widely varying levels of accessibility and usability. Standardized, queryable databases significantly improve efficiency for operating departments, government analysts, and members of the public seeking FOIAble information.

Background

- Current FOIA compliance on the maintenance of lists of available records under 5 ILCS 140/5 varies widely across different units of government. Few departments or governing bodies have a dedicated, publicly-accessible home for the required lists, to the point that some groups have had to [FOIA request the lists themselves](#).
- Database flaws and lack of searchable architecture has hindered government taskforces – the Chicago City Clerk’s Fair Fines and Fees initiative, for example, has to draw ticketing, towing, and booting data from multiple partial sources, rather than being able to combine all the (relatively simple) data into a single, queryable database
- Currently, some public bodies deny FOIA requests for database schema under the “system security” exemption (5 ILCS 140/7(o)), which has led to lawsuits from transparency advocates (see: <https://mchap.io/>)

Key Impacts

- Clarifies database management requirements for public bodies that maintain lists of FOIAble information under their oversight
- Clarifies a currently-ambiguous use of the “system security” exemption, in line with basic database management protocols
- Allows easier access and use of data already required and collected under FOIA, both for private individuals and for legislators and government offices/taskforces
- Helps prevent potential costly lawsuits against the state and/or public officials