

# **One Hundred Third Legislature - Second Session - 2014**

## **Introducer's Statement of Intent**

### **LB778**

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**Chairperson: Senator Bill Avery**

**Committee: Government, Military and Veterans Affairs**

**Date of Hearing: January 30, 2014**

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

For reasons easily grasped, laws addressing openness and transparency in government operations are known collectively as “sunshine laws.” Indeed, the Political Accountability and Disclosure Commission was popularly known as the Sunshine Commission.

A famous judge opined, regarding the most effective means of making judges “straighten up and fly right,” (my words): “Sunlight is the best antiseptic.”

This bill was “inspired” by secretiveness of Omaha’s Metropolitan Entertainment and Convention Authority, a quasi-governmental operation which is formed jointly with the City and whose members are appointed by the City Council and the Mayor. And it spends millions of dollars of public money.

Legislative Bill 778 applies to any “entity” – not just to MECA – that falls within its purview. Such an “entity” is “jointly formed or constituted between a political subdivision and another entity.”

In a nutshell, LB 778 extends to such entities, the reach of statutes dealing with open meetings, public records and conflicts of interest.

Exempted from public disclosure are “trade secrets and other proprietary or commercial information which. . . would give advantage to business competitors.”

Let the sunshine in.

**Principal Introducer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Senator Ernie Chambers**