



Wednesday, March 29, 2017

CARMA Legislative Committee
C/o Ms. Robin Heise
Records Manager/Archivist
Greene County Records Center and Archives
535 Ledbetter Road
Xenia, OH 45385

Dear Ms. Heise,

On behalf of the Society of Ohio Archivists, I am writing to convey our support for the 132nd General Assembly – Regular Session 2017 – 2018, House Bill number 139; an amendment to the Ohio Revised Code 149.43 to eliminate the public disclosure exemption for any permanently retained record 100 years after the date of its creation.

Records affected by the current legislation, such as adoptions, inheritance tax and veterans' relief, are regularly requested by historians and genealogists, both professionals and family history practitioners, for a variety of reasons. Under the current legislation, records that are openly accessible in one county Probate Court may not be accessible in another. This irregularity in records availability can be frustrating for researchers and may lead to inconsistent research findings.

Eliminating the public disclosure exemption would build upon the open access legislation passed by the Ohio General Assembly in 2015 to open confidential records of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services fifty years after the patient's death. It would also align with federal policies and similar open access legislation in states around the country.

Overall, we believe that eliminating the public disclosure exemption to provide access to records will lend valuable insight into our collective history as a state, as a society, and as families.

Sincerely,

Jillian Carney
President
Society of Ohio Archivists