



# Taxicab Commission Refuses to Respond to Sunshine Request

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*By: Joseph Miller*

At yesterday's meeting of the Saint Louis Metropolitan Taxicab Commission (MTC), the commissioners began considering, but ultimately tabled, taxicab code revisions regarding ridesharing companies. We at the Show-Me Institute wanted to see those proposed changes, which were almost voted on.

Luckily, in Missouri, we have the Sunshine Law, which requires public bodies and public officials [to disclose, among other things](#) :

“...[records](#) , regardless of what form they are kept in, and to all [meetings](#) , regardless of the manner in which they are held.”

Our first step was to call the MTC, hoping that someone would simply send us the proposed changes. The MTC's response: we have no such document. The MTC's "custodian of records" claimed to have no knowledge of any proposed code changes.

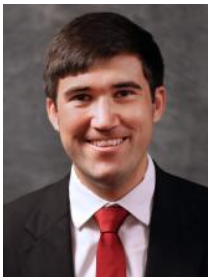
To make matters clear, the document containing draft code changes certainly existed. A commissioner was given a draft at a public meeting, and even posted [sections of the draft on the internet](#). Thus ignored, we sent an official sunshine request to the MTC, asking for any documents regarding the code changes, or if the custodian did not have the documents, contact information for the person who did. The MTC's response to the message was a prompt: “We

are not in possession of any records that match your request."

The next day, we again called the MTC, asking how we could contact the Chair of the MTC, who almost certainly would have access to the document. Representatives at the MTC refused to divulge any contact information, and instead had us call the MTC attorney, who provided no information.

To make a long story short, MTC commissioners (who are members of the MTC), circulated a document that is almost surely subject to a sunshine request. But because they did not give the document to their custodian of records, and they instructed that custodian to not disclose contact information, the MTC does not have to divulge the information? That's a neat trick, and, if legal, makes the Missouri Sunshine Law a joke. It is to suggest that government officials are immune from Sunshine requests, as long as they don't give their documents or contact information to their custodian of documents. I'm not a lawyer, but I hope that this is not the case. As for the MTC, it's disappointing that the organization refuses to be open with the public.

## About the Author



*Joseph Miller*

*Policy Analyst*

*Joseph Miller was a policy analyst at the Show-Me Institute. He focused on infrastructure, transportation, and municipal issues. He grew up in Itasca, Ill., and earned an undergraduate degree from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and a master's degree from the University of California-San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies.*

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[2] <https://ago.mo.gov/missouri-law/sunshine-law>

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5297 Washington Place      3645 Troost Avenue  
Saint Louis, MO 63108      Kansas City, MO 64109  
Phone: (314) 454-0647      Phone: (816) 287-0370  
Fax: (314) 454-0667

Email: [info@showmeinstitute.org](mailto:info@showmeinstitute.org)

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