



***State Lawmakers to be honored by WCOG***

**Seattle** – The Washington Coalition for Open Government announced it will honor State Representative Joan McBride (D-48th District, Kirkland) and State Senator Mark Miloscia (R-30th District, Federal Way) with the organization’s Ballard-Thompson Award for 2017.

The award, named in honor of former Speaker of the House Clyde Ballard (R) and former Senator and Chief Clerk of the House Alan Thompson (D), both founding members the Coalition’s board of directors, is presented to a member or members of the state legislature who have demonstrated outstanding dedication to the cause of open government during the previous legislative session.

McBride and Miloscia are being honored for their efforts to improve public agency performance and accountability in their compliance with Washington’s Public Records Act, as embodied in Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1594.

Among other provisions, ESHB 1594 expands training requirements regarding retention and disclosure of electronic records; establishes a consultation program in the offices of the state archivist and the attorney general to assist local agencies in complying with the PRA; establishes a grant program to help local governments acquire better technology for records retention, management, and disclosure; requires agencies that handle a large volume of record requests to report on their performance and costs in handling those requests; and funds a study of the feasibility of creating a statewide online portal for public records requests that would help small agencies provide a level of service similar to larger agencies.

ESHB 1594 was one of two bills to emerge from a stakeholder process during the summer and fall of 2016, in which legislators met many times with representatives of state and local agencies and of the records requester community to consider improvements to the PRA. The other bill, ESHB 1595, was more controversial, but 1594 quickly received broad support.

“It’s difficult to achieve consensus on many of the bills affecting Washington’s Public Records Act because they would make accessing records more difficult in one way or another,” said Toby Nixon, president of WCOG. “House Bill 1594, on the other hand, was entirely focused on improving agency performance and accountability,

reducing costs, and helping citizens access records more easily, and received broad support very early after introduction. WCOG is very pleased to have been an active participant in the stakeholder process and with the result achieved. We greatly appreciate the leadership of Rep. McBride and Sen. Miloscia in getting the bill through the process.”

The Ballard-Thompson Award will be presented to McBride and Miloscia at an event to be held during the 2018 legislative session in Olympia. Details of the event will be announced later.