

Public Should Be in the Know

***PATRICK HENRY ONCE SAID THAT LIBERTY IS NEVER SECURE
AS LONG AS GOVERNMENT DOES BUSINESS IN SECRET.***

The Liberty Sentinel, June 18, 2008

(Olathe News Opinion) Kansas remains one of the most closed state governments in the United States, having multiple exemptions that allow records and meetings to remain closed to its residents. It also has a court system that allows more closed hearings and sealed documents than the national average.

Although the lawsuit filed by Planned Parenthood and the Kansas Attorney General's Office against Phill Kline is now an open proceeding, why was it closed in the first place?

The two entities sued Kline for his transfer of redacted copies of abortion records. With a judges permission, Kline moved the records from the attorney generals office to the Johnson County District Attorney's Office. Those records, however, had been stored in different locations because, Kline said, former District Attorney Paul Morrison refused to let him store the records in the office while Morrison was still district attorney.

We'll let the courts decide the issue. What we question is why the Kansas Supreme Court ever closed the hearings and sealed the records of the proceeding. There is nothing within this case that warrants secrecy.

This case should have been open to the public from the beginning. This is a gross infraction on the public's right to know. It makes us wonder what had been going on and why these proceedings were kept secret. We know it wasn't to protect patient privacy because there's no identification of patients in this lawsuit.

The court was wrong to keep these proceedings from the public.

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rgannon@kspress.com***