Good points of H. 497, open meetings bill:

- Disclosure required through the public records act of written correspondence or electronic communications concerning members' scheduling a meeting, organizing an agenda, or distributing materials to discuss at a meeting.
- Explicit language added stating that public meetings are subject to the public accommodations law.
- Roll call votes required of any action taken by a board when one or more members is attending the meeting electronically.
- Announcement and posted notice of a meeting required when at least a quorum of the members will attend by phone or other electronic means; a physical meeting location where members of the public can attend and participate in the meeting must be made available.
- Meeting minutes must be posted within five days to the body or municipality's Web site, if one exists.
- Members of the general public, and not just editors, publishers, and news directors of print and broadcast media, may ask to be notified of special meetings of a public body.
- Meeting agendas must be posted to the body or municipality's Web site, if one exists; for a municipal public body, in or near the body's office and in at least two other designated public places in the municipality. Posting must be at least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting. No such posting of meeting agendas was previously required – only that an agenda had to be made available to "the news media or concerned persons prior to the meeting upon specific request."
- The section of the law describing the grounds for going into executive session has been reordered to make clear which of the various grounds first require a "specific finding" by the body that "premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage."
- Explanation required of a body's decision regarding appointments or evaluations of public officers or employees discussed in executive session.
- Award of attorney's fees and costs to someone who brings a suit in civil court alleging an open meeting violation and substantially prevails.

- A “cure” by a public body of an open meeting violation must include the adoption of “specific measures that actually prevent future violations.”

Bad points of H. 497:

- Two new grounds are created for going into executive session: 1) To discuss municipal or school security or emergency response measures, the disclosure of which could jeopardize public safety (mitigated by the requirement that a specific finding must first be made that “premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage”); and 2) To discuss confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body (mitigated by existing statutory language already protecting the attorney-client privilege under common law and by the requirement that a specific finding must first be made that “premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage”).
- After an individual alleges in writing a violation of the open meeting law, the public body may within a specified time frame decide to “cure” the violation. If it does so, it will not be subjected to mandatory attorney’s fees and costs in litigation arising from the violation (mitigated by “cure” option already available to public bodies through case law).
- Court must, before awarding of attorney’s fees and costs to someone who brings a suit in civil court alleging an open meeting violation and substantially prevails, consider whether “the public body had a reasonable basis in fact and law for its position” and “the public body acted in good faith.” If the court finds the body did, awarding of fees and costs to the prevailing plaintiff is not mandatory.