

## EDITORIAL



### FINE PROPOSED FOR BREAKING OPEN MEETING LAWS IN NORTH DAKOTA

By Gregory Bruce - GCND NEWS DOT COM - January 22, 2015

*UPDATE: [CLICK HERE](#) for a PDF copy of the news article below for North Dakota House of Representatives Bill 1435.*

The Grant County Commission may soon be facing fines if the North Dakota State Legislature can pass a bill being sponsored by Representative Randy Boehning (R) of Fargo.

Having been ejected from one meeting myself from asking questions (on camera) and Pete Reis of Carson being told by Commissioner Payne the commission was tired of talking about the former Grant County JDA as it was a "done deal" is it any wonder this proposed bill hasn't come up before the legislature sooner?

There is also another citizen who was told she could not have any more public records from the auditor's office unless she spoke first with the States Attorney Todd Schwarz.

It is my opinion and those of others in the county that Commissioners Payne and Roth and States Attorney Schwarz seem to think they are "GODS" and can run the county's business any way they want without any oversight by citizens or the press.

The government officials in Grant County smack of demagoguery and seem to think of themselves as plenipotentiaries and hopefully, will soon be recalled and out of their jobs.

The article below spells out what is drastically needed to hold accountable our government officials and prevent them from keeping the people from speaking out.

[CLICK Image To Enlarge](#)

# Fine proposed for breaking open meeting laws in N.D.

**GRACE LYDEN**  
Forum News Service

The North Dakota attorney general would be able to fine repeat violators of open records and meetings laws under a bill proposed this week that a co-sponsor says was prompted by the State Board of Higher Education.

"It's when you have an organization that repeatedly violates it, and it's like they just shove it in our face, the attorney general's face," said Rep. Randy Boehning, R-Fargo, one of the bill's four sponsors. "It's all, 'We're just going to do it anyway!'"

Since 2011, the board and universities in the system it governs

have violated open records and meetings laws 15 times, according to records compiled by the state Legislative Council.

This bill would impose a penalty of \$500 on a member of a state governing body who has violated such laws more than once.

Setting a fine like this is "a little unusual," Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem said. But, he added, people tell him "quite frequently" the open records and meetings statutes don't provide "enough teeth."

"By and large, most entities who get criticism in an opinion from my office learn from it and it works, but every once in a

while, you have issues that come up that are repeat violations," he said Tuesday. "Certainly the public embarrassment is enough, usually, for most."

In May 2013, Stenehjem wrote that the board's violations were "pervasive" and members would have to complete training to avoid future problems.

The board and universities have had eight violations since then, one in June 2013, the day after that training session.

"I think we clearly see with the turmoil on (the board) that they just don't seem to like open meetings," Boehning said Tuesday. "They may tell us different, but I think we all see the writing."

## Conference ministers to body, soul

"Faith, Fun, Food and Fitness" is a one-day conference designed to minister to the heart, mind, body and soul. Sponsored by First Place 4 Health and Body & Soul Fitness, the event will be held at First Evangelical Free Church, 205-43rd Ave. N.E., Bismarck, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. An early bird exercise class will be led by Rene Schwab at 7:30 a.m.

The featured speaker, author Helen Baratta, is a regional leader for First Place 4 Health and Body & Soul Fitness. Baratta will speak on "Embrace Change, Stay Yes!"

Cost is \$30, which includes lunch, snacks, materials and activities. Register online at [www.firstplace4health.com](http://www.firstplace4health.com) under "events" or by contacting Beth Thompson at 701-751-2685 or [beth.thompson.fp4h@gmail.com](mailto:beth.thompson.fp4h@gmail.com).

— Ann Melton

## YMCA offers classes to Parkinson's patients

The Missouri Valley YMCA, in conjunction with the Bismarck Parkinson's Support Group, will be starting fitness classes for Parkinson's patients beginning Monday.

In October of 2014, 10 YMCA fitness instructors from around the state attended a PWRI Training course that focused on educating instructors on the best approaches in making a difference in the life of a Parkinson's patient.

On Thursday, there will be a free demonstration class. Parkinson's fitness classes will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays beginning Monday.

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*Scanned Image From The Bismarck Tribune*

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