

## **Pullman & Comley Attorney Authors New Book on Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act Law**

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December 18, 2013

HARTFORD, Conn.: Pullman & Comley attorney, Mark J. Sommaruga, recently published, *Understanding the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act and Access to Public Meetings and Records, Fourth Edition*, the law firm announced today.

The 97-page book, published by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), provides guidance to public agencies seeking to navigate the maze of edicts and exceptions associated with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Enacted in 1975, the FOIA has basically two components, including a requirement to ensure that the meetings of public agencies take place in public, and a requirement that the records of public agencies be subject to disclosure and inspection by the public at large. These seemingly simple requirements have often proved difficult to apply, especially when dealing with the day-to-day issues that public agencies often face.

The book is organized into three sections. Section One covers the FOIA's public meeting provisions and provides clarity on determining when a meeting is not a "meeting," notice of regular meetings, minutes and votes, special and "emergency" meetings, and access of the public and the media. Section Two details the FOIA's access to public records and includes some notable exemptions to disclosure (educational records and tests, personnel records, preliminary drafts and notes, attorney-client privileged documents, and other important exceptions to disclosure), and other important exceptions to the usual disposal requirements. Section Three discusses FOIA penalties, proceedings before the Freedom of Information Commission, civil remedies and criminal penalties.

Copies of the book are \$9.95 for CABE members and \$17.95 for non-members and can be ordered directly from the CABE website: <http://www.cabe.org/page.cfm?p=750>.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Mark J. Sommaruga is a member of the School Law Section in the firm's Labor, Employment Law and Employee Benefits Department. For more than 20 years, he has represented the interests of Connecticut municipalities and school boards, other public sector clients, and private sector clients in labor, employment, education, civil rights, special education, municipal law, construction law, tort matters, and assorted other litigation in the state and federal courts on both the trial and appellate court levels. He serves as chairman of the Legislative Subcommittee and member of the Executive Committee of the Labor and Employment Section and on the Education Law Committee of the Connecticut Bar Association. He is also chair to the Hartford

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County Bar Association's Education Law Committee for the 2013-2014 term.

### **ABOUT PULLMAN & COMLEY**

With nearly 90 attorneys, Pullman & Comley, LLC is one of Connecticut's largest firms and provides a wide range of legal services to clients in the New England region, as well as throughout the United States and internationally. The firm's major practice areas include business organizations and finance; colleges, universities and other educational institutions; environmental and land use; government finance; health care; labor, employment law and employee benefits; litigation; property valuation; real estate; regulatory, energy and telecommunications; and trusts and estates. The firm has offices in Bridgeport, Hartford, Stamford, Waterbury and White Plains. The firm is an active member of the Law Firm Alliance, an international affiliation of law firms. For more information, please visit [www.pullcom.com](http://www.pullcom.com).

### **ABOUT CABE**

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) serves local and regional boards of education in Connecticut and is dedicated to improving the quality of education throughout the state and the nation. For more information, please visit: [www.cabe.org/](http://www.cabe.org/).

### **Practice Areas**

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