

**ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCLUDES THAT REQUIRING SPEAKERS TO STATE THEIR HOME ADDRESSES PRIOR TO ADDRESSING PUBLIC BODIES DURING PUBLIC COMMENT VIOLATES OMA**

In a recently issued binding opinion, the Illinois Attorney General has concluded that local governmental entities, including Library Districts and local Libraries, may not require individuals to state their home addresses prior to addressing public officials at open meetings.

The Attorney General noted that Section 2.06(g) of the Open Meetings Act (OMA) requires all public bodies subject to OMA to provide an opportunity for members of the public to address public officials at open meetings. The Attorney General also noted that OMA provides that public comment is subject to reasonable rules established and recorded by the public body and that public bodies establishing and recording such reasonable rules cannot impose conditions on public comment that are not part of those rules.

While noting that “nothing prohibits a speaker from voluntarily providing his or her home address in response to the public body’s request,” the Attorney General concluded that any written policy or unwritten custom and practice requiring an individual to state their home address prior to speaking at a public meeting violates Section 2.06(g) of OMA. In so concluding, the Attorney General stated that “requiring a member of the public to provide his or her complete home address prior to speaking may have a chilling effect on individuals who wish to speak at public meetings,” thereby violating their First Amendment rights.

Library Districts and local Libraries should make their Library Board members and, in particular, the Board members presiding over any open meeting aware of the fact that individuals desiring to speak at public meetings may voluntarily provide their home address, but they cannot be required to provide their home address to speak at said meeting.

A full copy of the binding opinion can be found at [Attorney General Opinion 14-009](#). If you have any additional questions, please contact your library counsel.



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