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# Hawaii dispute could impact lawmakers' disclosures to public

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By CATHY BUSSEWITZ  
Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) - A top Hawaii lawmaker is delaying a public records request because of a dispute that could hold up similar requests for years. The outcome will likely determine whether legislators can withhold emails, calendars and other information from the public, which watchdog groups see as crucial to government accountability.

The Associated Press recently sought emails and schedules from legislative leaders in all 50 states. The request was met with more denials than approvals. Some lawmakers claimed legislative immunity from the public records laws that apply to most state officials.

But a response from the Hawaii Senate president stood out because the reason for not providing records was a pending appeal of a different records request, suggesting the Senate could be walling off similar information requests for a year or more.

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