

Boston magazine

Massachusetts State Police Named Most Secretive Public Agency in America

Investigative Reporters and Editors awarded Massachusetts State Police its Golden Padlock for superlative secrecy.

By Kyle Clauss | Boston Daily | June 8, 2015

Like a Razzie, the Golden Padlock is not the kind of award you want to win.

Awarded by Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), the Golden Padlock recognizes the most secretive U.S. agency or individual each year. This year, the Massachusetts State Police took top honors, besting the Colorado Judicial Branch, Texas Department of Public Safety, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

“True commitment, no matter how offensive to the public interest, must be begrudgingly recognized,” said Robert Cribb, chair of IRE’s Golden Padlock committee, in a tongue-in-cheek release. “The Massachusetts State Police has distinguished itself as an agency unwavering in its willingness to ensure citizens are protected from the truth.”

From IRE’s announcement of the Massachusetts State Police’s victory:

“The Massachusetts State Police habitually go to extraordinary lengths to thwart public records requests, protect law enforcement officers and public officials who violate the law and block efforts to scrutinize how the department performs its duties. It normally takes months or longer to respond to news media FOI requests. Requests for basic documents routinely produce refusals, large portions of blacked out documents or demands for tens of thousands of dollars in unjustified fees.”

IRE notes the \$42,750 and \$62,220 fees handed to the *Boston Globe* for the log of its public records requests and records of crashes involving police cruisers, respectively. IRE also mentions that a *Bay State Examiner* reporter was told to pay a \$710.50 “non-refundable research fee” for an estimate of another fee to obtain copies of internal affairs reports.

More secretive than the U.S. D.O.D.?! Eek!
Let's fix the 1st public records law!
Best, Pam Walnut
417-426-9600