

COMMITTEE PROPOSALS

Working document 15

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Clause 1:

“information peddling means the conduct referred to in section 49”;

[“national security” means the resolve of South Africans as individuals and as a nation, to live as equals, to live in peace and harmony, to be free from fear and want and to seek a better life and includes protection of the people and occupants of the Republic from hostile acts of foreign intervention, terrorist and related activities, espionage, and violence whether directed from, or committed within the Republic or not, and includes the carrying out of the Republic’s responsibilities to any foreign country in relation to any of the matters referred to in this definition;]

PROPOSAL

“national security means the protection of the people of the Republic and the territorial integrity of the Republic against—

- (a) the threat of use of force or the use of force;**
- (b) the following acts:**
 - (i) hostile acts of foreign intervention;**

- (ii) terrorism or terrorist related activities
- (iii) espionage;
- [(iv) information peddling;]**
- (iv) exposure of a State security matter;
- (v) exposure of economic, scientific or technological secrets vital to the Republic's stability, security, integrity and development;
- (vi) sabotage; and
- (vii) violence
- (c) whether directed from, or committed within, the Republic or not, and includes the capacity of the Republic to respond to the use of or the threat of the use of force and carrying out of the Republic's responsibilities to any foreign country and international organisations in relation to any of the matters referred to in this definition.

“request’ means a request made by any person and in relation to –

- (a) review means a request for a review of the status of classified information;
- (b) access to classified information means the request submitted to the relevant head of an organ of state; or
- (c) records means the request for the records of an organ of state;]

“request for access”, in relation to an organ of state , means a request for access to information of an organ of state in terms of section 20;

FURTHER PROPOSAL:

“request for access” means a request for access contemplated in section 1 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act;

CLAUSE 1 (3)

“1 (3) When considering an apparent conflict between this legislation and other information-related legislation, every court must prefer any reasonable interpretation of the legislation that avoids a conflict over any alternative interpretation that results in a conflict.”.

PROPOSAL

1 (3) Despite section 5 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act when considering a conflict between a provision of this Act and a provision of another Act of Parliament regulating access to information, every court must prefer a reasonable interpretation of the legislation that avoids a conflict over any alternative interpretation that results in a conflict.

FURTHER PROPOSAL:

1 (3) Despite section 5 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, in the event of a conflict between a provision of this Act and a provision of another Act of Parliament that regulates access to information, the provision of this Act prevails.

Classification levels

[15.] 13. (1) State information may be classified as "Confidential" if the information is ~~[(a)]~~ sensitive information, the **[unlawful]** disclosure of which is likely or could reasonably be expected to cause demonstrable harm [may be harmful] to **[the security or]** national **[interest]** security of the Republic or is likely or could reasonably be expected to prejudice the Republic in its international relations;

[(b)] [commercial information] the disclosure of which may cause financial clients, competitors, contractors and suppliers.]

(2) State information may be classified as "Secret" if the information is—

(a) sensitive information, the disclosure of which is likely or could reasonably be expected to cause serious demonstrable harm to [endanger] [the security or] national **[interest]** security of the Republic or is likely or could reasonably be expected to jeopardise the international relations of the Republic; or

[(b)] commercial information, the disclosure of which may cause serious financial loss to an entity;]

[(c)] (b) personal information, the disclosure of which **[may]** is likely or could

reasonably be expected to endanger the physical security of a person.

(3) State information may be classified as “Top Secret” if the information is—

(a) sensitive information, the disclosure of which **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to demonstrably cause serious or irreparable harm to the national **[interest]** security of the Republic or **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to cause other states to sever diplomatic relations with the Republic;

[(b) commercial information, the disclosure of which may—

(i) have disastrous results with regard to the future existence of an entity; or

(ii) cause serious and irreparable harm to the security or interests of the state;]

(c) personal information the disclosure of which **[may] is likely or could reasonably be expected to endanger the life of the individual concerned.**

(4) The classifying authority must use the guidelines for classification levels as prescribed.

PROPOSAL

(3) State information may be classified as “Top Secret” if the information is—

(a) sensitive information, the disclosure of which **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to demonstrably cause **[serious]** grave or irreparable harm to the national **[interest]** security of the Republic or **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to cause other states to sever

diplomatic relations with the Republic;

[(b) commercial information, the disclosure of which may—

- (i) have disastrous results with regard to the future existence of an entity; or**
- (ii) cause serious and irreparable harm to the security or interests of the state;]**

(c) personal information the disclosure of which **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to endanger the life of the individual concerned.

FURTHER PROPOSAL

(3) State information may be classified as “Top Secret” if the information is—

(a) sensitive information, the disclosure of which **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to demonstrably cause serious **[or] and** irreparable harm to the national **[interest]** security of the Republic or **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to cause other states to sever diplomatic relations with the Republic;

[(b) commercial information, the disclosure of which may—

- (i) have disastrous results with regard to the future existence of an entity; or**
- (ii) cause serious and irreparable harm to the security or interests of the state;]**

(c) personal information the disclosure of which **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to endanger the life of the individual concerned.

OR FURTHER PROPSAL

- (3) State information may be classified as "Top Secret" if the information is—
- (a) sensitive information, the disclosure of which **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to demonstrably cause **[serious or]** irreparable harm to the national **[interest]** security of the Republic or **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to cause other states to sever diplomatic relations with the Republic;
- [(b) commercial information, the disclosure of which may—**
- (i) **have disastrous results with regard to the future existence of an entity; or**
- (ii) **cause serious and irreparable harm to the security or interests of the state;]**
- (c) personal information the disclosure of which **[may]** is likely or could reasonably be expected to endanger the life of the individual concerned.

Request for access to classified information and status review

20. (1) If a request is made for access to information and it is established that the information requested is classified, that request must be referred to the relevant head of the organ of state for a review of the classification status of the information requested in terms of the provisions of this Act.

(2)

.....

(5) A court may [**condone non-observance of**] anticipate the time-period referred to in sub section [23] (4) (a) on good cause shown where an urgent application is brought before court.

(6) If an application for a request referred to in subsection (1) is received, the head of the organ of state must within a reasonable time¹ but not longer than 90 days from date of application conduct a review of the classified information held by that organ of state relating to the request for declassification.

¹ Proposal to refer to “reasonable time” thereby aligning with the time frames in PAIA where a decision must be taken within a certain time period. The status review must be completed within a reasonable time before a decision is taken as contemplated under PAIA

PAIA Provides for decision on request and notice thereof in section 25. (1) Except if the provisions regarding third party notification and intervention contemplated in Chapter 5 of this Part apply, the information officer to whom the request is made or transferred, must, as soon as reasonably possible, but in any event within 30 days, after the request is received—

(a) decide in accordance with this Act whether to grant the request; and

(b) notify the requester of the decision and, if the requester stated, as contemplated in section 18 (2) (e), that he or she wishes to be informed of the decision in any other manner, inform him or her in that manner if it is reasonably possible.

Clause 21

Status review

(2) The head of an organ of state upon receipt of a request made in the prescribed manner for a review of the status of classified information must make a decision and in the case of refusal provide reasons within 90 days of date of receipt of such a request.

Pertaining to the question whether or not the time period provided for in section 21

(2) complies with the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No 3 of 2000).

Section 5 of PAJA provides that:

“(1) Any person whose rights have been materially and adversely affected by administrative action and who has not been given reasons for the action may, within 90 days after the date on which that person became aware of the action or might reasonably have been expected to have become aware of the action, request that the administrator concerned furnish written reasons for the action.

(2) The administrator to whom the request is made must, within 90 days after receiving the request, give that person adequate reasons in writing for the administrative action.

(3) If an administrator fails to furnish adequate reasons for an administrative action it must, subject to subsection (4) and in the absence of proof to the contrary, be presumed in any proceedings for judicial review that the administrative action was taken without good reason.

(4) (a) An administrator may depart from the requirement to furnish adequate reasons if it is reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances, and must forthwith inform the person making the request of such departure.

(b) In determining whether a departure as contemplated in paragraph (a) is reasonable and justifiable, an administrator must take into account all relevant factors, including—

- (i) the objects of the empowering provision;
- (ii) the nature, purpose and likely effect of the administrative action concerned;
- (iii) the nature and the extent of the departure;
- (iv) the relation between the departure and its purpose;
- (v) the importance of the purpose of the departure; and
- (vi) the need to promote an efficient administration and good governance.

(5) Where an administrator is empowered by any empowering provision to follow a procedure which is fair but different from the provisions of subsection (2), the administrator may act in accordance with that different procedure.

(6) (a) In order to promote an efficient administration, the Minister may, at the request of an administrator, by notice in the Gazette publish a list specifying any administrative action or a group or class of administrative actions in respect of which the administrator concerned will automatically furnish reasons to a person whose rights are adversely affected by such actions, without such person having to request reasons in terms of this section.

(b) The Minister must, within 14 days after the receipt of a request referred to in paragraph (a) and at the cost of the relevant administrator, publish such list, as contemplated in that paragraph.

Appeal to Court

33 A. A person who is aggrieved by a decision made with regard to a request for access to classified information may apply to a court for appropriate relief in the manner provided for in chapter 2 of Part 4 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act.

Responsibilities of Agency

[30.] 38 The Agency is responsible for monitoring —

(a) all organs of state for compliance with prescribed controls and measures to protect valuable information ; and

(b) all organs of state referred to in section 3, excluding the South African Police Service and the South African National Defence Force for compliance with the prescribed control and measures to protect classified information.

PROPOSAL

Disclosure of classified [and related] information

47. Any person who, other than as contemplated in section 42, unlawfully discloses classified information in contravention of this Act is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period **[not less than three years but]** not exceeding five years, except where such disclosure is-

- (a) protected under the Protected Disclosures Act, 2000 (Act No 26 of 2000); or section 159 of the Companies Act, 2008 (Act No 71 of 2008); or
- (b) authorised by any other law.