

(b) (1) Unless, for good cause shown, the court otherwise directs and notwithstanding any other provision of law, the defendant shall serve an answer or otherwise plead to the complaint within 30 days after service of the complaint.

(2) The defendant:

(i) has the burden of sustaining a decision to deny inspection of a public record; and

(ii) in support of the decision, may submit a memorandum to the court.

(c) (1) Except for cases that the court considers of greater importance, a proceeding under this section, including an appeal, shall:

(i) take precedence on the docket;

(ii) be heard at the earliest practicable date; and

(iii) be expedited in every way.

(2) The court may examine the public record in camera to determine whether any part of it may be withheld under this Part III of this subtitle.

(3) The court may:

(i) enjoin the State, a political subdivision, or a unit, official, or employee of the State or of a political subdivision from withholding the public record;

(ii) pass an order for the production of the public record that was withheld from the complainant; and

(iii) for noncompliance with the order, punish the responsible employee for contempt.

(d) (1) A defendant governmental unit is liable to the complainant for actual damages ~~and any punitive damages~~ that the court considers appropriate if the court finds BY CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE that any defendant knowingly and willfully failed to disclose or fully to disclose a public record that the complainant was entitled to inspect under this Part III of this subtitle.

(2) An official custodian is liable for actual damages ~~and any punitive damages~~ that the court considers appropriate if the court finds that, after temporarily denying inspection of a public record, the official custodian failed to petition a court for an order to continue the denial.

(e) (1) Whenever the court orders the production of a public record that was withheld from the applicant and, in addition, finds that the custodian acted arbitrarily or capriciously in withholding the public record, the court shall send a certified copy of its finding to the appointing authority of the custodian.

(2) On receipt of the statement of the court and after an appropriate investigation, the appointing authority shall take the disciplinary action that the circumstances warrant.