

From: **Catharine Rice** <[info@sg.actionnetwork.org](mailto:info@sg.actionnetwork.org)>  
Date: Sat, Nov 28, 2020 at 1:51 PM  
Subject: Support for Electronic Meeting Changes  
To: <[foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov)>

FOIA Council,

Dear FOIA Council:

I am the Chair of a Virginia City Commission, and a member of the public and I am writing to emphasize how important it is that the Council codify the authority of public bodies to address any subject during emergency electronic meetings.

Electronic participation removes the barrier of travel time, work or family responsibilities that conflict with public meeting schedules. So I encourage the Council to remove the limit on individual electronic participation by members of a public body. The law is outdated, was written before zoom existed and needs to change. Also remove the word "serious" in reference to a family member's medical condition that qualifies for an allowable reason for electronic participation. I believe that members of public bodies should be able to care for family members when needed, and to not have to choose between caring for them and participating in public service.

We all benefit from a government that better reflects our community and includes a diversity of voices and experiences, including those who have children, aging parents, or jobs that require travel. The inclusion of such members leads to better public policy for all.

Thank you for your consideration.

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