

From: **Marta Schantz** <martalynne14@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 19, 2023 at 11:48 AM
Subject: Please recommend HB 2050, Electronic meetings
To: <foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov>
Cc: <vagrassrootscoalition@gmail.com>, <april.breslaw@gmail.com>

Members of the Electronic Meetings Subcommittee of the VA FOIA Council:

Please make a positive recommendation to the full Council about legislation such as HB 2050, which was introduced in the 2023 session of the VA General Assembly.

From a personal perspective, I serve on the city of Alexandria's Environmental Policy Commission, and I also have 2 young children. With meetings that start at 7:30pm, it is so hard to manage daycare pickups, dinner, and bedtime in addition to the EPC meeting! The few times I can join virtually are incredibly helpful. I have a wonderful partner in parenting who makes it so that I can attend the rest in person, but for parents who don't - how will they manage? I have friends who dropped out of serving on Commissions once they had children because the in-person meeting commitment was too much of a challenge.

Electronic meetings and remote participation in meetings have been a success. They increase attendance, transparency, and public participation in government. They also help address the economic hardship associated with in-person participation, especially where it is necessary to obtain childcare or travel long distances to appear in person.

HB 2050 proposed commonsense adjustments to the rules that now govern the meetings of local and regional bodies. In the interest of removing the unnecessarily restrictive requirements that now apply, I urge you let the full Council know that you support the kinds of changes that HB 2050 proposed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the need to expand electronic meeting access for regional and local public bodies.

Sincerely,

Marta Schantz

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