

From: **Michelle Woolley** <info@sg.actionnetwork.org>
Date: Sun, Nov 8, 2020 at 4:15 PM
Subject: Expand flexibility for electronic participation
To: <foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov>

FOIA Council,

My name is Michelle Woolley. I live in Arlington and as a recent member of a public body and a working parent, I think it's important that members of public bodies be able to participate electronically. The public benefits from a government, including advisory bodies, that reflects its population and includes a diversity of voices and experiences, including those who have children, aging parents, and/or have jobs that require travel. Over this year, we have learned how effective it can be for people to participate in meetings virtually.

As a working parent managing virtual school, it's been critical to me to be able to continue to participate in my community. Even outside of a pandemic, it can be challenging to manage parenting duties, a husband who travels frequently for work, and staying engaged. Maximizing flexibility for electronic attendance means more parents like me can serve their communities on public bodies, whether we are in a pandemic or not.

I urge you to vote this year to remove any state-level limit for how often a member may participate electronically and to allow public bodies to address any subject during emergency electronic meetings. I would also like you to study in 2021 how there can be further increased flexibility for meeting electronically even when there is not an emergency.

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