

Freedom of Information Advisory Council
900 Main Street, 8th floor
Pocahontas Building
Richmond, VA 23219

September 1, 2021

Dear Council Members:

This letter is written on behalf of the Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN). NVAN consists of staff representatives from the five Northern Virginia Agencies on Aging, board members from the local Commissions on Aging, and representatives of allied organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association, National Association of Retired Federal Employees, and AARP. Participants meet to discuss issues of mutual concern, to craft a legislative platform for presentation to the Virginia General Assembly, and to discuss regional responses to critical issues affecting Northern Virginia's older adults.

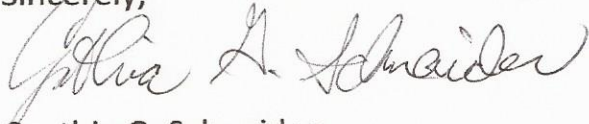
Every year NVAN adopts a legislative platform of items affecting older adults to present to the General Assembly. For the 2022 session, one of NVAN's legislative items is to allow for electronic meetings of all public bodies.

Based on our experiences this past year and one-half, NVAN has found that Virginia's current laws are much too narrow and restricting to ensure the participation of older adults. While the current law offers some exceptions for participation by members who are caregivers, permanently or temporarily disabled, or who need to attend to a personal emergency, current law still acts as a barrier to older adults' participation both as members of the public body or as members of the public desiring to observe the meeting or provide testimony.

If we have learned anything these past 18 months, we have learned that electronic meetings have increased participation both of public body members and public participants. Each member of NVAN can provide examples where this occurred. Transparency in government deliberations has thus increased. Since transparency is a primary purpose of open meeting laws, removing barriers to participation furthers the purpose of these laws.

We understand that a majority of states allow public bodies to meet electronically. We urge the Council to support legislation allowing for electronic meetings of all public bodies in Virginia.

Sincerely,



Cynthia G. Schneider
Chair, NVAN Electronic Participation Committee

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4	Task Order dated July 20 and July 21
2	Work orders for July Total Order 111
28	HVAC
11	Plumbing
15	Electrical
7	Interior Work
19	Common Area
18	Examination
11	Other
5	Move In/Out
2	Other