

On Fri, Oct 20, 2023 at 5:01 PM Carol Paquette <carolp5930@comcast.net> wrote:

I am writing in support of HB 2050 that enables greater flexibility in the utilization of electronic meetings by local and regional bodies while duly providing for public access and administrative record keeping.

The current Virginia Freedom of Information Act allows only 25% of public body meetings to be conducted electronically. This restriction applies to local advisory boards and commissions, such as the Commission on Aging. The requirement for board and commission members to meet in person disproportionately excludes older adults from taking part in these civic leadership activities. Cost and distance can be barriers to in-person attendance. In addition many older adults do not drive and public transportation is not always available or easily accessible. Electronic meetings would expand the opportunity for membership by a broader segment of the community and promote transparency in government. Virtual meeting technologies, such as Zoom, enable meetings to comply with FOIA requirements. Virtual meetings can be recorded for later viewing to supplement the publication of formal minutes and to increase public access.

I urge you to allow all advisory boards and commissions meetings to be conducted electronically. This provides much greater access for older adults as well as other citizens who are unable to attend these meetings in person. Thank you!

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