

Comments submitted by Conner Cummings:

I want to thank you all for the first step of allowing people with disabilities the opportunity to participate in boards and commissions virtually.

Now let's take it one more step. Let's ensure we can vote virtually and be included in the quorum. If it is ok, I would like to speak a little more on this matter.

If I and others like me are allowed to join committees virtually and be part of the quorum it will open doors for people with disabilities to be on more committees.

We all have something to say no matter our disability or our communication style.

I like to go to meetings in person, I like hugs and I like sitting in my own seat where there is a name tag with my name on it in the front of the room.

But even though I like all of that, on my struggle days I cannot physically or mentally make that happen. It is difficult to explain how I can feel on my struggle days. The things I just told you I like about meetings, can also become my enemy. My insides feel different and sounds, lights, crowds, the unknown take over.

For me to stay home on our computer in my own chair and my own surroundings I have lived with for 30 years will allow me to still attend the meeting and participate my way.

Yes, I still have the struggle day but my home, my computer, my chair are my accommodations that help very much.

Yes, I want to tell you how important this is to me, and others like me. I want to do as much as I can in person, but it does not always work.

When you speak of people with disabilities, the next words for me are my mom or in technical terms parents and caregivers. My mom is almost like my other half.

Parents and caregivers of someone with a disability live a life that revolves around that person. It is hard to separate a parent or a caregiver from the loved one they care for.

Please recognize and respect that my mom on the rare chance she makes plans without or around me, if I have a struggle day those plans are cancelled. I then become her plans.

This is a caregivers/parent's day to day life. Allowing them to also attend meetings virtually and be able to vote and be counted as part of the quorum are very important.

They too have so much to contribute, to share their experience and life skills. If we do not allow this for them, we take away their outlet their own voice.

It is like we are punishing them for doing the right thing.

I hope you will accept me for who I am in my struggle and good days and allow me to speak virtually when it is needed. I hope you also consider that a parent and caregiver has so much value as well.

Together we have lived experience in our own unique ways. I have nothing but respect for your consideration and understanding of my feels that I am trying hard to type.

I thank you for reading this and for listening to my written words.

You making these extra accommodations is like you just gave my brain a hug.

Please and thank you,
Conner