

From: Jesse Monroe <jmonroe@thearcofva.org>

Date: Wed, Dec 13, 2023, 2:07 PM

Subject: Re: Public Comment - FOIA Council Advocacy Opportunity

Hello. Thank you for letting me share my insight on this important issue. Due to my disability, Arthrogyrosis, I am severely physically disabled and completely dependent on others for my needs. I have been a self-advocate for several years and spoken with legislators about the needs of the disability community. I have been a part of several boards and commissions related to disability issues. I have both lived with family and now independently in my own home with supports. I understand firsthand what the disability community in Virginia faces. The input that I and others like me can give to state boards are invaluable for the best recommendations possible. After all, we know what we need better than anyone. However, I am dependent on the will of others for my transportation and care needs. At times, it is impossible for those giving me care to physically transport me somewhere, especially if it is long distance. I am not the only one they must care for, and there are only so many staff. This makes it difficult for me to always give my input in person. Now that the technology exists, I can be pretty much be anywhere virtually. It is crucially important that those of us with disabilities be allowed to be a part of these boards virtually. I am not alone in this predicament. There are some with disabilities who cannot leave their homes and therefore their voices are not heard at all. It is important that everyone has the same opportunity to participate and sometimes that can only happen virtually. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely, Jesse Monroe