

From: **Sarah Taylor** <[sgtaylor08@gmail.com](mailto:sgtaylor08@gmail.com)>

Date: Thu, Dec 14, 2023 at 11:38 AM

Subject: Testimony asking for your support for the work of the Electronic Meetings Subcommittee for today's meeting

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Cc: Alan Gernhardt <[agernhardt@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:agernhardt@dls.virginia.gov)>, <[foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov)>

Chairman Cherry, Vice-Chair Locke and the Members of the FOIA Council:

I write today to ask for your support for the proposal of the Electronic Meetings Subcommittee which would allow members of public bodies who meet the definition of a "person with a disability" to participate remotely and be counted as if they were physically present for purposes of determining whether a quorum exists.

Many view the push to allow for unrestricted electronic participation in public meetings as a convenience that degrades the work of public bodies and worsens the experience of members of the public who want to engage with a public body.

However, I believe that this very limited, well-defined change is not, in fact, a convenience. Rather it is an appropriate accommodation for people with disabilities and provides an accessible platform for people with disabilities to contribute their unique perspective to our public discourse.

Expanding the opportunity for people with disabilities to remotely participate in electronic meetings, and to count toward the quorum when they do, will help to reinforce the idea that everyone, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, has a valuable voice in shaping public policies and decisions.

I hope you will support this narrowly tailored proposal, which will be an important change for people with disabilities who serve our communities as members of public bodies.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Graham Taylor  
Alexandria, VA

*Note: As I have noted previously, while I currently serve as the Legislative Director for the City of Alexandria, a member of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, and a member of the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board, I am writing to you as a member of the public, as the parent of the child with a developmental disability, and not on behalf of any of these bodies.*