

From: **Marj Signer** <[marj.signer@gmail.com](mailto:marj.signer@gmail.com)>

Date: Tue, Nov 17, 2020 at 1:47 PM

Subject: Updating State Rules on Participation in Meetings by Members of a Public Body

To: <[foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov)>

To: Commonwealth FOIA Council

From Connie Cordovilla, Falls Church, Virginia NOW President; Pat Reuss, Sterling, Virginia NOW Executive Vice-President; Marjorie Signer, Arlington, Virginia NOW Legislative Vice-President

We are writing on behalf of the membership of Virginia NOW (the Virginia chapter of the National Organization for Women), a statewide organization in Virginia for more than 40 years, representing women and men who seek greater equality and inclusion in all aspects of life.

We support removing the state-level cap on individual electronic participation by members of a public body when a quorum is present.

On this issue of full participation in public life, we speak from experience. We have all lived in Virginia for decades and participate as volunteers in many aspects of public life. In particular, Ms. Cordovilla has served on electoral, library and community bodies as a volunteer, and Ms. Signer was a two-time gubernatorial appointee to the Virginia Council on Women.

There are competing interests on this issue but we believe the time has come to favor increasing diversity and participation in government. This requires making public meetings more accessible to potential members and interested parties; decisions about specific regulations for local meetings can be made at the local level. Thus, we support removing the state-level cap on individual electronic participation by members of a public body when a quorum is present.

Thank you for your consideration.

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