



April 8, 2024

TO: Chair Klevorn and Members of the Committee on State and Local Government

FROM: The Mayors Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities

SUBJECT: Amendments to Open Meeting Laws

Dear Chair Klevorn and Members of the Committee on State and Local Government,

On behalf of the Saint Paul Mayor's Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for HF 4413, which proposes to allow remote participation in board and commission meetings. We believe that this bill is a crucial step towards promoting accessibility and inclusivity in our governmental processes, particularly for individuals with disabilities.

Ensuring equal access to public meetings is fundamental to upholding the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate fully in civic life. Unfortunately, traditional in-person meetings can present significant barriers for many members of our community. Factors such as transportation challenges, inaccessible meeting locations, and health concerns can all prevent individuals with disabilities from attending meetings in person.

By allowing for remote participation, HF 4413 would remove these barriers and create a more inclusive environment for individuals with disabilities to engage in the democratic process. Remote participation enables individuals to join meetings remotely when circumstances limit participating in person, providing a familiar and accessible environment. This not only increases participation rates but also ensures that the voices and perspectives of individuals with disabilities are heard and valued in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, remote participation aligns with the principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability rights legislation, which emphasize the importance of removing barriers to participation and ensuring equal access to public services. By adopting remote participation policies, Minnesota can demonstrate its commitment to upholding these principles and fostering a more equitable and inclusive society for all residents.

In conclusion, we urge you to vote in support of HF 4413 and take proactive steps to promote accessibility and inclusivity in our governmental processes. By allowing remote participation in board and commission meetings, we can create a more accessible and democratic society that values the contributions of all individuals, including those with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mayor's Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities

Mark Zoller Mark Zoller, Accessibility Coordinator

Kari Sheldon

Signature: 
Kari Sheldon, MACPD Chair (Apr 5, 2024 15:38 CDT)

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MACPD Open Meeting Law Letter

Final Audit Report

2024-04-05

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