
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5269 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING REMOTE MEETINGS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

SUMMARY

Under the state's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), public agencies must generally make their meetings, other than executive sessions, open to the public. Current law allows these agencies, until April 30, 2022, to hold meetings that are accessible to the public through electronic equipment (e.g., by telephone, video, or other conferencing platforms) or electronic equipment combined with an in-person meeting (hybrid meetings) (PA 21-2, June Special Session (JSS), § 149).

This bill removes the sunset date and allows public agencies to continue holding remote and hybrid meetings, as long as they comply with the requirements under existing law.

The bill also explicitly provides that regional school districts may hold remote or hybrid public meetings to present a proposed budget in the same way as other public agencies under the bill. (Regional school districts are public agencies under FOIA.)

*House Amendment "A" adds the provision on regional school districts.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provision specific to regional school districts is effective October 1, 2022.

BACKGROUND

Remote and Hybrid Meeting Requirements

PA 21-2, JSS, § 149, established requirements for public agencies to hold remote or hybrid meetings. For example, for remote meetings, agencies must provide members of the public with a physical location and the equipment needed to attend the meeting in real-time, if

requested, and the same opportunities to participate they would have if the meeting were held in-person. It also (1) requires agencies to, among other things, create recordings or transcripts of remote public meetings and make them available to the public for at least 45 days and (2) establishes the conditions under which remote meetings that are interrupted may be resumed.

RELATED BILL

sSB 467, favorably reported by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, also removes the sunset date in PA 21-2, JSS, § 149.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 18 Nay 8 (03/18/2022)