



February 6th, 2023

House State Government & Elections

COYOTE RI is writing you today in support of House Bill No. [5266](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- OPEN MEETINGS {LC733/1} (Permits all members of a public body who are aged sixty-five (65) years or over to participate in public meetings by telephone or electronic communication.)

It is important for elderly people to be able to participate and have their voices heard. Many people over 65 have health conditions, many are still at high risk for COVID. Many do not drive so they are unable to attend public meetings.

We found during COVID when the public was allowed to call in to testify for legislative hearings, that it didn't take any extra time. With this being said, we think all Rhode Islanders should be allowed to participate by telephone or electronic communication because many of them have children and do not have childcare. Many do not have transportation. We should be removing barriers so everyone in our community can participate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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