PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN REMOTE MEETINGS

Active citizen participation is an integral part of a robust and healthy representative democracy. The Virginia House of Delegates encourages public interest and input when crafting laws or debating issues of public policy. To address a committee or other public body that is meeting remotely and is being facilitated by House staff, citizens may sign up in advance via the easy-to-use House of Delegates, HODSpeak, application.

Accessing the Signup Form to Request to Speak

All meetings are posted on the Virginia House of Delegates Meeting Schedule (virginiageneralassembly.gov/hs) that includes a “sign-up-to-speak” or “submit comments” link for those meetings either chaired by a House member or facilitated by House staff. The public should use this link to request addressing a committee and/or submit written comments. As part of registration, citizens must provide a phone number and/or email address. In advance of the meeting, House Clerk’s Office Committee Operations staff will contact those who have registered to inform them on how they may provide comments to the committee (orally or in writing).

House Clerk’s Office staff will provide instructions and guidelines to those who may be participating. Please note that the committee chair will seek to maintain a reasonably balanced list of participants on both sides of issues being discussed.

The Process

As is the custom and practice of the Virginia House of Delegates, the chair of a committee will determine a specific timeframe for public comment at each meeting, if public comment is to be taken. Registering to speak does not indicate a right to speak. Members of the public who are not called on may submit written comments instead. All written comments received in advance of the meeting can be accessed by all committee members during the meeting and will be available to the public from the meeting agendas.

Comments received after a meeting deadline will be provided as soon as possible on: HODspeak.house.virginia.gov.

During the Meeting

The chair of the committee or subcommittee may call for public input. Citizens who are addressing the remote meeting should adhere to the following guidelines:

- When first beginning to speak and in answering any question from the chair or any other member of a committee, subcommittee or other public body, please start by saying “Mr. Chairman or Madam Chair,” as appropriate.
- Oral comments will be restricted to no more than three minutes.
- Comments should be respectful and confined to the topics or issues being discussed at the meeting.
- Written comments are limited to no more than 425 words.
- The public comment time for each topic, piece of legislation, or meeting is set by the chair.

The Virginia House of Delegates continues to encourage members of the public to contact their representatives directly via email or phone, as needed. To determine who represents you, please visit: http://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov/