



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN REMOTE MEETINGS

Active citizen participation is an integral part of a representative democracy. The Virginia House of Delegates encourages public input when crafting laws or debating issues of public interest. To address a committee or other public body that is meeting remotely, people must sign up in advance using the HODSpeak application.

Accessing the signup form to request to speak

All meetings are posted on the Virginia House of Delegates Meeting Schedule (viriniageneralassembly.gov/hs) that includes a **Sign up to speak or submit comments** link. The public should use this link to request to address a committee and/or submit written comments. As part of registration, people must provide a phone number and/or email address. In advance of the meeting, House Committee Operations staff will contact people who have registered to let them know how they may provide comments to the committee (orally or in writing). The staff will also 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 any. Registering to speak does not create a right to speak. Members of the public who are not called on to speak can always submit written comments. All written comments received 4 hours in advance of the meeting may be accessed by all committee members during the meeting and will be available to the public from the meeting agendas.

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

During the meeting

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

- Individuals who will be allowed to speak at a committee meeting will sign into a meeting before the meeting starts and will be called on to speak after the chair calls for public comment and the committee clerk announces their name to speak.
- Citizens must activate their camera, with their face fully visible, before they will be given the ability to testify. To facilitate a respectful, deliberative exchange, face coverings** are prohibited.
- When first beginning to speak and in answering any question from the chair or any other committee member, please start by saying "Mr. Chairman or Madam Chair", as appropriate. Please keep comments respectful and on the topic being discussed by the committee.
- Comments should be confined to the topics or issues being discussed at the meeting.
- Written comments are limited to **425 words**.
- The public comment time for each topic, piece of legislation or meeting will be set by the chair.

The Virginia House of Delegates continues to encourage the public to also contact their representatives directly via email or phone as needed.

To determine who represents you, visit <https://whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov/>