



Action Alert #2

Taskforce on Remote Operations of Public Entities

March 9, 2023

Thursday, March 16th: The Taskforce on Remote Operations of Public Entities is scheduled to meet at 9:30 AM in Room F at the Louisiana State Capitol to consider recommendations for possible legislation which may allow public entities to hold meetings and conduct business remotely (i.e. by electronic means or virtually). More information about this issue can be found in the background information below. ([Tentative Meeting Agenda](#))

Advocates are encouraged to take this opportunity to share their views about remote meeting opportunities with the taskforce and attend LaCAN's first Yellow Shirt Day of 2023!

How to Take Action

Share with the committee your thoughts, opinions and ideas about Louisiana offering remote meeting opportunities and how you or your loved one would be impacted by allowing, or not allowing, virtual participation in public meetings.

1. Attend Yellow Shirt Day!

- WHEN: Thursday, March 16th, at 9:30 AM
- WHERE: Louisiana State Capitol – Room F
- This is a chance for you to share your story in-person before committee. It's also important for LaCAN to fill the room with yellow shirts to show the importance of this issue! If you plan to attend, want to share your story before the committee, need a yellow shirt and/or want to find out about carpooling options, contact your [LaCAN Leader](#).

2. Email marinovichl@legis.la.gov your public comments about remote operations of public entities:

- Only statements emailed to the address above and *received at least four hours before the start of the meeting (9:30 AM on March 16th)* will be included in the meeting record.
- With your comments, please ensure to include your name, address, phone number, email address and let them know you are writing about the taskforce's recommendations for remote operations of public entities.

3. Email or call the Taskforce's Chairwoman, Senator Sharon Hewitt by Thursday, March 16th:

- Email: hewitts@legis.la.gov
- Call: 985-646-6490 or 504-278-6530
- With your emailed comments, please ensure to include your name, address, phone number, email address and let them know you are writing about the taskforce's recommendations for remote operations of public entities.

4. **Watch** the taskforce's meeting virtually if you cannot attend Yellow Shirt Day.
 - You can watch the committee meeting live from the [legislature's website](#). When the meeting is in progress, click the camera icon to access the broadcast.

Background Information

During the 2022 legislative session, [Senate Resolution 147](#) by Sen. Sharon Hewitt created the Remote Operations of Public Entities Taskforce to study the possibility of allowing public entities to meet remotely or virtually. During the March 16th meeting, the taskforce is expected to develop its recommendations regarding remote operations and bring legislation during the 2023 session to address this issue. This is why it is so important for people with disabilities AND their caregivers reach out to the committee and Chairwoman so your recommendations can be considered!

Technology has come a long way since Louisiana's Open Meetings Law was enacted in 1976. By amending Open Meetings Law to allow for remote or virtual participation and representation in public meetings, we can make meetings more inclusive of all individuals, including individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, and more transparent.

By requiring in-person participation only during public meetings, we are discriminating against individuals with disabilities and their caregivers by creating barriers that prevent their full participation. We lose valuable insights and stakeholder feedback on important issues that directly impact their lives. They should be afforded the same opportunities individuals without disabilities have to participate in all public meetings, both as members of the general public and appointed members of the public board. In fact, the Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA requires all states and local bodies provide reasonable accommodations for meeting which includes virtual or remote participation.

For more information about amending Open Meetings Law, check out [LaCAN's fact sheet](#).

Confirm Your Action

- Email your [LaCAN Leader](#) after you take action
- Why confirm your action? This helps the Council know how effective we are reaching you with important information and engaging members across our state in advocacy for systems change.

Tips & Tools for Advocacy

Looking for tips and tools to help you in your advocacy? Check out the Council's [Advocacy 101](#) page. You can also find tips for:

- [Writing/emailing your legislators](#)
- [Calling your legislators](#)
- [Writing your story](#)

Contact Us

LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

phone: 1-800-450-8108

email: info@laddc.org

website: www.lacanadvocates.org

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Louisiana Developmental
Disabilities Council