



Action Alert #3

Taskforce on Remote Operations of Public Entities to Discuss Final Proposals

March 20, 2023

Friday, March 24th: The Taskforce on Remote Operations of Public Entities is scheduled to meet at 2:30 PM in Room F at the Louisiana State Capitol to reveal their proposals for legislation to allow for remote operations (i.e. by electronic means or virtually) of public entities ([Tentative Meeting Agenda](#)).

Numerous advocates reached out to this taskforce and attended their last meeting on March 16th to share their own opinions about what should be included in the taskforce's proposals. More information can be found in the background information below.

Its important advocates continue to reach out to this taskforce to ensure the needs of people with disabilities and their caregivers are included!

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: Friday, March 24th, at 2:30 PM
- 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* 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 proposals for remote operations of public entities.

3. Email or call the Taskforce's Chairwoman, Senator Sharon Hewitt by Friday, March 24th:

- 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 proposals for remote operations of public entities.

For those who are unable to attend meetings in person, the taskforce's meeting will be live streamed on the [legislature's website](#). When the meeting is in progress, click the camera icon to access the broadcast.

Background Information

[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 their March 16th meeting, the taskforce revealed some preliminary recommendations they were considering and solicited feedback from the public. You can watch the committee meeting [here](#). LaCAN testimonies begin at 59:00.

[Linked here](#) is a document shared during the taskforce's meeting with initial thoughts regarding remote operations. However, it must be emphasized, these were preliminary thoughts and recommendations and not the final proposals of the taskforce. They were considering:

- Local public entities meet in-person only.
- Statewide public entities will be allowed a certain number of remote meetings if they meet certain criteria, but not all meetings will be held remotely.
- All public entity members, whether local or statewide, will be allowed to participate remotely if they have a disability.
- All remote meetings shall have a mechanism in place to receive public comment.
- All in-person meeting will be encouraged to provide a remote participation option for the public.

The Council and LaCAN thank the taskforce for considering the needs of individuals with disabilities who serve on these public bodies. It is worth noting, however, there are still concerns that need to be addressed:

- Caregivers of individuals with disabilities need similar accommodations when it comes to their participation. They experience many of the same hardships individuals with disabilities endure that prevents their ability to attend meetings in-person.
- Members of the general public should be allowed to participate in all public meetings remotely with no caveats. This would ensure individuals with disabilities, caregivers and other marginalized groups who cannot attend meetings in-person will have opportunities to provide stakeholder input.

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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