



765 Asylum Avenue, 2nd Floor  
Hartford, CT 06105  
860-523-9146  
[www.acluct.org](http://www.acluct.org)

**Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 5269, An Act Concerning Remote Meetings Under the Freedom of Information Act**

Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Ranking Members Hwang and Zullo, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am testifying in support of House Bill 5269, An Act Concerning Remote Meetings Under the Freedom of Information Act.

The essential function of democracy is to allow the governed to have a voice in government. One of the most crucial ways that people can have a voice in their government is to observe, participate in, testify at, and attend public government meetings. During pandemics, remote access is important to everyone, but people with disabilities, people with nontraditional job schedules, people who lack childcare or transportation—all these people benefit from multimodal access to government all the time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all levels of Connecticut government have begun to explore alternatives to in-person meetings and governmental services. House Bill 5269 would permanently permit public agencies to hold meetings by electronic equipment in conjunction with in-person meetings. Providing more methods of participation will make our democracy stronger by allowing more voices a chance to weigh in on matters that affect their lives. We urge this Committee to support House Bill 5269.