



Legislative Testimony  
765 Asylum Avenue, First Floor  
Hartford, CT 06105  
860-523-9146  
www.acluct.org

**Written Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 183, An Act Concerning Remote Meetings under the Freedom of Information Act**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Ranking Members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Kelly McConney Moore, and I am the interim senior policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 183, An Act Concerning Remote Meetings under the Freedom of Information Act.

Injustice thrives in the dark. The ability to shed sunlight on government action through Freedom of Information requests is essential to holding public officials accountable and to preventing state-sanctioned discrimination, abuse, and mismanagement. In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of open government went dark due to the emergency public health crisis facing our state. In the months since then, though, the opacity continued, which is inexcusable.

Currently, the Connecticut state legislature is closed to the public, with all business being conducted on virtual meeting platforms. Many municipalities are conducting business in the same way. With these virtual meetings taking the place of the in-person meetings that were contemplated under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), it is critical to extend open government requirements to virtual meetings. Though it is likely that such meetings are already subject to FOIA requirements, spelling it out explicitly in Senate Bill 183 is critical to ensure there is seamless access to records of government action. Under this bill, virtual meetings are also subject to FOIA on the same timeframes and to the same extent as in-person meetings. This is both commonsense and extremely important to preserving and protecting FOIA during this pandemic. With these provisions, the ACLU-CT supports Senate Bill 183, and this Committee should as well.