



March 20, 2025

The Honorable Senator María Elena Durazo, Chair
Senate Local Government Committee
Capitol Office - Suite 7530
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 239 (Arreguín) Local Government: Open Meetings – Teleconferencing SUPPORT

Dear Senator Durazo:

The Agency on Aging Area 4 (AAA4) writes to express our strong support for SB 239 (Arreguín). This bill would remove barriers to civic participation by allowing members of local non-decision-making sub-bodies of a legislative governing body to meaningfully participate remotely via two-way virtual teleconferencing. Older adults and people with disabilities provide a critical voice in their communities and add invaluable perspective to local government. However, the current in-person meeting requirements in the Brown Act present many challenges to older adults and people with disabilities, resulting in fewer of these critical voices participating in meetings on a regular basis.

Local governments continue to face ongoing challenges in the recruitment and retention of older adults and people with disabilities for advisory bodies, boards, and commissions. The technological burst that occurred during the recent pandemic removed many barriers to local civic participation through active virtual teleconferencing. This enabled individuals who have been historically challenged to participate in-person to more easily engage in local government, providing communities with greater diversified input.

In 2023, the Legislature overwhelmingly passed, and the Governor signed SB 544 (Laird) (Stats. 2023, Ch. 216). Noting equity issues presented by physical attendance requirements, this bill provided virtual teleconferencing flexibility to members of State advisory only bodies. SB 239 would remove the same barriers for local advisory bodies by providing the same narrow exemption for non-decision-making sub-bodies of legislative governing bodies. Addressing barriers that allow all people to participate in civic engagement to achieve diverse representation is not only crucial to this state, but also the right thing to do.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support SB 239 (Arreguín).

Best regards,

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