



February 29, 2024

Dear Representative Shanley,

On behalf of the Senior Agenda Coalition of RI I write to support H7565 sponsored by Rep. Messier on behalf of Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos. This act would provide for remote participation of Council members in open public meetings of the Long-term Care Coordinating Council (LTCCC) and would provide that a quorum of the Council consists of twelve (12) out of the 33 members.

I have been involved with the LTCCC for many years; first providing staff assistance to the Council when I was Policy Director for former Lt. Governor Charles Fogarty and more recently as a member appointed by Speaker Shekarchi to represent a senior advocacy organization. In the recent past it has been difficult to get a quorum of members to conduct an official meeting. The ability for official government Commissions and Councils to conduct virtual meetings during the Covid pandemic showed this to be an efficient way to meet. This bill would allow for members to attend meetings virtually as long as members could clearly hear and see each other through the use of appropriate technology. It also provides for a reduction in the number of members down to 12 for purposes of a quorum.

Several members of the legislature are appointed members of the LTCCC and due to scheduling conflicts they are not always available to attend meetings in person. However, due to requirements of the Open Meeting law they are not currently allowed to speak even though they may be accessing the meeting virtually. Due to challenges relating to transportation, caregiving responsibilities or health issues it may also be difficult for some members to travel to Providence to attend meetings in person. Passage of this bill to allow virtual attendance will serve to address these challenges. I urge the Committee to recommend its passage to the full House.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Maureen Maignet, Policy Advisor
Senior Agenda Coalition of RI