

ALEX LEE

ASSEMBLYMEMBER, TWENTY-FIFTH DISTRICT

ASSEMBLY BILL 339

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



SUMMARY

This bill would allow for continued remote participation in local and state hearings/meetings and expand language access, allowing for more people to participate in government meetings and decisions.

BACKGROUND

Laws governing public participation for the State Legislature and local agencies all require certain processes for members of the public to participate at open meetings. However, participation is often limited to those who are able to travel to meetings to speak in-person, and to those who speak and read English. These requirements, along with inconsistent language access standards, often preclude immigrants and low-income people from participating.

While COVID-19 precautions have increased usage of remote participation options, not all agencies allow for effective remote participation. Additionally, there is frequently confusion over how to access meetings through remote technology options. The lack of timely notification and clear instructions reinforces obstacles.

THE PROBLEM

COVID-19 has exacerbated existing barriers that prevent people from participating in one of our democracy's greatest features - public discourse designed to inform the rules and policies that govern us. In addition, linguistic, physical, and geographic isolation prevents constituents from exercising their civic duties, which limits our governing bodies from achieving their full potential.

SOLUTION

AB 339 would protect the public's access to government, both during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

This bill would ensure that:

- Local agencies and the State Legislature provide both call-in and internet service-based options for all public meetings so constituents can participate either remotely or in-person.
- Language access services are provided for immigrant communities.
- Meeting agendas and instructions for accessing meetings remotely are posted in a timely and accessible manner.

SUPPORT

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability (Sponsor)

ACLU CA Action (Co-sponsor)
Abundant Housing LA
Alianza Coachella Valley
Alliance for Children's Rights
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)
California Children's Trust
California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA)
California Institute for Rural Studies
California Teachers Association
California Work & Family Coalition
California YIMBY
Californians Aware
Californians for Justice
Californians for Pesticide Reform
Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment
Central California Asthma Collaborative
Central California Environmental Justice Network
Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
Citizens for Choice Nevada County
Clean Water Action
ClimatePlan
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement
Courage Campaign
Cultiva La Salud
Dignity and Power Now
Dolores Huerta Foundation
Faith in the Valley
Fairmead Community & Friends
Fresno Barrios Unidos
Fresno Building Healthy Communities
Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce
GenerationUp
Gente Organizada
Greenbelt Alliance
Hmong Innovating Politics
Housing California
Housing Is A Human Right OC
INDIVISIBLE District 46
Inland Equity Partnership
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
Jakara Movement
Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay
Justice LA
La Defensa
League of Women Voters
Los Angeles Sunshine Coalition
Mi Familia Vota
NAMI LA
NextGen CA
NOlympics LA
Nuestra Casa
Orange County Emergency Response Coalition
Orange County Equality Coalition
Orange County LGBTQ Center
People's Budget OC

People for Housing OC
People's Collective for Environmental Justice
People's Homeless Task Force OC
Pesticide Action Network
Planning and Conservation League
PolicyLink
Ponoma Economic Opportunity Center
Pueblo Unido CDC
Riverside NAACP
Root & Rebound
South County Homeless Task Force
Time for Change Foundation
Voices for Progress
White People 4 Black Lives
Women for: Orange County
Youth Justice Education Clinic, Loyola Law School

Andrae Gonzales, Bakersfield City Council
Bryan Ososio, Mayor of Delano
Daniel Penaloza, Porterville City Council
Hilda Solis, LA County Supervisor
Katie Valenzuela, Sacramento City Council
Rigel Robinson, Berkeley City Council

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