



TO: Senate Government Operations Committee

FROM: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association

RE: S.55

DATE: January 11, 2024

Good afternoon. I am Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on S.55.

VSBA is a non-profit, membership organization with the purpose of supporting school boards in fulfilling their duties, promoting public education, and providing a collective voice for strong education policy in Vermont. VSBA has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to equity of opportunity and a strong, sustainable public education system.

VSBA members actively participate in the resolutions process, which is the foundation for our legislative work - from opportunities to submit resolutions for consideration by the full delegation, a live resolutions webinar, and the right to deliberate and vote on each proposal at the annual meeting, our members drive the process.

VSBA's member-proposed and approved resolutions provide directives to VSBA's staff to pursue a legislative framework that allows elected school board members to fulfill their statutory duties. Article 16E of the VSBA bylaws states that when passed by sixty percent (60%) of the voting delegates, a resolution shall become a position or statement of the association. VSBA has over 50 resolutions covering a range of issues that are important to school boards.

At the 2023 annual business meeting, VSBA members passed the following resolution which is relevant to S.55:

*The General Assembly should amend Vermont's Open Meeting Law to make fully remote meetings a permanent, voluntary option.*

Based on the resolution, VSBA supports S.55 which amends the Open Meeting Law to authorize public bodies to meet through electronic means without designating a physical meeting location.

Based on the discussion at the annual meeting and throughout the resolutions process, I don't anticipate that school boards will opt to meet remotely without a physical meeting location on a regular basis. They will, however, appreciate having that option in the event of a natural disaster such as the flooding that occurred in Vermont over the summer or any other event that makes providing a physical meeting location difficult to achieve.

My only additional comment on S.55 is that it seems the effective date should be changed to July 1, 2024.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.55.