



Mr. Joseph C. Ferreira
Mr. Robert L. Jubinville
Ms. Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney
Mr. Christopher A. Iannella
Ms. Eileen R. Duff
Mr. Terrence W. Kennedy
Mr. Paul DePalo
Ms. Mary E. Hurley

March 23, 2022

Dear Members of the Governor's Council:

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, urges you to maintain the same level of public access to Governor's Council meetings that the people of Massachusetts have depended on over the last two years.

We were disappointed that the Governor's Council reverted to an in-person-only approach to attending its meetings and hearings when the State House reopened. We ask you to reconsider. When remote access became a necessity in response to the pandemic, it did not merely preserve public bodies' ability to operate; it also opened the door to civic engagement for many people who had previously been shut out.

The option to observe and participate in government meetings and hearings remotely should be continued as we go forward. An in-person requirement to attend meetings in Boston puts a heavy burden on citizens who live in western Massachusetts or Cape Cod. It also makes attendance difficult for those with certain disabilities, with child or elder care responsibilities, who do not drive or have access to mass transit, or who are unable to take substantial time off from work.

The important work of the Governor's Council to evaluate judges and other gubernatorial appointments, consider pardons and commutations, and review warrants for the state treasury impacts the lives of all residents of the Commonwealth. The League asks that you work quickly to reestablish the ability to virtually access and participate in the Governor's Council meetings in addition to attending in person.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth L. Foster-Nolan".

Elizabeth Foster-Nolan
President