





**OCEAN STATE CENTER
FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

*Your Go-To Center for Disability Services,
Resources & Information*

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 OSCIL.ORG

March 30, 2026

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the House State Government and Housing Committee

On behalf of the Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL), I am writing in support of House Bill H7676, which amends RI's current Open Meetings law to allow for the use of videoconferencing for advisory bodies covered by Open Meetings law.

Since 1988, OSCIL has worked to remove the physical and attitudinal barriers that prevent Rhode Islanders with disabilities from fully participating in their communities. One of the mantras commonly invoked by the disability community is "Nothing about us without us". Being able to participate in meetings virtually is an important tool necessary for individuals with disabilities to be heard and participate in government entities that impact their lives.

Virtual participation in meetings removes many of the challenges such as transportation, availability of support staff to assist them, physical & communication access to meetings and other health concerns associated with their disability such as environmental sensitivity or other underlying conditions that limit in-person participation.

In short, advisory bodies will benefit from the increased participation of individual with disabilities and their outcomes will better reflect the views of all Rhode Islanders.

For these reasons, OSCIL respectfully urges the committee to support and pass H7676.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Pinkham". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Beth Pinkham, Associate Director