



NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF THE BLIND

RHODE ISLAND

*Live the life you want.*

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March 30, 2026

Testimony in Support of H. 7676

Dear House State Government and Elections committee members:

I am writing on behalf of the members of the National Federation of the Blind of Rhode Island to urge your support for H7676. This legislation would modify the Rhode Island Open Meetings Laws and allow advisory public bodies to meet virtually. This modification of the existing Open Meetings law will enable more blind and low vision Rhode Islanders to serve on these advisory bodies. Currently, the requirement for in-person attendance creates a significant barrier to public service. Many blind and low-vision Rhode Islanders rely on paratransit or fixed-route public transportation. Unlike our sighted counterparts, we lack the flexibility of personal transportation . This often results in members being stranded at meeting locations long after a session has ended, waiting for scheduled transportation while others have already returned home.

By allowing virtual meetings for advisory bodies, you are removing a physical barrier to civic engagement. We believe the passage of H7676 is a fundamental matter of **equity and inclusion which will benefit all Rhode Islanders**. Thank you for your time and consideration of this crucial matter.

Sincerely

Grace Pires

President, National Federation of the Blind of RI