



June 1, 2023

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Governance and Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 407
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 557 (Hart) – Support [As Introduced]

Hearing Date: June 7, 2023 – *Senate Governance and Finance Committee*

Dear Senator Caballero:

The undersigned organizations are pleased to express our support for Assembly Bill 557 (Hart), related to emergency remote meeting procedures under the Ralph M. Brown Act.

The changes made to California Government Code section 54953 by Assembly Bill 361 (R. Rivas, 2021) were of vital importance to local agencies looking to meet during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to continue to conduct the people's business. These changes were necessary in order to permit local agencies to meet during a time that it would have otherwise been impossible to meet in-person safely. Important safeguards were included to ensure transparency and accountability, including the fact that the emergency provisions were only applicable in instances where the California Governor had declared a state of emergency.

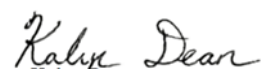
While California seeks to transition to a post-COVID era, the threat of additional emergencies remains, as has been made abundantly clear by recent flooding and wildfires. Absent any legislative intervention, the processes established by AB 361 to provide remote meeting flexibility to local agencies in emergency circumstances will expire at the end of this year. To remain best equipped to address future emergencies and allow local agencies to effectively react and respond, AB 557 would eliminate the sunset on the emergency remote meeting procedures added to California Government Code section 54953. Additionally, AB 557 would adjust the timeframe for the resolutions passed to renew an agency's temporary transition to emergency remote meetings to 45 days, up from the previous number of 30 days.

This legislation will preserve an effective tool for local agencies facing emergencies that would otherwise prevent them from conducting the people’s business when faced with an emergency. For these reasons, the undersigned organizations are pleased to support Assembly Bill 557 (Hart).

Sincerely,



Marcus Detwiler
Legislative Representative
California Special Districts
Association



Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate
California State
Association of Counties



Carlos Machado
Legislative Advocate
California School Boards
Association



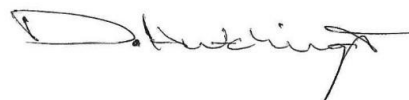
Johnnie Piña
Legislative Affairs Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Sarah Bridge
Senior Legislative Advocate
Association of California
Healthcare Districts



Dorothy Johnson
Legislative Advocate
Association of California School
Administrators



Dane Hutchings
Managing Director
Renne Public Policy Group
on behalf of
City Clerks Association of California



Rena Masten Leddy
Board President
California Downtown Association



Danielle Blacet-Hyden
Deputy Executive Director
California Municipal Utilities Association



Martha Alvarez
Chief of Legislative Affairs and
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Los Angeles Unified School District



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of
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Jean Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California

CC: The Honorable Gregg Hart
Members, Senate Governance and Finance Committee
Jonathan Peterson, Consultant, Senate Governance and Finance Committee
Ryan Eisberg, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Ronda Paschal, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom