



State of New Hampshire

GENERAL COURT

CONCORD

Senate President Chuck Morse
State House Room 302
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

House Speaker Sherman Packard
State House Room 311
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Mister President and Mister Speaker:

As we discussed in Joint Legislative Facilities this morning, Democratic leadership from the Senate and House believe that remote public access to all legislative proceedings should be maintained in the upcoming budget. We are encouraged to hear that the legislative budget should contain sufficient funds to continue providing remote public access.

This past year has posed some unprecedented challenges for the legislature, our constituents, and almost every facet of the way we work and live. These challenges have presented us with the opportunity to get creative and rise to the occasion, and we are proud of the ways in which we have innovated and safely continued to do our work and serve the people of New Hampshire.

The ability for the public to access legislative hearings has always been invaluable to our work, as the best public policy is arrived at when we hear from as many voices and perspectives as possible. The remote access that has been provided to the public during the pandemic over the past has proven to be tremendously successful and has afforded individuals the opportunity to weigh in on policy when they otherwise would not have been able to.

Policy committees have heard from people who do not have access to transportation, or for whom travel to Concord is not feasible. We have heard from parents who were able to call in and voice their opinions while caring for their children at home. During the Senate budget hearing, we heard from many Granite Staters living with developmental disabilities, for whom travel to the State House is often difficult and can even be impossible. By acknowledging the reality that for many hardworking Granite Staters with work and family obligations, coming to Concord to testify is not feasible, we can accommodate our constituents by keeping remote access available. We all benefit from hearing from as wide an array of views as possible.

As legislators, we have been elected by the people we serve to represent them and their interests. This includes doing everything we can to make sure their voices are heard and that everyone has a chance to participate in the legislative process.

Again, we are encouraged that funding should not be an obstacle to continuing this critical accommodation to our constituents. We respectfully request that remote access to legislative hearings be made a permanent part of legislative operations.

Respectfully,

Senator Donna M. Soucy, Senate Democratic Leader

Representative Renny Cushing, House Democratic Leader