



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE ▪ BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90210

Julian A. Gold, M.D., Mayor

July 12, 2023

The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
Chair, Assembly Committee on Local Government
1020 N Street, Room 157
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 411 (Portantino) Open meetings: teleconferences: neighborhood councils.
City of Beverly Hills – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Aguiar-Curry:

On behalf of the City of Beverly Hills, I am writing to express our SUPPORT for SB 411 (Portantino). The legislation effectively builds on the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act, providing the necessary adjustments to modernize and adapt to the ever-evolving technological landscape.


COVID-19 exposed the importance of flexibility and adaptability in governance, with virtual meetings providing a viable solution for public officials and constituents to connect, even in the face of extraordinary circumstances. At the conclusion of COVID-19, many cities, including Beverly Hills, still allow for residents to provide public comment during meetings via telephone, virtually through zoom, or through having their emails read into the record. We are able to make better informed decisions as a City Council by hearing from our constituents who are unable to attend in person. By allowing for teleconferencing during meetings, SB 411 bridges the geographical gap between public officials and the communities they represent, while fostering greater public participation.

The bill's specifications for neighborhood councils are particularly encouraging. By mandating conditions such as public accessibility to teleconferencing locations, the opportunity to comment in real-time, and ensuring a quorum of members participating from within city boundaries, SB 411 maintains the transparency and openness that is the cornerstone of good governance. This will promote more citizen participation and make government more responsive to local needs.

We appreciate the provision which empowers a city council to adopt a resolution authorizing or prohibiting neighborhood councils from using these alternate teleconferencing provisions as we do believe in preserving local control as it allows for city-specific needs to be considered, thus ensuring each city can adapt the legislation to its unique circumstances.

We believe this bill successfully strikes a balance between maintaining the principles of transparency, accessibility, and public participation, while adapting to the evolving needs of our city and our time. For these reasons, the City of Beverly Hills SUPPORTS SB 411 (Portantino).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julian A. Gold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Julian A. Gold, M.D.
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills

cc: The Honorable Anthony Portantino, Senator, 25th District
The Honorable Ben Allen, Senator, 24th District
The Honorable Rick Zbur, Assemblymember, 51st District
Andrew K. Antwih, Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange