

Honorable Committee Members:

HB 2560A seems so simple and good. The additions to ORS 192.670 require public bodies to invest in, and provide, telephone and Internet access to view and testify in all public meetings.

Who could find fault with that? Only those who will be further marginalized.

The issue here is how a local jurisdiction spends scarce money and staff time.

Should it be to further enable the already empowered, technically "savvy" and "connected" members of well-funded advocacy groups, such as 1000 Fiends of Oregon?

Or should the State be dictating that a local jurisdictions spend scarce money and staff time to inform, empower and hear from the members of our society who aren't technically savvy, who may be uncomfortable with electronic communications, and who aren't members of an organization that rallies them with emails, text messages, Twitter and Facebook?

Ironically, I participated in an OAPA discussion today about "citizen involvement," and a planner from the City of Sandy made a compelling appeal for planners to get out into the community and not rely just on city websites and Zoom public meetings.

The net on HB 2560A is that it will significantly benefit organized groups and well-off White activists in making their voices even louder compared to ordinary citizens who are already being marginalized by local jurisdictions' failure to find ways to actually engage a broader range of citizens and not just talk, talk, talk about "Inclusiveness."

The non-technological folks, who are overall comparatively older, poorer, non-White and not members of an advocacy group or spending their scarce time on Twitter, will become even further marginalized.

Thank you for your re-thinking about what is more of a "Trojan Horse" than may be apparent.

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