

City of Palo Alto

Office of the Mayor and City Council

May 21, 2025

The Honorable Jesse Arreguín
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 6720
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 239 (Arreguín) – Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body.
City of Palo Alto – Notice of Support**

Dear Senator Arreguín,

On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 239, which would authorize specified subsidiary bodies of local agencies—such as advisory boards and commissions—to use alternative teleconferencing procedures through January 1, 2030. SB 239 strikes a thoughtful balance between improving public access, encouraging civic participation, and ensuring government transparency.

For cities like Palo Alto that rely heavily on the expertise and engagement of volunteer-led advisory bodies, the flexibility offered by SB 239 is essential. Allowing these groups to meet via teleconference under clear and accountable conditions reduces barriers to participation, especially for those with caregiving responsibilities, mobility constraints, or work-related travel.

The bill preserves public access by requiring a physical meeting location, visible online participation from members, and real-time opportunities for the public to provide comment. It also upholds the principles of the Brown Act by prohibiting the use of this teleconferencing model for advisory bodies with jurisdiction over police oversight, elections, or budgets—ensuring higher-stakes decisions retain in-person transparency standards.

As a local government committed to expanding democratic participation and embracing digital tools to engage the public, we commend your leadership on this important legislation. SB 239 helps modernize the governance of subsidiary bodies while preserving the integrity and openness of local government.

For these reasons, the City of Palo Alto supports SB 239 and respectfully urges its passage.

Sincerely,



Ed Lauing
Mayor
City of Palo Alto

Cc: Assembly Member Marc Berman
Senator Josh Becker