



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF MARYLAND, INC.**

**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS**

**HB 413 – OPEN MEETINGS ACT - MINUTES - VIDEO AND AUDIO STREAMING**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

**BY: BARBARA SCHNACKENBERG AND NANCY SORENG, CO-PRESIDENTS**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2016**

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

Since the Open Meetings Act was passed in 1992, public bodies have been required to maintain written minutes of each meeting for at least one year. This legislation would allow public bodies with the technology for live and archived video streaming their public meetings to dispense with written minutes under certain circumstances. That is, video streaming must be available, either closed captioning must be available in the video streaming or a written transcript of the meeting must be available, and there must be an electronic index so that a viewer is able to go directly to the portion of the meeting of interest to him.

With the protections provided, we believe this legislation recognizes evolving technology and should be allowed.