The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic
government depends on 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. The
Open Meetings Act which was first passed in 1992 would meet these criteria if
implemented as intended. However, the Act provided no training requirement for those
charged with the obligation of carrying out the provisions of the Act.

More than 20 years after passing the Open Meetings Act, the General Assembly
passed, in 2013, a training requirement among the provisions of the Act. The Office of
the Attorney General now provides an online training course for those charged with
administering the Act. Training is also offered through certain organizations concerned
with implementing the provisions of the Act. But today there is no way to know who
needs the training nor any certification required to demonstrate that those needing the
training have actually completed it. HB 250 attempts to correct these insufficiencies.

The findings of the Open Meetings Compliance Board for the last several years suggest
that those responsible for carrying out the provisions of the Open Meetings Act still do
not always have an accurate understanding of the requirements of the Act. We urge the
committee to act favorably on this legislation or to find some way of assuring that the
people most in need of understanding the Open Meetings Act actually have the
knowledge to conduct meetings appropriately under the law.