



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 126

January Session, 2023

Substitute House Bill No. 5796

House of Representatives, March 21, 2023

The Committee on Planning and Development reported through REP. KAVROS DEGRAW of the 17th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY MANDATORY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS AT PUBLIC AGENCY MEETINGS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force
2 to study the feasibility of a mandatory public comment period at any
3 public meeting of any public agency as defined in section 1-200 of the
4 general statutes. The task force shall examine (1) the benefits and
5 drawbacks of mandatory public comment periods at public agency
6 meetings; (2) best practices for conducting such public comment
7 periods, including the length of time allotted for comments, the rules
8 governing comments and the process for signing up to speak; (3) legal
9 and practical considerations involved in implementing mandatory
10 public comment periods, including the potential impact on the
11 efficiency of public agency meetings, the cost of providing additional
12 staff support for public comment periods and the potential for abuse or
13 disruption of the public comment process; (4) potential benefits of
14 incorporating new technology into the public comment process, such as

15 allowing comments to be submitted electronically or providing a
16 contemporaneous broadcast of public agency meetings on an Internet
17 web site; and (5) any other issues the task force deems relevant to
18 implementing the public comment process.

19 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

20 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

21 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

22 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
23 Representatives;

24 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

25 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
26 Representatives;

27 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate; and

28 (7) The executive director of the Freedom of Information
29 Commission, or the executive director's designee.

30 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
31 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
32 of the General Assembly.

33 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
34 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
35 be filled by the appointing authority.

36 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
37 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
38 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
39 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty
40 days after the effective date of this section.

41 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the

42 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to planning
43 and development shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

44 (g) Not later than January 1, 2024, the task force shall submit a report
45 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of
46 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to planning
47 and development, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of
48 the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it
49 submits such report or January 1, 2024, whichever is later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Subsec. (a)(4), "live stream" was replaced with "a contemporaneous broadcast of public agency meetings on an Internet web site" for clarity.

PD *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill establishes a task force related to mandatory public comment periods at public agency meetings and does not result in a fiscal impact.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5796

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PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS AT PUBLIC AGENCY MEETINGS.***

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Research does not analyze Special Acts.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 21 Nay 0 (03/08/2023)