



Allegheny County Council

County of Allegheny
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Legislation Text

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Amending Article II of the Rules of Council for Allegheny County Council through the creation of a new Section F.11., in order to provide a standardized rule governing participation by telephone in all committees of Council.

Whereas, the Rules of Allegheny County Council, as currently drafted, expressly allow for participation in regular and special meetings of Council by telephone, see Article II, Rule J.4.; and

Whereas, although the Rules of Council do not specifically permit participation in committee meetings by telephone, the various committee chairs have typically permitted such participation by Council Members who are unable to attend proceedings in person; and

Whereas, while participation in committee meetings by telephone allows for increased awareness of the proceedings that take place in committee, participating in the detailed inquiries often undertaken in the committee process by telephone is often difficult or impossible due to the lack of a clear connection, imperfect telecommunications equipment, and an inability to refer to handouts and other reference materials that are often distributed in committee meetings; and

Whereas, these difficulties are sometimes exacerbated when a Council Member participating by telephone is relied upon to constitute a quorum of a given committee, insofar as it is not always possible to tell when or if a member participating by phone has been disconnected, which would result in a loss of quorum and force a stay in the committee's proceedings; and

Whereas, it is the judgment of Council that, due to these factors, participation in committee discussion via telephone should be expressly recognized within the Rules of Council, but that Council Members participating in committee meetings by phone should not be counted for the purposes of achieving a quorum and should not vote on matters before the committee;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MOVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY,

That this Council hereby amends the Rules of Council as follows:

Article II. Meetings

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F. Committee Meetings

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11. For the purposes of debate and discussion during the course of a meeting of any committee of Council, participation by any Member of Council by telephone shall be permitted, although the

Council Member(s) participating by telephone shall not be counted for the purposes of establishing a quorum, nor shall any such Member vote on any question before the committee.

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