

STATEMENT BY REP. THOMAS OPPEL, GRAFTON HOUSE DISTRICT 9

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee

I am pleased to submit this statement in support of HB 1518, legislation to permit the participation of members of county legislative delegations to participate remotely.

We are fortunate in Grafton County to already permit such participation, and I see no reason why all 10 counties should not have the same privilege.

Each member of a county delegation represents a constituency that deserves to be represented by the individual they elected to do that job at every opportunity. And we live in an age when remote participation is not only possible, it is widely accepted as a means of communication when in-person participation is simply not possible, for whatever reason.

Denying the ability of a member of a county delegation to participate simply because they are unable to be present at a particular location and particular time is not simply about denying that representative the ability to do their job. It is truly about denying a voice to the constituency who elected that individual to represent them.

In the interests of full transparency and representative democracy, I urge this committee to recommend ought to pass for HB 1518.