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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
and Drafting

Legislative Budget
Office

H.B. 257
135th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 257's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Reported by Senate Government Oversight

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Hoops and Claggett

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Jared Cape, Budget Analyst

Highlights

- Eligible state and local public bodies opting to use remote communication technology to conduct public meetings or hearings could incur some procurement costs or information technology to handle remote meetings if they are not equipped to do so already.

Detailed Analysis

The bill grants permissive authority to certain state and political subdivision public bodies to use remote communication technology, excluding teleconferences, to conduct certain public meetings or hearings. As a result, eligible state and local public bodies (listed in the accompanying LSC bill analysis) opting to use remote communication technology to conduct public meetings or hearings could incur some procurement or information technology costs to handle remote meetings if they are not equipped to do so already. Under the bill, in order to hold such meetings, the public body must establish a policy and meet the qualifications established in the bill related to adequate public notice, public participation, distribution of information and materials, and in-person attendance. However, the bill prohibits public bodies from holding virtual meetings if the meetings deal with votes on nonroutine expenditures, significant hiring decisions, or votes on tax matters.

Public meetings are also prohibited from being held remotely if the board's members are compensated (excluding compensation for qualified expenses) for their position as board members or elected to their positions by a vote of the general public. However, otherwise ineligible public bodies may hold joint virtual meetings unless the meetings deal with votes on nonroutine expenditures, significant hiring decisions, or votes on tax matters. Under the bill, retirement boards have additional restrictions if they opt to meet remotely. Finally, the bill declares an emergency and thus goes into immediate effect.