

Ensuring an Informed Public: State Open Records and Meetings Laws

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Troutman Pepper attorneys Stephen Piepgrass and Mary Grace Metcalfe published the chapter on “Technology as Protector: Challenges, Adaptations, and Best Practices for Remote Public Meetings During States of Emergency” in the American Bar Association’s book titled, *Ensuring an Informed Public: State Open Records and Meetings Laws*.

The chapter dives directly into virtual meetings, an area that many state and local governments had not addressed before the mechanism became necessary and ubiquitous in the summer of 2020. Stephen Piepgrass and Mary Grace Metcalfe, who both practice in the governmental investigations and regulatory realm, discuss the increasing use of virtual meetings, including the adaptations necessary to ensure public access, and in some instances public participation, as well as the challenges attendant to those meetings. Using the COVID-19 pandemic as an example, Stephen and Mary Grace describe the types of emergency responses that require government bodies to turn to virtual meetings, including descriptions of those states with statutes that explicitly contemplate the option of virtual meetings and those that were faced with having to rely upon executive orders to create temporary exemptions from state open meetings laws. Finally, the authors offer tips on best practices for remote public meetings.

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