



## ISSUE MEMORANDUM

<b>DATE</b>	April 11, 2023
<b>TO</b>	Committee Members, California State Board of Optometry (CSBO)
<b>FROM</b>	Gregory Pruden, Executive Officer
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Agenda Item #5G – Discussion and Possible Action on Legislation: SB 544

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 544

**AUTHOR:** Laird

**BILL DATE:** March 20, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act: teleconferencing

**SPONSOR:** Unknown

### AUTHOR REASON FOR THE BILL:

According to the author: "In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread shutdown, the Governor signed an executive order to provide flexibility so state boards and commissions could continue to serve Californians remotely and safely. Although meant to be temporary, we saw significant benefits of remote meetings such as increased participation and reduced operating costs to the state. Senate Bill 544 codifies the Governor's Executive Order allowing state boards and commissions the opportunity to continue holding virtual meetings without being required to list the private address of each remote member, or providing public access to private locations. The additional flexibility and safeguards may also help attract and retain appointees, who provide invaluable perspective. This bill will promote equity and public participation by removing barriers to Californians that experience challenges attending physical meetings, such as people with disabilities, caretakers, seniors, low-income individuals, and those living in rural or different areas of the state."

### DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT LEGISLATION:

This bill would amend portions of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Act) that will remain operative after July 1, 2023, to remove indefinitely the teleconference requirements that a state body post agendas at all teleconference locations, that each teleconference location be identified in the notice and agenda of the meeting or proceeding, and that each teleconference location be accessible to the public.

The bill would require a state body to provide a means by which the public may remotely hear audio of the meeting, remotely observe the meeting, or attend the meeting by providing on the posted agenda a teleconference telephone number, an internet website or other online platform, and a physical address for at least one site, including, if available, access equivalent to the access for a member of the state body participating remotely. The bill would require a member or staff to be physically present at the location specified in the notice of the meeting.

ANALYSIS:

The Act regulates meetings held by state bodies and it guarantees the public the right to access these meetings subject to specific exceptions. To ensure this right, the public is entitled to attend, monitor, and participate in state agencies' meetings where actions and deliberations are being conducted unless there is a specific reason to exclude the public. Promoting public participation in the form of open meetings is in both the governments and the public's best interest and provides transparency in government functions.

This bill incorporates the use of modern technology in the Act, making it easier for all Californians and people from all over the world to not only view but actively participate in public meetings.

FISCAL: Significant costs due to planning and logistics for physical board and committee meetings.

SUPPORT: None known.

OPPOSITION: None known.

POSITION: Recommendation: Support

ATTACHMENT: [SB 544 \(Laird\) Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act: teleconferencing](#)

Version: 3/20/2023 – Amended Senate