

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**2023 Legislative Session**

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<b>Reference No.:</b>	CR-078-2023
<b>Draft No.:</b>	1
<b>Committee:</b>	Committee of the Whole
<b>Date:</b>	09/26/2023
<b>Action:</b>	FAV

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**REPORT:** Favorable 8-0-3: Council Members Dernoga, Blegay, Burroughs, Franklin, Hawkins, Ivey Olson, Oriadha.

Abstain: Fisher, Harrison, Watson.

CR-78-2023 was considered in the Committee of the Whole (COW) on September 12, 2023. CR-78-2023 amends the Rules of Procedure for the County Council.

Chair Dernoga updated the sponsors, indicating that the Chair, Council Members Olson, Oriadha, Burroughs, and Blegay have signed on as sponsors.

The Chief Legislative Officer and drafter indicated that this resolution amends the County Council Rules with regard to the ability to vote virtually. This discussion started from issues in late March and early April when various Council Members were participating in Council meetings virtually and voting virtually as was permitted during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the allowance for Council Members to participate and vote virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic only lasted while under the State of Emergency. Since we are no longer under the COVID-19 State of Emergency, at this time, Council Members are not permitted to vote virtually.

This Resolution would change the Council Rules to continue to permit that accommodation for the Council Members. The accommodation is limited to extraordinary circumstances beyond the Council Members' control. CR-78-2023 also modifies Rule 3.1 Attendance and Rule 8 voting to permit Council Members to participate and vote virtually.

A motion to move with a favorable recommendation was made by Council Member Blegay and seconded by Council Member Burroughs. The motion failed 5- 5. A substitute motion was not made. The Council Chair indicated that CR-78-2023 would benefit all Council Members should there be a need to participate and vote

virtually. It was noted that it requires six votes to pass out of committee. CR-78-2023 was held in committee.

After the COW vote, various Council Members spoke passionately in explaining their vote for or against the resolution.

When asked, the Chief Legislative Officer indicated that neighboring jurisdictions modified their rules regarding virtual voting post-pandemic: Montgomery County changed their regulations to allow for virtual voting in limited circumstances, and Anne Arundel had proposed legislation.

A Council Member asked for the definition of “reasonable accommodation” since he believes Council Member Oriadha's reasonable accommodation was denied by not allowing her to vote. The Chief Legislative Officer requested time to thoroughly vet a “reasonable accommodation” definition of an employee and employer relationship.

The Council convened in Committee of the Whole (COW) on September 26, 2023, to re-consider CR-78-2023. The Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee Director provided an overview of the previous COW work session held on September 12, 2023.

The Council Chair indicated that CR-78-2023 was held in committee and that public testimony would not be heard since the legislation was previously held in committee.

The Council Chair called for a motion. A motion to move with a favorable recommendation was made by Council Member Ivey and seconded by Council Member Blegay. The COW voted favorably 8-0-3 on CR-78-2023.