

HB 857 -- MEETINGS OF GOVERNING BODIES OF POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

SPONSOR: West

This bill establishes basic requirements for public comment periods in meetings of governing bodies of political subdivisions.

The bill requires each governing body to designate a time for public comment at the beginning of its public meetings. The comment period must be available to residents, businesses, and taxpayers of the political subdivision. Rules requiring decorum and civility will be allowed, but the category or content of remarks made during this time cannot be restricted.

The minimum length of time allowed for each speaker and for the public comment period itself are prescribed in the bill. Governing bodies can request identifying information of individuals desiring to participate in the comment period. No individual can be prohibited from participating in or removed from the meeting except as provided in the bill.

Governing bodies of political subdivisions are also required to provide a method for individuals who are unable to attend the public comment period of a meeting to submit a written statement.

If it is necessary to hold a meeting on less than 24 hours' notice, if the meeting is conducted exclusively electronically, or if it is conducted at a time not reasonably convenient to the public, the reason for departing from the normal requirements must be included in the meeting's minutes.

This bill is similar to HB 2206 (2024).