

CHAPTER 2017-214

House Bill No. 1295

An act relating to Monroe County; providing definitions; providing an exception to general law; authorizing the School Board of Monroe County or the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, or any political subdivision thereof, to conduct public meetings, hearings, and workshops by means of communications media technology; authorizing the adoption of rules; providing for notices of public meetings, hearings, and workshops conducted by means of communications media technology; providing applicability and construction; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. (1) As used in this act, the term “communications media technology” has the same meaning as provided in s. 120.54(5)(b)2., Florida Statutes.

(2) Notwithstanding s. 286.011, Florida Statutes, the School Board of Monroe County or the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, or any political subdivision thereof, may authorize public meetings, hearings, and workshops to be conducted by means of communications media technology if the board adopts uniform rules authorizing the use of communications media technology and no final action is taken at such meeting. The rules must provide procedures for conducting public meetings, hearings, and workshops, and for taking evidence, testimony, and argument at such public meetings, hearings, and workshops, in person and by means of communications media technology. The rules must provide that all evidence, testimony, and argument presented shall be afforded equal consideration, regardless of the method of communication.

(3) If a public meeting, hearing, or workshop is to be conducted by means of communications media technology, or if attendance may be provided by such means, the notice shall so state. The notice for public meetings, hearings, and workshops using communications media technology shall state how persons interested in attending may do so and shall name locations, if any, where communications media technology facilities will be available.

(4) This act does not limit a person’s right to inspect public records under chapter 119, Florida Statutes. Limiting points of access to public meetings, hearings, and workshops subject to s. 286.011, Florida Statutes, to places not normally open to the public is presumed to violate the right of access of the public, and any official action taken under such circumstances is void. Other laws relating to public meetings, hearings, and workshops, including penal and remedial provisions, apply to public meetings, hearings, and workshops conducted by means of communications media technology, and shall be

liberally construed in their application to such public meetings, hearings, and workshops.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 6, 2017.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 6, 2017.