



April 22, 2021

Chairman Martin Causer
Pennsylvania House Majority Policy Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
147 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman Causer,

Thank you for inviting me to provide testimony to the House Majority Policy Committee on the impact of laws and regulations that were suspended, waived or otherwise changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To serve the public as an impartial witness for business and personal transactions, a notary must communicate with an individual in person. The notary must identify the individual, assess their willingness and ability to act, and observe them signing the record. Only then can the notary complete the notarial certificate, including the notary's official stamp and signature, thereby ensuring the receiver of the record that the notary performed his or her duties according to the law.

The pandemic demanded some alteration in the notary's execution of these duties. Quarantining and social distancing meant there had to be another way to meet the legal requirement for personal appearance. States turned to remote online notarization (RON), which was already a stable technology before the pandemic, as an alternative. Thirty-two states have now enacted legislation enabling RON.

Notarial acts have not changed; RON has become another tool to accomplish them. Although notaries were being called on to learn a different method, their underlying duties and responsibilities remained the same. The Department of State should be commended for its work in implementing RON in such an efficient and timely manner, despite the challenges presented to it.

We anticipate that the initial surge in demand for RON services caused by the pandemic will be followed by a return to more ordinary levels once individuals are able to interact with each other in familiar patterns. RON will continue to be an option for notaries to provide traditionally secure, yet technologically advanced service to the public. For this reason, we do not foresee a need to amend or repeal the current law, particularly Act 97 of 2020, and we do not recommend legislative action at this time.

Thank you.

For the Association,



Marc L. Aronson
President and C.E.O.