

1 State of Arkansas
2 93rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2021

SR 1

4
5 By: Senator Hickey

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7 **SENATE RESOLUTION**

8 A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR
9 COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL
10 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

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13 **Subtitle**

14 TO ADOPT RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR
15 COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-
16 THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF
17 ARKANSAS.

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20 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
21 STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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23 SECTION 1. The rules of procedure for committees of the Senate of the
24 Ninety-Third General Assembly of the State of Arkansas are adopted to read as
25 follows:

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27 2021 Regular Session Senate Rules for Committee Procedures

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29 1. Purpose. In order to provide for continuity of government and the
30 carrying out of its Constitutional responsibilities related to the regular
31 legislative session, while also allowing for member, staff, and public
32 participation in the legislative process in an environment that is as safe
33 and healthy as possible, the Senate of the Ninety-Third General Assembly of
34 the State of Arkansas adopts these temporary emergency rules regarding the
35 conduct of committee meetings for the 2021 Regular Session.



1 requirements may result in discipline by the member’s respective chamber.
2 Other individuals violating these rules may be removed from the committee
3 room or public comment holding room.

4 a. Assigned Seating. Committee member seating will be assigned
5 for each committee. A legislator who is not a member of a committee shall
6 not be seated at the committee table unless presenting a bill. Each committee
7 room shall have a designated seating area for members waiting to present a
8 bill to the committee. Member seating shall remain the same for the duration
9 of the 2021 Regular Session.

10 b. Mask Requirement. A mask or other cloth face covering is
11 required to be worn over the mouth and nose of every individual in committee
12 rooms and public comment holding rooms at all times, except an individual
13 who: is speaking directly into the microphone; is able to maintain physical
14 distance of six (6) feet or more from other individuals; is consuming food or
15 drink; or has a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face
16 covering.

17 c. Physical Distancing. Every effort shall be made to maintain
18 physical distancing of at least six (6) feet in the committee rooms and
19 public comment holding rooms. Seating arranged to provide for this distance
20 shall not be rearranged. Individuals are not permitted to enter the room
21 once all available seating is filled.

22 d. Health Screening. All individuals shall have submitted to a
23 temperature check and onsite health screening and been given an armband
24 indicating admittance at the entrance to either the State Capitol Building or
25 the MAC Building that calendar day prior to entering the Senate chamber, a
26 committee room, or public comment holding room.

27 e. Removal of Trash. Committee members, staff, and members of
28 the public shall remove and properly dispose of any trash he or she creates
29 during the course of the committee meeting.

30 f. Security. The Senate shall place staff in all committee
31 rooms and public comment holding rooms to ensure compliance by members of the
32 public with room capacity limits, masking requirements, and physical
33 distancing requirements.

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35 7. Committee Agendas.

36 a. Referred Items List. As a bill or resolution is filed and

1 assigned to a committee by each chamber, the bill or resolution shall be
2 placed on the referred items list for the committee. The bills and
3 resolutions on the referred items list are bills and resolutions that are
4 referred to the committee but not currently on a committee agenda. In
5 addition, a bill or resolution that has failed to pass one time in committee
6 will revert to the referred items list. The committee chair will use the
7 referred items list to create the regular agenda for each committee meeting.

8 b. Creation of Committee Agenda.

9 (1) Bills and resolutions pulled from the referred items
10 list will be placed in one of the following three categories on the committee
11 agenda:

12 (A) Regular Agenda – bills and resolutions to be
13 considered by the committee on the date of the agenda;

14 (B) Consent Agenda – bills and resolutions on the
15 committee agenda for which there is no known opposition or expected public
16 testimony and that may be taken up at any time by the committee; or

17 (C) Deferred Bills – bills and resolutions for which
18 committee consideration has been deferred either for failure of the sponsor
19 to appear or at the request of the sponsor.

20 (2) It is the responsibility of a primary sponsor or the
21 member who will be presenting the bill or resolution in committee to contact
22 the committee chair to let the chair know that he or she is ready to have the
23 bill or resolution placed on a committee agenda. The primary sponsor or the
24 member who will be presenting the bill or resolution in committee shall
25 advise the chair of:

26 (A) A specific date on which he or she is available
27 to present his or her bill or resolution;

28 (B) Whether the bill or resolution is considered to
29 be controversial;

30 (C) The number of witnesses he or she plans to bring
31 with him or her to testify before the committee; and

32 (D) An estimate of the time the committee may need
33 to consider the bill or resolution.

34 (3) The committee chair will provide committee staff with
35 a list of bills and resolutions that will be considered at the next committee
36 meeting and the order in which they will be taken up.

1 c. Consent Agenda.

2 (1) The chair may place a bill or resolution on the
3 consent agenda if the sponsor has advised the chair that the bill or
4 resolution has no known opposition and no public testimony to be given on the
5 bill or resolution.

6 (2) Prior to including a bill or resolution on the consent
7 agenda, the chair shall ask that the committee members review the list of
8 bills or resolutions being added to the consent agenda, and the chair shall
9 state that without objection the bills and resolutions will be placed on the
10 consent agenda.

11 (3) If any member objects, the bill or resolution shall be
12 moved to the referred items list.

13 (4) A bill or resolution that has been placed on the
14 consent agenda may at any time be moved to the referred items list if the
15 chair learns of opposition to the bill or resolution or at the request of the
16 sponsor.

17 (5) A bill or resolution on the consent agenda may remain
18 on the agenda for multiple meetings before being taken up by the committee,
19 and its sponsor is not subject to the provisions of subsection 7.e. of this
20 rule, regarding failure to appear to present the bill or resolution.

21 d. Posting Committee Agenda.

22 (1) The committee agenda shall be posted at least
23 eighteen (18) hours prior to the committee meeting.

24 (2) The committee agenda shall state the room number for
25 the public comment holding room to which members of the public should report
26 to wait to be called to provide testimony on a bill or resolution.

27 e. Failure of Sponsor to Appear at Committee Meeting.

28 (1) The first time a bill or resolution appears on the
29 regular agenda and the sponsor or his or her designee does not appear at the
30 committee meeting to present his or her bill or resolution, the member's bill
31 or resolution will be moved back to the referred items list. It is within
32 the discretion of the chair to place the bill or resolution on the regular
33 agenda for the next scheduled meeting of the committee.

34 (2) If a bill or resolution appears on a regular agenda
35 three (3) times without the member or his or her designee appearing to
36 present the bill or resolution, the bill or resolution will be moved to the

1 deferred list.

2 f. Consideration of Bills and Resolutions. Only those items
3 listed on the day's regular agenda or consent agenda shall be considered by
4 the committee. Bills or resolutions shall not be called up from the referred
5 items list with less than eighteen (18) hours' notice. This rule may be
6 suspended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the membership of the committee in
7 order to allow the committee chair to create the agenda in a more expedient
8 manner.

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10 8. Public Participation. Due to restraints on space and physical
11 distancing required in committee rooms and public comment holding rooms, only
12 a member of the public who is present to testify on a bill or resolution that
13 is listed on a committee agenda will be allowed in a committee room or public
14 comment holding room. In order to allow for public participation in the
15 legislative process during the public health emergency in a manner that
16 provides for the health and safety of legislators, staff, and members of the
17 public, public comment regarding bills or resolutions being considered by a
18 committee shall be allowed in any of the following ways:

19 a. Committee Rooms.

20 (1) Agency Personnel. Each committee room shall have a
21 designated seating area for state agency personnel that need to be present in
22 the committee meeting to answer questions regarding various bills or
23 resolutions related to their agency.

24 (2) Media. Each committee room shall have a designated
25 seating area for members of the media.

26 (3) Other members of the public. Each committee room
27 shall have a number of designated seating for members of the public who are
28 present to testify on a specific bill or resolution for which testimony is
29 currently being taken.

30 b. Public Comment Holding Rooms. Members of the public present
31 in the State Capitol Building to present testimony on a bill or resolution
32 listed on a committee agenda that is not currently being discussed in the
33 committee will be sent to the public comment holding room or bullpen assigned
34 to the specific committee. Each public comment holding room will have
35 limited capacity with physically distanced seating. There will be no
36 standing allowed in the public comment holding rooms. Once all available

1 seating is full, no other individuals will be permitted in the room. Members
2 of the public will wait in these designated areas until the bill or
3 resolution on which they plan to testify is called. They will then be
4 directed by Senate staff posted in the public comment holding room to the
5 appropriate committee room to give testimony. Following presentation of his
6 or her testimony, the individual will exit the committee room.

7 c. Public Comment Sign-In Sheets. Public comment sign-in sheets
8 for each committee meeting will be posted electronically with the agenda on
9 the General Assembly website and physically at each public comment holding
10 room. An individual's name appearing on a public comment sign-in sheet is not
11 a guarantee that the individual will have an opportunity to speak during the
12 committee meeting.

13 d. Lobbyists. For purposes of these rules, a lobbyist is
14 considered to be a member of the public and shall adhere to the rules
15 regarding public participation and presence in committee rooms.

16 e. Additional Public Seating. Additional socially distanced
17 seating areas will be designated throughout the State Capitol Building for
18 use by members of the public.

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20 9. Remote Participation.

21 a. Members.

22 (1) A member of a legislative committee who is either
23 unwilling or unable to physically attend a meeting of a committee of which he
24 or she is a member due to one of the following reasons shall be allowed to
25 participate remotely via the electronic means designated by the Senate for
26 remote participation:

27 (A) He or she is considered an individual at high
28 risk for severe illness related to COVID-19;

29 (B) He or she has a household member or individual
30 for whom he or she is a caregiver who is considered an individual at high
31 risk for severe illness related to COVID-19;

32 (C) He or she has been directed by the Arkansas
33 Department of Health to quarantine due to close contact with an individual
34 who has tested positive for COVID-19; or

35 (D) He or she has tested positive for COVID-19.

36 (2) The following shall apply regarding the deadline for

1 submitting a request to participate remotely in committee:

2 (A) A committee member who wishes to participate
3 remotely may submit a request to the Secretary of the Senate, who will submit
4 that request to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate for approval. The
5 request shall be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day prior to the
6 meeting at which the member wishes to participate remotely.

7 (B) If a member planning to be physically present is
8 unable to attend a committee meeting due to a failed health screening or
9 another reason listed under subsection 9.a.(1), he or she may be allowed to
10 participate remotely under the provisions of these rules, and the 4:00 p.m.
11 previous day requirement shall be waived.

12 (3) The Secretary of the Senate shall notify the
13 requesting member and the chair of each committee on which the requesting
14 member sits of the approval for the member to participate remotely in the
15 committee proceedings.

16 (4) A member participating remotely shall be considered
17 present and in attendance at the committee meeting, including for purposes of
18 determining a quorum.

19 (5) A member participating remotely shall be able to be
20 seen and heard while making any comments during debate, asking any questions
21 of other members or of those testifying, and when submitting his or her vote.

22 (6)(A) If a member's remote connection is unintentionally
23 disconnected or lost, the member will no longer count toward the quorum for
24 the meeting and will not be able to vote on any motion before the committee
25 until he or she is connected again and can be seen and heard in the committee
26 room.

27 (B) If a member is unable to reconnect through
28 remote technology that allows him or her to be seen and heard by the
29 committee, a majority of the committee members may vote to allow the member
30 to participate by phone for the purpose of voting, and that allowance shall
31 only apply to the committee meeting at which that vote is taken.

32 (7) Committee staff shall record the names of all
33 committee members that participated remotely on the committee report for each
34 day.

35 b. Agency Personnel. A representative of a state agency who is
36 unable to physically attend a meeting of a committee at which he or she is

1 requested by the committee to testify shall be allowed to provide his or her
 2 testimony via electronic means designated by the Senate for remote
 3 participation at the committee meeting if he or she:

- 4 (1) Is in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19;
- 5 (2) Has been directed by the Arkansas Department of Health
 6 to quarantine due to close contact with an individual who has tested positive
 7 for COVID-19; or
- 8 (3) Failed the health screening required under subsection
 9 6.d. of these rules required for entering the committee room on the day he or
 10 she has been requested to testify.

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 12 10. Suspension of Rules. In order to ensure protection of the health
 13 and safety of all individuals participating in legislative committee meetings
 14 during the 2021 Regular Session and to ensure uniformity of procedure among
 15 the committees during this time, except as otherwise stated herein, these
 16 rules may only be suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership of
 17 the Senate.

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 19 11. Planned Activities and Committee Dinners. Planned activities for
 20 committees and committee dinners will not be allowed during the 2021 Regular
 21 Session.

22 **ATTACHMENT A – NINETY THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Committee Rooms/Meeting Assignments**

	HOUSE						SENATE					
	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Room	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Room
A Committees												
Education		9:30am		9:30am		151						OSC
Judiciary		2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**		MAC A		9:30am		9:30am		171
Public Health, Welfare And Labor		9:30am		9:30am		MAC C		2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**		130*
Transportation		2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**		MAC C						
Revenue and Taxation		2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**		151		9:30am		9:30am		OSC
B Committees												
Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative & Military Affairs	2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**			MAC A						
Agriculture and Economic Development	2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**			151		9:30am		9:30am		130*
Civ. County and Local Affairs	2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**			MAC C		9:30am		9:30am		171
Insurance and Commerce	9:30am		9:30am			MAC C		2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**		171
State Agencies and Governmental Affairs	9:30am		9:30am			151		2:00 pm**		2:00 pm**		OSC
C Committee												
Senate Transportation, Technology & Legislative Affairs								9:30am		9:30am		OSC
Joint Committees												
Energy												
Public Retirement and Social Security Program	8:30am					MAC A		8:30am				MAC A
Joint Budget Committee (JBC)		8:30am	8:30am	8:30am		MAC A		8:30am	8:30am	8:30am		MAC A
JBC Subcommittees		7:30am	7:30am	7:30am		MAC A/B		7:30am	7:30am	7:30am		MAC A/B
House Select Committees												
House Rules						MAC B						
House Technology						MAC B						
Senate Select Committees												
Senate Rules												172
Senate Efficiency												172

* Room 130 is a House Committee Room. Its use by Senate Committees, as indicated in the table, was approved by the House Management Committee on September 10, 2020.
 ** Afternoon meetings will convene at 2:00 p.m. or upon adjournment of the corresponding chamber, but not earlier than 2:00 p.m.

1 **Chambers will convene at a time to be determined by each chamber.**

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House Committee Room	“Bullpen” Room	Senate Committee Room	“Bullpen” Room
MAC A	MAC Lobby	130	138
MAC B	MAC Lobby	171	207
MAC C	4th Floor MAC	OSC	272
151	149		

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