

Arkansas House Newsletter

January 7, 2021

Committee Procedures and Public Access for 2021 Regular Session



ARKANSAS SENATE • ARKANSAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • ARKANSAS SECRETARY OF STATE

In an effort to allow for public participation in the legislative process in an environment that is as safe and healthy as possible, leadership for the Arkansas House of Representatives, the Arkansas Senate, and the Arkansas Secretary of State's office have agreed to several proposed rules and procedures for the 2021 Regular Session.

With limited exceptions, a mask or other cloth face covering will be required to be worn over the mouth and nose of every individual in committee rooms and public comment holding rooms at all times. All individuals will be submitted to a temperature check and onsite health screening and be given an armband indicating admittance at the entrance to either the State Capitol Building or the MAC Building that calendar day prior to entering the House or Senate chamber, a committee room, or public comment holding room.

Committee agendas:

Proposed rules addressing committee agendas are designed to prevent crowded rooms and hallways. The agendas will give the public a clear expectation of what bills will be heard on a given day.

As a bill is filed and assigned to a committee by each chamber, the bill shall be placed on the referred items list for

the committee.

Bills pulled from the referred items list will be placed by the committee chairs in one of the following three categories on the committee agenda:

(A) Regular Agenda – bills to be considered by the committee on the date of the agenda

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

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

Committee agendas will be posted at least eighteen (18) hours prior to the committee meeting.

Public seating:

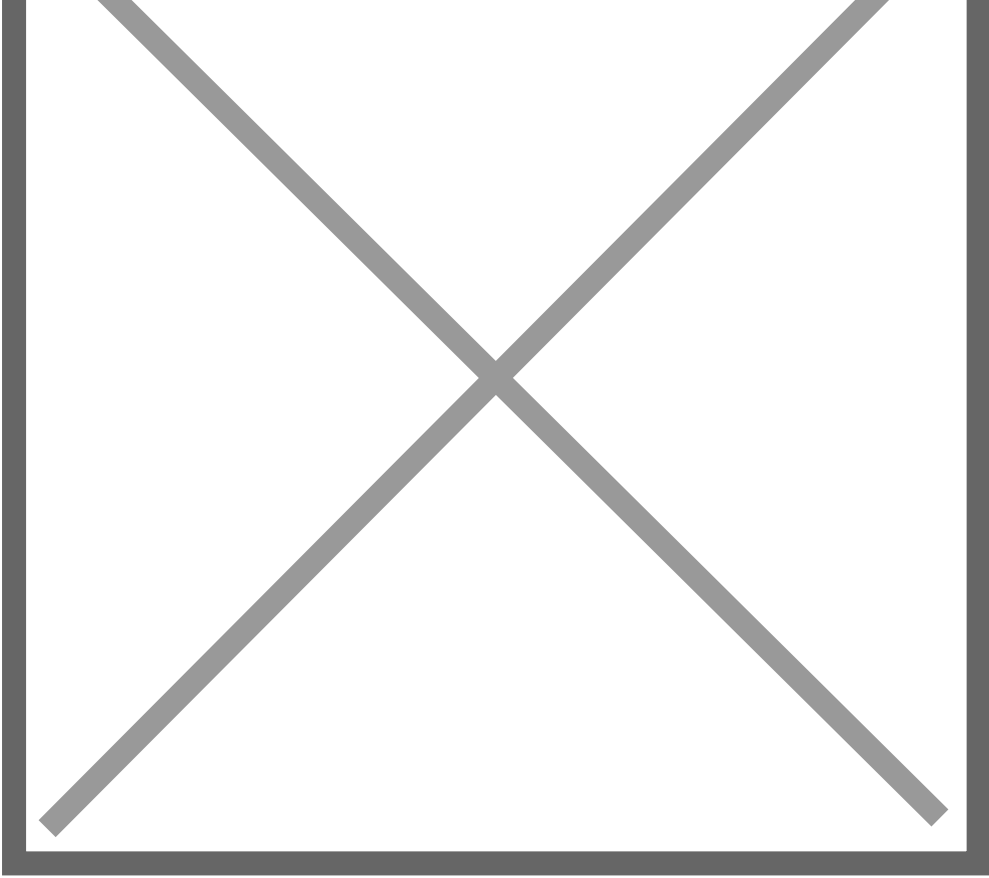
Members of the public who wish to present testimony on a bill listed on a committee agenda that is not currently being discussed in the committee will be sent to the public comment holding room (bullpen) assigned to the specific committee. Each public comment holding room will have limited capacity with physically distanced seating. Members of the public will wait in these designated areas until the bill on which they plan to testify is called. Live streaming of the committee will be available in the holding rooms and staff will direct individuals to the committee rooms to give testimony.

Public comment sign-in sheets for each committee meeting will be posted electronically with the agenda at www.arkleg.state.ar.us and physically at each public comment holding room. An individual's name appearing on a public comment sign-in sheet is not a guarantee that the individual will have an opportunity to speak during the committee meeting.

Limited public seating will be available in the House Chamber on the 4th floor west gallery. Limited public seating for the Senate Chamber will be located in the east and west galleries on the 4th floor, beginning Tuesday, January 12.

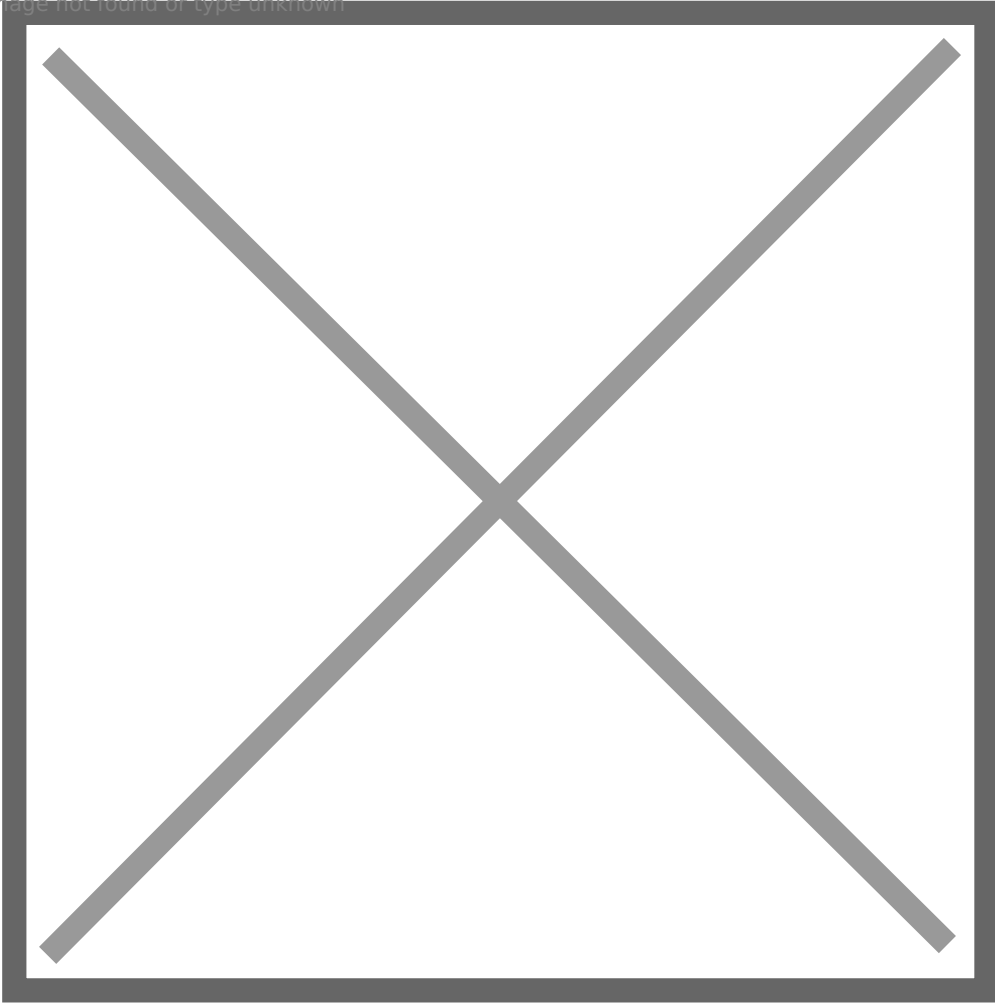
Media seating:

The House Chamber, Senate Chamber and each committee room will have a designated seating area for members of the media.



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