

STEVE FENBERG
President
State Senator
200 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80203
Capitol: (303) 866-4872



COMMITTEES
Vice Chair, Executive Committee of the
Legislative Council
Vice Chair, Legislative Council

President of the Senate

Senate Regulations for Senator Remote Participation

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Section 1 – Remote Participation - General Provisions

1.1 Limited remote participation by Senators permitted

These regulations are authorized by the provisions of Senate Rule 44, which permits the President to promulgate regulations allowing limited remote participation in legislative proceedings by Senators.

1.2 Approval criteria for limited remote participation

The President may permit a Senator to participate remotely on a limited basis if any of the following conditions are met:

- a. The Senator has a likely or confirmed case of a highly communicable disease that is the subject of a declared public health disaster emergency.
- b. Because of birth, adoption, or placement through foster care, the Senator is caring for a new child.
- c. The Senator is the primary caregiver for a family member who is experiencing an extended serious health condition.
- d. The Senator is experiencing an extended health condition that significantly limits the Senator's ability to participate in person.

The President may also permit Senators to participate remotely if limiting the number of people congregating in person in the Senate Chambers would assist in protecting the health of Senators, staff, and the general public.

In evaluating the merit of any request to participate remotely, the President may ask for documentation from the requesting Senator. The authority to permit any Senator to participate remotely rests with the President, who may approve requests for remote participation at his sole discretion, after consultation with the Senate Majority and Senate Minority leaders.

1.3 Notice of intent to participate remotely

A Senator seeking to participate remotely must request permission from the President at least one day in advance of when the member wishes to begin participating remotely. When providing notice, the Senator

should specify the anticipated duration of the remote participation. The President will approve or deny the request within 24 hours and provide notice to the requesting Senator, the Senate Majority Leader, the Senate Minority Leader, the Senate Secretary, and Legislative Council Information Technology staff. If approving a Senator's request, the President may specify the duration that the requesting Senator is permitted to participate remotely.

1.4 Rights, privileges, and responsibilities

Senators who are participating remotely generally may participate with the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as a Senator who is participating in person, after recognition by the Presiding Officer or Committee Chair.

As much as possible, Senators who are participating remotely are expected to be in communication with the Senator's caucus floor leader, committee chair, or other designated member, to stay informed about the legislative proceedings.

Senators who are participating remotely may speak through the audio feed that is being broadcast into the chamber or committee room only after being recognized by the Presiding Officer or Committee Chair, respectively. A Senator who is participating remotely who wishes to be recognized for speaking through the audio feed, should make that request through the Senator's caucus leadership, the Committee Chair, or by other means such as raising one's hand.

Senators participating remotely are expected to be visually present through the remote participation software while participating in legislative proceedings, unless the President or Committee Chair has approved an alternative method. Senators participating remotely are permitted to leave the view of their camera from time to time just like a Senator can leave the floor of the Senate, or committee room, from time to time.

Front desk staff and non-partisan committee staff will provide Senators who are participating remotely with access to amendments as they become available on iLegislate. It will be the responsibility of the Senator to obtain COW amendments from the Senator's caucus leadership.

1.5 Authentication

Legislative Council Information Technology Staff will establish a method for authenticating the identity of Senators who are participating remotely.

Section 2 – Technology

2.1 Remote Participation Software

Unless otherwise determined by the Senate President, all remote participation shall be conducted via Zoom. The Senate President may identify alternative methods of participation, if necessary.

2.2 Recording of Proceedings

All streams of the proceedings conducted remotely shall be recorded and available as part of the public record.

Section 3 – Floor Procedures

3.1 Ascertaining quorum

A Senator is included when calculating a quorum if the President has approved that the Senator may participate remotely and if the Senator is participating using approved remote participation technology. During a roll call to ascertain a Senate quorum, the remotely participating Senator must raise his or her hand into the camera to signal the Senator's presence when the Senator's name is called or the Senator may simply respond verbally.

3.2 Recorded Votes

For recorded votes, a Senator participating remotely must raise his or her hand into the camera to signal the Senator's vote at the appropriate time. If video is unavailable, or if a roll call vote is requested, the President will conduct a roll call for those Senators participating remotely and the Senators will speak into the audio through the remote participation technology. In unforeseen circumstances, such as when the remote participation technology is no longer available, a remotely participating Senator may submit the Senator's vote in writing to the Senator's caucus floor leader, or another caucus member designated by the caucus floor leader, to be provided to the President and entered into the record.

3.3 Committee of the Whole

For standing division votes or votes on motions during the Committee of the Whole, a Senator participating remotely will signal the Senator's position through the remote participation technology. An affirmative vote shall be cast by raising the Senator's hand or standing up in the camera view. If video is unavailable, the Senator participating remotely may submit the Senator's vote in writing to the Senator's caucus leader, or another caucus member designated by the caucus leader, to be provided to the presiding officer.

3.4 Call of the Senate

A call of the Senate cannot be made by Senators who are participating remotely. However, a Senator who is participating remotely can be included in sustaining the call by raising his or her hand into the video screen and being recognized by the President. If video is unavailable, the Senator may submit his or her action of sustaining a call of the Senate by speaking verbally into the audio feed after being called on by the Senate President.

Section 4 – Committee Procedures

4.1 Ascertaining quorum

A Senator is included when calculating a quorum if the President has approved that the Senator may participate remotely and if the Senator is participating using approved remote participation technology. During a roll call to ascertain a Senate quorum, the remotely participating Senator must raise his or her hand into the camera to signal the Senator's presence when the Senator's name is called or the Senator may simply respond verbally and his or her presence shall be recorded in the committee report.

4.2 Recorded Votes

When the Committee Chair conducts a roll call, Senators participating remotely shall speak into the audio through the remote participation technology. Senators must be visually present through the remote participation software while casting their vote. In unforeseen circumstances, such as when the remote participation technology is no longer available, a remotely participating Senator may submit the Senator's vote in writing to the Committee Chair and the vote shall be entered into the committee report