

# MEMO

To: Members of the Executive Committee  
From: Representative Meg Froelich, Representative Hugh McKean,  
Representative Yadira Caraveo, Representative Kyle Mullica  
Senator Joann Ginal, and Senator Jim Smallwood  
Date: May 18, 2020  
Subject: Subcommittee Recommendations on Safety Protocols for the General Assembly

The following recommendations are made regarding new safety protocols for the reconvening of the General Assembly during the COVID-19 health epidemic. These recommendations are being made through consultations with a bi-partisan group of legislators, NCSL, CDPHE and non-partisan staff. The purpose of these written protocols is to ensure a safe and healthy working environment while the General Assembly is reconvened.

## Personal Protections

- Anyone experiencing symptoms (including fever, cough, general aches and pains, and fatigue) should stay home and not come to the Capitol as should anyone who is a high-risk of COVID-19.
- Members, staff and the public are asked to wear masks or facial coverings that they bring from home at all times. These masks should be non medical grade, as those supplies should be reserved for medical professionals. Cloth masks should be washed at home each night. Additional masks will be available for members and staff, if needed.
- Members and staff are asked to wear gloves when possible, which will be available upon request.
- Everyone in the building is asked to wash their hands frequently especially before and after meetings, floor work, upon entering the building and leaving, etc. Hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Hand sanitizer will be placed in the chambers, committee rooms, and in public areas.
- If possible, everyone in the building should carry sanitizing wipes for door handles, faucets, and other high-contact items. People should sanitize personal high-contact items such as keys, phones, and glasses throughout the day and daily when they return home. Everyone is asked to wear new (clean) clothing each day.
- Everyone is encouraged to bring their own water, food, etc. Communal water spigots and food in the House and Senate should be removed to decrease high contact items and communal water fountains should not be used.
- Signage on restrooms about occupancy and cleaning will be created by staff.
- Signage on staircases and elevators will be created. Elevators will be set to automatic - no buttons needed to be pushed.

## Health Screenings

- Everyone entering the building will undergo a health screening including a temperature check. All members of the public will enter the building through the South Side entrance in a line which will follow social distancing protocols. The North Side entrance will be

open as a staff and members entrance, if volunteers are available to complete health checks.

- Depending on availability of volunteers at North entrance, members and staff may be screened before entering the chamber or gallery.
- A fever is 100.4 or higher. Anyone whose temperature is over 100.4 will be given health recommendations and information about how to participate in the legislative process remotely.

## **Social Distancing Guidelines**

- Everyone should practice social distancing in the Capitol, staying a minimum of 6 feet apart from others at all times.
- Members should adhere to social distancing guidelines, being very mindful to stay at least 6 feet away from others. This will require that seating in the chamber be altered to include some members sitting in the gallery and at other locations in the chamber. Microphones will be available in the gallery for members who wish to speak.
- Members of the public will have space available to them in the gallery that will follow social distancing guidelines. Social distancing requirements may limit the number of members of the public that can be admitted at one time. All members of the public are requested to follow social distancing guidelines at all times, including wearing a face covering.
- Members of the press will have space reserved for them in the gallery that will follow social distancing guidelines. Social distancing requirements may limit the number of members of the press that can be admitted to the gallery at one time. A press pool consisting of one television reporter and one digital or print reporter will be permitted access to the House floor when the chamber is in session. All members of the press are requested to follow social distancing guidelines at all times, including wearing a face covering.
- Members will work with their Aides and Interns to make a plan to follow social distancing guidelines. Staff and Aides are encouraged to work from home when possible. Members could also limit access to their physical offices. It is recommended to only have one person working out of each office.
- Non-partisan staff will listen to the guidance from the head of their department who will determine if they need to be in the building or can work from home.
- Areas in the building that previously allowed for larger groups of people to gather in confined spaces will be closed. This includes the House and Senate lobbies and the basement cafeteria. During floor work, members of the public, lobbyists, and staff will be able to watch floor proceedings in either the Old Supreme Court Chambers or the Old State Library (Room 271).
- Communal refrigerators, kitchens, copy machines, printers, mailboxes etc will either have limited use or be sanitized frequently. Staff will post signage directing use.
- Tours of the building will remain cancelled.
- Voting by voice vote and standing vote will be explored, as will options to participate remotely. The Majority Leader, Minority Leader, and Chief Clerk in the House will determine the voting method for members who are not sitting at their desks, in the House.

## **Suggested Protocol for Committee Meetings**

- Public committee testimony and participation will still occur, however access to the committee rooms will be limited to allow for social distancing. Overflow rooms will be available and the public is encouraged to listen and submit testimony online. Additional opportunities to submit written testimony will be available.
- It is recommended to use Old State Library (271), Old Supreme Court Chambers, or Senate Committee Room 357 for committee hearings in order to achieve the greatest social distancing, especially if witnesses are present.
- Witnesses in committee should maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all times. Committee rooms may be reorganized to minimize contact in order to reduce the amount of cleaning and sanitizing necessary. Fewer witnesses should be called to the table at one time, to increase social distance. Consider having witnesses stand at a microphone to eliminate having to disinfect the witness chairs and tables between witnesses.
- If possible, remote participation and written testimony will be encouraged.
- Microphones will be covered and participants will be asked to adjust with a fresh tissue.
- The Joint Budget Committee plans to have meetings held in LSB-A with proper spacing of the members and the audience. Audience overflow will be placed in LSB-B. Meetings will be streamed and some presentations may be given remotely.
- Committees are asked to be paperless.

## **Protocols for Floor work**

- Members will sit using every other seat in each row on the floor and members will avoid sitting directly behind another member. Therefore, every other row will only have two people sitting in that row. The Chief Clerk in the House and Secretary of the Senate will make the new seating charts in consultation with caucus leadership.
- Members that are experiencing symptoms or are at high-risk of COVID-19 should stay home and notify their leadership. This will help to create seating charts and ensure that a quorum is present.
- Aides and interns will not be allowed on the floor, to allow for social distancing. Non-partisan staff will be asked to only be in the chamber if necessary for floor work proceedings.
- Microphones in the well will be covered using disposable socks. Tissues should be used to adjust microphone or podium height. Portable microphones will be used in the gallery.
- Members are asked to maintain social distancing on the floor, including in the well, center aisle, etc. Members are recommended to have only one person on either side of the well and can use additional space in each chamber to wait to speak. Leadership in each caucus is asked to help facilitate and convey members who wish to speak who may not want to be able to come to the well due to social distancing. This can be done through notifying or texting leadership, the Chair of the COW or the Secretary of the Senate/Chief Clerk in the House, for example.
- Staff will prop open doors to the chambers so that no one will need to touch door knobs. Everyone in the chambers should be especially mindful of the items that they handle. They will be encouraged to adjust microphones and other communal items using fresh tissues, to clean surfaces as often as possible, and to bring their own food, beverages and water bottle from home. Cards will not be accepted in the lobby, signage with

information posted on how to contact each member through their preferred electronic communication. Sergeants will not distribute items onto member desks.

- In the chamber, members and staff will be encouraged not to use paper, whenever possible. The Chief Clerk in the House and the Secretary of the Senate will determine protocols regarding materials that have been previously printed and distributed.
- Non-partisan staff will notify Leadership if the chamber should go into recess so that surfaces can be sanitized. Non-partisan staff will work to continually sanitize items that are frequently contacted.
- Plexiglass partitions have been ordered and will be placed in a few places in the House and Senate where 6 foot social distancing is not feasible.