

By: Representative Shepherd

HOUSE RESOLUTION

TO ADOPT EMERGENCY RULES FOR THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FOR THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS IN THE HOUSE CHAMBER
DURING THE 2021 REGULAR SESSION.

Subtitle

TO ADOPT EMERGENCY RULES FOR THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD
GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the Governor declared and has since extended a state of emergency due to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic; and

WHEREAS, in order to provide for the continuity of government and the carrying out of the General Assembly's constitutional responsibilities related to the regular legislative session, it is necessary to adopt certain protocols and procedures to ensure a safe and healthy environment for members, staff, and public participation in the legislative process,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

Section 1. Intent and Duration.

(a) Upon affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the House of Representatives, these emergency procedures shall become effective and applicable to the proceedings of the House of Representatives and its



committees for the duration of the 2021 Regular Session of the Ninety-Third General Assembly.

(b) If the procedures set forth herein conflict with the Rules of the House of Representatives, these procedures shall supersede the Rules of the House of Representatives.

Section 2. Health and Safety of the House.

(a) To comply with Department of Health recommendations and to protect the health and safety of representatives, staff, and others who access House properties, a mask or other cloth face covering over the mouth and nose shall be worn with exceptions for participants in recognized debate or under special circumstances as authorized by the Speaker.

(b) To comply with Department of Health recommendations and to protect the health and safety of representatives, staff, and others who access House properties, appropriate physical distancing shall be maintained among individuals unless transparent barriers are in place.

(c) All representatives, staff, and others prior to entering House properties shall submit to and pass a temperature check and health screening if such screenings are being conducted.

Section 3. Voting.

(a) The Electronic Voting System shall have the same force and effect as a Roll Call. (House Rule 102).

(b) Any representative who will be absent from the House may pair his or her vote with a representative who shall be present. (House Rule 99)

(c) In addition to votes cast using the Electronic Voting System and pair votes, representatives may cast votes using:

(1)(A) The Electronic Voting System's Virtual Voting Console operational on electronic devices assigned to individual representatives and operational outside the House Chamber but within the communications network maintained for the General Assembly.

(B) In the event of a sounding of the ballot (House Rule 100), votes cast remotely through the virtual voting console shall be confirmed by the physical presence of the representative at the time the ballot is sounded; or

(2)(A) Limited-Directed Proxy:

(B) A representative may submit in writing to the Speaker of the House a request to vote by proxy. For purposes of these procedures, "in writing" includes submission of the request by electronic means.

(C) The Speaker of the House shall direct an approved request to vote by proxy to the requesting representative's respective Majority or Minority caucus leader, or his or her designee, who will be physically present to vote as proxy for the absent representative. A caucus leader or his or her designee may vote by proxy for more than one (1) absent representative.

(D) All votes by proxy shall be indicated in writing by the absent representative no later than one (1) hour before the House session begins. The Speaker of the House may waive the deadline in order to accommodate extraordinary circumstances.

(E) A representative authorized to vote by proxy shall be counted as present for purposes of establishing a quorum of the House but shall not be eligible for daily expense reimbursements.

(F) The physical presence of a representative who requested authorization to vote by proxy shall invalidate the authority to vote by proxy.

(G) Copies of all proxy votes cast shall be provided to the Chief Clerk of the House, who shall record proxy assignments and voting preferences in the House Journal.

(H) A quorum established through the use of proxies and sessions held involving votes cast by proxy shall satisfy the requirement that the General Assembly meet at the seat of government every year, as set forth in Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 5.

(I) In the event of a sounding of the ballot (House Rule 100), votes cast by proxy shall not be stricken.