

**Delaware House of Representatives**

**House Majority Caucus**

**For Immediate Release:**

**March 31, 2022**

**House Announces Hybrid Committee Meeting Process**

**for In-Person, Remote Participation**

*New process will allow residents to watch meetings, offer public comment*

*remotely, or attend meetings at Legislative Hall*

DOVER – With the House returning to session next week, legislators want the public to be aware of a new way to follow and participate in the committee process in real time.

The global pandemic forced governments, private companies and other entities to rethink how they conduct business. The General Assembly held the vast majority of its committee meetings and floor sessions during 2020 and 2021 virtually. The House and Senate have resumed in-person floor sessions, which are live-streamed on the [legislative website](https://legis.delaware.gov/).

Committee meetings had been conducted via Zoom since January 2021 into March 2022, allowing residents for the first time to watch and offer public comments from the convenience of their own homes, a practice that allowed for record participation in meetings last year.

Earlier this month, the House resumed in-person committee meetings at Legislative Hall and established options to allow residents to continue viewing and participating remotely. The new system is different than Zoom and has required staff and members to learn and acclimate to new technology. This hybrid style of committee meeting will continue indefinitely.

“COVID reshaped many of our lives, but it also made us think outside the box about how we conduct business. One positive change was the increased transparency that has come from streaming our meetings and sessions online. Even as the House has resumed full in-person committee meetings, we have recognized the value of the virtual aspect and have decided to continue this practice,” said **House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf**.

“The new hybrid system has required us to step away from Zoom and start using a new system, which has had a learning curve. There admittedly have been some challenges during the soft launch of the new system, but we ask that residents be patient and understand that our staff are managing the in-person meetings they always have capably done, while learning a new streaming system on the fly. There are going to be issues along the way, but our long-term goal is to increase overall transparency and residents’ access to their government. I appreciate the long hours and hard work our staff has put into the process and hope Delawareans will see the benefit to this.”

Under the new system, residents are once again able to attend House committee meetings in person in Legislative Hall. However, space in the committee rooms is limited. Residents are encouraged and able to watch a livestream of the proceedings on the legislative website by following a link on each [committee meeting page](https://legis.delaware.gov/CommitteeMeetings/House). Those wishing to give public testimony should use the call-in number and password provided on the same page. (The call-in number should not be used primarily for listening to the meeting.)

Written comments are strongly encouraged for all persons who wish to provide public comment during a House Committee meeting. All written comments should be submitted to HouseCommitteeComment@delaware.gov. Public comments will be accepted in advance of a committee meeting and by close of business the day after the meeting has adjourned. All public comments are considered part of the official committee record.

The House returns to session next week, with committee meetings [announced for April 5-6](https://legis.delaware.gov/CommitteeMeetings/House).

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