



## *The Maryland House of Delegates*

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

### **2021 HOUSE COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

All House committee work will be conducted virtually for the 2021 legislative session. The following framework for House Standing Committees is based on what we know right now about COVID-19. These are all subject to change, based on changing public health trends.

For planning purposes, during the first third of session (January 14<sup>th</sup> through at least February 12<sup>th</sup>), House committee work for standing committees will occur during the following time blocks (as needed):

- Mondays 1:30pm – 5:30pm
- Tuesdays through Thursdays 11am – 12:30pm; 1:30pm – 5:30pm; 6:30pm – 8:30pm
- Fridays 11am – 12:30pm; 1:30pm – 5:30pm

### **HEARINGS**

- ***Bill hearings will begin on January 14, 2021 on pre-filed bills.*** Pre-filed bills will be available online in mid-December and the hearing schedule will be available during the first full week of January 2021 on the Maryland General Assembly website. Witness sign-up for pre-filed bills that will be heard on January 14<sup>th</sup> will be open via the MGA website beginning at 10am on Tuesday, January 12, 2021.
- Every on-time bill will receive a hearing. The standing committee chair continues to have full discretion over the length of the hearing.
- The hearing schedule for each committee will be posted at the latest during the week before the hearing is scheduled.

### **WITNESS SIGN-UP**

- ***Witness sign-up will be opened online through the Maryland General Assembly website 48 hours before the bill hearing beginning at 10am until 3pm.*** Witnesses can sign up on Thursdays for Monday hearings and Fridays for Tuesday hearings.

- ***The specific bill order will be posted on the Maryland General Assembly website the day before the hearing.*** If a bill hearing is scheduled for a Monday, the hearing order will post on Friday.
- The House standing committees will cap bill hearings at ***a maximum of 50 witnesses per bill.*** As a point of reference, less than three dozen on-time bills during the 2020 legislative session had more than 50 witnesses signed up.
- The witness sign-up software will not allow witnesses to sign up as a panel. The sponsor may communicate with the committee about other witnesses that the sponsor wants to testify with them and the chairs will make every effort to accommodate those requests

**SUBCOMMITTEES:** While subcommittees are not subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act, ***all subcommittee work will be livestreamed*** through the Maryland General Assembly website for the 2021 legislative session.

**VOTING SESSIONS:** All standing committee ***voting sessions will be livestreamed*** through the Maryland General Assembly website for the 2021 legislative session. The vote lists will be available on the Maryland General Assembly website at least two days prior to the voting session.

**CO-SPONSORS:** For the 2021 legislative session, ***co-sponsors will not be listed on the blue backs*** to avoid passing paper among a large number of members.

**BILL FILES:** Electronic copies of the bill files will be available by request to any member of the public after the bill hearing by contacting the standing committee.

- Bill files will be available through the MGA website when the bill is on the House floor for second reader. For bills that do not pass out of the standing committee, the bill file will be available on the website after the legislative session.