



Delaware General Assembly State of Delaware

**For Immediate Release:
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Legislative Hall to Open to Public in Limited Fashion

Members of the public will have opportunity to sign up to attend session

DOVER – When the Delaware General Assembly reconvenes for session on Tuesday, members of the public will be welcomed back into Legislative Hall in a limited fashion for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Legislative Hall has been closed to the public since March 2020 due to the global pandemic, which has infected more than 10% of Delaware's population and resulted in the deaths of more than 1,670 residents. Lawmakers met virtually throughout 2020 and began the 151st General Assembly virtually before beginning a hybrid in-person session earlier this spring.

However, space constraints inside Delaware's Legislative Hall – one of the smallest statehouses in the nation – have previously made the public's safe return impossible given previous social distancing requirements.

Gov. Carney's latest State of Emergency order, which reduced social distancing requirements from 6 feet to 3 feet, combined with the fact nearly half of all eligible Delawareans are now fully vaccinated, will allow the House and Senate to provide limited public seating inside Legislative Hall on session days.

Under this plan:

- 25 seats in the House gallery and 25 seats in the Senate gallery (50 seats total) will be made available to members of the public each session day.
- Members of the public will be able to reserve seats on the [Delaware General Assembly website](#).
- The House and Senate will use separate online sign-up forms.
- The sign-up forms will be available starting at 5 p.m. the evening before each session day.
- Members of the public will be required to provide their full name and email address to reserve a seat. Confirmation of a seat reservation will be emailed using the address provided.

- Sign-up opportunities will close once all available seats have been reserved or 10 a.m. the following morning, whichever comes first.
- Capitol Police will be provided with the names of individuals who have reserved a seat in each chamber.
- Members of the public will not be able to sign up more than once each day. Individuals will be limited to once seat per person per day. No seating will be available to anyone who arrives at Legislative Hall without a reservation.
- Doors to Legislative Hall will open 30 minutes before each chamber convenes session on a given day. Attendees will be directed up the main staircase (or to the nearest elevator) and to their respective gallery. They will be asked to leave once session is completed.
- Members of the public must wear masks at all times while in Legislative Hall, as with all other state government buildings.
- In order to accommodate as many Delawareans as possible, members of the public are encouraged to sign up to observe only one chamber each day.

Access to the remainder of the building will continue to be restricted, including the wings of the building, the cafeteria (which remains closed) or the library. The House and Senate floors also will be closed to the public.

Legislative session will continue to be broadcast online via the legislative website, as it has all year. This will enable the public to continue to view their government from the convenience of their homes.

Committee meetings will continue to be conducted virtually. The public will not be permitted access to the House chamber on those days (June 9 and June 15-16). Seating will be available in the Senate chamber gallery on any Wednesday in which the Senate is in session.

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