

## **Covid-19: State Legislatures Holding Remote Sessions**

As of Nov. 12, 2020

Beginning in March 2020, one or both chambers in at least 27 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and the Virgin Islands adopted or enacted measures to allow for remote participation, remote voting or proxy voting by members in floor sessions or committee meetings. In most states, the changes are temporary and tied specifically to the COVID-19 emergency. Some chambers or committees in these states, nevertheless, may have chosen not to meet remotely. Also, chamber rules or statutes adopted or enacted prior to 2020 in several states also authorize remote committee proceedings. The information below provides examples of legislative actions and activities where available and may not have captured similar activities in every state. To provide updates or changes, email us.

Legislature/Chamber	Remote Meetings Authorized by Bill, Resolution or Rules in 2020 or Prior	Held Remote/Partially Remote Floor Sessions (includes voting by proxy where noted)	Held Remote/ Partially Remote Committee Meetings	Audio/Videoconference Platform, Voting Tech, Livestreaming and Archives <sup>1</sup> , Captioning	<b>Public Participation</b> (Note: Some links may not work if tied to specific committee hearings held in the past.)
Alabama Adjourned sine die 5/18		No			
Alaska Adjourned sine die 5/20		No	Yes	Using Sonexis for conferencing, also MS Teams. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	The public can join video or teleconferences to provide live testimony.
Arizona Adjourned sine die 5/26	House motion	Yes-House met several times using hybrid of remote and in person.	Yes-House and Senate online-only meetings in April	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	Online request to speak comment form (pre-COVID-19)
Arkansas Adjourned sine die 4/24 Special session 3/26- 3/28	HR 1001, SB 2, SR 3	Yes -members of both chambers could participate in-person or by proxy vote. The Senate "floor" incorporated the gallery. The House met in person at the Jack Stephens Center at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock basketball arena.		Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned.	

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California Adjourned sine die 8/31	HR 100, SR 86	Yes—Senate adopted SR 86 to authorize senate remote proceedings. The Senate conducted remote voting and debate for floor sessions the last week of August. The Senate also allowed remote participation and voting in committee hearings during the summer.  Yes—Assembly. HR 100 was adopted by the Assembly to establish proxy voting procedures, but no proxy votes were cast. The Assembly did not conduct any remote floor sessions.	Senate-Yes. Semi-remote Senate meeting in physically distanced locations within capitol.  Assembly members did not participate remotely in committee hearings or floor sessions, but witnesses and the public testified remotely (video and phone) during committee hearings.	Zoom, WebEx, teleconference. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned.	The Assembly established remote testimony stations throughout the state, allowing the public to testify on bills during committee hearings via live video in public spaces in various cities. Witnesses and the public testified remotely (video and phone) during committee hearings.  Electronic committee testimony accepted Call-in option for testimony by telephone.
Colorado Adjourned sine die 6/15	HR 1002, SR 5 (Statute addressing remote meetings enacted prior to 2020: CRS § 2-3-303(h) (2017) allows members to participate remotely in interim committees.)	Yes-Remote voting was an option for members; some in the House participated remotely once rules were adopted.  Majority of members participated in the chamber. The House installed plexiglass barriers and seated members one desk apart.	No	WebEx. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions; audio for committee hearings. Captioning of floor sessions.	Yes—online form and email addresses for members. Public may submit written testimony online or sign up online to speak in person.
Connecticut Adjourned sine die 5/6 Special session 7/21- 7/28 Special session 9/29- 10/2	HJR 28	Yes-House. Members had to be physically present at the capitol but were able to vote from their LOB office. Members could watch the entire debate on TV, but to participate they would line up outside the House	Using Zoom and Teams for some meetings. During special session, committees met via Zoom; in interim, subcommittees and task forces are meeting via Zoom or Teams.	Implementing IRC Virtual Voting Console (VVC) System to allow members to vote from their office at the capitol. Video livestream of floor sessions and committee hearings via CT-N.	Virtual public listening sessions to allow people at home to voice their opinions various issues. Online form provided to request link to attend and participate.  Committee webpages have members listed with contact information and a

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Special session 9/30- 10/2		chamber to keep socially distanced.  No–Senate. Senators were allowed to enter the chamber sequentially to vote. House and Senate met on different days.			committee-specific email address for public testimony.
Delaware Adjourned sine die June 30 Special session 7/1- present	HCR 85	Yes—Senate and House met virtually after adopting new rules until adjourning sine die. In the House, the Speaker and the Minority Leader were in attendance in Legislative Hall along with some House staff and our state IT support MS Teams. A few times, House members were in their offices in Legislative Hall, mainly because of connectivity issues in their homes but almost all remained off-site. The Senate staff and IT teams were present in the Senate Chamber during their sessions along with the Lt. Governor who is President of the Senate. All senators participated via Zoom.	Yes, subcommittees meeting by conference call.	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings via YouTube and Facebook. Captioning via YouTube.	Telephone conference calls for subcommittee meetings – phone number and access code are provided on legislative website.
Florida Adjourned sine die 3/19	No	No	No		
<b>Georgia</b> Adjourned sine die 6/26 Special session 3/16	HR 1507, SR 1010	Senate – No. Provided televisions and space in the hallways for members to observe proceedings and to keep number of people on the	Yes—House and Joint Committees.	Zoom Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	

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Hawaii Adjourned sine die 7/10 Special session 10/5- 10/6	HR 188, SR 197	floor to a minimum. All debate and voting occurred within the Senate chamber itself. Members used the electronic voting machine at their desk to vote. The significant rule suspension was the time allowed for members to vote, which was extended so they could get to the chamber to vote.  Yes—House and Senate held session in chambers but allowed some members to participate remotely.	Yes–Some House and Senate members participated remotely in some committee meetings.	Zoom Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Also livestreaming Interim Zoom meetings to YouTube and Facebook. Captioned.	Online submission of testimony form (pre-COVID).  For special session, the legislature prepared instructions for those wishing to remotely testify in committee, including a website to submit written testimony and instructions on how to sign up and participate via Zoom.  Witnesses are emailed a link prior to start of proceedings.  https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/docs/R emoteTestimony.pdf
Idaho Senate Adjourned sine die 3/19; House Adjourned sine die 3/20. Special session 8/24- 8/28		No	Yes—some members are participating remotely in interim committee meetings. See  Protocols for Legislative Interim Committee and Working Group Meetings.	Livestreamed. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	When a committee meeting provides for public testimony, LSO will make remote testimony (both phone and video) available so that in-person attendance is not necessary.
Illinois Special session 5/20- present	SR 1201 (Note: put in place for future use; not invoked during the May special session.) Senate Rule	No. However, House session was held at the Bank of Springfield convention center. Used a standalone version of their voting system. Displayed	Yes—Senate <u>hearings are</u> <u>conducted remotely</u> via Zoom and are broadcast live.	Committee hearings: Zoom. Video livestream of floor sessions and committee hearings.	Public is provided email addresses to communicate to committees. Members of the public also may submit electronic testimony or electronic

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	<u>3f</u> allows for remote committee meetings.	votes and bill information on a big screen on the floor.			witness slips in advance of Senate hearing.
<b>Indiana</b> Adjourned sine die 3/11.		No	Legislative Council met remotely on 5/13.	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of Council meeting. Captioned.	An <u>online request to testify form</u> is available, but is for in-person testimony. See also <u>joint policies</u> for the conduct of Electronic Interim Study Committee meetings.
lowa Adjourned sine die 6/14.		No	Yes—In addition to attendance in person, virtual attendance via Zoom is also available for some committees.	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions.	Remote participation for some committees. Zoom link, phone number and meeting password are provided on website.
Kansas Adjourned sine die 5/22 Special session 6/3-6/4		No	Yes—House and Joint Committees.	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of committee hearings via YouTube with captioning.	
Kentucky Adjourned sine die 4/15.	HR 133	Yes—House – by proxy voting.	Yes—Some members in-person, some remote from home, district offices or capitol complex.	Zoom, BlueJeans, Jitsi. IT department is working on a remote voting app that will require members to be in their offices and certify attendance. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	The public is able to join video or teleconferences to provide live testimony.
Louisiana Adjourned sine die 6/1. Special session 6/1-6/30 on budget. Special session 9/28- 10/27	SR 45	Yes–Senate convened in person; remote voting was an option		Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	The public can participate in person but is also given a committee email address and instructions on how to submit written testimony electronically. Some committees provide Zoom logins or links.
Maine Adjourned sine die 3/17.		No	Yes–some.	Zoom, MS Teams House and Senate implementing IRC Virtual Voting Console (VVC) System.	The public is able to participate in committees through an online Zoom meeting format. Those without internet access will be provided with a phone number so that they may call-in to participate. Online testimony may be

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				Audio and video livestream of floor sessions; audio of committee hearings. Livestreamed on YouTube. Captioned.	submitted through the <u>submission</u> portal.
Maryland Adjourned sine die 3/18.		No	Yes-some.	Zoom, MS Teams, Skype Senate implementing IRC Virtual Voting Console (VVC) System. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned.	Email addresses and phone numbers for committee chairs provided on web.
Massachusetts	House, No. 4690, House, No. 2688, Senate, No. 2756, House, No. 4690, House, No. 4676, Senate, No. 2688, Senate, No. 2756	Yes—House and Senate. Formal and informal sessions throughout the past several months. Senate met in formal session on June 16; a majority of members participated remotely.  House met in formal session in May and June. House rules require the Speaker to preside from the chamber; authorizes other members to be physically present; encourages all others to participate remotely. (House adopted temporary emergency rules, which were published as House No. 4690. Within those emergency rules are these two definitions: (1) "Present," a Member either physically present in the House Chamber for a formal session or remotely	Yes	Teleconference (chamber floors); Zoom (committee). Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned.	Online form for some committees; committee contact information provided on website.

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		present, and participating in a formal session; and (2) "Quorum", eighty-one Members present for a formal session.			
Michigan	SB 1108 May permit remote meetings by legislative bodies in any circumstances from 3/18/20 to end of 2020. May also permit remote meetings after the first of next year only in emergencies but excludes "a meeting of any state legislative body at which a formal vote is taken."	No	Yes—Senate standing committees. However, enough members of the committee are physically present for a quorum. Only members physically present may vote or question an individual before the committee.	Zoom, MS Teams House implementing IRC Virtual Voting Console (VVC) System. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	Members of the public or legislature may view or testify before the committee remotely by scheduling online testimony with committee clerk before the meeting date.
Minnesota Adjourned sine die 5/17. Special session 6/12- 6/19; 7/13-7/21; 8/12; 9/11; 10/12-10/15	House Rule 10.01, Senate Report 229/Temporary Senate Rule No. 12.1 (Statute addressing remote meetings enacted prior to 2020: Minn. Rev. Stat. § 3.055, Subd. 1A (1997))	Yes-House. Senate provides for voting by proxy.	Yes—House and Senate	Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned	House— <u>COVID-19 legislation public</u> <u>comment form</u> provided on web.
Mississippi		No			
Missouri Adjourned sine die 5/17.		No			

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Special session 7/27- 8/26; 9/16-9/21					
<b>Montana</b> No regular session in 2020		No	Yes-interim committees	Zoom House and Senate are implementing IRC Virtual Voting Console (VVC) System. Video livestream and archive of committee hearings.	Online comment form for some interim committees are on web. Public may offer live comment at meetings via Zoom.
Nebraska Adjourned sine die 8/13.		No. Installed plexiglass barriers			
Nevada No regular session in 2020; Special session 7/8-7/19; 7/31-8/7	AR 2, SR 4, AR 1, SR 1	No. Installed plexiglass barriers.	Yes	Zoom is being used for committee hearings. Video livestream and archive committee hearings. Captioned.	Public testimony may be presented by phone or written comment. Public also may phone in comments to the floors of both chambers.
New Hampshire Adjourned sine die 6/30	(Statute addressing remote/open meetings enacted prior to 2020: NH RSA § 91A:1-a(VI)(a), (2008), NH RSA § 91A-2 (2008))	Yes—Both the House and Senate have met in person to take action on committee recommendations and to finally vote on bills that have then been sent to the governor. The House also took action when it met in the Whittemore hockey arena at the University of New Hampshire in early Sept. for a veto day to request an opinion of the New Hampshire Supreme Court about meeting virtually under RSA 91A (Case No. 2020-0414, Request for an Opinion of the Justices (Quorum under Part II, Article 20)	Yes—Both the House and Senate have had committees meet and do business remotely. There have been public hearings on bills, work sessions, including consideration of proposed amendments to legislation and committee votes on recommendation to the body. Both House and Senate Committees met under the Governor's Declaration of Emergency, which was cited into the record at the outset of each committee meeting, and induced specific requirements to be in compliance with the spirit of the Open Meetings /Right to Know	Zoom, teleconference For in-person session, used electronic voting clickers. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	Email addresses are available for remote meetings. Telephone numbers also provided. Some committees publish Zoom link for public participation.

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New Jersey	AB 3852, AB 3850	Yes—Assembly and Senate. Leaders present in the chamber. Assembly conducted first in person voting session since March on June 29. Still using remote capability as well; it has varied.	Yes— Assembly and Senate	Teleconference (floor session) Zoom (committees). Video livestream and archive of floor sessions. Audio and video of committee hearings.	Online registration form to request to speak.
New Mexico Adjourned sine die 2/20 Special session 6/18- 6/22	HR 1 and <u>SR 1</u>	Yes—Assembly averaged 20-25 members participating from outside the chamber. Yes—Senate: Only one member (who had been exposed to someone who had tested positive and was self-isolating) participated remotely, from her office by telephone. Phone with speaker set up at her desk on the floor and connected to her office and she was able to debate and vote from there.	Yes—Assembly committees participated fully through Zoom. During interim, Senate and Assembly committees can be held virtually or in the chamber at the chair's discretion. Only members and staff allowed in person.	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Senate floor sessions and committee meetings were webcast.	Video/telephone links for the public to participate remotely. An email address was created for committees and noted on the agendas for the public to submit questions or remarks.
New York	AR 854, <u>SR 3108</u>	Yes–Assembly and Senate - Week of 5/25	Yes Assembly and Senate joint virtual hearings	Assembly and Senate: Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	Senate – Oral testimony by invitation only. Online comments on bills are invited on web.  Assembly – Oral testimony by invitation only—those testifying may fill out an information form online.
North Carolina Adjourned sine die 9/3	HB 1044, HB 1230, SB 704	Yes-House by proxy voting.	Yes-House	Zoom, WebEx, GoToMeeting Audio livestream and archives of floor and committee hearings.	Online form to request to comment for some committees.
North Dakota No regular session in 2020	2019-20 Supplementary Rules 2 c allow members of an interim	No	Yes—interim committee meetings.	MS Teams for legislators connected to a Teams Webinar for members of the public. Also implementing IRC Virtual	

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	committee meeting to participate remotely with approval.  2019 House and Senate Rules 102 provide that "present" means physically in the chamber or room where the session or meeting is being held, and for purposes of a committee meeting; includes participation by means of interactive video or teleconference call.			Voting Console (VVC) System. Video livestreaming, recording and captioning (IBM Watson) meetings.	
Ohio		No	Only House 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force	GoToMeeting, WebEx Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned.	Online witness information form is available in accessible PDF and Word formats for House committee hearings. Through an email address provided.
<b>Oklahoma</b> Adjourned sine die 5/29. Special session 4/6-5/30	SR 17, HR 1032	Yes—Senate. House—implemented proxy voting with a designee for each party. Once the Floor Leader published the floor agenda, a proxy voting form would be sent out to the membership of the House, had to be turned in by a certain time and confirmed by either the Parliamentarian or Clerk. The votes were entered in	Yes-Senate and House	Senate: MS Teams House is implementing IRC Virtual Voting Console (VVC) System. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned.	

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		the voting machine for each vote after being announced on the Floor and proxy voters were listed in the journal for each vote.			
Oregon Adjourned sine die 3/8. Special session 6/24- 6/26; 8/10	(Constitutional amendment authorizing remote meetings during emergencies enacted prior to 2020: Art. X-A, Sec. 5)	No. House and Senate members required to be on floor to vote; at other times, members participated from their offices.	Yes–Senate and House	MS Teams. Audio and video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned.	When public testimony is taken, an online registration form is used that has been created in Qualtrics; information on how to submit written testimony and provide oral testimony (if applicable) is on committee meeting agendas. When someone registers to testify, they receive an email with a phone number to call into the meeting. All committee meetings are being shown on an outdoor viewing station on the front steps of the Capitol. An outdoor public access kiosk is also available for any meeting where public testimony will be taken; anyone may walk up and use the laptop to speak to a committee. See Remote Public Testimony Memo.
Pennsylvania	SR 318, HR 834	Yes—Senate held remote sessions while being deliberate in choosing to hold session still in Harrisburg, in the Capitol, in the Senate Chamber. Both leaders were present with key staff, along with the President Pro Tem as the presiding officer and additional staff. Continued operating in Harrisburg, the seat of government, which did not	Yes	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and some committee hearings. Floor session livestreams are captioned.	Phone number and login provided on website for the public to call in.

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Rhode Island Senate	<u>SR 2846</u>	change for purposes of remote participation.  Yes—House is using proxy voting. The House held session 15 of 18 weeks in late March-June. The Chief Clerk reports that on average 40% of members have participated by proxy since adopting the rule in March.  Senate—Proxy voting allowed. House—No. Members of the House and Senate watched session on televisions in their State House offices, if they have them. If not, they were asked to watch in the lounges or designated committee rooms and then come into the chambers, individually or in small groups, to debate and vote. Installed plexiglass barriers in the chamber.	No. Committee hearings have been held in the House and Senate Lounges.	Video livestream of floor sessions and committee hearings.	Written testimony on any piece of legislation may be submitted via email directly to the Committee Clerk for that committee.
South Carolina Adjourned sine die 5/14; reconvenes 6/23 re: federal CARES Act; Special session 9/15.		No	Yes—House and Senate committees meetings are in-person; some remote.	WebEx, Zoom House is implementing IRC Virtual Voting Console (VVC) System. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned.	Email address provided for written comments.
South Dakota Adjourned sine die 3/30. Veto session on 3/30; Special session 10/5	Via suspension of rules (Statute addressing remote/open	Yes-House and Senate veto session. Legislators were allowed to participate remotely via electronic conference, and	Yes–some interim committee meetings	MS Teams. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned via YouTube.	Yes-those wishing to testify may register in advance. Email address provided in committee agendas.

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	meetings enacted prior to 2020: S.D. Cod. Stat. § <u>1-25-1.5</u> (2019))	up to nine members from each chamber were allowed to participate in designated committee rooms that had a live feed broadcast on public access television.			
<b>Tennessee</b> <i>Adjourned sine die 6/19.</i>		No	No		
Texas No regular session in 2020		No	No		House interim committees requested written submissions from interested parties and the public on certain topics. Submissions were transmitted to members of the committee and posted on the House request for information website.
<b>Utah</b> Adjourned sine die 3/12; Special sessions 4/16- 4/23; 4/23-4/30; 6/18; 8/20	SJR 16 (Statute addressing remote meetings enacted prior to 2020: Utah Code §§ 52-4-103, 52-4-207 (2019))	Yes-House and Senate – April and June special sessions were largely virtual; the June and August special sessions had some lawmakers participating online and some in person.	Yes	WebEx. Audio and video livestream of floor sessions and committee hearings.	Website provides procedures and guidelines for remote public comment and virtual meeting instructions. Google Sheets document was used for budget meetings, allowing the public to view details. Registration required to testify in advance.
Vermont	SR 10, SR 11, SJR 48, HR 17, HR 18	Yes— House and Senate	Yes- House and Senate	Zoom. Everbridge app for voting. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings via YouTube. Captioned via You Tube.	Yes—phone number and access code provided for some meetings; advance notice required for later meetings
Virginia Adjourned sine die 3/12; Veto Session 4/22; Special session 7/19 to present, 8/20 to present	HR 515	Yes-House only; adopted during August special session. For April veto session, House met under a tent on lawn outside of the Capitol and for special session	Yes—House and Senate	House: Using MS Teams and Zoom. For session, members voted from tent using a webbased voting app for iPad written by House developers. Video livestream and archive of	House: Online form to register and submit testimony is available for some committees. Also via email.  Senate: Online form to register for committee Zoom webinar and to indicate general stance on the topic or

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		House met at VCU's Siegel Center. Senate met in person at local science museum for both sessions.		floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned. Senate: Using Zoom for virtual committee meetings. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings. Captioned. Same for meetings of legislative commissions.	bill being discussed. Same for some meetings of legislative commissions.
<b>Washington</b> Adjourned sine die 3/12	No	No	Yes–Senate and House	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of committee hearings via TVW.	Yes-The public can testify remotely.
West Virginia Adjourned sine die 3/7	No	No			
Wisconsin Adjourned sine die 5/7 Special session 8/18- present	(Statute allowing remote meetings enacted prior to 2020: Wisc. Stat. § 1342 (2009))	Yes-Assembly met with half of members in chamber; half remote. Yes-Senate had most remote and a few members in the chamber.	Yes	Skype. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings.	Legislature is allowing public comment virtually. This form allows a limited number of participants to sign up to provide public comment for a specified agenda item during the committee's upcoming meeting. Only those that fill out the form to provide public comments and who are e-mailed the Zoom invite will be permitted into the meeting. The total amount of time dedicated to public comment is set by the committee chairmen per Management Council Policy.
Wyoming Adjourned sine die 3/12 Special session 5/15- 5/16	Joint Rules 23-10 Management Policy 20-02	Yes-House and Senate during special session. Members had the option to participate; presiding officers attended in person. Others chose to come to the Capitol but were required to	Yes	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings via YouTube.	"Listening session" held prior to session. Online hotline for comments. For committees, public participation is encouraged through the comment and sign up feature on the committee's website.

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		be in committee rooms to follow social distancing guidelines. Regardless of location everyone joined via Zoom.			
District of Columbia	<u>B 23-718</u>	Yes	Yes	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions and committee hearings	Online request to speak form
Guam	<u>R 323</u>	Yes—held a virtual emergency session in August.	Yes	Zoom. Video livestream and archive of floor sessions via YouTube.	The Legislature is allowing <u>public</u> <u>comment</u> during virtual meetings. Email addresses are provided to register in advance or to send electronic testimony.
Puerto Rico Adjourned sine die 6/30 Special session 7/21-8/9 Special session 9/16- 10/5					•
Virgin Islands	No. 33-20-004	Yes—most members present in the chamber; some participating remotely.	Yes—most members present in the chamber; some participating remotely.	Skype	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See also NCSL's <u>Legislative Broadcasts and Webcasts</u> for links.

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