

Remote Participation in Committees:

Gathering input and feedback

May 5th, 2021

Dan Rapoza – Information Services

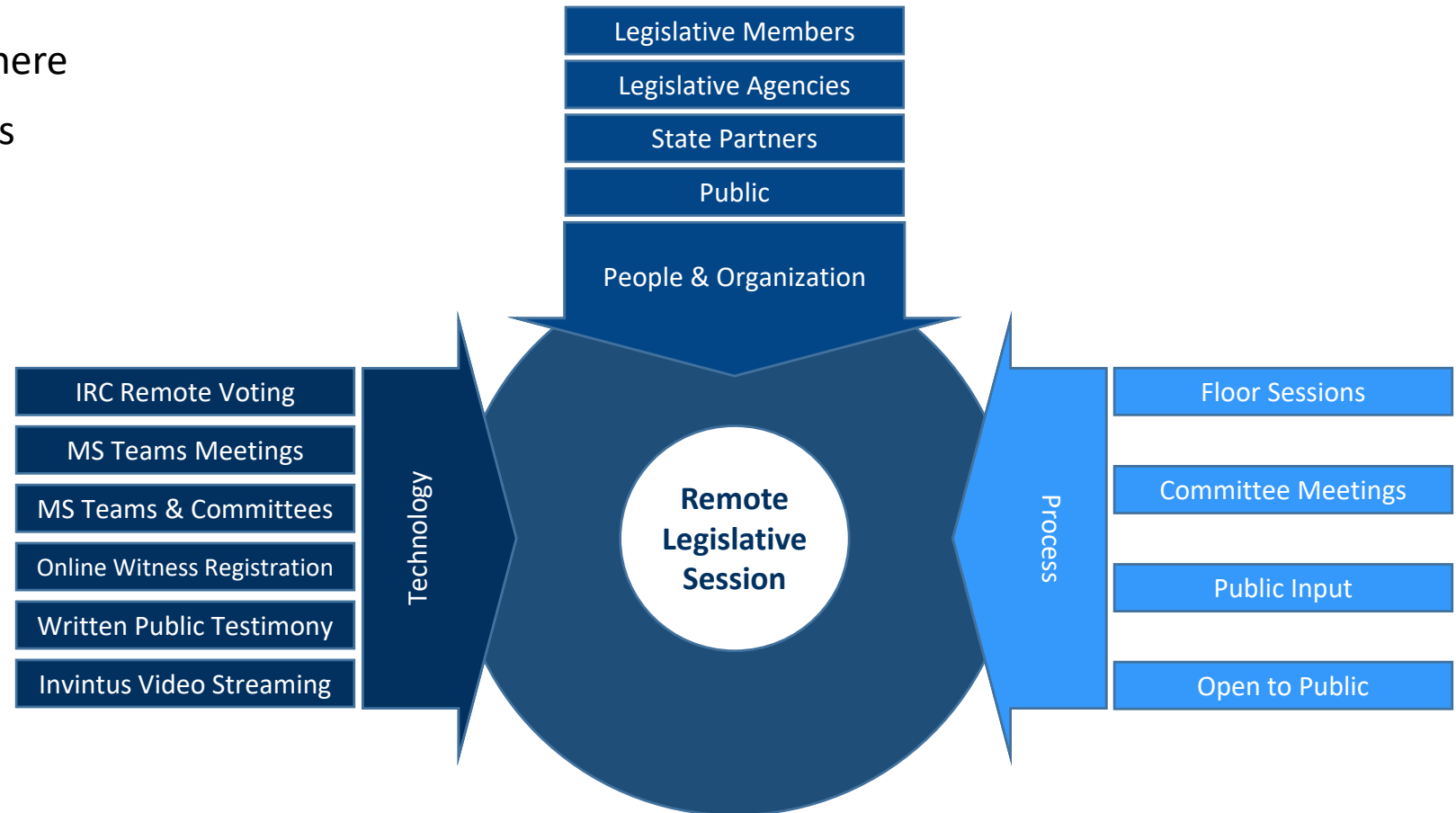
Misty Mason Freeman – Legislative Policy and Research Office

Brett Hanes – Legislative Administration

People, Process, Technology

Framework

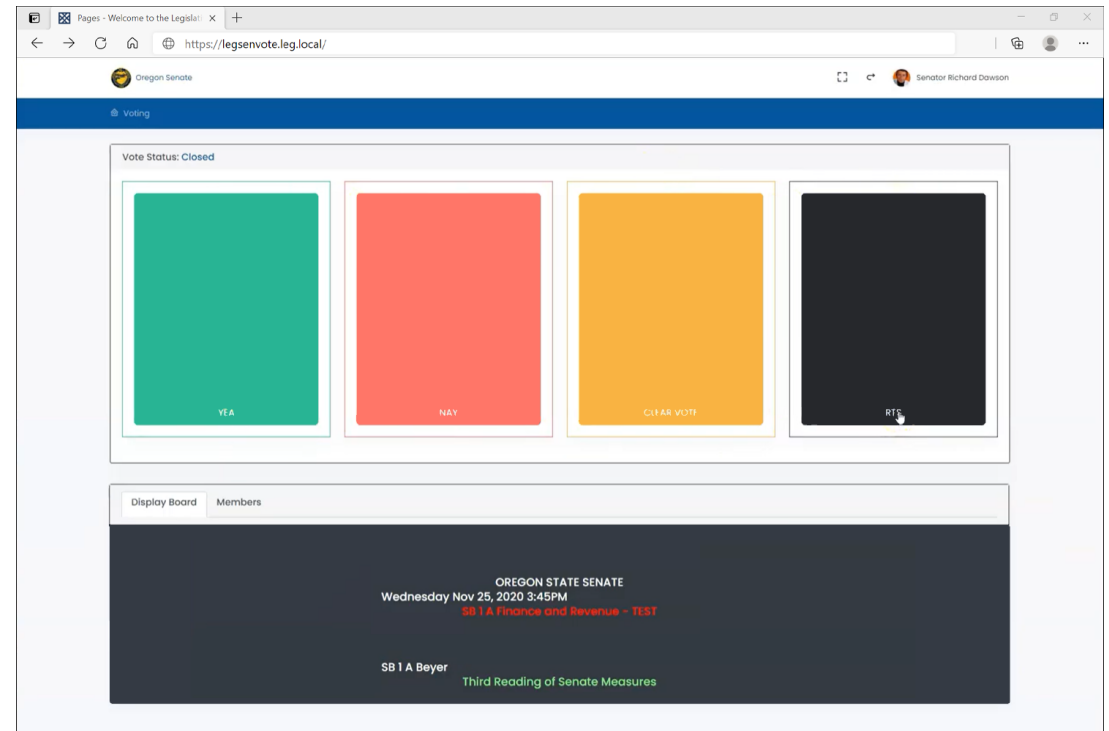
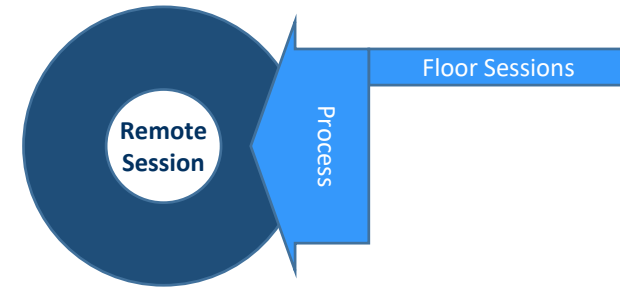
- People – who's involved
- Process – how do we get there
- Technology – tech solutions



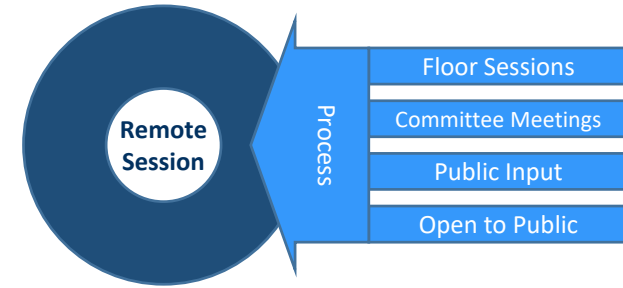
Results Thus Far

Remote Floor Voting

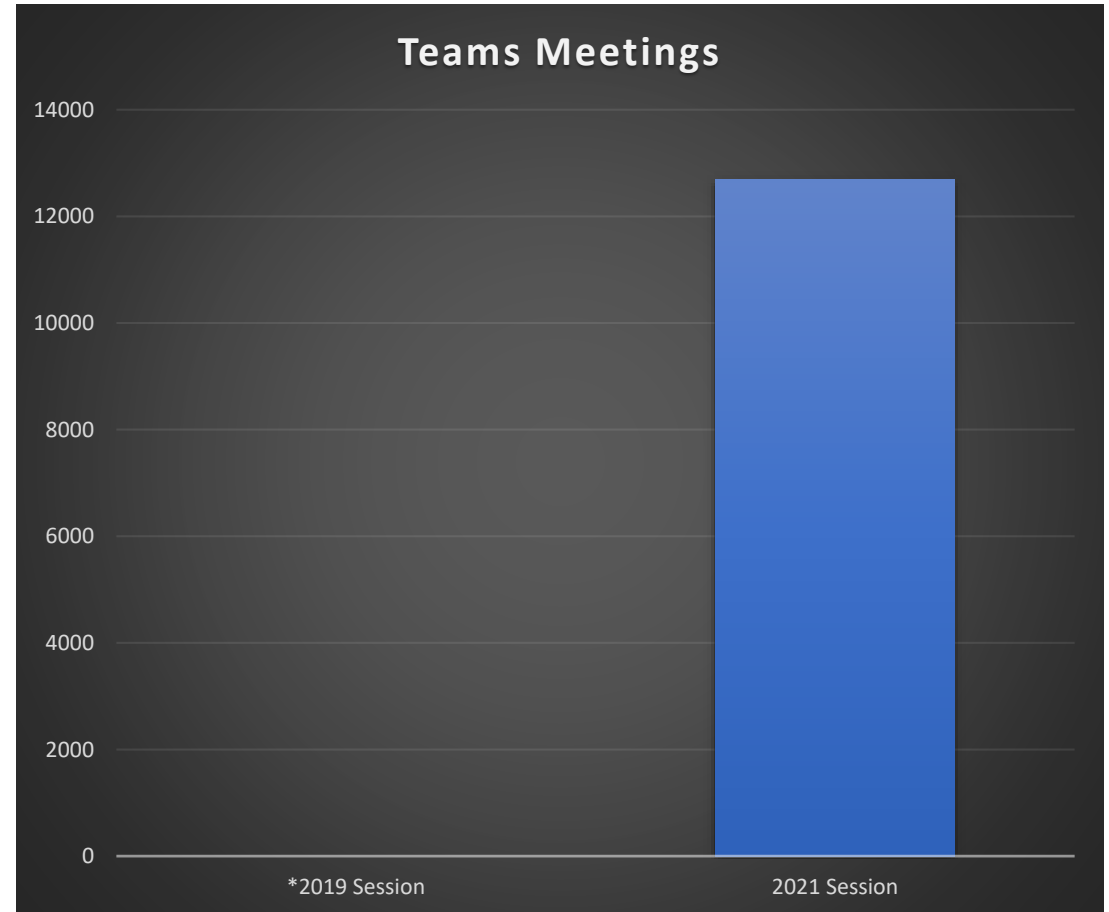
- Available if “catastrophic” emergency was declared



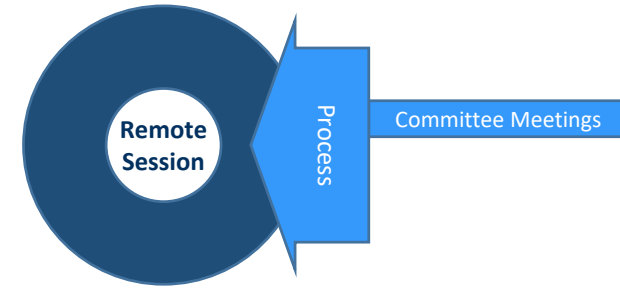
Number of Remote Meetings



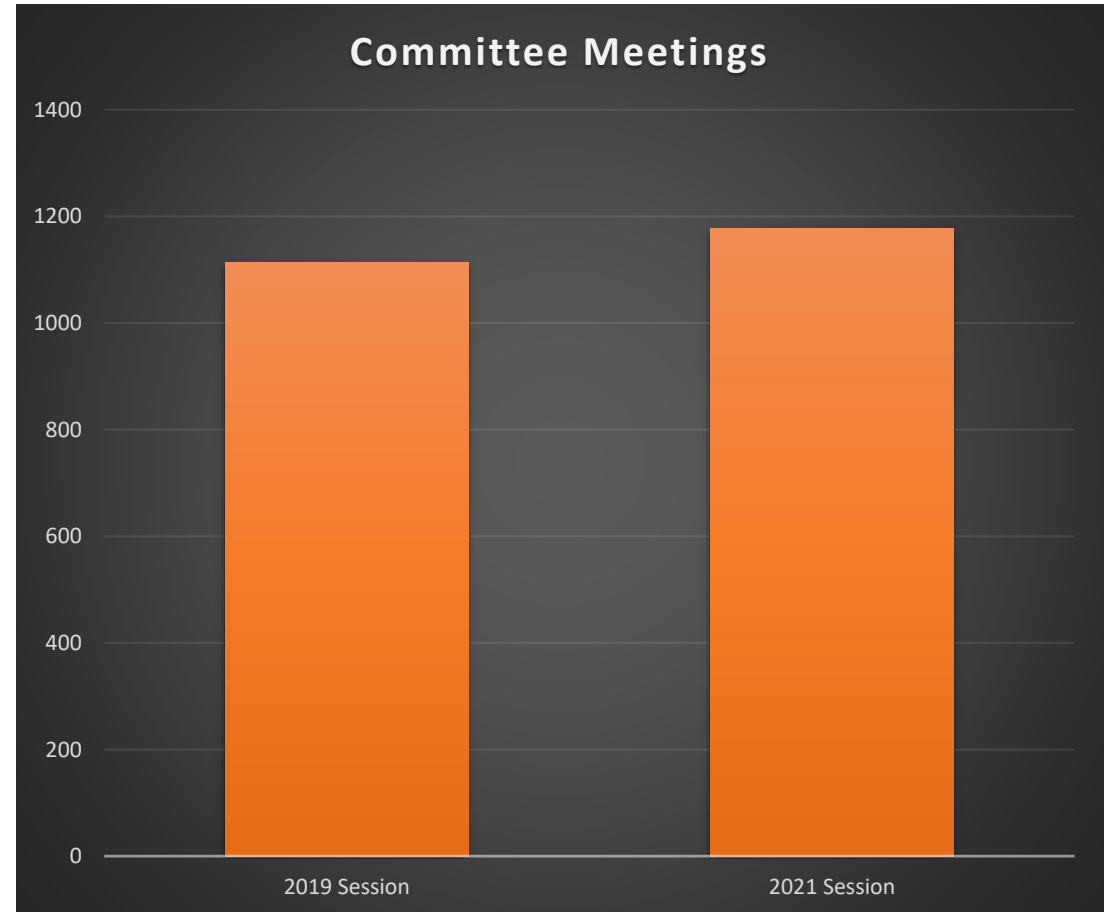
- 2019: (solution not yet implemented)
- 2021: 12,693
“regular meetings”, not Committee Meetings, etc.



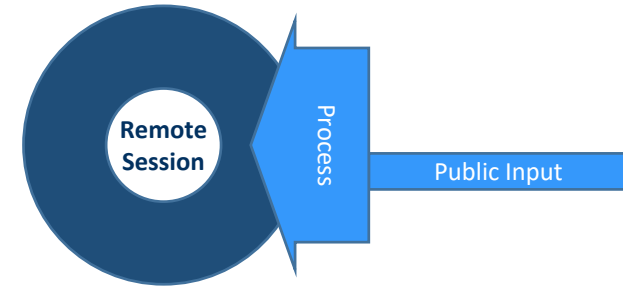
Number of Committee Meetings



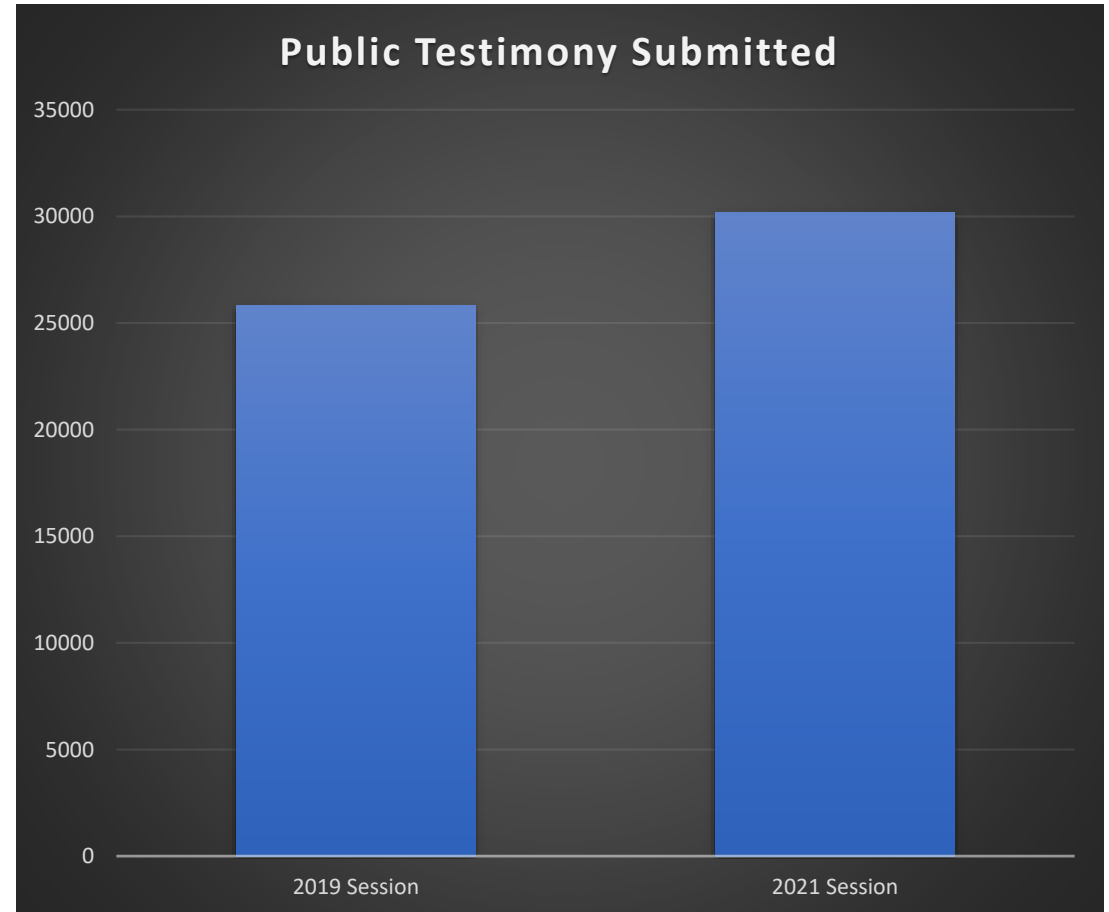
- 2019: 1,114 – in person
- 2021: 1,177 – remote



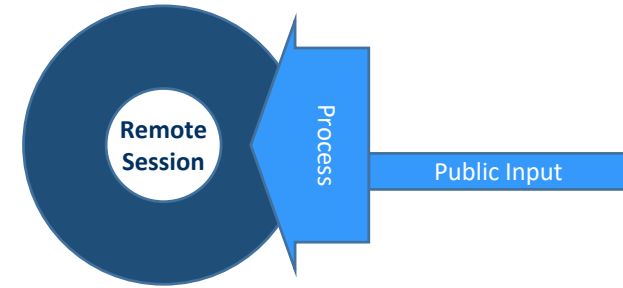
Public testimony items submitted



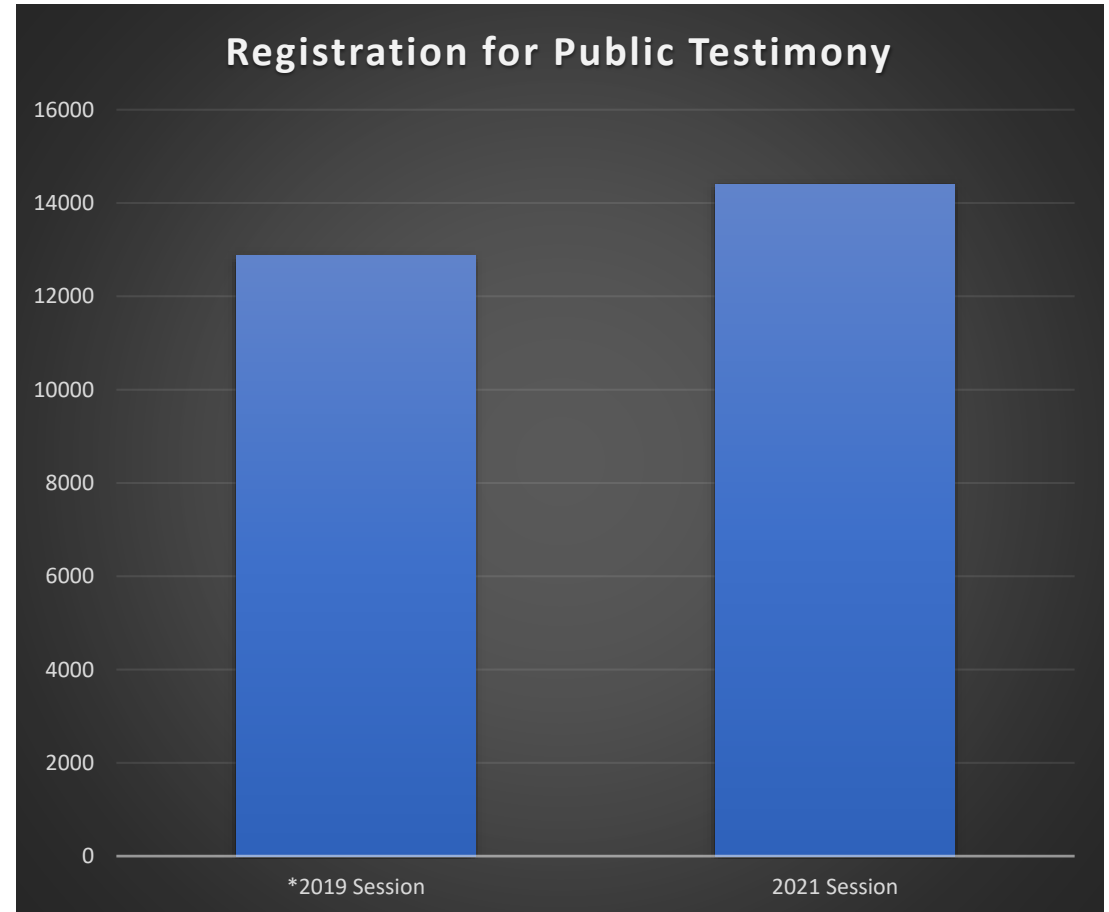
- 2019: 25,823 – emails
- 2021: 30,177 – uploads



Registration for Testimony

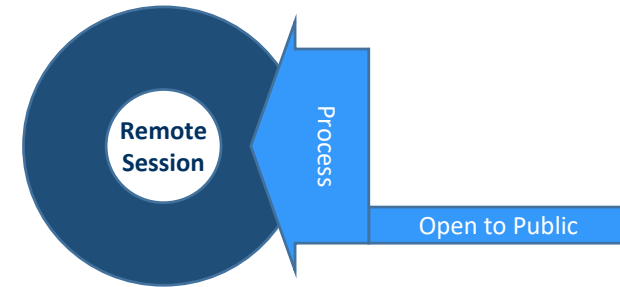


- *2019: 12,869 – Paper Forms
- 2021: 14,407 – Online Registration

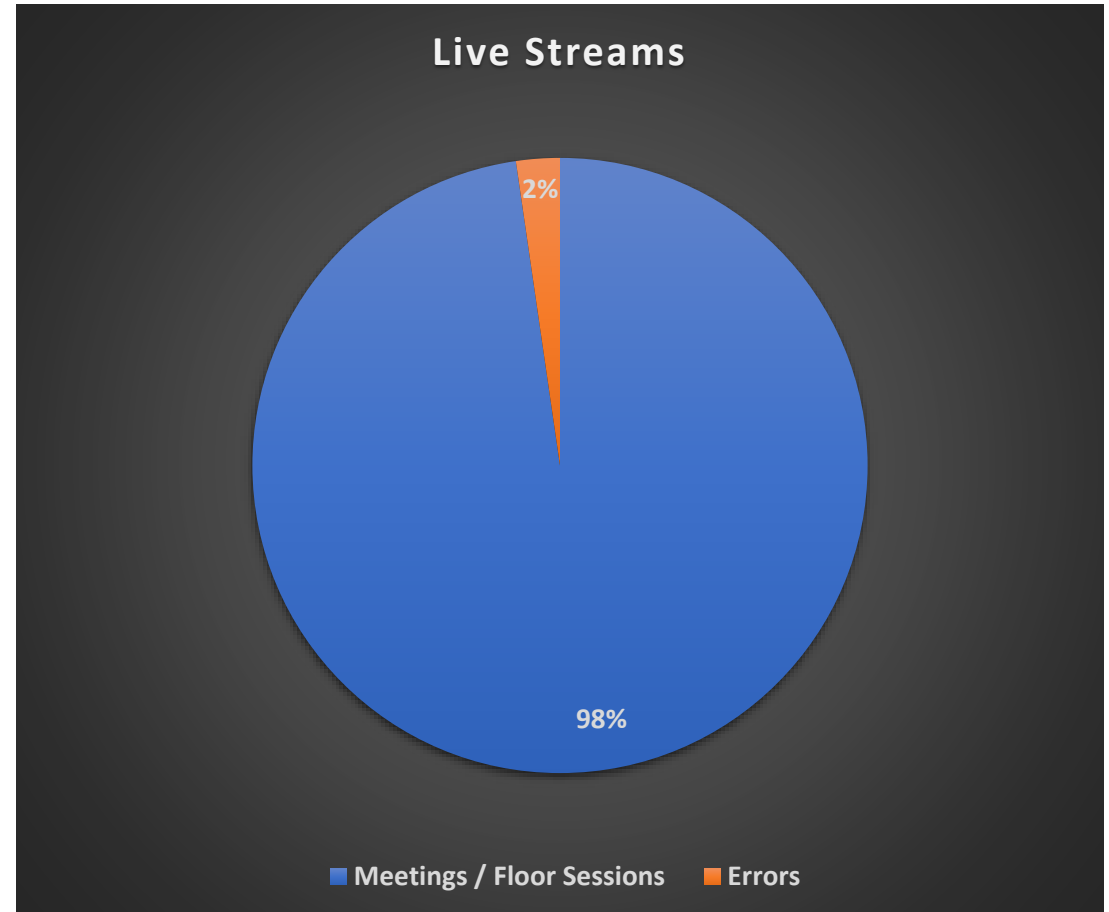


*Total for entire Session

Committee / Chamber Streams



- Remote meetings must be streamed to be a “Public Meeting”
- Meetings / Floor Sessions: 1,267
- Uninterrupted Streams: 98%
- Total Plays: 8,078
- Total Play Time: 1 years 7 months 12 days
- Average Play Time: 1 hour, 45 minutes



Remote Public Engagement – Big Picture

The Tough Stuff

Remote participation is not the same as in person:

- Missing nonverbal cues
- Not the same level of interpersonal connection
- Fewer opportunities for informal meetings
- Impact of technology glitches
- Digital divide
- Alternatives not widely used

The Wins

Remote participation has had positive aspects, such as:

- Ability to testify without traveling to Salem/the Capitol
- Additional access to the process for Oregonians from around the state
- Testifying from home/own space has meant less time off work, ability to testify with kids in the house or while at home caring for an ailing parent
- Fewer trips over the Cascades in dangerous weather conditions
- For some, a less intimidating atmosphere than in person meetings at the Capitol.

Individuals participating in a variety of roles in the legislative process have voiced a desire for remote engagement to be an option after we return to full, in person operations at the Capitol.

Current Sources of Feedback

- Legislative leadership, caucus staff
- Capitol Club
- Orientations with committee chairs, legislators' staff, lobbyists, agency staff
- Willamette University student project
- Emails and phone calls received from public
- Data gathering by IS

What we know so far



Higher volume
than 2019

Meetings
Committees
Proposed measures
People signed up to
testify
Written testimony
submitted



High success rate of remote
meeting tech & processes,
relative to number of meetings



System outages are rare but
serious

What we know so far

- End user technology impacts experience
 - Downloaded MS Teams application vs. browser version
 - Access to reliable, high-speed internet
 - Access to computer, devices
- Very little use of alternative options
 - Public testimony station at the Capitol
 - Public viewing station at the Capitol to review posted agendas, watch live meetings
- Moderate use of toll-free options for signing up to testify and participating in meetings

Efforts to improve

- Refined, simplified the testimony registration process
 - Removed extra language in the survey
 - Clarified that signing up = being present to testify
 - Worked with lobby & agency staff on options to attend without signing up to testify
 - Cleaned up the output to make the list more user-friendly for Chairs
- Provided live links to testimony sign up and written testimony portal on meeting agendas in OLIS
- Streamlined the wording on agendas for LPRO, LFO, LRO-administered meetings
- Posted information on how to testify (English and Spanish) and tutorial videos on oregonlegislature.gov > Citizen Engagement > Engage

Plans in development

- Ensure that remote testimony remains an option for the future
- Integrate testimony sign up into OLIS
 - Reduce duplication of efforts and potential for error
 - “Check in” feature to let Chair know when witnesses have arrived/are present
- Consider how to incorporate in person and remote testimony
 - Develop testimony sign up process to accommodate both
 - Support leadership in developing guidance for Chairs
- Continued improvement in language access services, including ASL and closed captioning
 - Recent improvement from Microsoft—pinned ASL interpreter no longer superseded by a presentation/shared screen
 - LPRO Language Access Coordinator on board, will be working on plan

Considering a survey

- Possible end-user survey of those who provided contact information when signing up to testify on a bill or when submitting written testimony on OLIS
 - Questions we could explore:
 - Was this your first time participating in the legislative process?
 - Were you able to testify/upload your testimony?
 - If yes, how did it go?
 - If no, why not? (technology, time constraints, wasn't able to attend, etc.)
 - If you had the choice to testify remotely/upload written testimony in the future, would you?
 - How can we make the remote testimony system more...
 - User-friendly
 - Effective for the public, legislators
 - Notes:
 - Generalizable to a subset of those who signed up to testify or submitted written testimony, and likely will reflect those who love or hate the system
 - Survey would not capture those who did not/could not use the systems
 - Likely would capture issues outside our influence, like end-user technology challenges, frustration with time limited testimony or number and content of bills considered
- Alternative to survey: focus groups, a purposive sample of participants

Abbreviations Used in this Presentation

- ASL: American Sign Language
- IS: Information Services
- LFO: Legislative Fiscal Office
- LPRO: Legislative Policy and Research Office
- LRO: Legislative Revenue Office
- MS Teams: Microsoft Teams
- OLIS: Online Legislative Information System