

PRESS RELEASE



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SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATURE IMPLEMENTS COVID MEASURES FOR 2021 SESSION

PIERRE – Due to the ongoing public health concerns over COVID-19, legislative leaders are proposing safety protocols to protect those working and attending session. Those protocols include:

- Allowing legislators to attend and vote remotely under certain circumstances and with leadership approval;
- Requiring face coverings for all individuals in spaces under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota Senate;
- Encouraging face coverings for all spaces under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota House of Representatives;
- Limiting seating in the Senate and House galleries;
- Providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for members and staff;
- Encouraging remote testifying during legislative committee meetings; and
- Promoting the use of digital documents.

Senator Lee Schoenbeck, President-Elect Pro Tempore, says while it is important that legislators fulfill their duties as they have in previous years, this year's priority is that they do so safely.

"Members of the legislature have battled COVID themselves, had family members contract it, or been exposed to others who have had it. We know the situation in our state, and plan to do what we can to mitigate the spread. But we still understand that legislative business has to go on," Schoenbeck said.

House Speaker-Elect Representative Spencer Gosch says like everything else during a pandemic, it is a delicate balance between doing what needs to be done and finding a way to do it safely.

"We've held numerous discussions over the past several months over what is the best way to hold the 2021 Legislative Session without adding to the COVID issues in South Dakota. Even in a pandemic, government still needs to act," said Gosch.

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate are scheduled to convene at 12:00 p.m. (CT) on January 12, 2021.