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# HOW LEGISLATURES ARE GETTING BACK TO WORK

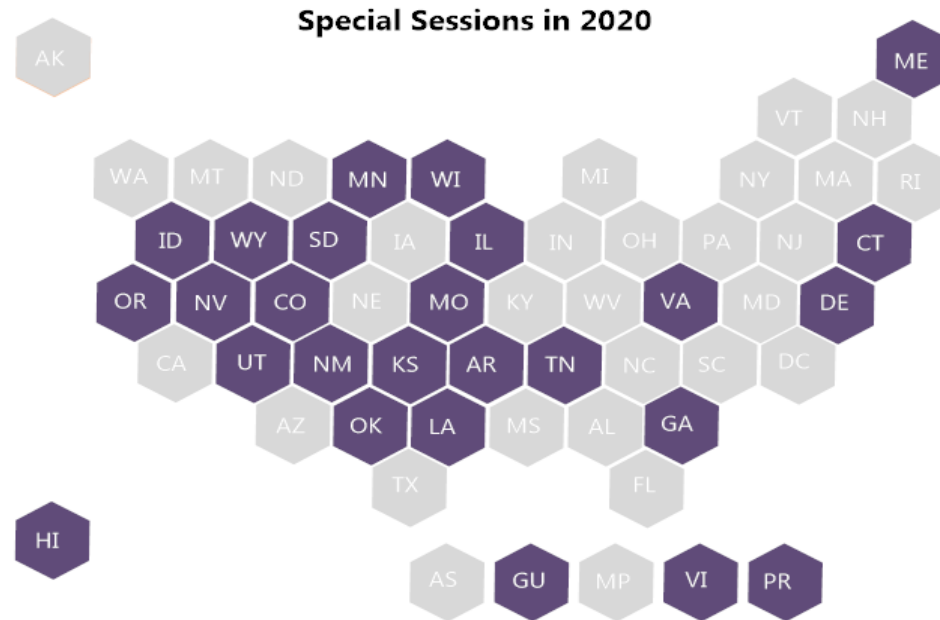
MONDAY, DEC. 7, 2020

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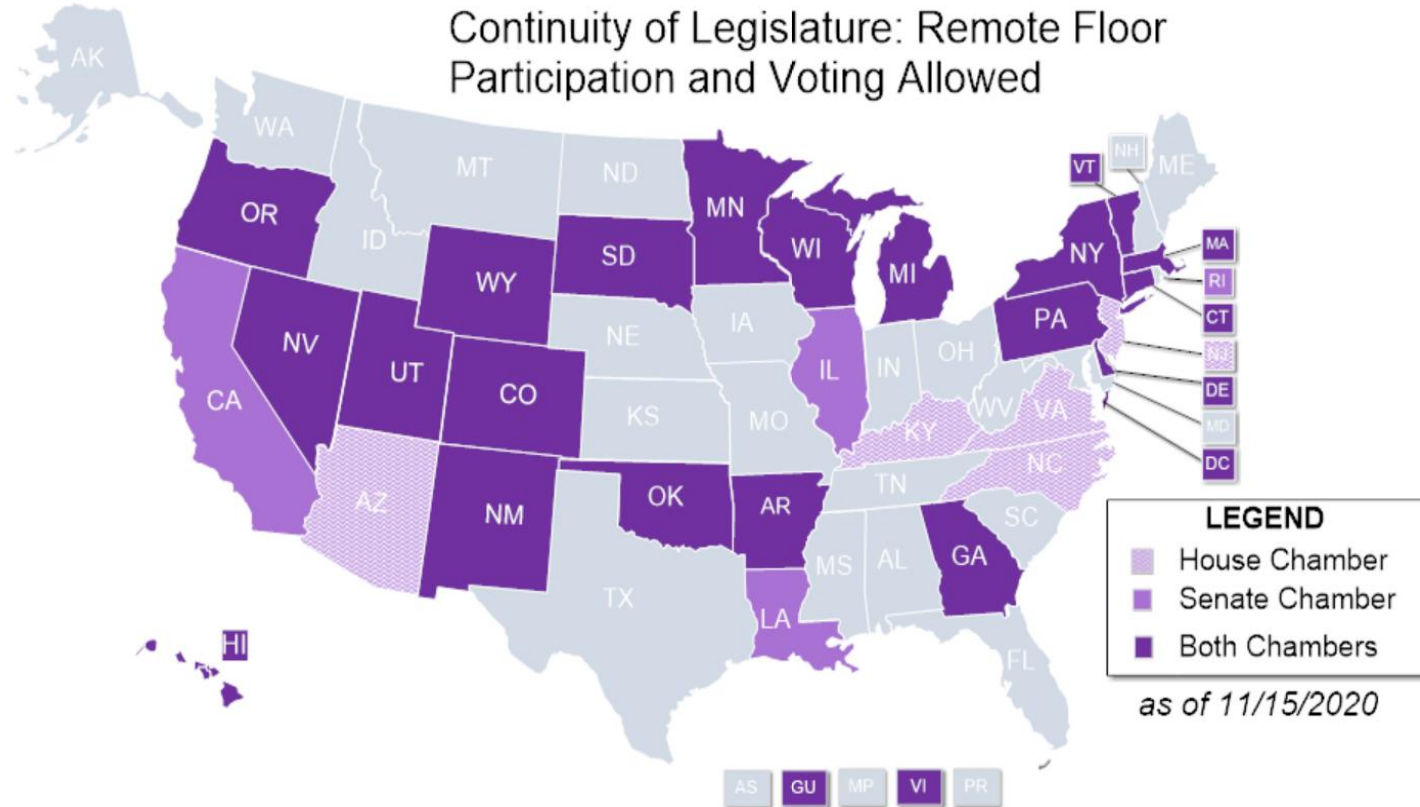


# 2020 SPECIAL SESSIONS



*as of 12/7/2020*

# REMOTE SESSIONS



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# COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols

Preliminary Plans for Legislatures/Chambers in 2020 and 2021



# HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

- States have been grappling with the issue of health and safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic
- Main topics of discussion today:
  - Health and Safety Protocols Survey results
  - Examples of chamber/legislature plans
  - Off-site meeting plans & public access to capitols

# HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS SURVEY

- In Oct. 2020, NCSL initiated a survey to gain insight regarding current and/or planned safety protocols
- Information discussed today is preliminary and subject to change
- Six main survey topics:
  - Public health expert/medical consultant advice
  - Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - Safety partitions
  - Social distancing requirements
  - Health screenings
  - Cleaning and sanitation protocols
- 26 responses received from 23 states/legislative chambers, the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam

# PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE

- Many states have consulted with public health experts and/or medical consultants
- State Department of Health, Public Health Officials, Public Safety, Governor's Offices are some examples
  - Alaska consulted with Chief Medical Officer and Commissioner of Health and Chief Epidemiologist
  - Arkansas consulted with State Department of Health
  - Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) provided guidance prior to Nov. special session
    - Health screenings, testing, contact tracing and ability to provide N95 masks from the state Emergency Operations Center, if requested
  - Florida Senate consulted with infectious disease and prevention experts at Tampa General Hospital and University of South Florida prior to Nov. organizational session
  - Oklahoma Senate consulted with health professionals from University of Oklahoma Medical Center
  - South Dakota working with Health Department and Association of Physicians

# PPE AND FACE COVERINGS

- Florida House – masks not required for members (*applies to 2020; 2021 session protocols will to be released before end of Feb. 2021*)
- Florida Senate – masks required for all in attendance (*applies to 2020 organizational session only*)
- Maryland House – face coverings required in 2021 (*County Health Dept. can have members properly fitted for N-95 masks for purchase*)
- Maryland Senate – face coverings required in 2021 (*applies to 2021 legislative session*)
- North Dakota – masks required during 2020 organizational session (*final rules for Jan. 2021 session TBD*)
- Access to PPE:
  - Every chamber/legislature reported providing face masks in various ways
  - Majority of states provide face masks to legislators and legislative staff
    - Masks also offered to others: registered lobbyists, members of the public and credentialed press
  - Face shields and gloves were reported to be provided upon request in a couple chambers



# SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Reported social distancing measures include:
  - Scheduling of appointments in advance
  - Member desks 6' apart
  - Limited entrances and exits
  - Directional signage
  - Capacity limits
  - Ability to use overflow spaces

# HEALTH SCREENINGS

- Majority of states report requiring temperature checks and/or COVID-19 screening questions prior to entering the capitol building
  - Administered by outside groups, capitol police, sergeant-at-arms or other security/building screening unit or self-administered
  - Some capitol buildings are closed and some do not require health screenings
- Health Screening Apps (*Maryland House/Senate – OIS designed, Michigan – Microsoft Forms, Washington - MyMedBot*)
- Examples of COVID-19 testing protocols:
  - Alaska
  - Colorado
  - Florida
  - Maryland
  - Wyoming

# SANITIZING AND CLEANING PROTOCOLS

- Majority of states report sanitizing protocols in various spaces:
  - Chambers, committee rooms, gallery, member offices, staff offices, public spaces (information desks, etc.)
  - Some capitol buildings remain closed and spaces are only sanitized when necessary
- Typically, maintenance and custodial staff sanitize the spaces
  - Sanitize daily or as often as needed/after every use of the space
  - Several legislatures report using an outside vendor or contractor to sanitize daily or as often as needed
- Every state reports access to hand sanitizer in the Capitol building

# LEGISLATURE/CHAMBER PLANS

- Example plans:
  - Florida House Nov. 2020 Organizational Session Protocols
    - HEPA air purifiers and disinfecting technology placed in key areas, masks provided, COVID-19 testing required, one guest allowed
  - Florida Senate Nov. 2020 Organizational Session Protocols
    - HEPA filters installed, COVID-19 testing required, one guest allowed on Floor, no district staff travel
  - Maryland House plan for 2021 Legislative Session
    - Increased HVAC/air flow protocols, COVID-19 testing tent available, contact response team in place
  - Maryland Senate 2021 Session Operations Plan
    - Increased HVAC/air flow protocols, contact response teams in place

# OFF-SITE MEETINGS & PUBLIC ACCESS TO CAPITOLS

- Examples:
  - Arkansas House – Basketball arena
  - Illinois House – Concert venue
  - Maine House/Senate for organizational session – convention center
  - New Hampshire House – Organizational session outside at football field
  - Virginia House – Outside
  - Virginia Senate – Museum of Science
  
- Currently, 21 capitols are open to the public and 30 capitols are closed to the public

# QUESTIONS

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