

## Memorandum

From: Speaker David Ralston

To: All House Members and Staff

Date: December 30, 2020

RE: Convening of the 2021 Legislative Session on January 11, 2021 at 10:00 A.M.

As we prepare for a return to the Capitol for the 2021 Legislative Session, there are quite a few topics of importance that must be addressed prior to the Session commencing. Attached to this email you will find a memorandum from the committee that I appointed to make recommendations for the 2021 Legislative Session along with other supporting documents. I thank the committee members for their hard work, especially Majority Leader Jon Burns and Minority Leader James Beverly. We will implement the recommendations of the committee, except for those instances where they differ from this correspondence, in which case, this correspondence will control. Please take the time to read this information thoroughly.

**STAFF REPORTING TO CAPITOL:** As in years prior, House Staff should report to the Capitol for standard Session operating hours (8:00 AM through 5:00 PM) beginning Monday, January 4, and continuing until the conclusion of Session.

**OPENING DAY PROCEDURES:** The Speaker's Office and the leadership of both caucuses will strive to preserve the dignity and appropriate conduct for opening day ceremonies at **10:00 A.M., Monday, January 11**. Members will be administered the oath of office in the House Chamber in groups to allow for adequate social distancing. The number of Members in each group will be determined by January 11. Each Member shall be permitted to have one (1) guest during the swearing-in ceremony. At the completion of the swearing in of each group, that group will depart the House Chamber in order to allow the next group to safely enter.

**TESTING:** During the 2021 Session, Georgia Tech will be operating a testing site for General Assembly Members and Capitol Staff. The test that Georgia Tech will be using is a saliva-based PCR test (no nasal swab required) and is intended for asymptomatic individuals only. (In the event that a Member or House staff is symptomatic, they should not report to the Capitol to be tested, but rather should seek out a test off-site. If a Member or House staff has difficulty finding a testing site with availability, they should contact the Office of the Speaker for assistance.)

After a sample is collected, it will be taken to Georgia Tech to be processed and analyzed. The healthcare provider responsible for delivering the results of these tests is Northeast Georgia Health System. The results of each test will typically be made available by the end of the day on the day the test is administered. As part of the testing process, contact tracing will be performed in the event of a positive test result. All Members and House staff are strongly encouraged to participate in contact tracing efforts.

The testing site will be located in Room 230 of the Capitol and will be open for testing from 7:00 AM through 11:00 AM on Mondays and Thursdays during Session beginning on January 11, unless the schedule has us out of Session on one of those days, in which case another day may be utilized. The week prior to Session, testing will be conducted between 7:00 AM and 11:00 AM on Tuesday, January 5, and Thursday, January 7. A portion of each day's testing period, 8:00 AM through 10:00 AM, will be reserved for General Assembly Members, but Members are welcome to be tested at any time the testing station is open.

All Members and House staff will be required to be tested twice weekly during the 2021 Session. House staff must begin testing the week prior to session. All Members shall be tested prior the beginning of the 2021 Session at the testing location of their choosing. In the event that a Member wishes to be tested at the Capitol prior to Session beginning, they should make plans to be at the Capitol between 7:00 AM and 11:00 AM on either Tuesday, January 5, or Thursday, January 7.

Over the next day or so, Members and House staff should expect to receive an email from Georgia Tech giving them the opportunity and the instructions necessary to create a profile for testing that will help them access their test results. **Attached to this email is a document provided by Georgia Tech that gives more information about the testing that will be done and includes a Consent Form that must be completed by each individual who will be tested (page 4 of the attachment).** In order to speed up the process of testing, Georgia Tech requests that the Consent Form be completed and returned as soon as possible via email to Morgan McCombs and Caulder Harvill-Childs at [GCR@GATech.edu](mailto:GCR@GATech.edu).

**MASKS:** As stated in the memorandum from the Committee, masks must be worn by all Members and House staff while present in the Capitol Complex, including, but not limited to, the House Chamber, the House Gallery, and Room 341. Masks *may* be (but are not required to be) removed when a Member is addressing the House (whether seated in the House Chamber, the House Gallery, or in Room 341) or when a Member is speaking during a Committee meeting. Masks must be promptly replaced upon the conclusion of a Member's remarks. Additionally, the Georgia Building Authority will require masks for any individual entering the Capitol and within the public spaces of the Capitol.

Masks also must be worn by any and all members of the public who enter the House Chamber, House Committee Rooms, or any other spaces under the control of the Georgia House of Representatives. Members of the public *may* (but are not required to) remove their masks when speaking during a House Committee meeting or addressing the House. Masks must be promptly replaced upon the conclusion of a member of the public's remarks.

**MEMBERS ADDRESSING THE BODY:** Members who wish to give a Morning Order, offer an announcement, or speak to a bill will do so from the well. Otherwise, Members should remain at their assigned seat or microphone to address the House.

**GUEST POLICY:** As in June 2020, the House Page program is suspended until further notice. There will be no invite resolutions or recognition of guests until further notice. We will continue the Chaplain of the Day program, but no guests will be permitted into the House Chamber with the Chaplain of the Day.

As has always been the case, Members are reminded that Members must notify the Office of the Clerk if they wish to be “Excused” from a specific vote or for an entire day of the 2021 Legislative Session for any reason.