

Office of the Sergeant at Arms  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6634

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

TO: All Members-elect of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress

FROM: Paul D. Irving  
Sergeant at Arms

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Attending Physician

DATE: December 29, 2020

SUBJECT: **Opening Session of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress**

The Opening Session of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress will be held on **Sunday, January 3, 2021 at 12:00 Noon** in the Hall of the House of Representatives. The following guidelines have been developed in consultation with the Office of Attending Physician (OAP) and House Leadership. The Attending Physician continues to recommend teleworking for all Congressional offices. In all cases, Members and staff must maintain 6-foot social distance spacing as much as practicable when in offices and/or the Capitol. **Members are also strongly encouraged to refrain from gatherings of any kind in their office spaces, whether located in the Capitol or the House Office Buildings.** To ensure Member and staff health safety, normal operating procedures continue to be temporarily modified.

It is essential to note that health and safety measures in place will have a significant impact on access to the Opening Session. Members should check the local government operating conditions in the District of Columbia and specifically any revisions to the Mayor's Travel Order after December 31, 2020 (when the current order expires). Travelers should anticipate an extension or additional restrictions may be imposed regarding travel and local services depending on coronavirus disease conditions. Travel to Washington, D.C. may involve some limitations involving availability of restaurants, lodging, and other commercial meal sources and other amenities often necessary for traveling. **Spouses or Children accompanying the Member may be required to show a copy of their negative pre-travel COVID test at businesses extending lodging or other services.**

Members should also be advised that the Sergeant at Arms and the Attending Physician have provided guidance to the House Leadership that any available guest seating in the House Gallery for the Opening

Session be kept at to an absolute minimum. To this end, only freshman, first-term Members-elect will be issued one (1) ticket for a guest to the House Gallery for the Opening Session. Returning Members of Congress will not be issued a guest ticket for gallery seating.

Should a first-term Member-elect choose to invite a guest, **all applicable travel guidelines to Washington, D.C. must be followed.** These include having your guest obtain a COVID test prior to traveling to Washington, D.C., and the need for them to quarantine for the days between their pre-travel COVID test and their day 3 to 5 COVID test here in Washington, D.C. Note that the required day 3 to 5 COVID test to exit quarantine for **Spouses and children cannot be provided at the Capitol** and those accompanying individuals will need to seek a local commercial COVID test. **If their COVID test is positive, they should not travel to Washington, D.C.**

### **First-term Member Gallery Access for Guests**

**First-term Members will receive one (1) guest ticket for a seat in the House Gallery. However, this seat will be available only during the swearing-in of the first-term Members-elect.** First-term Members-elect will be sworn in as a group on the Floor, and offices will be notified when guests should go to the Gallery to be seated. Please note that guests who are invited to attend the Opening Session must follow all District of Columbia Travel Orders regarding testing and quarantine. Individuals (such as spouses or children), who are not critical infrastructure workers, will need to quarantine for the days between their pre-travel COVID test and their day 3 to 5 COVID test here in Washington, D.C. Please visit the OAP website for the latest information and guidance: <https://attendingphysician.house.gov/>

Gallery tickets for First-term Members must be picked up from the Rayburn Tunnel Appointments Desk on **Wednesday, December 30 from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM** and on **Sunday, January 3, 2021, from 9:00 AM until the event begins at 12:00 Noon.** The Rayburn Appointment Desk is located adjacent to the Rayburn Subway on the G3 level. Additional questions regarding tickets, ticket pickup, or seating in the Gallery, can be directed to Sergeant at Arms Chamber Operations at 225-0067.

**Please note that because of limited seating, returning Members of Congress will not be issued a guest ticket for Gallery seating.**

### **Post Travel Coronavirus Testing Program**

Guidance regarding travel to Washington D.C. from the Office of Attending Physician is available by following this link: <https://attendingphysician.house.gov/media/press-releases/post-travel-coronavirus-test-program>

### **Member Pins/Plates/Voting Cards**

The Office of the Clerk and the Office of the Sergeant at Arms will issue Member Voting Cards, Member/Spouse Pins and Plates, as well as other important information on **January 3, 2021 from 9:00**

**AM until 12:00 Noon in Statuary Hall.** Statuary Hall will be used so that distribution may be done with social distancing.

**Chamber Access for Members**

During the Opening Session, access to the Floor of the House will be limited to those Members who are scheduled to speak during debate. Members who wish to speak during debate should contact their respective Leadership office. **Unless participating in debate, Members should remain in their offices. Members will be notified with sufficient time to travel safely to the Chamber to participate in the Quorum Call or to vote.** Members are strongly encouraged to cleanse their hands with waterless hand sanitizer before entering and departing the House Chamber, and face covers and gloves will be available, should Members need them. Members are requested to follow all health safety procedures while on the Floor.

**Quorum Call, Voting and Swearing-In Procedures**

Throughout the Opening Session, Members will be called to the Floor in groups. For the health and safety of Members and staff, it is essential that **Members vacate the floor and Speaker’s Lobby** while waiting to vote and/or after their vote has been cast. This minimizes the risk posed by placing too many Members on the House Floor at the same time. During quorum calls, vote series and/or the swearing in, we will monitor the number of Members on the Floor both to maintain safe social distancing and to ensure voting is done as expeditiously as possible. The Gallery is open and available for Member seating.

- **Quorum Call:** The House Floor will be used for groups of approximately 72 Members at a time.
- **Votes:** The House Floor will be used for groups of approximately 72 Members at a time.
- **Swearing-in:** The House Floor will be used for groups of approximately 72 Members at a time; **please note that First-term Members-elect will be sworn in first as a group.**

When your group is called to the Floor or Gallery, please enter the Chamber via either the House Main Door, the East Door or West Door. We request that you promptly vacate the Chamber via the Speaker’s Lobby after voting. A chart of Member groups is below, and Members will be notified of their time block to come to the Floor/Gallery:

**GROUPS FOR QUORUM CALL AND VOTING**

<b>Group 1</b>	Rep. Adams to Rep. Cloud
<b>Group 2</b>	Rep. Clyburn to Rep. Gohmert
<b>Group 3</b>	Rep. Golden to Rep. Kilmer
<b>Group 4</b>	Rep. Kim to Mrvan
<b>Group 5</b>	Rep. Mullen to Schrier
<b>Group 6</b>	Rep. Schweikert to Rep. Williams

<b>Group 7</b>	Rep. Wilson to Rep. Zeldin
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**GROUPS FOR SWEARING-IN**

<b>Group 1</b>	<b><u>All First-term Members-elect</u></b>
<b>Group 2</b>	Rep. Adams to Rep. Courtney
<b>Group 3</b>	Rep. Craig to Rep. Hagadorn
<b>Group 4</b>	Rep. Harder to Rep. Lynch
<b>Group 5</b>	Rep. Malinowski to Rep. Rose
<b>Group 6</b>	Rep. Rouzer to Rep. Waltz
<b>Group 7</b>	Rep. Wasserman Schultz to Zeldin

**Use of Face Covers**

Please see link for guidance regarding the use of face coverings, the health screening inventory and other important health information not covered in this notification, from the Office of Attending Physician by following this link: <https://attendingphysician.house.gov/>

**Capitol and House Office Building Access**

Members and staff are reminded of current policies in place regarding access to the Capitol and House Office Buildings. As a reminder, offices who are expecting official business visitors are required to greet guests outside an entrance and be prepared to escort them to and from any meeting. In addition, the Capitol remains open only to Members, staff and official business visitors. Offices who are expecting official business visitors to the Capitol are required to greet guests outside the South Door of the Capitol and to escort them to and from each meeting.

**Group Gatherings**

Members are strongly discouraged from hosting **any group gatherings or events** such as office receptions, welcome receptions, and/or holiday celebration in their office spaces – either in the Capitol or in the House Office Buildings.

**House Dining Facilities**

Please see this link for current House Campus services and hours and status:  
<https://housenet.house.gov/campus/personal-services/announcements/current-house-dining-and-convenience-services-hours-and-status>

**Member Facilities**

The House Member Gymnasium has established a limited re-opening in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and District of Columbia health regulations. The House Member Gym Participants will receive direct correspondence from the Gymnasium Director regarding the limited hours and services available.

### **Use of the Members Representational Allowance (MRA)**

Rules and regulations applicable to the MRA remain in effect. Travel to and from your district to Washington D.C. for the purposes of participating in this session is a reimbursable expense. For more information contact the Committee on House Administration, (202) 225-2061 (majority), (202) 225-8281 (minority).

### **House Documents**

Pursuant to guidance offered by the Office of the Clerk on April 6, 2020, documents may be submitted electronically. The Floor Hopper remains available only to Members.

### **Press Access**

The Speaker's Lobby and Statuary Hall are closed to press; the Press Gallery on the Third Floor in the House Chamber will remain open.

### **Tours**

The Capitol and CVC remain closed to **all tours**, including Member-led, staff-led and public tours.

We appreciate your assistance as we implement these temporary measures for your protection. If you have further questions or have any concerns, please feel free to contact either the Office of Attending Physician at (202) 225-5421 or the Office of the Sergeant at Arms at (202) 225-2456.