No. R-185. Joint resolution authorizing remote participation in joint committees under restricted, COVID-19-related circumstances through the remainder of 2022.

(J.R.H.17)

Offered by: Committee on Rules

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That Temporary Joint Rule 22A is amended to read as follows:

Rule 22A. Temporary Rule Regarding Joint Committee Meetings

(a)(1) ~~A~~ Joint committees shall return to in-person legislating, except that a member of a joint committee may debate and vote remotely in that committee if the member ~~confirms with~~ notifies the committee's chair or ~~co-chairs~~ a co-chair, as applicable, that the member ~~must be absent from committee due to symptomatic illness or direct COVID-19 related circumstances~~ meets one of the following conditions:

(A) the member has tested positive for COVID-19 and is within a required period of isolation;

(B) the member has been exposed to COVID-19 as a close contact and is within a required term of quarantine;

(C) the member has COVID-19 symptoms and is awaiting the results of a PCR test;

(D) the member has a household member who relies on the member for caregiving and the household member is required to be home due to one of the reasons set forth in subdivisions (A)–(C) of this subdivision (1) or because such a household member's daycare or school program has a short-term closure due to COVID-19; or

(E) the member provides to the joint committee chair or a co-chair, as applicable, written documentation from a health care provider indicating that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic requires the member to participate remotely due to the member's health condition.

(2) The definitions, required time periods, and testing referenced in subdivision (1) of this subsection are those provided by Vermont Department of Health guidelines, including any revisions or updates

(b) The Joint Rules Committee is authorized to meet remotely as necessary to address COVID-19-related matters that may impact the operation of the General Assembly and joint committees.

(c) The remote authority set forth in this rule shall remain in effect through ~~Tuesday, March 8,~~ December 31, 2022.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (c) of this rule, if the Governor thereafter reissues capacity restrictions at gatherings and events or requires masks and physical distancing in response to COVID-19, the Joint Rules Committee is authorized to meet remotely and to permit any joint committees of the Legislature to meet and vote electronically as the Joint Rules Committee determines appropriate.