The following has special meaning:
green underline denotes added text
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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 4–SENATOR CANNIZZARO

JULY 8, 2020

Read and Adopted

SUMMARY—Adopts Special Rules of the Senate for the 31st Special Session of the Nevada Legislature concerning the use of remote-technology systems by members of the Senate. (BDR R-15)

SENATE RESOLUTION—Adopting Special Rules of the Senate for the 31st Special Session of the Nevada Legislature concerning the use of remote-technology systems by members of the Senate.

WHEREAS, The 31st Special Session of the Nevada Legislature is being held amid the ongoing and widespread public-health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Because of the extraordinary danger, risk, harm, injury and peril posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Senate must exercise its constitutional and inherent powers and privileges and must adopt these Special Rules concerning the use of remote-technology systems by members of the Senate to:

1. Govern, control and regulate its membership and its internal organization, affairs and management;

2. Ensure its institutional self-protection and self-preservation; and

3. Establish a reasonable method for determining whether a member of the Senate is present at legislative proceedings amid the ongoing and widespread public-health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in order to keep the legislative process as safe and free as reasonably possible from the extraordinary danger, risk, harm, injury and peril posed by the COVID-19 pandemic; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, That the following Special Rules of the Senate for the 31st Special Session of the Legislature are hereby adopted:

Special Rule No. 1. Applicability and Precedence of Special Rules.

These Special Rules of the Senate for the 31st Special Session of the Legislature:

1. Are applicable only during the 31st Special Session of the Legislature; and

2. Supersede, take precedence and control over any other rule, provision or principle of law to the extent of any conflict with these Special Rules.

Special Rule No. 2. Public Purposes and Construction of Special Rules.

1. These Special Rules are intended to serve the following public purposes:

(a) To protect the health, safety and welfare of Legislators, members of legislative staff and others who participate in the legislative process amid the ongoing and widespread public-health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these Special Rules are intended to authorize necessary protective and safety measures intended to keep the legislative process as safe and free as reasonably possible from the extraordinary danger, risk, harm, injury and peril posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

(b) To enable the members of the Senate to represent their constituents and carry out their official powers, functions, duties and responsibilities in the legislative process amid the ongoing and widespread public-health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these Special Rules are intended to authorize members of the Senate, under certain circumstances, to use remote-technology systems to attend, participate, vote and take any other action in legislative proceedings when determined to be necessary as a protective or safety measure to keep the legislative process as safe and free as reasonably possible from the extraordinary danger, risk, harm, injury and peril posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

(c) To safeguard the workings of the Legislative Department of Nevada's State Government and preserve and protect the continuity and efficacy of its legislative operations amid the ongoing and widespread public-health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these Special Rules are intended to ensure that the Senate may efficiently and effectively carry out its official powers, functions, duties and responsibilities which are expressly and exclusively assigned to the Senate by the Nevada Constitution and which cannot be exercised or performed by any other body or branch of Nevada's State Government.

2. Because of the extraordinary danger, risk, harm, injury and peril posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, these Special Rules must be liberally construed to achieve their intended public purposes, and if there is any uncertainty or doubt regarding the interpretation or application of these Special Rules, that uncertainty or doubt must be resolved in favor of carrying out the intended public purposes of these Special Rules.

Special Rule No. 3. Definitions Applicable to Special Rules.

As used in these Special Rules, unless the context otherwise requires, "remote-technology system" means any system or other means of communication that is:

1. Approved by the Majority Leader and uses any electronic, digital or other similar technology to enable a member of the Senate from a remote location to attend, participate, vote and take any other action in any proceedings of the Senate or the Committee of the Whole even though the member is not physically present within the Senate Chambers or at a meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

2. Approved by the chair of a committee, other than the Committee of the Whole, and uses any electronic, digital or other similar technology to enable a member of the Senate from a remote location to attend, participate, vote and take any other action in any proceedings of the committee even though the member is not physically present at a meeting of the committee.

Special Rule No. 4. Authorized Use of Remote-Technology Systems to Carry Out Public Purposes of Special Rules.

1. Upon request by a member of the Senate:

(a) The Majority Leader may authorize the member to use a remote-technology system to attend, participate, vote and take any other action in any proceedings of the Senate or the Committee of the Whole if the Majority Leader determines that such use by the member is necessary as a protective or safety measure to carry out the public purposes of these Special Rules. If the Majority Leader grants such authorization, it must be entered in the Journal of the Senate.

(b) The chair of a committee, other than the Committee of the Whole, may authorize the member to use a remote-technology system to attend, participate, vote and take any other action in any proceedings of the committee if the chair determines that such use by the member is necessary as a protective or safety measure to carry out the public purposes of these Special Rules. If the chair grants such authorization, it must be entered in the records of the committee.

2. If a member of the Senate uses a remote-technology system to attend, participate, vote and take any other action in any proceedings pursuant to these Special Rules, the member shall be deemed to be present and in attendance at the proceedings for all purposes.

3. For the purposes of voting in proceedings of:

(a) The Senate or the Committee of the Whole, the Secretary of the Senate, or an authorized assistant, shall call the roll of each member who is authorized to use a remote-technology system for the proceedings and, in accordance with the procedures of the Senate, cause the member's vote to be entered into the record for the purposes of the Journal of the Senate or the records of the Committee of the Whole, as applicable.

(b) A committee, other than the Committee of the Whole, the committee secretary shall call the roll of each member who is authorized to use a remote-technology system for the proceedings and, in accordance with the procedures of the committee, cause the member's vote to be entered into the record for the purposes of the records of the committee.

Special Rule No. 5. Authority to Adopt Special Rules.

The Senate hereby finds and declares that:

(a) The Nevada Constitution invests each House of the Legislature with certain plenary and exclusive constitutional powers which may be exercised only by that House and which cannot be usurped, infringed or impaired by the other House or by any other branch of Nevada's State Government. (Heller v. Legislature, 120 Nev. 456 (2004); Commission on Ethics v. Hardy, 125 Nev. 285 (2009); Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure §§ 2-3 & 560-564 (2010) (Mason's Manual))

(b) Section 6 of Article 4 of the Nevada Constitution invests each House with plenary and exclusive constitutional powers to determine the rules of its proceedings and to govern, control and regulate its membership and its internal organization, affairs and management, expressly providing that: "Each House shall judge of the qualifications, elections and returns of its own members, choose its own officers (except the President of the Senate), determine the rules of its proceedings and may punish its members for disorderly conduct, and with the concurrence of two thirds of all the members elected, expel a member."

(c) In addition to its plenary and exclusive constitutional powers, each House possesses certain inherent powers of institutional self-protection and self-preservation to govern, control and regulate its membership and its internal organization, affairs and management. (In re Chapman, 166 U.S. 661, 668 (1897); Mason's Manual § 2; Luther S. Cushing, Elements of the Law & Practice of Legislative Assemblies § 533 (1856) (Cushing's Legislative Assemblies))

(d) The inherent powers of each House are considered "so essential to the authority of a legislative assembly, that it cannot well exist without them; and they are consequently entitled to be regarded as belonging to every such assembly as a necessary incident." (Cushing's

Legislative Assemblies § 533)

(e) The inherent powers of each House authorize it to take all necessary and proper institutional actions that are "recognized by the common parliamentary law." (Cushing's Legislative Assemblies § 684)

(f) Thus, it is well established that each House is "vested with all the powers and privileges which are necessary and incidental to a free and unobstructed exercise of its appropriate functions. These powers and privileges are derived not from the Constitution; on the contrary, they arise from the very creation of a legislative body, and are founded upon the principle of self-preservation." (Ex parte McCarthy, 29 Cal. 395, 403 (1866))

(g) Under the Nevada Constitution, there are no constitutional provisions establishing a particular method for determining whether a member of either House is present at legislative proceedings.

(h) The United States Supreme Court has held that when there are no constitutional provisions establishing a particular method for determining whether a member of a legislative house is present at legislative proceedings, "it is therefore within the competency of the house to prescribe any method which shall be reasonably certain to ascertain the fact." (United States v. Ballin, 144 U.S. 1, 6 (1892))

(i) The United States Supreme Court has also held that when a legislative house adopts a rule establishing a reasonable method for determining whether a member is present at legislative proceedings, that rule must be given great deference by the courts because:

Neither do the advantages or disadvantages, the wisdom or folly, of such a rule present any matters for judicial consideration. With the courts the question is only one of power. The constitution empowers each house to determine its rules of proceedings. It may not by its rules ignore constitutional restraints or violate fundamental rights, and there should be a reasonable relation between the mode or method of proceeding established by the rule and the result which is sought to be attained. But within these limitations all matters of method are open to the determination of the house, and it is no impeachment of the rule to say that some other way would be better, more accurate, or even more just. It is no objection to the validity of a rule that a different one has been prescribed and in force for a length of time. The power to make rules is not one which once exercised is exhausted. It is a continuous power, always subject to be exercised by the house, and, within the limitations suggested, absolute and beyond the challenge of any other body or tribunal.

(United States v. Ballin, 144 U.S. 1, 5 (1892))

2. The Senate hereby exercises its constitutional and inherent powers and privileges and adopts these Special Rules to:

(a) Govern, control and regulate its membership and its internal organization, affairs and management;

(b) Ensure its institutional self-protection and self-preservation; and

(c) Establish a reasonable method for determining whether a member of the Senate is present at legislative proceedings amid the ongoing and widespread public-health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in order to keep the legislative process as safe and free as reasonably possible from the extraordinary danger, risk, harm, injury and peril posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

And be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon adoption.

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