

Table 1- A
Summary of Remote Public Testimony in Committee of Reference Scenarios and Related Costs

*Updated from Table 1-A on page 2 of the November 20, 2020 LCS Memorandum titled
 "Remote Participation in Committees of Reference: Costs and Issues for Consideration"*

Description		Staffing	Requested from the Legislative Cash Fund		Page /a
Scenario 1	Weekly meeting at a set time (perhaps on Friday afternoons) for all remote testimony. Members of the public must register in advance.	No new staffing needs	Total Requested	\$0	8
Scenario 2	Mirror current remote testimony policy. Limited to 2 meetings at a time. Members of the public must register in advance.	2 session-only meeting hosts 1.0 FTE	Personal Services Operating Capital Outlay Centrally-appropriated Total Requested	\$56,352 \$2,280 \$2,400 \$4,882 \$65,914	9
Scenario 3	First hour of afternoon committees devoted to public remote participation for all bills on agenda. Members of the public must register in advance.	3 session-only meeting hosts 1.5 FTE	Personal Services Operating Capital Outlay Centrally-appropriated Total Requested	\$84,528 \$3,420 \$3,600 \$7,322 \$98,870	11
Scenario 4	First hour of all committees devoted to public remote participation for all bills on agenda. Members of the public must register in advance.	4 session-only meeting hosts 2 FTE	Personal Services Operating Capital Outlay Centrally-appropriated Total Requested	\$112,704 \$4,560 \$4,800 \$9,763 \$131,827	12
Scenario 5	Mirror in-person testimony. Public remote participation on any bill at any time on all committee agendas. Members of the public must register in advance.	6 session-only meeting hosts 3 FTE	Personal Services Operating Capital Outlay Centrally-appropriated Total Requested	\$169,056 \$6,840 \$7,200 \$14,645 \$197,741	14

/a These page numbers reference pages in the November 20, 2020 memorandum titled "Remote Participation in Committees of Reference: Costs and Issues for Consideration." Each scenario is described in the memorandum at the referenced page number. Costs shown in this table will differ slightly from those in the memorandum because they have been updated to reflect new information.

Personal services = \$24,000 base salary per employee, 10.95% PERA contribution, Medicare taxes, and transportation allowance. Operating = \$1,140 per employee for a six-month telephone lease, software, chairs, and equipment such as keyboards, mice, docks, etc. Capital outlay = \$1,200 per employee for a computer. Centrally appropriated costs include PERA AED and SAED and short-term disability premiums.



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Memorandum

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November 20, 2020

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SUBJECT: Remote Participation in Committees of Reference: Costs and Issues for Consideration

Summary

This memorandum contains Legislative Council Staff cost estimates for, and questions leadership should consider while crafting a policy for, remote participation in committees of reference.

Cost estimates are summarized in:

- Table 1-A on page 2, which provides cost estimates for member participation and five options that assume both members and the public participate remotely; and
- Table 1-B on page 3, which provides cost estimates for remote participation by members of the public, assuming members do not participate remotely.

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These tables are followed by a discussion of the background and assumptions for the cost estimates, descriptions of the staff roles required for remote participation, and more detail about each scenario.

Requested funding for FY 2020-21. Legislative Council Staff respectfully requests the amounts listed in Tables 1-A and 1-B from the Legislative Cash Fund for each scenario. These amounts are net of up to \$94,890, or the base salary and associated costs for three session-only staff. Legislative Council Staff is able to absorb these costs due to efficiencies in positions expected to be backfilled for staff on loan to the redistricting commissions. These savings will not be available for FY 2021-22.

A confidential memorandum is only given to the legislator requesting the research. Staff continue to regard the memorandum as confidential unless the legislator making the request indicates otherwise, although information in the memorandum may be provided in whole or in part to other legislators pursuant to their separate research requests. After receiving the memorandum, the legislator may release the document to interested parties.

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Table 1-A
Summary of Remote Participation in Committee of Reference Scenarios and Related Costs
Assuming Members Participate Remotely in Committees

Description	Staffing	Requested from Legislative Cash Fund FY 2020-21 /a	Required GF Appropriation FY 2021-22	Page
Member Remote Participation	Existing committee staff 1 existing IT support <u>3 new session-only IT support</u> Total new staff: 3 staff, 1.5 FTE	\$12,720	\$100,020 1.5 FTE	6
Plus Public Remote Participation				
Scenario 1	Weekly meeting at a set time (perhaps on Friday afternoons) for all remote testimony. Members of the public must register in advance.	No new staffing needs above that required for members	<i>Plus</i> \$0	\$0
		Total	\$12,720 \$100,020 1.5 FTE	8
Scenario 2	Mirror current remote testimony policy. Limited to 2 meetings at a time. Members of the public must register in advance.	In addition to need for members: <u>2 session-only meeting hosts</u> Total new staff: 5 staff, 2.5 FTE	<i>Plus</i> \$67,940	\$62,880
		Total	\$80,660 \$162,900 2.5 FTE	9
Scenario 3	First hour of afternoon committees devoted to public remote participation for all bills on agenda. Members of the public must register in advance.	In addition to need for members: <u>3 session-only meeting hosts</u> Total new staff: 6 staff, 3.0 FTE	<i>Plus</i> \$101,910	\$94,320
		Total	\$114,630 \$194,340 3.0 FTE	11
Scenario 4	First hour of all committees devoted to public remote participation for all bills on agenda. Members of the public must register in advance.	In addition to need for members: <u>4 session-only meeting hosts</u> Total new staff: 7 staff, 3.5 FTE	<i>Plus</i> \$135,880	\$125,760
		Total	\$148,600 \$225,780 3.5 FTE	12
Scenario 5	Mirror in-person testimony. Public remote participation on any bill at any time on all committee agendas. Members of the public must register in advance.	In addition to need for members: <u>6 session-only meeting hosts</u> Total new staff: 9 staff, 4.5 FTE	<i>Plus</i> \$203,820	\$188,640
		Total	\$216,540 \$288,660 4.5 FTE	14

/a FY 2020-21 costs are net of the first \$94,890 of personal services costs, which Legislative Council Staff can absorb in FY 2021-22 due to one-time factors related to the redistricting budget and staff efficiencies. They include centrally appropriated costs. FY 2021-22 appropriations exclude centrally appropriated costs.

Table 1-B
Summary of Public Remote Participation in Committee of Reference Scenarios and Related Costs
Assuming Members *Do Not* Participate Remotely in Committees

Description	Staffing	Requested from Legislative Cash Fund FY 2020-21 /a	Required GF Appropriation FY 2021-22	Page
Scenario 1 Weekly meeting at a set time (perhaps on Friday afternoons) for all remote testimony. Members of the public must register in advance.	Existing staff	No Fiscal Impact		8
Scenario 2 Mirror current remote testimony policy. Limited to 2 meetings at a time. Members of the public must register in advance.	1 existing IT support staff 1 new session-only IT support <u>2 session-only meeting hosts</u> Total new staff: 3 staff, 1.5 FTE	Total \$12,720	\$100,020 1.5 FTE	9
Scenario 3 First hour of <i>afternoon</i> committees devoted to public remote participation for all bills on agenda. Members of the public must register in advance.	1 existing IT support staff 3 new session-only IT support <u>3 session-only meeting hosts</u> Total new staff: 6 staff, 3.0 FTE	Total \$114,630	\$194,340 3.0 FTE	11
Scenario 4 First hour of <i>all</i> committees devoted to public remote participation for all bills on agenda. Members of the public must register in advance.	1 existing IT support staff 3 new session-only IT support <u>4 session-only meeting hosts</u> Total new staff: 7 staff, 3.5 FTE	Total \$148,600	\$225,780 3.5 FTE	12
Scenario 5 Mirror in-person testimony. Public remote participation on any bill at any time on all committee agendas. Members of the public must register in advance.	1 existing IT support staff 3 new session-only IT support <u>6 session-only meeting hosts</u> Total new staff: 9 staff, 4.5 FTE	Total \$216,540	\$288,660 4.5 FTE	14

/a FY 2020-21 costs are net of the first \$94,890 of personal services costs, which Legislative Council Staff can absorb in FY 2021-22 due to one-time factors related to the redistricting budget and staff efficiencies. They include centrally appropriated costs. FY 2021-22 appropriations exclude centrally appropriated costs.

Background and Assumptions

Legislative Council Staff provides staff support to committees of reference through both the Policy & Research section (committee staff) and the IT support group.

- The **IT support group** currently consists of four-full time support staff. One staff person from this group supports the existing remote testimony program. This role can be repurposed to support committee member remote participation and committee public participation. The IT support group provides technical support to the four nonpartisan staff agencies, the partisan and nonpartisan staff of the House and Senate, and all 100 legislators.
- The **Policy & Research section** assigns a staff person to support each committee of reference. These staff could have a small role in supporting member participation in committees of reference, as long as they were sufficiently supported by IT support staff. Policy & Research Staff do not have the capacity to support public participation in committee hearings in addition to their current duties.
- The **cost scenarios in this memo** assume:
 - staff will be supporting 19 committees of reference, as during the 2020 legislative session,
 - the committee schedule will allow up to six committees to meet at the same time (three House committees and three Senate committees); and
 - these committee hearings could potentially occur at the same time in up to four separate physical areas of the Capitol Complex:
 - the House Committee Room area (Capitol Basement);
 - the Senate Committee Room area (Capitol Third Floor);
 - the Old Supreme Court Chambers and Old State Library (Capitol Second Floor); and
 - Hearing Rooms A and B (Legislative Services Building).
- The cost estimates are reflective only of costs to support committees of reference. Costs to support remote participation in year-round committees (such as the Joint Budget Committee) or for floor work are separate from committee costs and are not included in this memo.
- The **cost estimates** include \$5,700 to purchase Webex accounts at a cost of \$300 each for 19 committees of reference, and the following amounts per employee:
 - a **base salary** of \$25,000 for the period of January through June;
 - \$1,380 in **operating expenses**, which include:
 - \$240 to lease a telephone for six months; and
 - \$900 for other operating costs such as software, chairs, and equipment such as keyboards, mice, and docks; and
 - \$1,200 capital expenses for a **laptop**.

Legislative Council Staff may request additional funding should the 2021 legislative session extend beyond FY 2021-22.

Staff Roles Required for Remote Participation

IT support staff. To support remote participation by members in committees of reference or remote public participation in committees of reference, LCS Staff requires four IT support staff. Four staff will be required if members participate, if the public participates, or both. These four staff will be stationed at each of the four physical locations in the Capitol Complex in which committee meetings occur to provide IT support to members of the committee and committee staff during any meeting that has a remote component. These staff will also be responsible for connecting audio and other equipment to the WebEx software and setting up any required overflow rooms before and after each committee meeting.

Existing staff from this team are also responsible for covering remote participation for the Joint Budget Committee and on the House and Senate floors. As noted above, LCS staff has one employee that currently supports the remote testimony process; this person would be repurposed to support remote member and/or remote public participation. Therefore, LCS staff will require three additional session-only IT support staff for remote participation in committees.

Meeting host. A remote meeting host is required for meetings with a remote component. One IT support staff person serves in this role for the current remote testimony process. This person monitors and coordinates the testimony sign-up process; communicates with witnesses; promotes, mutes, and otherwise controls the flow of electronic witnesses in the meeting; communicates with the chair and staff about the number and availability of witnesses; and troubleshoots technical issues for witnesses.

For meetings in which only legislative members are participating, existing committee staff can serve as the meeting host. This assumes that not all members will participate virtually; that those members who do participate virtually will be supported by the additional IT support staff identified in the preceding section; and that members who regularly participate in committee hearings virtually will become more practiced over time, lessening the need for the host to provide ongoing support as members become more comfortable with virtual procedures.

Each meeting that has a public participation component requires a meeting host, separate from the committee staff. This is because the number of virtual participants will be significantly larger and less practiced with procedure, and these witnesses will require staff to take a more active role in muting, promoting, communicating, troubleshooting, etc.

IT application development staff: one-time workload increase for public remote participation. The IT application development staff will incur a one-time increase in workload to program an online process for members of the public to use to register to provide remote testimony in a committee. This process would be integrated with those for signing up to testify in person and providing written electronic testimony. The work would be accomplished prior to the 2021 legislative session.

Remote Participation by Members in Committees of Reference

Legislative Council staffing needs for remote participation by members in committees of reference are based on the following assumptions:

- members may participate remotely in any committee of reference meeting;
- up to six meetings of committees of reference with remotely participating members may occur at the same time; and
- committee hearings will have a mixture of in-person and remote participation.

Member Remote Participation

3 new session-only
\$12,720 requested

No new meeting hosts. Legislative Council Staff committee staff will be the meeting host and will be responsible for scheduling the electronic meeting, sharing invites with remotely participating members, and working with the committee chair to manage in-person and remote attendance and participation.

Three new IT support staff. Legislative Council Staff will require four IT support staff, including three new session-only staff, to support committee staff in setting up, managing, and troubleshooting committee meetings with remote member participation.

FY 2020-21 Expenditures (\$12,720 requested from the Legislative Cash Fund). As shown in Table 2, Legislative Council Staff is requesting \$12,720 from the Legislative Cash Fund to cover capital and operating costs of three session-only staff. Costs total \$107,610, of which Legislative Council Staff will absorb \$94,890, or the personal services and related expenses for three session-only staff.

Table 2
Remote Participation by Members in Committees of Reference, FY 2020-21

	Total Costs	Requested Costs
Personal Services /a	\$87,263	-
Operating Expenses /b	\$9,120	\$9,120
Capital Outlay Costs – Laptops	\$3,600	\$3,600
Centrally-Appropriated Costs /c	\$7,628	-
Session-only IT Support Staff (Head Count) /d	3	3
Session-only Host Clerks (Head Count) /d	0	0
Total Cost	\$107,610	\$12,720
Total FTE	1.5	1.5

/a Personal services include a base salary of \$25,000 per employee, Medicare tax, and PERA contribution.

/b Operating expenses include telephones, software, chairs, and equipment such as keyboards, mice, and docks.

/c Centrally-appropriated costs include short-term disability and PERA supplemental distributions.

/d Each session-only head count is estimated to be equivalent to 0.5 FTE.

FY 2021-22 Expenditures (\$100,020 General Fund and 1.5 FTE). As shown in Table 1-A on page 2, Legislative Council Staff would require \$100,020 General Fund and 1.5 FTE to continue this service in FY 2021-22. This differs from the FY 2020-21 total because it excludes centrally appropriated costs.

Additional questions and considerations include:

1. Will all committees allow member remote participation? Will members be able to vote, offer amendments, and present bills virtually in committee?
2. What will the approval process be for members to participate remotely?
3. May members participate in some committees remotely and others in person (that is, can they go back and forth between remote and in-person participation?)
4. How much notice must members give to participate remotely?
5. Will members be permitted to participate remotely in meetings of year-round committees? (JBC, Legislative Council, Executive Committee, Joint Technology Committee, Capital Development Committee, Legislative Audit Committee, Committee on Legal Services, Capitol Building Advisory Committee)
6. How will technology issues be handled, for instance, if a remotely participating member cannot connect remotely?

Remote Participation by Members of the Public in Committees of Reference

The LCS staffing requirements for remote public participation depend on how it is structured.

- Remote public participation drives the **lowest** staffing need if it is:
 - **time-limited** (i.e., occurs only for a specific amount of time)
 - **scheduled** (i.e., occurs at regular and predictable pre-determined times);
 - **discrete and specific** (i.e., occurs in two or fewer meetings at the same time); and
 - **secured** (i.e., members of the public must register to testify in advance).
- Remote public participation drives the **highest** staffing need if it:
 - **not time-limited** (i.e., there are no overall time limits for testimony or limits on the number of witnesses who may testify);
 - **not scheduled** (i.e., occurs at any time during, and at multiple times throughout, a committee meeting);
 - **not discrete or specific** (i.e., occurs in multiple concurrent committee meetings); and

- **not secured** (i.e., members of the public can join the remote meeting at any time without prior registration; this is not recommended).

The following scenarios are options for allowing virtual public participation in the committee process. All of the scenarios assume that members of the public can submit written testimony on any bill pending in a committee from the time the bill is scheduled in committee to the time the committee acts on a bill and may also testify in person.

Scenario #1: One Weekly Meeting for All Remote Public Testimony

One weekly, limited, and scheduled meeting would be held to allow members of the public to comment on certain bills. The bills could include any bill pending before the General Assembly, any bill scheduled for committee in the following week, or another subset of bills. Because most committees are not scheduled for Friday afternoons, this would be the easiest time for this. Members of the public would be required to register at least two hours before the meeting.

Scenario #1 One Weekly Meeting

No Member Participation

Existing staff
No fiscal impact

With Member Participation

3 new session-only
\$12,720 requested

If members do not participate remotely – no fiscal impact.

Existing IT support staff can serve as the meeting host in this scenario. This scenario would drive the lowest staffing impact and could be provided within existing resources.

If members do participate remotely – no additional fiscal impact. If members are participating in committee remotely, the four staff supporting them will also support this process. Three of the four positions are new session-only IT support staff. *Legislative Council Staff requests \$12,720 from the Legislative Cash Fund in FY 2020-21 to facilitate member participation, as shown in Table 2 on page 6.*

Additional questions and considerations include:

1. Which members would attend the remote testimony session to receive the public input? Would members be allowed to participate remotely in this meeting, and if so, would the requirements members to participate remotely differ than those for standard committee of reference meetings?
2. Will the number of remotely participating members of the public be limited? If more members of the public sign up than are able to testify, how will it be determined which members of the public get to testify? Will there be uniform time limits on individual testimony (3 minutes per witness)?

Scenario #2: Mirror Current Remote Testimony Policy

Allow public remote participation in up to two committees meeting at the same time, with advance notice required from leadership to staff and advance registration required for members of the public adapted from the schedules in the current remote testimony policy.

The current remote testimony policy allows remote testimony to occur in two concurrently meeting committees. Advance registration of witnesses is required. As discussed earlier, one IT support staff currently supports this process.

Scenario #2 Mirror Current Remote Testimony Policy

No Member Participation

3 new session-only
\$12,720 requested

With Member Participation

5 new session-only
\$80,660 requested

Although the remote testimony process currently allows for up to two concurrent remote testimony meetings to occur, in practice, concurrent meetings with remote testimony do not happen every day. In general, Legislative Council Staff has been supporting up to four to five remote testimony sessions per week with existing FTE. This policy would allow a maximum of 16 remote sessions per week (2 on Monday afternoons, 4 each on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and 2 on Friday afternoons). The cost estimate assumes that remote testimony would occur in each of the 16 available sessions.

Two new meeting hosts. Because up to two meetings may occur concurrently and are not time-limited, LCS requires two meeting hosts for this scenario.

IT support staff. The need for IT support staff depends on whether or not members are also participating remotely:

- If **members do not participate** remotely, Legislative Council Staff requires **one new session-only IT support staff**. A total of two IT support staff are needed because the meetings could occur in two separate physical spaces within the Capitol Complex. One of these roles will be filled from existing staff. *Legislative Council Staff requests \$12,720 from the Legislative Cash Fund in FY 2020-21 for this scenario, as shown in Table 2 on page 6.*
- If **members are participating** in committee remotely, the four staff supporting them will also support this process. **Three of the four positions are new session-only IT support staff.** *Costs for this scenario are shown in Table 3.*

FY 2020-21 Expenditures – Assuming Members Participate Remotely (\$80,660 requested from the Legislative Cash Fund). As shown in Table 3, Legislative Council Staff is requesting \$80,660 from the Legislative Cash Fund to cover capital and operating costs of five and the personal services of two session-only staff. Costs total \$175,550, of which Legislative Council Staff will absorb \$94,890, or the personal services and related expenses for three session-only staff.

FY 2021-22 Expenditures – Assuming Members Participate Remotely (\$162,900 General Fund and 2.5 FTE). As shown in Table 1-A on page 2, Legislative Council Staff would require a \$162,900 General Fund appropriation and 2.5 FTE to continue this service in FY 2021-22. This differs from the FY 2020-21 total because it excludes centrally appropriated costs.

Table 3
Scenario #2 for Public Remote Participation. FY 2020-21
Total Cost, Assumes Members Are Also Participating Remotely
 Not time-limited, Partially Scheduled, up to 2 Concurrent Meetings, and Secure

	Total Costs	Requested Costs
Personal Services /a	\$145,438	\$58,175
Operating Expenses /b	\$11,400	\$11,400
Capital Outlay Costs – Laptops	\$6,000	\$6,000
Centrally-Appropriated Costs /c	\$12,713	\$5,085
Session-only IT Support Staff (Head Count) /d	3	3
Session-only Host Clerks (Head Count) /d	2	2
Total Cost	\$175,550	\$80,660
Total FTE	2.5	2.5

/a Personal services include a base salary of \$25,000 per employee, Medicare tax, and PERA contribution.

/b Operating expenses include telephones, software, chairs, and equipment such as keyboards, mice, and docks.

/c Centrally appropriated costs include short-term disability and PERA supplemental distributions.

/d Each session-only head count is estimated to be equivalent to 0.5 FTE.

Additional questions and considerations include:

1. If there are more than two committees meeting in a particular time slot, how will it be determined which committees will be open for remote testimony?
2. What will be the requirements and timeframes for registration of witnesses?
3. How would committee schedule changes/delays be handled?
4. This scenario would require in-person witnesses to wait through this portion of the agenda – potentially keeping people clustered in committee rooms for longer periods of time.
5. Will the number of remotely participating members of the public be limited? If more members of the public sign up than are able to testify, how will it be determined which members of the public get to testify? Will there be uniform time limits on individual testimony (3 minutes per witness)?
6. How will remotely participating witnesses be rotated or balanced with in person witnesses?

Scenario #3: First Hour of Afternoon Committees

Require each committee to devote the first hour of its weekly afternoon meeting to hearing remote public testimony on any bills assigned to the committee. Members of the public will be required to register at least two hours before the meeting. This scenario assumes that all committees would utilize this option, and therefore, up to six concurrently meeting committees could be taking public remote testimony at the same time.

Scenario #3 First Hour – Afternoon Committees

6 new session-only
\$114,630 requested

Three new meeting hosts. Each meeting with public remote participation will require one meeting host to monitor the duration of the committee hearing. Existing IT staff could support up to three concurrent meetings if the meetings are limited to the afternoon to a regularly scheduled and discrete time. Because of this, and because this scenario limits this to six afternoon meetings, three session-only host clerks will be required.

Three new IT support staff. Legislative Council Staff will require four IT support staff, including three new session-only staff, to support committee staff in setting up, managing, and troubleshooting committee meetings with public and/or member remote participation. These four staff are needed to provide coverage to the four locations where remote participation could happen concurrently, regardless of whether or not members participate remotely.

FY 2020-21 Expenditures (\$114,630 requested from the Legislative Cash Fund). As shown in Table 4, Legislative Council Staff is requesting \$114,630 from the Legislative Cash Fund to cover capital and operating costs of six and the personal services of three session-only staff. Costs total \$209,520, of which Legislative Council Staff will absorb \$94,890, or the personal services expenses of three staff.

FY 2021-22 Expenditures (\$194,340 General Fund and 3.0 FTE). As shown in Tables 1-A and 1-B, Legislative Council Staff would require a \$194,340 General Fund appropriation and 3.0 FTE to continue this service in FY 2021-22. This differs from the FY 2020-21 total because it excludes centrally appropriated costs.

Additional questions and considerations include:

1. How would committee schedule changes or delays be handled?
2. This scenario would require in-person witnesses to wait through this portion of the agenda – potentially keeping people clustered in committee rooms for longer periods of time.
3. It may be confusing for the committee to hear testimony on bills that are not on its agenda for the day.
4. It may be difficult to enforce the time limit.

5. Will the number of remotely participating members of the public be limited? If more members of the public sign up than are able to testify, how will it be determined which members of the public get to testify? Will there be uniform time limits on individual testimony (3 minutes per witness)?

Table 4
Scenario #3 for Public Remote Participation, FY 2020-21
Total Cost, Assumes Members Are Also Participating Remotely
 Time-limited, Partially Scheduled, up to 6 Concurrent Meetings, and Secure

	Total Costs	Requested Costs
Personal Services /a	\$174,525	\$87,263
Operating Expenses /b	\$12,540	\$12,540
Capital Outlay Costs – Laptops	\$7,200	\$7,200
Centrally-Appropriated Costs /c	\$15,255	\$7,628
Session-only IT Support Staff (Head Count) /d	3	3
Session-only Host Clerks (Head Count) /d	3	3
Total Cost	\$209,520	\$114,630
Total FTE	3	3

/a Personal services include a base salary of \$25,000 per employee, Medicare tax, and PERA contribution.

/b Operating expenses include telephones, software, chairs, and equipment such as keyboards, mice, and docks.

/c Centrally appropriated costs include short-term disability and PERA supplemental distributions.

/d Each session-only head count is estimated to be equivalent to 0.5 FTE.

Scenario #4: First Hour All Committees

Require each committee to devote the first hour of each meeting to remote public testimony on any bills on the committee's schedule for the day. This assumes that public remote participation will occur in up to six meetings at the same time. Managing this effectively will require members of the public to register at least two hours before the meeting.

Scenario #4 First Hour – All Committees

7 new session-only
\$148,600 requested

Four new meeting hosts. Each meeting with public remote participation will require one host clerk to monitor the duration of the committee hearing. Because the meetings are limited in duration, existing IT support staff could support up to two concurrent meetings. Because of this, and because this scenario presumes up to six meetings, four session-only host clerks will be required.

Three new IT support staff. Legislative Council Staff will require four IT support staff, including three new session-only staff, to support committee staff in setting up, managing, and troubleshooting committee meetings with public and/or member remote participation. These four staff are needed to provide coverage to the four locations where remote participation could happen concurrently, regardless of whether or not members participate remotely.

FY 2020-21 Expenditures (\$148,600 requested from the Legislative Cash Fund). As shown in Table 5, Legislative Council Staff is requesting \$148,600 from the Legislative Cash Fund to cover capital and operating costs of seven and the personal services of four session-only staff. Costs total \$243,490, of which Legislative Council Staff will absorb \$94,890, or the personal services expenses of three staff.

FY 2021-22 Expenditures (\$225,780 General Fund and 3.5 FTE). As shown in Tables 1-A and 1-B, Legislative Council Staff would require a \$225,780 General Fund appropriation and 3.5 FTE to continue this service in FY 2021-22. This differs from FY 2020-21 total because it excludes centrally appropriated costs.

Table 5
Scenario #4 for Public Remote Participation, FY 2020-21
 Time-limited, Partially Scheduled, up to 6 Concurrent Meetings, and Secure

	Total Costs	Requested Costs
Personal Services /a	\$203,613	\$116,350
Operating Expenses /b	\$13,680	\$13,680
Capital Outlay Costs – Laptops	\$8,400	\$8,400
Centrally-Appropriated Costs /c	\$17,798	\$10,170
Session-only IT Support Staff (Head Count) /d	3	3
Session-only Host Clerks (Head Count) /d	4	4
Total Cost	\$243,490	\$148,600
Total FTE	3.5	3.5

/a Personal services include a base salary of \$25,000 per employee, Medicare tax, and PERA contribution.

/b Operating expenses include telephones, software, chairs, and equipment such as keyboards, mice, and docks.

/c Centrally appropriated costs include short-term disability and PERA supplemental distributions.

/d Each session-only head count is estimated to be equivalent to 0.5 FTE.

Additional questions and considerations include:

1. This schedule could be tough to manage for committees meeting upon adjournment.
2. It may be difficult to enforce the time limit.
3. This scenario would require in-person witnesses to wait through this portion of the agenda – potentially keeping people clustered in committee rooms for longer periods of time.

4. Will the number of remotely participating members of the public be limited? If more members of the public sign up than are able to testify, how will it be determined which members of the public get to testify? Will there be uniform time limits on individual testimony (3 minutes per witness)?

Scenario #5: Mirror In-person Testimony

This scenario attempts to allow public remote testimony to resemble in-person testimony as much as possible. Remote public testimony is permitted on any bill on the committee's agenda, and would occur at the time the bill is taken up by the committee. The committee chair can determine the order in which to take remote and in-person testimony and can rotate between the two. Members of the public will still need to register in advance to manage the agenda and prevent increased information security risk.

Scenario #5 Mirror In-Person

9 new session-only
\$216,540 requested

Six new meeting hosts. Each meeting with public remote participation will require one host clerk to monitor the duration of the committee hearing. This scenario requires more coverage than the other scenarios. It would likely result in longer committee meetings and additional occurrences of six or more concurrent meetings at a time. Therefore, in addition to increased workload to existing staff, six session-only host clerks will be required.

Three new IT support staff. Legislative Council Staff will require four IT support staff, including three new session-only staff, to support committee staff in setting up, managing, and troubleshooting committee meetings with public and/or member remote participation. These four staff are needed to provide coverage to the four locations where remote participation could happen concurrently, regardless of whether or not members participate remotely.

FY 2020-21 Expenditures (\$216,540 requested from the Legislative Cash Fund). As shown in Table 6, Legislative Council Staff is requesting \$216,540 from the Legislative Cash Fund to cover capital and operating costs of nine and the personal services of six session-only staff. Costs total \$311,430, of which Legislative Council Staff will absorb \$94,890, or the personal services expenses of three staff.

FY 2021-22 Expenditures (\$288,660 General Fund and 4.5 FTE). As shown in Tables 1-A and 1-B, Legislative Council Staff would require a \$288,660 General Fund appropriation and 4.5 FTE to continue this service in FY 2021-22. This differs from FY 2020-21 total because it excludes centrally appropriated costs.

Table 6
Scenario #5 for Public Remote Participation, FY 2020-21
 Not Time-Limited, Not Scheduled, Not Discrete, Secure

	Total Costs	Requested Costs
Personal Services /a	\$261,788	\$174,525
Operating Expenses /b	\$15,960	\$15,960
Capital Outlay Costs – Laptops	\$10,800	\$10,800
Centrally-Appropriated Costs /c	\$22,883	\$15,255
Session-only IT Support Staff (Head Count) /d	3	3
Session-only Host Clerks (Head Count) /d	6	6
Total Cost	\$311,430	\$216,540
Total FTE	4.5	4.5

/a Personal services include a base salary of \$25,000 per employee, Medicare tax, and PERA contribution.

/b Operating expenses include telephones, software, chairs, and equipment such as keyboards, mice, and docks.

/c Centrally appropriated costs include short-term disability and PERA supplemental distributions.

/d Each session-only head count is estimated to be equivalent to 0.5 FTE.

Additional questions and considerations include:

1. Making it easier for the public to safely participate in the committee process is a desirable goal. But, increasing public participation would also increase the time spent in committee, which could delay bills moving through the process, make it difficult to manage overall legislative workload, and expose those members and staff who are in-person to longer meetings in confined spaces.
2. Will the number of remotely participating members of the public be limited? If more members of the public sign up than are able to testify, how will it be determined which members of the public get to testify? Will there be uniform time limits on individual testimony (3 minutes per witness)?