

2024 Senate of Maryland Rules

Easy-Read Version

About the Maryland Senate



Below are rules the Senate will follow in 2024. These rules will help keep the senators, staff, and visitors safe while COVID-19 is still a problem.



The Senate is made up of people from every county in Maryland. Marylanders voted for them. They are called “senators.” They help make the state laws we have to follow.



The Senate has committees that work on different issues. Examples are education and health.

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Committees



In 2024, Senate will do its work in person. Senate committees will meet in person. You can watch the hearings in person or online. You can also testify in person or online.



One of the first steps to make a new law is for committees to meet. When they meet, they have “hearings” about “bills.”

- **Bills** are new laws the committees consider passing.
- **Bill hearings** are when the committees meet to listen to people “testify” about bills.
- **Testifying on a bill** means telling the committee if you are for or against a bill and why.
- People who testify are called **witnesses**.



Hearings

Most Senate committees will have their hearings on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

There is a [calendar](#) on the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) website that shows when the hearings will be for each committee.

Witnesses



If you want to testify on a bill, you must sign-up.

- You sign-up at [MyMGA](#). You must make an account. To learn more, watch this [video](#).
- You can sign up to testify in person OR online.
- Sign up starts 24 business hours before the bill hearing.
- You can sign up from 8 am until 6 pm.
- You sign up on Fridays for hearings that are on Monday. You sign up on Mondays for hearings that are on Tuesday.



Committees talk about many different bills each time they meet. You can find out what order the bills will be discussed by going to [MGA calendar](#). Make sure to choose the correct date.

- The information will be listed before the hearing.

Committee Rules



You cannot sign-up to testify and then ask someone else to take your place. The way you testify cannot change after you sign up. The chairperson of each committee makes other rules for witnesses. To read the rules for each committee, go to mgaleg.maryland.gov. Click on the “Committees” tab.

Voting Sessions



Voting sessions are meetings where the committees vote on bills. This is how they decide if a bill will become a law.

- Senators will meet in person for voting sessions.
- You can find a list of the bills the committees will vote on by going to the [MGA calendar](#). Make sure to choose the correct date. The information will be there before the committee votes.
- You can watch voting sessions on the MGA website or in person

Bill Files



Each bill has a “bill file.” This is all the important information about the bill. It includes the bill, written testimony people sent in, and other information.

- You can always call or email the committee staff to help you get a bill file. Their information is on the [Senate Committee webpage](#).

Maryland State House



When senators on a committee want a bill to become law, they vote “yes.” When most senators on a committee vote “yes,” the bill then goes to all the other senators to discuss it together.



All of the senators meet together in a building called the Maryland State House. The room they meet in is called the Senate Chamber.



The senators come together in person when they meet in the Senate Chamber.



There is an area in the Senate Chamber where you can watch the senators talk about and vote on bills. It is called the “gallery.” There are not a lot of seats in the gallery, so not everyone can get one. When the gallery is full, no one else can get a seat.



You do not need to wear a mask in the gallery or in the Maryland State House. You can wear one if you want. There will be masks if you need one.



Want more Information?

Go to the Maryland General Assembly website at mgaleg.maryland.gov

Or, the Department of Legislative Services website at dls.maryland.gov

Or, call 410–946–5400