

2026 House of Delegates Protocol Guidelines

Easy Read Version



Below are the rules the House of Delegates will follow in 2026. These rules will help keep the delegates, staff, and all visitors safe during the 90-day session.



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



The House of Delegates has committees that work on different issues. Examples are education and health.



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**.



In 2026, House committees will do their work both in person and online. House committees will meet in person. Subcommittees will generally meet online. This means everyone meets using their computers, tablets, or cell phones. An iPad is an example of a tablet.



Hearings

- Committees start having bill hearings in mid-January.
- To learn when a bill will have a hearing, go to mgaleg.maryland.gov. Information is on the website before the hearing.
- The committee chairperson decides how long the hearing will last.



Witnesses

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

- You sign-up at [MyMGA Tracking](#). You must make an account.
- You can sign up to testify in person OR online.
- Sign up starts 48 hours before the bill hearing.
- You can sign up from 8am until 6pm.
- You sign up on Thursdays for hearings that are on Monday. You sign up on Fridays 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 the [MGA calendar](#). Make sure to choose the correct date.

- The information will be listed the day before the hearing. If the hearing is on Monday, the information will be listed on Friday.



Some committees may limit how many people can testify on a bill.

- If you want to testify with other people, call the committee staff. This is called testifying as a “panel.”
- Contact information is at [mgaleg.maryland.gov](#).

- You testify in person OR online. If you sign up to testify online, you will get a Zoom link. You use your computer, tablet, or cell phone.



Watch the Full Committees

Anyone can watch committees do their work.

Go to mgaleg.maryland.gov. Look for the yellow ribbon that says “Live Media.”



Subcommittees

Subcommittees are smaller committees that work on specific issues. They report to the full committees.

You can watch the subcommittees work by going to mgaleg.maryland.gov. Look for the yellow ribbon that says “Live Media.”



Voting sessions

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

- You watch committees vote online at mgaleg.maryland.gov. Look for the yellow ribbon that says “Live Media.”
- 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.



Bill files

Each bill has a “bill file.” This is all the important information about the bill. It includes the bill, written testimony people have 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 [**House Committee webpage**](#).



Maryland State House

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



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



The delegates come together in person when they meet in the House of Delegates Chamber.



There is an area in the House of Delegates Chamber where you can watch the delegates 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: mgaleg.maryland.gov

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

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