



## MARYLAND HOUSE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

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November 29, 2021

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker of the House  
State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Speaker Jones:

With the Special Session looming and the 2022 Legislative Session following closely behind, we know this is a time of planning. To that end, we are writing to make several requests for these upcoming legislative sessions.

As our Caucus communicated at the closure of the 2021 Legislative Session, there were several procedures instituted under the COVID protocols that brought a new layer of transparency and openness to the legislative process. We would like to see these policies and procedures continue. They are:

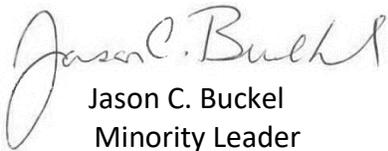
1. The two-day notice of Committee Voting Sessions and the live streaming of these voting sessions is possible and should fall under normal operations in the future. If this can be achieved in an environment when less staff are on hand, there should not be a problem providing this level of transparency once normal operations resume.
2. The ability to deliver remote live-streamed testimony to committees during bill hearings should be offered as an option for members of the public who cannot or do not wish to travel to Annapolis. When normal operations resume and citizens can once more come to Annapolis to testify, remote live-streamed testimony should be an additional option for individuals.
3. The twenty-four hour notice of the bills coming to the floor on second and third reader also provides an opportunity for increased public transparency.

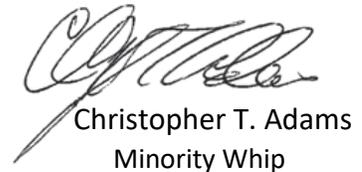
In addition, as we move toward normal operations in the General Assembly complex, we believe there are several procedures that should be reinstated. They are:

1. The ability for House members to co-sponsor legislation should be reinstated. Whether it be through the traditional signing of “blue backs” or some electronic authorization, it makes no sense to limit members ability to sign on to legislation.
2. The ability for the public to testify in-person on pieces of legislation. While we support keeping remotely-delivered testimony as an option, our citizens have the right to come before their representatives to advocate for or against policies that impact them.
3. Testimony should no longer be limited to a specific number of witnesses. While we appreciate the need of Committee chairs to sometimes limit the amount of time people get to testify, other arbitrary limits are antithetical to open government.
4. To the extent that public meetings and hearings happen remotely, via Zoom or some similar service, members who are on camera should be attentive and stationary. We have witnessed members in various scenarios during committee hearings, some that do not always appear safe much less completely professional. To uphold the dignity of the institution and as a matter of decorum, members on camera should at least be seated at a desk or table during these public meetings.

We know you share our commitment to making the General Assembly as open and accessible to the citizens of Maryland as possible. We believe these actions will help to further that important goal.

Sincerely yours,

  
Jason C. Buckel  
Minority Leader

  
Christopher T. Adams  
Minority Whip