

**As Introduced**

**134th General Assembly**

**Regular Session**

**2021-2022**

**H. B. No. 55**

**Representative Kelly**

**Cosponsors: Representatives Leland, Lepore-Hagan, Galonski, Brent, Miranda, Sykes, Ingram, Sweeney, West, O'Brien, Denson, Miller, J., Lightbody, Troy, Sheehy, Robinson, Crossman, Miller, A., Brown, Smith, K., Weinstein, Howse, Boggs, Russo, Sobecki, Skindell, Liston, Crawley, Blackshear, Boyd, Hicks-Hudson, Jarrells, Smith, M., Upchurch**



**A BILL**

To allow committee meetings and general sessions of 1  
the House of Representatives to be conducted 2  
virtually and to declare an emergency. 3

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** (A) During the period of emergency declared by 4  
Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9, 2020, the 5  
chairperson of a standing committee, subcommittee, or select 6  
committee of the House of Representatives, or a joint committee 7  
of the General Assembly may conduct committee meetings by means 8  
of teleconference, video conference, or any other similar 9  
electronic technology and all of the following shall apply: 10

(1) Any resolution, rule, or formal action of any kind 11  
shall have the same effect as if it had occurred during an open 12  
meeting of the committee. 13

(2) Members of the House of Representatives who attend 14  
meetings by means of teleconference, video conference, or any 15

other similar electronic technology, shall be considered present 16  
as if in person at the meeting, shall be permitted to vote, and 17  
shall be counted for purposes of determining whether a quorum is 18  
present at the meeting. 19

(3) The chairperson shall provide notification of meetings 20  
held during a declared emergency to the public and to the media 21  
that have requested notification of a meeting at least twenty- 22  
four hours in advance of the meeting by reasonable methods by 23  
which any person may determine the time, electronic location, 24  
and the manner by which the meeting will be conducted, except in 25  
the event of an emergency requiring immediate official action. 26  
In the event of an emergency, the chairperson shall immediately 27  
notify the news media that have requested notification of the 28  
time, place, and purpose of the meeting. 29

(4) The chairperson shall provide the public access to a 30  
meeting held virtually during a declared emergency, commensurate 31  
with the method in which the meeting is being conducted, 32  
including, but not limited to, livestreaming by means of the 33  
internet, local radio, television, cable, or public access 34  
channels, call in information for a teleconference, or by means 35  
of any other similar electronic technology. The chairperson 36  
shall ensure that the public can hear, and if the technological 37  
means permit observation, observe the discussions and 38  
deliberations of all the members of the committee, whether the 39  
member is participating in person or electronically. 40

(B) When a committee conducts a meeting by means of 41  
teleconference, video conference, or any other similar 42  
electronic technology, the chairperson shall establish a means, 43  
through the use of electronic equipment that is widely available 44  
to the general public, to converse with witnesses, and to 45

receive documentary testimony and physical evidence. 46

**Section 2.** During the period of emergency declared by 47  
Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9, 2020, the Speaker 48  
of the House of Representatives may conduct sessions of the 49  
House of Representatives by means of teleconference, video 50  
conference, or any other similar electronic technology and all 51  
of the following shall apply: 52

Any resolution, rule, or formal action of any kind shall 53  
have the same effect as if it had occurred during an open 54  
meeting of the House of Representatives. 55

Members of the House of Representatives who attend 56  
sessions by means of teleconference, video conference, or any 57  
other similar electronic technology, shall be considered present 58  
as if in person during session, shall be permitted to vote, and 59  
shall be counted for purposes of determining whether a quorum is 60  
present. 61

The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall provide 62  
notification of sessions held during a declared emergency to the 63  
public and to the media that have requested notification of a 64  
session at least twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting by 65  
reasonable methods by which any person may determine the time, 66  
electronic location, and the manner by which the session will be 67  
conducted, except in the event of an emergency requiring 68  
immediate official action. In the event of an emergency, the 69  
Speaker of the House of Representatives shall immediately notify 70  
the news media that have requested notification of the time, 71  
place, and purpose of the session. 72

The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall provide 73  
the public access to a session held virtually during a declared 74

emergency commensurate with the method in which the meeting is 75  
being conducted, including, but not limited to, examples such as 76  
livestreaming by means of the internet, local radio, television, 77  
cable, or public access channels, call in information for a 78  
teleconference, or by means of any other similar electronic 79  
technology. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall 80  
ensure that the public can hear, and if the technological means 81  
permit observation, observe the discussions and deliberations of 82  
all of the members of the House of Representatives, whether the 83  
member is participating in person or electronically. 84

**Section 3.** This act is hereby declared to be an emergency 85  
measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public 86  
peace, health, and safety. The reason for such necessity is that 87  
physical distancing is an essential measure to slow the spread 88  
of COVID-19. Therefore, this act shall go into immediate effect. 89