

1 Introduced by
2 Referred to Committee on
3 Date:
4 Subject: General Assembly; convening, organizing, and holding sessions
5 during the 2021–22 biennium; COVID-19 mitigation

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to provide an
7 alternate to convening, organizing, and holding sessions of the 2021–22
8 General Assembly at the State House in order to mitigate the COVID-19
9 pandemic’s effects on the public health, safety, and welfare.

10 An act relating to convening, organizing, and holding sessions of the
11 2021–22 legislative biennium in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

12 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

13 Sec. 1. FINDINGS; PURPOSE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

14 (a) The General Assembly currently finds that both legislative chambers
15 convening, organizing, and holding sessions of the 2021–22 legislative
16 biennium in person at the State House in Montpelier conflicts with health
17 precautions that are necessary to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19
18 pandemic.

19 (b) The purpose of this act is to provide an alternate means of convening,
20 organizing, and holding sessions of the 2021–22 biennium of the General

1 Assembly in order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare during the
2 COVID-19 pandemic while also maintaining the ability of the Legislative
3 Branch to perform its constitutional legislative duties.

4 (c) By this act, the General Assembly intends to establish in law the
5 alternate means of convening, organizing, and holding sessions of each
6 chamber of the 2021–22 General Assembly. However, in acknowledgement
7 that the General Assembly in 2020 cannot know what effects the COVID-19
8 pandemic or other factors may have on the intended alternate of convening and
9 organizing after that alternate is enacted into law, this act also provides the
10 Legislative Branch with the flexibility it needs to provide for a subsequent,
11 substitute alternate means of convening and organizing the 2021–22 biennium
12 pursuant to authority that this act grants to the Joint Legislative Management
13 Committee and its members from each chamber, in order for the Legislative
14 Branch to maintain constitutional control over its legislative procedure.

15 Sec. 2. GENERAL ASSEMBLY; ALTERNATIVE LOCATION AND
16 MANNER OF CONVENING, ORGANIZING, AND HOLDING
17 SESSIONS OF THE 2021–22 LEGISLATIVE BIENNIUM

18 (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 1 (place of holding
19 sessions) that require the sessions of the General Assembly to be held in the
20 State House in Montpelier, for the 2021–22 legislative biennium:

1 (1) The House shall convene and organize and may thereafter hold
2 sessions at the Barre Auditorium or remotely, or both.

3 (2) The Senate shall convene and organize and may thereafter hold
4 sessions in a location or manner that it determines.

5 (3) In addition, after convening and organizing, the chambers may hold
6 sessions as they may by rule, joint rule, or resolution provide.

7 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, if a
8 majority of a chamber’s members of the Joint Legislative Management
9 Committee subsequently determines that the alternate means of convening and
10 organizing the chamber described in subdivision (a)(1) or (2) will jeopardize
11 the public health, safety, or welfare, a majority of that chamber’s members of
12 the Joint Legislative Management Committee may vote to require that chamber
13 of the 2021–22 biennium to instead convene and organize in a substitute
14 location or manner, and if that substitute location or manner is thereafter
15 approved by the Joint Legislative Management Committee, that chamber of the
16 2021–22 biennium shall instead convene and organize in that substitute
17 location or manner. In this case, the Joint Legislative Management Committee
18 shall notify as soon as practicable the Secretary of State, Lieutenant Governor,
19 and members-elect.

20 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

21 This act shall take effect on passage.