

State Capitol: Lawmakers React to COVID-19

Last week was certainly not a normal week at the state Capitol as we closed out the seventh week of the legislative session. Here are a few things we know:

The state Capitol building is closed to the public until further notice. Our Government Affairs team is continuing to stay in touch with the legislative and executive branches to gain insight into the next steps for this legislative session, as well as offering our assistance to the state's response to COVID-19.

The Legislature met last Monday and Tuesday to consider a handful of bills that provide the state flexibility for future meetings and voting, if necessary.

- [Senate Concurrent Resolution 8](#) removes the Third Reading Deadline (April 23), which requires all bills and joint resolutions to be passed in the chamber opposite the chamber of origin (i.e. – Senate bills must pass the House and vice versa). This means the only deadline remaining is Sine Die adjournment on May 29 by 5 p.m., as stipulated in the Oklahoma Constitution.
- [House Concurrent Resolution 1017](#) provides for continuing permission for each chamber to be adjourned for more than three days; this will be in effect until the Legislature votes to end the emergency or session is adjourned Sine Die.
- [House Resolution 1032](#) amends the House Rules to allow members of the House of Representatives to authorize a designated member, chosen by each caucus leader, to cast a proxy vote for them. Majority Whip Terry O'Donnell and Minority Floor Leader Emily Virgin have been designated to cast proxy votes on behalf of members. Proxy votes cannot be used on questions of procedure, including suspension of the rules.
- [House Resolution 1033](#) allows for the implementation of HR 1032, setting up proxy voting.
- [Senate Bill 661](#) (signed by Gov. Stitt on Wednesday) temporarily amends the Oklahoma Open Meetings Act in order to allow boards, commissions and other groups the flexibility to conduct meetings by teleconference or videoconference in order to comply with the CDC recommendation that no more than 10 people gather together at this time.

Following the daily session last Tuesday, both the Senate and the House adjourned. The House and Senate have canceled all business for the next week. Due to a Senate staffer testing positive for the virus on Tuesday, all members of

the Senate and their staff were quarantined in offices until tests could be conducted. The results from those tests are still pending.

In addition to the legislative activities at the state Capitol, Gov. Stitt has issued three executive orders declaring a state of emergency in all 77 counties and easing regulatory restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All three executive orders can be found here:

- [Executive Order 2020 – 06](#)
- Amended [Executive Order 2020 – 07](#)
- [Executive Order 2020 – 08](#)

Pursuant to Amended Executive Order 2020-07, any occupational license that would otherwise expire during this emergency shall not expire until May 1. License applications and renewals will still be accepted and applications may be completed online at www.ok.gov/odol. Payments and accompanying documents relating to licensure should be mailed directly to the respective program at the Oklahoma Department of Labor.