

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 16
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 5/18/20

Referred: Secretary's Desk

A RESOLUTION

1 **Suspending Rules 16, 24(a), 27(c), and 34(c), Uniform Rules of the Alaska State**
2 **Legislature, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; authorizing the presiding officers**
3 **to allow members to attend a session to address matters related to the COVID-19 public**
4 **health disaster emergency by videoconference or teleconference in certain circumstances**
5 **related to the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency; and relating to sessions**
6 **where members are authorized to attend a session by videoconference or teleconference.**

7 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

8 **WHEREAS** the World Health Organization has declared the disease caused by the
9 novel coronavirus, COVID-19, a pandemic; and

10 **WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2020, the Governor declared a statewide public health
11 disaster emergency to support the response to the COVID-19 disease outbreak; and

12 **WHEREAS**, through passage of Senate Bill 241, enacted into law as ch. 10, SLA
13 2020, the legislature extended the declaration of a public health disaster emergency issued by
14 the governor to November 15, 2020; and

1 **WHEREAS**, under art. XV, sec. 20, Constitution of the State of Alaska, Juneau is the
2 capital and the seat of government of the State of Alaska, and the legislature must continue to
3 meet in the seat of government to the fullest extent possible; and

4 **WHEREAS**, as a result of the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency, it may be
5 unsafe or impossible for all members to travel to Juneau to continue the essential business of
6 the legislature; and

7 **WHEREAS** the Uniform Rules of the Alaska State Legislature may be suspended by
8 a two-thirds vote of the full membership of each house;

9 **BE IT RESOLVED** that, under Rule 54, Uniform Rules of the Alaska State
10 Legislature, the provisions of

11 (1) Rule 16, regarding a call of the house, are suspended during the Thirty-
12 First Alaska State Legislature when attendance of members by videoconference is authorized
13 by the presiding officer, and no member may make a motion for a call on the house; the
14 journal shall reflect the names of all members excused from attendance in person or by
15 videoconference, and such members shall be excused from all roll calls during such absence;

16 (2) Rule 24(a), requiring signature by a majority of the members of the
17 committee for committee reports, are suspended during the Thirty-First Alaska State
18 Legislature to the extent necessary to authorize a member of the committee to vote by
19 videoconference to report a bill from committee; the vote at a meeting held by
20 videoconference shall be taken by roll call, and the committee report must be in writing,
21 signed by the chair, and approved by a majority of the members of the committee;

22 (3) Rule 27(c), regarding the precedence of privileged motions, are suspended
23 during the Thirty-First Alaska State Legislature to the extent that a motion for a call of the
24 house is not available when attendance of members by videoconference is authorized by the
25 presiding officer;

26 (4) Rule 34(c), regarding voting procedure, are suspended during the Thirty-
27 First Alaska State Legislature when attendance of members by videoconference is authorized
28 by the presiding officer to allow a member attending a session by videoconference to vote in a
29 roll call vote by videoconference; when attendance of members by videoconference is
30 authorized by the presiding officer, the electronic voting machine may be used by a member
31 voting from the member's desk and may be used to tally roll call votes cast by members by

1 videoconference; and be it

2 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, by agreement of the presiding officers of both houses,
3 the presiding officer may authorize members to attend a session by videoconference to
4 address matters related to the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency if the legislature
5 cannot physically meet because of the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency; and be it

6 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, when attendance of members by videoconference is
7 authorized by the presiding officer,

8 (1) the presiding officer must be physically present in the capitol when
9 conducting a session;

10 (2) a member participating by videoconference is considered present for
11 quorum purposes under Uniform Rule 14(a);

12 (3) a member participating by videoconference must be physically present at a
13 Legislative Information Office, unless otherwise approved by the presiding officer;

14 (4) the identity of each member participating by videoconference must be
15 verified and the actions of each participating member must be authenticated in a manner
16 satisfactory to the presiding officer; the videoconference must enable each participating
17 member to hear or read the comments of a member who is recognized by the presiding
18 officer;

19 (5) at least 48 hours' notice must be given before a floor session;

20 (6) amendments must be turned in to the chief clerk or senate secretary before
21 a floor session; a member may offer only amendments that have been turned in before the
22 floor session; and

23 (7) debate on all matters, including procedural motions, should be concise and
24 limited; and be it

25 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, if the presiding officer has authorized members to
26 attend a session by videoconference and there are technological reasons, including internet
27 service interruption or other unavoidable technological complications, that prevent members
28 from participating by videoconference, the presiding officer may allow members to attend a
29 session by teleconference; a member allowed to participate by teleconference under this
30 provision will be regarded as participating by videoconference for purposes of this resolution;
31 and be it

1 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution remains in effect for the duration of the
2 public health disaster emergency declaration issued by the governor on March 11, 2020, as
3 extended by the legislature.