

Government Administration and Elections Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

2:30 PM in Zoom and YouTube Live

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM by Chairwoman, Sen. Flexer M. S29.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Flexer M. S29; Haskell W. S26; McCrory D. S02; Sampson R. S16;
Slap D. S05

Representatives: Blumenthal M. 147; Carpino C. 032; Fox D. 148; France M. 042;
Haddad G. 054; Labriola D. 131; Mastrofrancesco G. 080;
McCarthy Vahey C. 133; Morrin Bello A. 028; Palm C. 036; Rosario
C. 128; Santiago H. 084; Thomas S. 143

Absent were:

Senators:

Representatives: Fishbein C. 090

Sen. Flexer convened the organizational meeting and welcomed members to the meeting.

Rep. Fox welcomed the new Vice-Chair, Rep. Thomas, as well as Ranking Members Rep. Mastrofrancesco and Sen. Sampson.

Sen. Flexer gave Vice-Chairs Sen. Haskell and Rep. Thomas, and Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco, the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Sen. Flexer acknowledged that some members of the committee were participating in the ongoing Judiciary Committee meeting taking place on 13 January at 2:30 PM.

Sen. Flexer reviewed the rules for the committee, particularly as it pertained to Zoom functions. She instructed members to use the hand raise feature on Zoom when wishing to speak and in the event of a roll call vote, members must identify themselves and state how they will vote. Sen. Flexer urged members to refrain from using the chat feature on Zoom.

Sen. Flexer asked members to introduce themselves.

Members of the committee introduced themselves.

Sen. Sampson expressed concerns regarding the use of Zoom for committee meetings, finding that this method disenfranchises citizens without technology from having a voice in government.

Sen. Flexer moved to Section IV of the agenda, Concept to be Raised:

1. An Act Extending the Duration of Provisions of July Special Session Public Act 20-3

Sen. Flexer highlighted the urgency to extend the provision of the July Special Session Public Act 20-3, which allows for voters to request an absentee ballot using COVID-19 as an excuse. She recognized the upcoming special elections that are set to be held in February, as well as municipal elections in May.

Sen. Flexer asked for a motion to raise concept 1.

Rep. Fox made the motion and it was seconded by Sen. Haskell.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco asked whether the language of the bill would be similar to the bill passed during the 2020 July Special Session.

Sen. Flexer explained that there will be a public hearing on the concept. Raising the concept would allow the committee to have a full discussion on the issue. If the committee drafts legislation related to the concept, it will be debated with a full public hearing and a committee vote.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco asked if committee screenings will be held moving forward

Sen. Flexer explained that screening structures for the committee will be evaluated moving forward. She reiterated that this concept was included on the agenda because of its urgency. Sen. Flexer stated that the committee has the capability to move legislation through the legislative process rather than requiring an emergency certification.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco expressed her hesitations with the process of moving forward with the concept.

Sen. Flexer opened the floor to any comments or questions from members of the committee. Seeing none, she moved to a voice vote on Section IV of the agenda, Concept to be raised.

Members of the committee unmuted their microphones and a voice vote was recorded.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco requested a roll call vote.

Sen. Flexer reminded members that requests for a roll call vote must be made before members are called to vote. Sen. Flexer accepted the roll call request but noted that going forward, it must be requested prior to vote calls.

Sen. Flexer called for a roll call vote on concept 1. An Act Extending the Duration of Provisions of July Special Session Public Act 20-3

Total voting = 18. Those voting yea = 15, those voting nay = 3, absent = 1.

Rep. Mastrofrancesco sought clarification from Sen. Flexer about the process for keeping the vote open.

Sen. Flexer announced that going forward, more guidance would be provided as to how members can vote in the event that a vote is held open.

Sen. Flexer announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 22, 2021 at 1:00 PM via Zoom. The meeting will be broadcasted on YouTube Live and may be broadcasted on CT-N.

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Administrator

Val Mehmeti
Committee Clerk