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## **FOR THE FOURTH TIME IN A YEAR, REPUBLICANS BLOCK VIRTUAL/HYBRID OPTIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

**CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE** - Today, House Republicans on the Rules Committee blocked an amendment to House Rule 67 that would have given House committees the ability to meet “in person, virtually, or as a hybrid of in person and virtually.” Following the vote, **House Democratic Parliamentarian Rep. Lucy Weber (D-Walpole)** released the following statement:

“In the past week, New Hampshire has experienced its highest rates of COVID cases and hospitalizations since the start of the pandemic. For the fourth time in a year, Republicans blocked a simple measure to allow the New Hampshire House to use readily available technology to do the people’s business without risk to the health and lives of legislators, staff, and the public who testify before us.”

“It is unconscionable that House Republicans continue to jeopardize the health and safety of Granite Staters by blocking simple, inexpensive meeting measures, especially given the NH Supreme Court’s unanimous ruling that remote meetings of the House are constitutional. Denying legislators and the public from exercising the freedom to choose a virtual option that could protect them from contracting a deadly disease is not the New Hampshire way.”

“Days ago, a Republican member admitted that some of his colleagues might die through in-person meetings during COVID, but that this outcome was the price of ‘going back to normal.’ With over 9,000 active COVID cases and almost 500 current hospitalizations in New Hampshire, nothing suggests ‘going back to normal’ is the appropriate course of action.”

### **On Background:**

- House Rules Prior to Today’s Meeting: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/aboutthehouse/houseRules.pdf>
- Prior Statement on House Rule 67 from Jan. 6, 2021: <https://www.nhhousedemcaucus.com/post/house-republicans-block-path-forward-to-remote-sessions>
- Current COVID Cases: [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/Coronavirus in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count/2021/us/covid-cases.html?action=click&module=Spotlight&pgtype=Homepage](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/Coronavirus%20in%20the%20U.S.:%20Latest%20Map%20and%20Case%20Count/2021/us/covid-cases.html?action=click&module=Spotlight&pgtype=Homepage)
- NH Supreme Court Ruling: <https://www.wmur.com/article/state-supreme-court-advises-nh-house-that-remote-sessions-are-constitutional/34704335#>