



April 1, 2022

Dear Speaker Rendon and Pro Tem Atkins:

The Institute of Governmental Advocates respectfully requests your consideration of two important requests from IGA on behalf of its members, who have repeatedly raised these matters with us during the past two weeks. IGA has appreciated your leadership during the pandemic and your willingness to work with IGA to address issues affecting public access and participation in the legislative process, particularly those affecting the professional lobbying corps.

The first request is to partially relax the “social distancing” in committee hearing rooms. We have already experienced a number of instances where Senate and Assembly standing committees have quickly exceeded the severely limited number of seats available in hearing rooms. While we understand and appreciate that some social distancing will continue to be required, IGA requests that you increase the number of seats open by 50% in each committee hearing room. For the lobbying corps, having greater access into hearing rooms are critical to doing their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

The second request is to allow lobbyist entrance and exit through the N Street Pavilion at the State Capitol. While having separate entrances during the pandemic was appropriate, especially in light of temperature screenings for the public and staff coming into and leaving the Capitol Annex when Senate and Assembly offices were staffed in that building, the current limitation no longer is necessary. IGA members are greatly inconvenienced having to enter and exit from the North side of the Capitol when going back and forth between committee hearings in the Capitol and the Swing Space. The inability to swiftly move between the Capitol and the Swing Space is especially hard on solo practitioners and small firms, while the circuitous route required to shuttle between both destinations is hard on the members of our community with mobility issues. (I can speak from my own personal experience with mobility issues that adding unnecessary distance to a trip that is done multiple times a day can be debilitating and demoralizing.)

Here, too, we are asking for only an accommodation and not elimination of your current practice. In other words, keep the limitations in place, except for a lobbyist carrying his or her ID badge. If the registered lobbyist presents his or her ID badge, then the techs at the N Street side of the Capitol should be allowed to have those lobbyists enter and exit at the South side of the Capitol.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of these requests. I look forward to hearing back from you at your earlier convenience.

Sincerely,

Dominic DiMare, President