

Senate signs off on session rules

Posted on Tuesday, Jan 17, 2017

The Senate voted 21-12 today to approve a [new package of rules](#) to govern the 2017-18 session.

The changes includes eliminating a requirement that a committee chair who decides to hold a hearing to schedule the hearing as early as practicable. Sen. Lena Taylor, D-Milwaukee, proposed four amendments today, including a rule requiring a racial impact statement on any bill that creates a crime or modifies a penalty, as well as one that would require a bill with a penalty to include a fiscal impact before it could receive a third reading. Each of her four amendments was tabled.

Taylor introduced them to highlight issues facing her Milwaukee district.

The rules approved would:

- *allow any member to participate in a hearing by phone or other electronic communication with the consent of the chair. Now, only a member connected to the meeting may do so with the chair's permission.
- *eliminate the requirement the chamber be "properly ventilated" before each session day.
- *require those in the Senate gallery now have to silence and conceal electronic devices. Before, they had to be turned off.
- *allow delayed calendars to be referred to Senate Org. Now, they must be taken up after completion of the ninth order of business on the current day and before consideration of the 10th order.