

January 9, 2020

Rep. Jim Dunnigan,

On behalf of the Utah Media Coalition, we wanted to thank you for spearheading an effort to formalize interim legislative procedures. It is important that government carry out the work of the people in a transparent manner, allowing sufficient opportunity for the public to be aware of what their elected officials are considering and have an opportunity to voice their input.

It has come to our attention that many interim committees are holding hearings, debating and voting on draft legislation that is sometimes not made available until the meeting is convened. During the legislative session, it is required that all bills are made public for 24 hours prior to being heard in a committee. Even though 24 hours is still a very brief window of time, it strikes a balance between the public interest and the speed of the legislative session.

The outcome of not publishing draft bills in a timely manner during interim is that the committee can debate and unanimously vote on a bill the public has not seen then, utilizing the one committee hearing rule, circumvent a House and Senate hearing during the legislative session and take it right to the floor. This essentially would cut off any opportunity for informed public comment and prevents legislators from hearing all sides of an issue. This is not good public policy.

We humbly ask you and your committee to consider amending the joint rules to include a requirement that all draft legislation must be made public 24 hours before being heard by an interim committee. For your convenience, we have included draft language to this letter for your consideration.

Thank you for your service to the State of Utah and for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Utah Media Coalition