

# Legislative Council (Disciplinary Sanctions and Remote Sitting) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2021 gazetted

The Government published in the Gazette today (August 27) the Legislative Council (Disciplinary Sanctions and Remote Sitting) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2021.

The Bill aims to implement the Legislative Council (LegCo)'s proposal to impose financial penalties on a Member of the Council who is suspended from the service of the Council due to the Member's misbehaviour (misbehaved Member), or who is absent without valid reasons from a sitting of the Council which is adjourned due to a lack of quorum (absent Member). The Bill also allows sittings of the Council or a committee to be conducted remotely in exceptional circumstances and amends the provision dealing with the admission of journals of LegCo as evidence.

"The Government supports LegCo's proposals. Through the introduction of the relevant amendments to the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382), LegCo will be empowered under a more effective legislative regime to impose financial penalties on misbehaved Members and absent Members. We hope that this would reduce incidents involving grossly disorderly conduct of LegCo Members and deter the abuse of quorum calls for the purpose of filibustering, thereby maintaining the efficiency and solemnity of LegCo and restoring rational discussion in the Council," a Government spokesman said.

In addition, the Bill provides authority for LegCo to authorise by resolution at a physical sitting that sittings of the Council or any committee may be conducted remotely within a specified period. This would ensure that LegCo could continue to discharge its constitutional function even in exceptional circumstances.

The Government notices that LegCo plans to produce only electronic copies of the journals in the future. To this end, the Bill proposes that, apart from the copy of the journals currently printed by the Director of Government Logistics, a copy of the journals printed under the authority of the Council, or duly authenticated by a Clerk to LegCo, be allowed to be admitted as evidence of such journals.

Detailed procedures and other relevant matters for the conduct of remote sittings (such as quorum, voting procedures and other technical matters) would be provided for in the Rules of Procedure to be made by LegCo upon passage of the relevant legislative amendments.

The Bill will be introduced into the LegCo for first reading on

September 1, 2021 (Wednesday).