

**2023 -- H 5051 SUBSTITUTE A**

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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023**

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**H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N**

**ADOPTING THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS 2023  
AND 2024**

Introduced By: Representative Kathleen A. Fogarty

Date Introduced: January 11, 2023

Referred To: House Rules

1           RESOLVED, That pursuant to Article VI, Section 7 of the Constitution of the State of  
2 Rhode Island, the following rules be adopted for the House of Representatives for the years ~~2021~~  
3 [2023](#) and ~~2022~~ [2024](#):

4           **Rules Pertaining to the Speaker**

5           (1) The Speaker is authorized to: take the chair each legislative day, call the members to  
6 order, and, if a quorum be present, proceed to business; refer bills and resolutions upon  
7 introduction; preserve order and decorum; call some other member to the chair in order to speak  
8 from the floor as other members are entitled on general matters; decide all questions without  
9 debate subject to appeal to the House; and have on every appeal the right to assign reasons for  
10 any decision, and to put the question forward without further debate.

11           (2) The Speaker shall propound all questions in the order in which they are moved. On a  
12 voice vote, if the Speaker doubts the result, or a division be called for, the Clerk of the House  
13 shall call the roll. The Speaker shall declare the outcome of all votes.

14           (3) The Speaker may, but shall not be obliged to, vote on any question.

15           (4) All writs, warrants and subpoenas issued by order of the House shall be under the  
16 hand and seal of the Speaker, attested by either clerk.

17           (5) It shall be the duty of the sheriff in attendance upon the General Assembly, or either  
18 of his/her deputies, to execute the command of the House, from time to time, together with all  
19 such process, issued by authority thereof, as shall be directed to him/her by the Speaker.

1 (6) (a) The Speaker may appoint a Speaker pro tempore and a Deputy Speaker. In the  
2 event the Speaker is unable or chooses not to preside over the House session, the Speaker may  
3 designate either the Speaker pro tempore or the Deputy Speaker to call the House to order and  
4 preside over the House session. In the event the Speaker is incapacitated or otherwise unavailable  
5 to make a designation, the majority leader shall make the designation pursuant to this rule. In case  
6 of the absence of the Speaker, Speaker pro tempore and Deputy Speaker, the senior member  
7 present from Newport, or in the absence of such member, a member chosen by notification to the  
8 House clerk by the Speaker shall call the House to order and preside.

9 (b) In the case of a permanent vacancy of the office of the Speaker, the majority leader  
10 shall make the designation pursuant to this rule until a Speaker is elected by ballot.

11 **Rules Pertaining to the Order of Business**

12 (7)(a) The Speaker, or the Speaker's designee, shall prepare the floor calendar for each  
13 legislative day. The calendar shall be printed or made available electronically to the members  
14 daily. During the legislative session, the House shall convene at 4 p.m. provided that the Speaker,  
15 with adequate notice to the members, may convene the House at another time.

16 (b) At the commencement of each day's session the roll shall be called or taken by use of  
17 the electronic voting system. If a quorum is determined to be present the Speaker shall seek  
18 approval of the previous day's journal and thereafter proceed to business. The order of business,  
19 unless the Speaker determines otherwise, shall be as follows:

20 (i) Reports of standing and select committees.

21 (ii) Introduction and reference of new business.

22 (iii) Communications, including communications from the Senate.

23 (iv) Unfinished business in which the House was engaged at the time of last adjournment.

24 (v) Consent calendar.

25 (vi) Calendar.

26 (vii) Introduction of guests and announcements.

27 (viii) Matters of personal privilege.

28 (ix) Recess or adjournment.

29 (c) A representative desiring to introduce a bill or resolution shall file the same with the  
30 Clerk of the House. At the request of any representative, an announcement presented to the  
31 Speaker may be placed directly in the House Journal noting his or her absence from session. The  
32 Speaker, in his or her discretion, may authorize the use of electronic signatures to facilitate the  
33 legislative process. If the Speaker authorizes the utilization of electronic signatures by members,  
34 the following shall apply:

1 (i) Members shall be provided the option to utilize electronic signatures only by means of  
2 a secure electronic signature procedure provided by the Speaker to the members;

3 (ii) An electronic signature executed pursuant to this rule shall be deemed and interpreted  
4 as the member's legal and binding signature;

5 (iii) Only a member of the House may execute an electronic signature pursuant to this  
6 rule. A member shall be strictly prohibited to request or permit another person to execute an  
7 electronic signature on his or her behalf.

8 (d) All bills and resolutions shall be filed no later than February ~~11, 2021~~ 16, 2023 (for  
9 the ~~2021~~ 2023 session) and February ~~10, 2022~~ 15, 2024 (for the ~~2022~~ 2024 session). The  
10 provisions of this section shall not apply to city or town bills, to bills for the reinstatement of  
11 corporate charters, to bills relating to the solemnization of marriages, ceremonial resolutions of  
12 congratulations or condolences, appropriations and budget bills, or to bills to create or extend the  
13 reporting dates of study commissions. Further, a member may introduce a public bill or resolution  
14 after this date in February if one day previous to such introduction, the member shall have  
15 notified the House of his or her intention to introduce such bill or resolution by reading the title  
16 and giving a brief explanation of its purpose. A member may avail himself or herself of the  
17 opportunity afforded by this rule three (3) times only in each calendar year, but in no event after  
18 the fortieth (40<sup>th</sup>) legislative day unless the matter is submitted with the approval of the Speaker.  
19 House Committees may, but shall not be obligated to, hear and consider public bills or resolutions  
20 approved for introduction pursuant to this rule.

21 (e) Any bill or resolution introduced on or before April ~~13, 2021~~ 11, 2023 (for the ~~2021~~  
22 2023 session) and on or before April ~~12, 2022~~ 10, 2024 (for the ~~2022~~ 2024 session):

23 (i) if filed after the convening of the session, shall be in order for the first reading and  
24 where appropriate, assignment to committee, as early as the next legislative day and shall be  
25 considered a part of the days business, provided that the Speaker may direct that any given  
26 measure may be treated in accord with subparagraph (ii) below, and

27 (ii) if filed prior to the convening of the session in the instance where the desk has been  
28 left open to receive matters, shall be in order for the first reading and, where appropriate,  
29 assignment to committee, as early as that day.

30 (iii) All bills or resolutions introduced after April ~~13, 2021~~ 11, 2023 (for the ~~2021~~ 2023  
31 session) and after April ~~12, 2022~~ 10, 2024 (for the ~~2022~~ 2024 session) shall be in order for the  
32 first reading and, may be assigned to committee, as early as the day of introduction.

33 (iv) In the discretion of the Speaker, any bill filed after the convening of the session on  
34 the last legislative day of any week shall also be in order for the first reading as early as the next

1 day and assigned to committee as if the desk were left open.

2 (f) The Clerk of the House shall cause the title and numbers of all bills and resolutions  
3 introduced, along with the names of up to ten (10) co-sponsors, to be published in the House  
4 Journal for the day on which said bill or resolution is deemed, as herein provided, to have been  
5 introduced.

6 (g) Whenever a member has requested that the text of a resolution be read into the House  
7 Journal, the Speaker may, at his or her discretion, comply with the request and have the resolution  
8 read either during a recess, while the House is at ease or following adjournment. The decorum of  
9 the House shall be maintained throughout the requested reading of the resolution.

10 [\(h\) Members shall restrict announcements on the House floor to statements which relate](#)  
11 [to legislative business or pertain to ceremonial events or occasions.](#)

12 (8) Bills and resolutions which are of a routine, ceremonial, or non-controversial nature,  
13 may be granted "Immediate Consideration" and brought before the body for its approval without  
14 appearing on the printed floor calendar, with the approval of the Majority Leader, Minority  
15 Leader, and Speaker. The representative seeking such approval shall request the permission of the  
16 Majority and Minority Leaders and then during the floor session indicate, by activating their  
17 recognition light, that he or she has such a matter to present before the body. The resolution or  
18 bill will then be presented to the House clerk who shall proceed to present the matter to the  
19 Speaker who will bring it before the body for a voice vote. At the request of the prime sponsor  
20 and in the discretion of the Speaker, the clerk may be instructed to read the resolution to the body.

21 (9) In addition to the provisions allowing for "Immediate Consideration" of routine,  
22 ceremonial or non-controversial bills or resolutions, there shall also be a consent calendar on  
23 which may be entered such bills and resolutions as the Speaker, Majority Leader, and Minority  
24 Leader, or their designees, shall agree upon. Matters of substance shall be placed on the regular  
25 calendar and be fully debated and considered by the membership according to these rules. No bill  
26 or resolution shall be included on the consent calendar on the date the consent calendar is  
27 moved unless copies of the consent calendar in the form as it is intended to move and the same  
28 have been made available to the membership no later than two (2) legislative days prior to the day  
29 on which the consent calendar shall be proposed to be moved. At the request of a member any bill  
30 or resolution may be removed from those included in the motion if the Speaker so orders. All bills  
31 and resolutions designated for action on the consent calendar shall be passed on motion without  
32 discussion unless, at any time prior to the motion for passage, a member requests removal of a  
33 bill or resolution from the consent calendar in which case such bill or resolution may be so  
34 removed and placed on then regular calendar. Any bill or resolution appropriate for placement on

1 the consent calendar under these rules but so removed shall be placed on the regular calendar for  
2 the same day and shall be considered as having appeared on the regular calendar for a period of  
3 time equivalent to that during which it appeared on the consent calendar.

4 (10) (a) A member may claim the floor on a question of personal privilege for no more  
5 than five (5) minutes to reply to criticism, or to discuss anything clearly derogatory, or  
6 which reflects upon his or her character, or upon the House in general, that appears in the press ~~or~~  
7 ~~other public medium~~, but not to discuss favorable references to himself or herself.

8 (b) No member is permitted to attack another member of the House personally, nor to  
9 make false statements about, or question the integrity of, another member.

10 **Rules Pertaining to Committees**

11 (11)(a) The following standing committees shall be appointed each year in the month of  
12 January or as soon as convenient after the adoption of the House Rules:

13 A committee on conduct

14 A committee on corporations

15 A committee on education

16 A committee on environment and natural resources

17 A committee on finance

18 A committee on health and human services

19 A committee on innovation, internet and technology

20 A committee on judiciary

21 A committee on labor

22 A committee on municipal government and housing

23 A committee on rules

24 A committee on oversight

25 A committee on small business

26 A committee on special legislation

27 A committee on state government and elections

28 A committee on veterans' affairs.

29 (b) The Speaker shall appoint all standing committees and create such other  
30 subcommittees and committees as may be required from time to time and appoint thereto. Each  
31 member of the House shall be entitled to membership to at least (2) standing committees, as  
32 appointed by the Speaker; provided, however that a member may waive this requirement upon  
33 written notice to the Speaker. All subcommittees and committees shall have proportionate  
34 minority membership when feasible. The Speaker, in consultation with the Minority Leader, shall

1 be the appointing authority for minority membership on standing committees and subcommittees  
2 thereof, joint committees, boards and commissions. All vacancies occurring in any committee and  
3 subcommittee after they have once been named shall be filled in like manner by the Speaker. The  
4 Speaker, Majority Leader and Minority Leader shall be ex officio members with voting rights of  
5 all House committees but shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. The  
6 Speaker shall have the authority to appoint the chair, first vice chair and second vice chair of each  
7 committee. In the event that the chair of a committee is unable to serve due to incapacity for  
8 medical or other reasons, the Speaker may appoint an acting chair for the period of such  
9 incapacity, which acting chair shall have all of the powers and duties of the chair. The chair shall  
10 determine all questions of procedure before the committee in cases not provided for in these rules.

11 (c) A committee shall not consider any bill in the absence of a quorum, which shall  
12 consist of a majority of the committee's membership.

13 (d) All committee meetings shall be open to the public, but public participation shall be  
14 limited to testimony on the matters before the committee. The chair of any committee shall have  
15 the authority to limit the length of a witness's testimony in order to afford all witnesses the  
16 opportunity to be heard, to limit repetitiveness and duplication, or to maintain order and decorum.

17 (1) In the discretion of the chair, any witness who is a representative of a state  
18 department, agency, or quasi-public agency appearing in their official capacity before a  
19 committee, subcommittee or commission of the House shall, before testifying, be required to  
20 declare that they will testify truthfully, by oath or affirmation administered by the chair, first vice-  
21 chair or second vice-chair of the committee.

22 (e) It shall be the duty of the committee on finance to take into consideration all  
23 propositions relative to the revenue, to inquire into the state of the public debt and to report from  
24 time to time their opinion thereon and such propositions relative thereto as to them shall  
25 seem expedient.

26 (f) Upon introduction of the annual state budget to the House on behalf of the Governor,  
27 the budget shall be referred to the finance committee. Within two (2) weeks following receipt  
28 thereof, the finance committee's fiscal advisor shall provide to each member of the House a  
29 concise summary of budget issues. Within three (3) weeks following the receipt of the budget,  
30 the committee shall schedule such meetings as it deems necessary to receive comment on the  
31 budget as a whole from all House members who wish to appear before it for that purpose.

32 (g) The Speaker may appoint from time to time subcommittees of a given standing  
33 committee, which shall consist only of members of the committee from which it was appointed.  
34 The chair of each standing committee shall be considered a member of each subcommittee of

1 such committee. Each subcommittee may hear testimony on bills and resolutions falling within  
2 the subject matter of its charge and shall report to the committee from which it was appointed.  
3 Subcommittees will otherwise conduct themselves in conformity with these rules. The Speaker  
4 shall appoint the chair of each subcommittee.

5 (12)(a) Committees shall take into consideration all such petitions, resolves, bills, matters  
6 or things as may be referred to them by the House with power to report by bill or otherwise;  
7 provided, however, that committees shall, whenever possible, consider all bills of substantially  
8 the same or of a similar nature at the same time in a manner that is otherwise in conformity with  
9 these rules.

10 (1) Any bill filed before or after the 40<sup>th</sup> legislative day, but subsequent to the hearing of  
11 a group of bills on the same subject matter pursuant to Rule 12(a), may or may not be assigned  
12 for hearing if it appears from the subject matter that the issues presented would be substantially  
13 similar to those matters already heard, even if a bill hearing request is filed pursuant to Rule  
14 12(e). If heard, the chair of the committee may limit the testimony to those issues not addressed  
15 in the previous bill hearing.

16 (b) A committee shall not consider any public bill or resolution not previously distributed  
17 in print or electronically to its members except by a vote of the majority of the members of the  
18 committee.

19 (c) The Chair of every committee shall post, in print and electronically, at least forty-  
20 eight (48) hours prior to any committee meeting, a list by number and title of the bills  
21 and resolutions to be heard at that meeting. Such postings shall be made electronically and on the  
22 Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The electronic posting shall be considered the official date of the  
23 posting. In the event that the electronic posting system is inoperable then the official posting shall  
24 be posted on the Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The Chair shall limit such listings to the  
25 number of bills or resolutions he or she reasonably expects can be taken up by the committee at  
26 that meeting. Any bill or resolution so posted which the committee is not able to take up at the  
27 stated meeting must be re-posted as stated above. Such postings shall be made electronically, and  
28 on the Legislative Data bulletin board. Copies of all posted bills or resolutions shall be provided  
29 in print or electronically to all committee members and principal sponsors. A committee shall not  
30 hear any said bill or resolution without such notice except by the consent of a majority of its  
31 members and with at least one (1) day's notification to the principal House sponsor. The sponsor  
32 may, however, waive such one-day notification. The time requirements of this section shall not  
33 apply to House bills returned from the Senate with amendment, or, after the 50<sup>th</sup> legislative day,  
34 to any bill originating in the Senate.

1 (d) Every standing committee shall meet at least once weekly if any requests for hearings  
2 on or consideration of bills or resolutions are pending before it. The right to be heard on any such  
3 bill or resolution may be granted, upon written or electronic request, to the principal sponsor as  
4 provided in these rules. No committee shall hear more than thirty (30) bills (exclusive of city and  
5 town bills, corporate charter reinstatement bills, those to be placed on the consent calendar, and  
6 duplicate senate bills that have previously passed) at any one (1) meeting.

7 (e) Upon receipt of a written request from the principal House sponsor of a bill or  
8 resolution, a copy of which is to be given to the recording clerk of the committee, the committee  
9 shall grant to said principal House sponsor a hearing on any said bill or resolution within thirty  
10 (30) calendar days of the request, subject to Rule 12(a), and provided further, that said committee  
11 shall grant to the principal House sponsor consideration of his or her bill or resolution prior to the  
12 deadline for committee action on such bill or resolution, also subject to Rule 12(a). The principal  
13 sponsor, with the concurrence of the Chair, may cancel a scheduled hearing with twenty-four (24)  
14 hours' notice to the Chair, which notice shall be posted electronically. The Chair may cancel a  
15 bill hearing at any time, with the approval of the Speaker if in the Chair's discretion the bill is not  
16 ready to be heard in the committee. A hearing postponed twice at the sponsor's request need not  
17 be re-scheduled, and shall also be subject to Rule 12(a). For the purpose of the rule, consideration  
18 shall mean a majority vote on one (1) of the following:

19 (i) a motion to report the bill or resolution to the House with a recommendation of  
20 passage;

21 (ii) a motion to report the bill or resolution as amended, or in substitute form, to the  
22 House with a recommendation of passage; or

23 (iii) a motion to report the bill or resolution to the House without recommendation; or

24 (iv) a motion to report the bill or resolution to the House with a recommendation of no  
25 passage; or

26 (v) a motion to report the bill or resolution to the House with a recommendation that it be  
27 held for further study.

28 In the event of a tie vote on any of the motions specified in (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) or (v)  
29 hereof, the bill or resolution shall be lost.

30 The originals of bills or resolutions which have failed in committee shall be transmitted  
31 by the committee clerks to the Secretary of State for the State Archives, with an appropriate  
32 notation thereon at the time specified in R.I.G.L.

33 (f) Committee Chairs shall bring reports of committee actions to the floor no later than  
34 two (2) weeks following the committee votes thereon, provided that this shall not apply to the



1 Committee on Finance, nor shall it apply to bills being held for further study under subdivision  
2 (e)(v). A committee member may move reconsideration of any vote taken under Rule 12(e)(i)-(iv)  
3 so long as the bill or resolution which was the subject of the vote remains in the possession of the  
4 committee and that the motion is made by a member voting in the majority. A motion to  
5 reconsider in committee shall not be debated.

6 Bills or resolutions concerning appropriations, revenue or expenditures shall not be  
7 subject to the above time limits.

8 (g) In the event a committee fails to afford consideration to any bill or resolution within  
9 the prescribed time where such consideration has been properly requested, and where no other  
10 exceptions or considerations apply by the rules herein, the principal sponsor may report such  
11 failure in writing to the Speaker of the House and the Speaker thereupon may order the immediate  
12 discharge of the bill or resolution from a committee to the House floor.

13 (h) All bills or resolutions reported from committee shall be placed on the calendar or,  
14 pursuant to the restrictions of these rules, on the consent calendar for the required period of time  
15 according to these rules before House consideration. Bills and resolutions reported from  
16 committees and received by the Clerk of the House prior to the convening of the session on a  
17 given legislative day shall be deemed to have been received, and therefore in order to be placed  
18 upon the appropriate calendar, as of that day. Bills and resolutions so received after the convening  
19 of the session on a given legislative day shall be deemed to have been received, and therefore in  
20 order to be placed upon the appropriate calendar, on the next legislative day and shall be  
21 considered a part of that day's business.

22 House Rule 12(e) regarding the necessity to hold a hearing at the sponsor's request  
23 through 12(h) pertaining to the timing of placing a bill onto the floor calendar shall not apply to  
24 any bill or resolution which shall have originated in the Senate.

25 (i) No public bill or resolution which originated in the House shall be considered by a  
26 House committee unless the committee has held a hearing on that bill or resolution by April ~~13,~~  
27 ~~2021~~ [11, 2023](#) (for the ~~2021~~ [2023](#) session) and on or before April ~~12, 2022~~ [10, 2024](#) (for the ~~2022~~  
28 [2024](#) session), and thereafter the committees of the House shall not consider public bills or  
29 resolutions except those which have been acted upon by the Senate and transmitted by the Senate  
30 to the House of Representatives, provided however, that the committee on finance may hear and  
31 consider such House bills, acts or resolutions as it deems to have a fiscal impact after April ~~13,~~  
32 ~~2021~~ [11, 2023](#) (for the ~~2021~~ [2023](#) session) and after April ~~12, 2022~~ [10, 2024](#) (for the ~~2022~~ [2024](#)  
33 session), except as provided in section (j) hereof, and provided further, that each other  
34 House committee may complete consideration of not more than three (3) House bills or

1 resolutions after such date, on which such committee had not been able to complete action, upon  
2 approval by the Speaker of a written request from the Chair. All such requests must be filed with  
3 the Clerk of the House no later than April ~~13, 2021~~ [11, 2023](#) (for the ~~2021-2023~~ session) and on  
4 or before April ~~12, 2022~~ [10, 2024](#) (for the ~~2022-2024~~ session). The provisions of this paragraph  
5 shall not apply to House bills of which Senate duplicates have passed the House.

6 (j) No House bill which relates to an individual's pension or retirement shall be accepted  
7 as a committee report from the committee on finance unless it shall have been considered by the  
8 committee on or before April ~~13, 2021~~ [11, 2023](#) (for the ~~2021-2023~~ session) and on or before  
9 April ~~12, 2022~~ [10, 2024](#) (for the ~~2022-2024~~ session), and shall have been heard in the committee  
10 no later than one (1) week prior to that date.

11 (k) Transfers –The Speaker or the Speaker’s designee may direct the transfer of a bill or  
12 resolution from one committee to another at any time. The committee receiving the transferred  
13 bill or resolution must comply with the posting and time requirements of this section.

14 (l) Members of a committee shall, if present, cast a vote on legislation before the  
15 committee, unless prior to the discussion of the bill and vote, the member ~~recuses themselves~~ [has](#)  
16 [recused](#) in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Ethics, RIGL §36-14-6. The member  
17 shall sign a recusal form, and the Clerk of the Committee shall note the member's recusal on the  
18 bill vote sheet.

19 (m) Any proposed committee amendment to a bill, in a substitute amended bill format,  
20 shall be posted in print and electronically by the chair of the committee hearing the bill at least  
21 twenty-four (24) hours prior to its committee consideration. Such postings shall be made on the  
22 legislative data bulletin board and electronically. The electronic posting shall be considered the  
23 official date of the posting. In the event that the electronic posting system is inoperable, then the  
24 official posting shall be posted on the legislative data bulletin board. The chair of the committee  
25 may waive this twenty-four (24) hours posting requirement, if he or she deems the proposed  
26 amendment either technical, grammatical, or not substantive or substantial in nature. This section  
27 shall not apply to the budget bill.

28 ~~(n)(i) A bill or resolution introduced in the first year session of a legislative term of the~~  
29 ~~House is eligible to be carried over as an active bill or resolution into the second year session of~~  
30 ~~the legislative term at the request of the prime sponsor.~~

31 ~~(ii) With written notice to the Speaker by December 31 of the first year session of a~~  
32 ~~legislative term, a member may avail himself or herself of the opportunity afforded by this rule~~  
33 ~~three (3) times in each legislative term. Only bills or resolutions introduced in the first year~~  
34 ~~session of a legislative term may be carried over pursuant to this rule. A member may request a~~

1 ~~hearing in the second year session by filing a request for hearing pursuant to subsection 12(e) of~~  
2 ~~this rule.~~

3 ~~(3) As used herein, "legislative term" means two (2) consecutive sessions of the House of~~  
4 ~~Representative which corresponds with the two (2) year term of representatives pursuant to~~  
5 ~~Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island, the first year session of~~  
6 ~~which is an odd-numbered year and the second year session of which is an even-numbered year.~~

7 (13)(a) Committees shall keep a permanent record of their written submissions and of  
8 their voting tally sheets, and the same shall be public records and available to any member and to  
9 any person within two (2) legislative days upon written request.

10 (b) Each committee shall file with the Clerk of the House and with legislative data  
11 services a list of all measures on which formal action was taken and a copy of the recorded vote  
12 tally on each such measure.

13 (c) The Speaker shall formulate a plan for the publication of committee votes and work to  
14 implement the plan so committee votes appear online in a prominent and conspicuous location on  
15 the General Assembly website prior to the floor votes of the bill occurring.

16 (d) The Speaker, wherever feasible with the confines of existing room availability and  
17 personnel levels, shall direct Capitol Television to broadcast committee hearings live on Capitol  
18 Television or, in the instance where committees are meeting on the same day and time, record the  
19 hearings for broadcast on a delayed basis. Committee hearings dealing with the expenditure of  
20 public funds shall be given priority for live broadcast. Chairs of the various committees are  
21 authorized to make a request of the Speaker, or the Speaker's designee, to broadcast their  
22 respective committee hearings on Capitol Television if they believe an agenda item is of  
23 particular importance or interest.

24 (e) All committee hearings shall be audio recorded.

#### 25 **Rules Pertaining to Bills and Petitions**

26 (14)(a) No bill or resolution shall be considered or acted upon by the House if objection  
27 is made unless the same has been considered by, reported, or recalled from a committee thereof,  
28 from a joint committee, or by two-thirds (2/3) of members present. This rule shall not apply to a  
29 House Bill of which the Senate duplicate has passed the House, and provided further that the  
30 Speaker may at any time order a duplicate bill received from the Senate, or a any Senate bill after  
31 the budget bill shall have passed the House, onto the calendar.

32 (b) When a bill or resolution is postponed indefinitely, the same shall not be acted upon  
33 again during the session.

34 (c) No bill or resolution shall be passed or concurred in without two (2) readings. The

1 first reading shall take place by acceptance of the bill or resolution and publication in the House  
2 Journal and the second after it has been placed upon the calendar. No bill or resolution upon the  
3 calendar shall be taken up for consideration unless copies thereof, in the form in which it was  
4 reported from committee, shall have been made available in print or electronically to the  
5 members no later than the rise of the House on the legislative day before the day on which it shall  
6 be in order for consideration. No matter of business on the calendar shall be considered upon its  
7 merits prior to the legislative day after it shall have been placed on the calendar except by vote of  
8 the majority of the members present and voting. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply  
9 to Senate bills received by the House which are duplicates of House bills. Those bills passing out  
10 of committee on the last legislative day of the week shall be in order for placement on the  
11 calendar or consent calendar as early as the first legislative day of the next week.

12 (d) No more than fifty (50) public bills shall be considered upon their merits during any  
13 one (1) legislative day and no bill shall be brought before the body after 10:30 p.m., provided,  
14 however, that House bills returned from the Senate, Senate bills which are duplicates of and  
15 identical to House bills, corporate charter revocation bills, and solemnization of marriage bills  
16 and bills removed from the consent calendar may be considered notwithstanding this limit.  
17 Provided further, that Senate bills which are duplicates of and identical to House bills, and House  
18 bills returned from the Senate, may without objection be bundled and passed by one vote  
19 provided that they are provided to members electronically prior to consideration. In the case of  
20 bundled bills that contain identical and duplicate Senate bills, at the request of the Majority and  
21 Minority Leaders the House journal will reflect that the vote of the members on the bill is  
22 consistent with his or her vote on the duplicate House bill previously passed. Prior to the vote on  
23 a duplicate bill, it should be stated for the record and be made known to the body that the bill is  
24 identical.

25 (e) The budget bill shall be prepared by Legislative Council. The budget bill shall not be  
26 considered by the House unless copies thereof as approved by the finance committee have been  
27 available to the members for seven (7) calendar days. For the purposes of calculating the seven  
28 (7) day requirement, the day of passage by the Finance Committee shall not be counted but the  
29 scheduled day for floor action shall be included in the calculation. No amendment which is  
30 intended to make a substantive change in the budget bill may be offered other than by the Chair  
31 of the finance committee, except with the agreement of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present,  
32 unless the text thereof shall have been submitted to the Legislative Council and made available to  
33 the members not less than two (2) calendar days prior to the day on which the budget bill shall  
34 be in order for consideration.

1 (f) An amendment which was germane when prepared, and which was offered in a timely  
2 fashion, but is no longer germane because of an intervening amendment, may, with the agreement  
3 of the Majority Leader and Minority Leader, be revised orally or in writing by the sponsor  
4 without renewed compliance with the requirements hereof.

5 (g) After the 50th legislative day, bills or resolutions received back from the Senate with  
6 amendments requiring House concurrence shall, with the agreement of the House sponsor and the  
7 Majority Leader, be placed on the calendar in order for the day upon which they are received or  
8 any day thereafter.

9 (15)(a) There shall be attached to every public bill or resolution when first introduced an  
10 explanation of such bill or resolution indicating the proposed changes, and/or the statute or  
11 existing law which such bill or resolution purports to amend.

12 (b) When any bill or resolution is offered which is intended to amend any part or parts of  
13 an existing statute, or the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island, or the House Rules, any part  
14 or parts intended to be stricken shall be contained in the bill or resolution and shall be crossed  
15 out. All new matter contained in the bill or resolution shall be underlined, so that the new matter  
16 may be easily discerned. Existing language not intended to be amended shall be  
17 reproduced without change. In the discretion of Legislative Council in drafting a bill pursuant to  
18 section (d) of this rule, or upon the request for a Sub A from the Chair of the committee where the  
19 bill is assigned, additional sections of law that are not being amended may be included in the  
20 explanation to the bill to add context to the changes made in the statutes the bill amends.

21 (c) "Public bill" shall include all bills or resolutions which in any way have general  
22 application throughout the state or which are of a nature for which the constitution requires  
23 special treatment, and bills which relate to an individual's pension or retirement benefits. Bills or  
24 resolutions of a private or local nature shall not be considered "Public bills" and shall include:  
25 those which pertain to a particular city or town or local entity; those making claims against the  
26 state; those which pertain to private corporation charters and amendments thereto and restoration  
27 thereof, and to amendments to authorize holdings by non-profit organizations of a charitable,  
28 civic, library or like nature; resolutions memorializing congress, or of congratulations or  
29 expressing sympathy or condolences; resolutions requesting the several departments of state  
30 government to grant some privilege, consideration or relief; and others of like private and local  
31 nature.

32 (d) All bills and resolutions, private as well as public, and all proposed amendments  
33 thereto, shall be prepared by the Legislative Council, and the Clerk of the House may decline to  
34 accept for introduction any bill, resolution or transmittal not in conformity herewith. Once

1 introduced and referred, all bills and resolutions shall be printed and made available  
2 electronically, except resolutions of congratulation and condolence. The Legislative Council may  
3 decline to accept for drafting any proposal for an amendment submitted to it later than ~~3 p.m.~~  
4 [12:00 p.m.](#) on the day on which the bill or resolution to be amended is to be heard, provided that  
5 the Speaker or his or her designee may waive this restriction.

6 (e) All bills and resolutions which have been introduced at the request of one of the  
7 general officers or any department or agency or from the judicial branch shall bear a stamp or  
8 designation indicating such request.

9 (i) Upon presentation of testimony before a committee, the prime sponsor of a bill or  
10 resolution shall provide to the committee the name of any individual, group or organization  
11 responsible for the substantive basis or text of the bill.

12 (f) A prime sponsor may withdraw a bill or resolution previously introduced at any time,  
13 upon written request to the Clerk of the House on a form which the Clerk of the House shall  
14 provide.

15 (g)(i) In the event a bill is amended or substituted by a committee for floor action, the  
16 sponsor or sponsors of that bill may elect, in writing, to have their names disassociated from said  
17 bill and the committee report shall reflect this election and it shall be reflected in the House  
18 journal.

19 (ii) A co-sponsor of a bill or resolution may remove his or her name from a bill or  
20 resolution at any time prior to its passage upon written notice to the clerk. If the co-sponsor is  
21 listed electronically as one of the sponsors, such change in sponsorship shall be amended online  
22 as well as reflected in the House journal.

23 (iii) A member may request of the Speaker to be listed as a co-sponsor on any bill or  
24 resolution assigned to any committee, provided that the member makes the request of the Speaker  
25 and actually signs the bill prior to the first hearing on the bill in committee.

26 (h)(i) A bill or resolution may be pre-filed by any member or member-elect with the  
27 Clerk of the House at any time from November 15 to the day prior to the commencement of the  
28 regular annual session. The clerk shall order it printed by Legislative Council, and make it  
29 available for the first reading on the second day of the succeeding session.

30 (ii) Only the bills or resolutions filed by members elected and qualified shall receive the  
31 first reading.

32 (iii) In the event that any member or member-elect shall die after filing and before the  
33 first reading, the death of the member or member-elect shall constitute automatic withdrawal of  
34 said bill or resolution; provided, however, that where a bill or resolution shall have had more than

1 one sponsor, said bill or resolution and number shall not be withdrawn and the member whose  
2 name appears second on the bill or resolution shall become the prime sponsor.

3 (16) No measure without a body or substantive content shall be accepted at any time, nor  
4 shall a substitute bill be accepted which is not consistent with the title and substance of the  
5 original bill. No motion or proposition of a subject different from that under consideration shall  
6 be admitted under color of amendment.

7 (17)(a) No amendment to a pending bill or resolution may be considered by the House,  
8 except by unanimous consent, unless the text of the amendment shall be on the desks of the  
9 members in typed form or accessible electronically.

10 (b) When an amendment proposed to any pending measure is laid on the table, it shall not  
11 be construed to be a motion to table the measure on which the amendment has been offered.

12 (c) The motion to lay on the table and the motion to take from the table shall be non-  
13 debatable; provided, however, that the mover of an amendment shall be allowed two (2) minutes  
14 to reply when a motion is made to table his or her amendment; whereupon the Speaker shall put  
15 forward the question on the motion to table.

16 (18) Amendments, articles or sections of the State budget shall concern only  
17 appropriations, expenditures, revenue or matters related thereto.

18 (19) Except with respect to present and former members of the General Assembly,  
19 general officers, members of the judiciary, and elected state and federal officials, all expressions  
20 in the nature of condolences and in the nature of congratulations may be presented in omnibus  
21 resolutions which shall not require concurrent action and which, upon passage, shall be forthwith  
22 transmitted to the Secretary of State.

23 (20)(a) No petition to discharge a bill or resolution from Committee shall be appropriate  
24 for presentation until after the fiftieth (50<sup>th</sup>) legislative day and until the bill or resolution shall  
25 have been in the possession of the Committee for no less than sixteen (16) legislative days. On  
26 any day after those requirements have been met, the prime sponsor of a bill or resolution may  
27 present a petition in writing to discharge the committee from further consideration of a public bill  
28 or resolution which has been referred to a committee, and by no other procedure, but only one  
29 petition may be presented for a public bill or resolution during the course of a session. The  
30 petition shall be placed in the custody of the recording clerk of the House who shall arrange  
31 some convenient place for the signatures of the members to be placed thereon in the presence of  
32 the recording clerk. A signature may be withdrawn by a member at any time before the petition  
33 receives sufficient signatures to become effective, and such petitions shall become effective, and  
34 shall serve to discharge a committee from further consideration of the public bill or resolution,

1 and shall cause said public bill or resolution to be placed upon the calendar for action, when any  
2 thirty-eight (38) representatives shall have affixed their signatures thereto, provided, however,  
3 that if, after the bill or resolution is calendared but before it is taken up, enough signatures are  
4 withdrawn so that the number of effective signatures falls below thirty-eight (38), the bill or  
5 resolution shall pass off the calendar.

6 (b) At the time the petition is properly submitted to the clerk of the House, a notation  
7 shall be added to the bill status/history section for that particular legislation as it appears online.

8 (c) During House consideration of any discharged public bill or resolution, no motion to  
9 recommit or lay on the table shall be entertained by the Speaker until every member desiring to  
10 be heard has been recognized.

11 (21) No vote or act which has been passed by the House shall be sent by the clerk to the  
12 Senate or to the Governor before the expiration of the time limit for its reconsideration, except  
13 where the Speaker has ordered the transmittal and no objection is stated by a member, or in a case  
14 where an objection is stated the objection to transmittal is supported by a majority of those  
15 members who voted on the matter

16 **Rules Pertaining to Decorum and Debates**

17 (22) When any member desires to speak in debate, or to deliver any matter to the House,  
18 the member shall activate his or her recognition button, and when recognized from the rostrum  
19 rise and proceed by respectfully addressing the Speaker. Debate shall be confined to the matter  
20 before the House. No member shall be permitted to ask, nor shall the Speaker entertain, any  
21 question not directly related to the matter before the House.

22 (23) When two (2) or more members seek to be recognized as indicated by activation of  
23 their recognition buttons, the Speaker shall select the member who is to speak first.

24 (24) No member, exclusive of the Majority and Minority Leaders, the principal sponsor  
25 or floor manager, or the chair of the committee from which the bill or resolution was reported,  
26 shall speak more than twice to the same question without the leave of the House, nor more than  
27 once until every member choosing to speak shall have spoken, nor for longer than five (5)  
28 minutes without the leave of the House.

29 (25) If any member, in speaking or otherwise, transgresses any rule of the House, the  
30 Speaker shall, or any member may, call him or her to order, in which case the member called to  
31 order shall immediately sit down, unless permitted by the Speaker to continue and the House  
32 shall, if appealed to, decide on the case but without debate. If the reading of any printed or written  
33 paper be objected to, it shall be determined by the Speaker, and the House, if appealed to.

34 (26) While the Speaker is putting any question, or addressing the House, or when a



1 member is speaking, none shall entertain private discourse in person or by phone, nor  
2 walk between the member who is addressing the Speaker and the chair. At no time while the  
3 House is in session on the floor or in committee shall any person use cell phones or cause  
4 disruption by any other means.

5 (27) When a motion is made and seconded, it shall be stated by the Speaker, or, being in  
6 writing, shall be handed to the Speaker and read by the Clerk of the House before debate. Any  
7 motion shall be reduced to writing before debate whenever the Speaker shall so direct.

8 (28) Any bill or resolution of more than one section shall be passed upon by section,  
9 at the request of any member. With the leave of the Speaker, a section that is susceptible of  
10 division shall be divided and put separately upon the propositions of which it is compounded, but  
11 a motion to strike out and substitute shall not be divided.

12 (29) After a motion is stated by the Speaker, or read by the clerk, it shall be deemed to be  
13 in possession of the House, but any motion may be withdrawn by the mover at any time before a  
14 decision or amendment.

15 (30) When a question is under debate no motion shall be received except: to adjourn, for  
16 the previous question, to take a recess, to lay on the table, to fix a time for closing debate, to  
17 postpone indefinitely, to postpone to a day certain, to recommit, or to amend. The motions for any  
18 of the above actions shall have precedence in the order in which they are here arranged.

19 (31) When a time for a meeting of the House shall have been previously fixed upon, a  
20 motion to adjourn shall be always in order. Motions to take from the table, to reconsider, for the  
21 previous question, to take a recess, to adjourn, and for the vote, shall be decided without debate.  
22 Motions to lay on the table shall also be non-debatable except that the mover of an amendment  
23 shall be allowed two (2) minutes to reply when a motion is made to table his or her amendment as  
24 referenced in Rule 17(c).

25 (32) No member shall vote on any question of private property in the event of which he  
26 or she is immediately and particularly interested.

27 (33)(a) No member shall speak or vote, unless within the bar of the House and at his or  
28 her seat, except as hereinafter provided. No member may vote for another member, nor activate  
29 another member's voting machine except by the express direction of that member who is present  
30 in the House chamber. No one may occupy the vacant seat of a member. Every member who shall  
31 be in his or her seat in the House Chamber when the question is put, shall give his or her vote,  
32 unless prior thereto the Speaker shall have excused him or her in accordance with the provisions  
33 of the Code of Ethics statute (RIGL 36-14-6). Members seeking to recuse themselves on  
34 legislation before the full House must file a written request for recusal, if they are present when

1 the House takes action on the bill, and the journal shall reflect such recusal with the letter "R."

2 (b) When a violation of Rule 33(a) in regard to voting is alleged in writing by a member,  
3 the Speaker may refer said written allegation to the committee on conduct to investigate, hold  
4 hearings, ascertain the facts and report its findings and recommendation to the House, which may  
5 then take appropriate action including but not limited to expulsion as authorized by Article 6,  
6 Section 7 of the Constitution of the State.

7 (c) The electronic voting machine of any member not present when the quorum is called  
8 shall remain locked until the member has notified the ~~reading~~ [recording](#) clerk of his or her  
9 presence. Upon late arrival but prior to adjournment, a member may report his or her presence to  
10 the ~~reading~~ [recording](#) clerk which shall be recorded in the journal.

11 (d) Any member who leaves the floor before adjournment for the remainder of that day's  
12 session shall report to the ~~reading~~ [recording](#) clerk prior to his or her departure. The ~~reading~~  
13 [recording](#) clerk will then lock the electronic voting machine of that member.

14 [\(e\) The Speaker may authorize a member to vote at session by limited-directed proxy if](#)  
15 [the member is unable to be physically present in the chamber due to a health or medical](#)  
16 [condition. After five \(5\) or more consecutive absences, a member may provide a written request](#)  
17 [to the Speaker for authorization to vote by proxy pursuant to this rule. The Speaker may require](#)  
18 [that the member provide documentation from a physician verifying that the member is unable to](#)  
19 [be physically present at session, and the Speaker may limit the duration of authorization under](#)  
20 [this rule. Authorization to vote by proxy pursuant to this rule shall be reported in the House](#)  
21 [Journal and shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure provided in rule 47 \(b\).](#)

22 (34)(a) The electronic voting system may be used to record attendance and quorums, and  
23 ~~in the discretion~~ [at the direction](#) of the Speaker, to ~~allow members to indicate their desire to~~  
24 ~~second~~ [record those members seconding](#) any motion, request, or item. It shall be used to record  
25 all votes on public bills and votes on rule changes and suspensions. It shall be used for other votes  
26 by request of a member at the discretion of the Speaker. The results of all votes recorded  
27 electronically shall be reported in both the House journal and, as it pertains to votes on bills,  
28 reflected in a prominent and conspicuous place on the General Assembly website. The procedure  
29 for the recording of such votes online shall be determined by the Speaker and reported to the  
30 body.

31 (b) In the event the machine is not to be used or is not operating properly, all votes and  
32 other determinations may be taken as otherwise required by House rules, either by voice vote,  
33 division vote or by calling the roll alphabetically and recording the ayes and nays. If a  
34 member's voting device is out of order, he or she shall rise and announce it to the presiding

1 officer and call his or her vote orally prior to the declaration of the result of the vote. Every  
2 member may vote providing he or she is in the chamber of the House at the time the vote is in  
3 progress and before the machine is locked.

4 (c) The electronic voting system shall be under the control of the presiding officer and  
5 shall be operated by such personnel as the Speaker of the House so designates. At a reasonable  
6 time, prior to any vote being taken, the presiding officer shall announce that a vote is about to  
7 be taken. When any member other than the Speaker of the House is presiding, he or she shall  
8 direct the voting clerk to record his or her vote as if cast at his or her voting station. Until the  
9 completion of the voting, no member shall be recognized, and no other business shall be  
10 transacted.

11 (d) When sufficient time has elapsed for each member to vote, the presiding officer shall  
12 order the machine locked and activate the recording process. When the vote is completely  
13 recorded, the clerk shall advise the presiding officer of the result; and the presiding officer shall  
14 announce the result to the House and the result shall be recorded in the journal. No vote may be  
15 changed after the system has been locked and the vote recorded, unless a member requests a  
16 change, without objection from any other member, during the same session that the vote was  
17 recorded.

18 (e) When a division is called for, those in the affirmative or the negative, as the case may  
19 be, shall cast their votes accordingly and the voting clerk shall activate the recording equipment  
20 so as to reflect only the numerical count. When the vote is completely recorded, the clerk  
21 shall advise the presiding officer of the result; and the presiding officer shall announce the result  
22 to the House. (In the event the electronic voting system is not operating properly, the division  
23 vote shall be conducted as otherwise provided in House rules).

24 (f) After the question has been put, but before the system is locked, any member may call  
25 for a statement of the question.

26 (g) While the presiding officer is putting the question, or the vote is being recorded, no  
27 member shall speak or leave his or her place. After a vote has been ordered there shall be no  
28 debate whatever.

29 (h) In case of a tie vote the question shall be lost.

30 (35) There shall be a motion for the previous question, also known as moving the  
31 question, which shall always be in order and which shall not be debated, and which may be  
32 moved and ordered upon any bill or section thereof, amendment, motion, resolution or question  
33 which is debatable, any of which shall be considered as the main question for the purpose of  
34 applying the previous question. When a motion for the previous question has been made, no other

1 motion shall be entertained by the Speaker until it has been put to the House and decided. All  
2 incidental questions of order arising after a motion for the previous question has been made, and  
3 before the vote has been taken on the main question, shall be decided whether on appeal or  
4 otherwise without debate. When the previous question has been ordered, a motion to reconsider  
5 such vote shall not be in order, and no motion to adjourn or take a recess while a quorum is  
6 present shall be entertained between the taking of such vote and the taking of the vote on the main  
7 question. Ten (10) minutes shall be allowed for further debate upon the main question during  
8 which no member shall speak more than three (3) minutes, and a further period of ten  
9 (10) minutes, if desired, shall be allowed for debate to the member introducing the bill or question  
10 to be acted upon, or to the member or members to whom he or she may yield the floor, at the  
11 close of which time, or at the close of the first ten (10) minutes, in case the introducer does not  
12 desire to so use his or her time, the vote on the main question shall be taken. If incidental  
13 questions of order are raised after the previous question has been ordered, the time occupied in  
14 deciding such question shall be deducted from the time allowed for debate.

15 (36) When any vote is passed, any member voting in the majority may move  
16 to reconsider on the same or a subsequent legislative day, if the matter has not been previously  
17 transmitted to the proper party. A motion to reconsider shall not be debated and once a motion for  
18 reconsideration has been decided, the motion itself shall not be reconsidered.

19 (37)(a) The presiding officer may refer to "Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure,"  
20 most recent edition, published by the National Conference of State Legislatures, for guidance as  
21 to procedure on the floor of the House in all cases in which its provisions are not inconsistent  
22 with applicable law or these rules.

23 (b) A point of order is the parliamentary device used to require a deliberative body to  
24 observe its own rules and to follow established parliamentary practice. A point of order is proper  
25 during a floor debate when a member questions whether there has been a breach of order or of the  
26 rules. The person speaking at the time a point of order is raised, shall be instructed by the  
27 presiding officer to stop speaking until the point of order is stated and the issue is resolved. The  
28 Speaker shall not entertain one point of order while another is pending. A point of order must be  
29 raised at the time the particular question is pending. No member shall be permitted to present  
30 argument under the guise of a point of order, a point of parliamentary inquiry, or a question. No  
31 member shall resort to persistent irrelevance or persistent repetition.

32 **Rules Pertaining to Admission to the Floor**

33 (38)(a) No person or persons, except currently elected members of the general assembly,  
34 legislative staff assigned by the Speaker or Minority Leader and authorized representatives of

1 the public press shall be admitted to the floor of the House during the session thereof, except by  
2 the approval of the Speaker for a designated purpose. The Speaker may make special provision  
3 for admission to the floor of the House during the session thereof for persons, who by reason of  
4 disability, are unable to gain access to the House galleries. All persons so admitted by the Speaker  
5 to the floor of the House during the session thereof shall be present for the sole purpose of  
6 observing the proceedings of the House and shall remain seated, refrain from conversation, and  
7 maintain the decorum of the House. No person so admitted shall contact, address, speak or  
8 gesture to, or communicate in any way with any House member while present on the floor of the  
9 House. No person on the floor of the chamber shall dress in a manner offensive to the decorum of  
10 the House. Any House member who observes conduct in violation of the House Rules  
11 shall immediately notify the Speaker thereof and the Speaker shall forthwith take appropriate  
12 corrective action and may order the removal of the offending person.

13 (b) During House sessions, admission to the House lounge is limited to currently serving  
14 members, and staff of the General Assembly authorized by the Speaker

15 (c) Complimentary items, souvenirs and gifts of food shall not be placed upon members'  
16 desks nor delivered to the floor of the House or to members' mailboxes.

17 (39) Authorized representatives of the public press may be admitted by the Speaker to the  
18 floor of the House and assigned seats under such regulations as he or she may from time to time  
19 prescribe. Such press representatives as shall be admitted shall have no privilege upon the floor  
20 other than to pass to and from the seats assigned to them.

### 21 **Miscellaneous Rules**

22 (40) In the event of the calling of an extraordinary session of the General Assembly by  
23 the Governor, or a reconvened session by the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate,  
24 said session shall be conducted pursuant to the foregoing rules; provided, however, that the  
25 requirement for prior posting of bills by committees, the limitation on consideration of House  
26 bills by House committees, the prohibition on reading a bill a second time on the same day it was  
27 given first reading and the two (2) day calendar requirement and the deadline for  
28 new introductions shall not be applicable during such extraordinary sessions, and provided further  
29 that any bill or resolution for consideration of which the session is called shall have been  
30 provided electronically to the members at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the opening of  
31 the session.

32 (41) The procedure to be followed in consideration by the House of a motion to override  
33 the Governor's veto of a bill or resolution (whether at an extraordinary or reconvened session as  
34 contemplated in Rule 40 or at a regular session of the House) shall be as follows: The Governor's

1 objections to the bill or resolution shall be entered into upon the House Journal as required by the  
2 Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9, Section 14. The Governor's objections shall be made  
3 available to the members in written form or electronically, and upon the request of any member  
4 shall be read aloud by the Clerk of the House. Each of the following: the prime sponsor of the bill  
5 (in the case of a House bill), the Minority Leader and the Majority Leader may, if he or she  
6 wishes, and in the order specified, speak for no more than five (5) minutes. Thereupon the House  
7 shall immediately proceed to a vote as prescribed in the Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9,  
8 Section 14, and such vote once taken shall not be the subject of a motion to reconsider. If the bill  
9 or resolution shall have passed notwithstanding the veto of the Governor, the same shall be  
10 immediately transmitted to the Senate or to the Secretary of State as may be appropriate.

11 (42)(a) Once adopted by a majority of the body present and voting, no rule shall be  
12 repealed or amended, except by two-thirds (2/3) of the members voting.

13 (b) A rule may be temporarily suspended with the consent of the Majority and Minority  
14 Leaders or by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members voting except that in no case shall the  
15 rules pertaining to the recording of votes be suspended. At the time a rule or rules are temporarily  
16 suspended, the duration of time that the rule shall be suspended shall clearly be stated to the body  
17 and recorded in the House journal. The application of this rule as it pertains to the temporary  
18 suspension of the rules shall not be subject to amendment or repeal. Any motion to repeal, amend  
19 or suspend any rule shall be a debatable motion under these rules.

20 (c) At the beginning of a legislative session, the rules of the previous legislative session  
21 shall remain in full force and effect until the permanent rules of the House for the current session  
22 have been prepared, presented, debated and adopted by a majority vote of the House. Any  
23 member at the beginning of a legislative session who was not a member at the time of the  
24 adoption of the rules shall be provided with a copy of the rules.

25 (43) Within a reasonable time of the House adopting its rules, the rules will be posted on  
26 the House website.

27 (44) The Speaker shall designate a staff member who shall be responsible for providing  
28 any Representative, who shall request in writing, with a dvd copy of any of any proceeding of the  
29 General Assembly that has been broadcast on Capitol Television within two (2) business days of  
30 receiving the request.

31 **Establishment of Caucuses**

32 (45)(a) Members of the House may establish affiliate groups to be known as "Caucuses."

33 (b) Membership in any said Caucus is limited to duly elected members of the House. No  
34 party, person, nor organization who is not a duly elected member of the House shall be involved

1 in nor be allowed to join nor participate in any manner in the business of the Caucus except staff  
2 members authorized by the highest ranking member present at the majority party caucus and by  
3 the highest ranking member present at the minority party caucus.

4 (c) Membership in any said Caucus is open to those who are primarily in said affiliate  
5 group, but should not necessarily be closed to other House members.

6 (d) Notwithstanding 45(c):

7 (1) Any Caucus organized around a political party affiliation is limited solely to those  
8 House members who belong to said party, provided that any member elected to the House as an  
9 Independent may caucus with any party, but not more than one party, and not before submitting  
10 written communication to the House announcing such intention. The party for which the  
11 Independent member wishes to caucus with shall not be obligated to accept the Independent into  
12 the caucus, and if permission is so denied, shall communicate that decision to the House clerk  
13 within seven (7) days of the Independent member's notification to the House. The Speaker shall  
14 make such determination for the majority party caucus, and the Minority Leader shall make such  
15 decision for the minority party caucus. The Independent then may seek admission to any other  
16 party for purposes of joining a caucus. [Upon request, the Speaker for the majority party caucus,  
17 and the Minority Leader for the minority party caucus, may waive the written communication  
18 required by this rule.](#)

19 (2) Any Caucus organized around a county and/or municipal affiliation is limited solely  
20 to those House members who represent said county and or municipality.

21 (e) The duties of each Caucus shall be to provide a common association and opportunity  
22 for members to interact with each other and to address concerns and to act as a positive body to  
23 implement legislation, initiatives, suggestions and other forms of action on issues of common  
24 interest to the membership.

25 (f) The governing body of any Caucus is limited to a chairperson and vice chairperson  
26 and any member of the Caucus shall be eligible to hold any office.

27 (g) The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

28 (1) Chairperson:

29 (i) To preside over all meetings of the Caucus;

30 (ii) To provide an agenda for each meeting to those attending; and

31 (iii) To conduct the annual election of officers.

32 (2) Vice Chairperson:

33 (i) To assume duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence; and

34 (ii) To conduct all votes, notwithstanding 45(g)(1)(iii), at meetings.

1 (h) Office holders shall be elected by a simple majority of a quorum vote by the body for  
2 a two (2) - year term.

3 (i) In the event an officer cannot fulfill his or her term, the following rules shall apply:

4 (1) A vacancy in the Chairperson's office shall be filled by the Vice Chairperson.

5 (2) A vacancy in the Vice-Chairperson's office shall be filled by a majority vote of a  
6 quorum of the membership of the Caucus.

7 (3) The term of the replaced officers shall begin immediately and shall terminate upon the  
8 regular election of new officers.

9 (j) A quorum shall consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the current membership of the Caucus.

10 (k) No budget shall be appropriated for any Caucus nor shall any Caucus engage in the  
11 raising of funds nor in-kind donations to pay for any of its activities.

12 (l) All caucuses shall be established by written notification to the Speaker or his/her  
13 designee with all elections being held one month after the establishment. The two (2) - year  
14 election term shall run from the date of said election.

15 (m) Rules 45(f), 45(g), 45(h), and 45(i) shall not apply to political party caucuses.

16 **Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited**

17 (46)(a) The House of Representatives is committed to creating and maintaining a work  
18 environment in which all members and employees are treated with respect and are free from  
19 sexual harassment and discrimination.

20 The House fully supports the protection and safeguarding of the rights and opportunities  
21 of all people to seek, obtain and hold employment without being subjected to sexual harassment  
22 of any kind in the workplace. The House recognizes that sexual harassment has a serious  
23 detrimental effect on victims of sexually harassing behavior.

24 The House acknowledges that the question of whether a particular action or incident is of  
25 a purely personal or social nature, without a discriminatory employment effect, could require an  
26 extensive determination based on all facts in each case. The House further recognizes that false  
27 accusations of sexual harassment can have serious effects on innocent individuals.

28 (b) Sexual harassment is a violation of the state Civil Rights Act of 1990 (chapter 112 of  
29 title 42), the state Fair Employment Practices Act (chapter 5 of title 28), and Title VII of the Civil  
30 Rights Act of 1964. It is against the policy of the House for any member or employee of the  
31 House of Representatives to sexually harass another person involved in the business of the House.  
32 Members of the House and its employees are expected to comply with applicable law and take  
33 appropriate measures to ensure that prohibited conduct does not occur.

34 (c) Any member of the House who believes that he or she has been the subject of sexual



1 harassment while engaging in the business of the House should report the alleged act as soon as  
2 possible to the Office of Compliance.

3 (d) The Office of Compliance shall publish an official sexual harassment policy which  
4 shall include the responsibilities of the Office of Compliance, the rights and responsibilities of  
5 members of the House of Representatives and its employees, the procedure for the adjudication of  
6 complaints made pursuant to the policy, and any other provisions it shall deem appropriate.

7 (e) All reported complaints of sexual harassment shall be investigated by the Office of  
8 Compliance in a timely and confidential manner. No person investigating on behalf of the Office  
9 of Compliance shall discuss the subject outside the investigation. The purpose of this provision is  
10 to protect the confidentiality of the person who files a complaint, to encourage the reporting of  
11 any incidents of sexual harassment and to protect the reputation of any person who may be  
12 wrongfully accused.

13 (f) If an investigation reveals that a complaint is valid, prompt action designed to  
14 immediately stop the harassment and to prevent its recurrence shall be taken. A recommendation  
15 shall be made to the Committee on Conduct pursuant to the policy published by the Office of  
16 Compliance.

17 (g) The form of any disciplinary action for a member of the House shall be in accordance  
18 with any recommendation and findings of the Committee on Conduct and a two-thirds (2/3) vote  
19 of the House and shall include, but not be limited to, loss of leadership and/or committee chair  
20 position, reprimand, censure, or expulsion as permitted by the Article 6, Section 7 of the Rhode  
21 Island Constitution, or any other action deemed necessary.

22 (47) Temporary Emergency Procedures of the House of Representatives

23 The Speaker shall have the discretion to determine if there exists a public health or other  
24 emergency that could pose a risk to the health and safety of members and staff of the House.  
25 During the pendency of the emergency, with public notice via the General Assembly website, the  
26 Speaker may adopt the following temporary procedures and may set legislative dates in light of  
27 said public health or other emergency.

28 (a) Authorization to hold Remote Committee Meetings due to an Emergency--  
29 Requirements.

30 (i) When the Speaker issues a public notice pursuant to this rule, the Chair of a legislative  
31 committee may request that the Speaker permit the committee to conduct remote meetings.

32 (ii) If the Speaker approves the Chair's request, the legislative committee shall be  
33 permitted to conduct remote meetings in order to transact public business. Members and  
34 witnesses may participate in a remote meeting through the use of any means of communication;

1 provided that both of the following shall occur:

2 (A) The identity of a member or witness is verified in a manner satisfactory to the Chair;  
3 and

4 (B) During the meeting, all participating members are able to simultaneously hear the  
5 comments of each member who is recognized by the Chair.

6 (iii) For the purposes of determining quorum as required by these rules, a member  
7 participating from another location in a remote meeting shall be considered present as if the  
8 member were physically present at the meeting.

9 (iv) For the purposes of voting, a member participating from another location by remote  
10 means shall be deemed to have voted as if the member were physically present at the meeting.

11 (v) Votes shall be taken by roll call in any meeting conducted as a remote meeting  
12 pursuant to this rule.

13 (vi) Any remote meeting must be preceded by the same or substantially equivalent public  
14 notice as would be required if the meeting were to be held at a physical location. Notice shall  
15 include information on how the public can monitor and/or participate in a remote meeting of a  
16 committee.

17 (vii) The Chair, when presiding over a remote meeting, shall interpret and apply all rules  
18 that presume or require the physical presence or act of members or witnesses in such a manner to  
19 accomplish the same purposes for which the rules were adopted.

20 (viii) Any technological failure that prevents, or any technological limitation that limits  
21 public access otherwise required under these rules shall not invalidate a remote meeting or any  
22 action taken at a remote meeting.

23 (b) Authorization to Vote by Limited-Directed Proxy--Procedure

24 When the Speaker issues a public notice pursuant to this rule, the Speaker may allow  
25 members to vote on certain matters before the House by limited-directed proxy (hereinafter  
26 "proxy") in accordance with the following procedure:

27 (i) Notwithstanding the provisions of this rule, a quorum of members shall be physically  
28 present in order to conduct business, pursuant to Article VI, Section 6 of the Constitution of the  
29 State of Rhode Island, and Rules 1 and 7(b) herein.

30 (ii) A member of the House who is unwilling or unable to be physically present during a  
31 public health emergency may submit a written request to the Speaker that the member wishes to  
32 cast a vote by proxy under the limited parameters established by this rule.

33 (iii) The Speaker, if he or she so approves of a member's proxy request, shall direct the  
34 requesting member's respective majority leader or minority leader to vote for the absent member.

1 If the majority leader or the minority leader is unable to attend session, he or she shall designate  
2 another member to execute proxy votes in accordance with this section.

3 (iv) A member authorized by the Speaker to vote by proxy shall prepare and submit  
4 written voting instructions prior to each applicable floor session. The instructions shall identify  
5 the particular daily calendar item(s) on which the member will be voting by proxy, and shall  
6 clearly state how the member wishes to have the member's vote recorded for each calendar  
7 item(s). For each calendar item, a member shall indicate one of the following: a vote in favor of  
8 the calendar item or a vote against the calendar item. A member shall also clearly indicate how  
9 the member wishes to vote on any consent calendar, if applicable. The Speaker, in his or her  
10 discretion, may provide a form to facilitate the proxy process in accordance with this rule.

11 (v) The written voting instructions shall be both submitted to the member's majority  
12 leader or minority leader and filed with the Clerk of the House.

13 (vi) The member's majority leader or minority leader shall follow the written voting  
14 instructions exactly as submitted, by announcing the other member's proxy vote or by responding  
15 to a voice vote or roll call for the member voting by proxy.

16 (vii) A member authorized by the Speaker to vote by proxy may change the member's  
17 written voting instructions with regard to a particular calendar item at any time prior to the  
18 convening of session. Any revised voting instructions shall be submitted in writing as required  
19 herein.

20 (viii) The House Journal shall identify any members who voted by proxy on each  
21 calendar item.

22 (ix) For the purposes of this rule, submission of written requests to vote by proxy and  
23 written proxy instructions may include electronic delivery by email.

24 (c) During the pendency of any public health emergency, the Speaker may, in his or her  
25 discretion, require that members comply with any public health safety measure recommended by  
26 the Rhode Island Department of Health while in attendance at any session or committee of the  
27 House.

28 (d) The temporary procedures as established by this rule shall be valid until rescinded by  
29 the Speaker with public notice on the General Assembly website.

30 (48) Discipline of a Member

31 (a) Any action to expel a member shall commence with a resolution sponsored by the  
32 Speaker of the House; provided however, if the Speaker is the subject of the resolution to expel,  
33 the resolution shall be sponsored by the Speaker pro tempore.

34 (b) The Speaker shall refer the resolution to the committee on conduct, or any other

1 standing committee, for hearing and review. The committee shall investigate the matter and shall  
2 have the right to compel witnesses and produce documents by subpoena prepared by the  
3 committee and approved and signed by the Speaker. All testimony in the committee shall be  
4 under oath and preserved by stenographic record which shall be transcribed upon the order of the  
5 chair.

6 (c) Any member who is the subject of potential expulsion under the resolution shall be  
7 afforded due process of law, to include notice of all hearings, the right to retain legal counsel, and  
8 the opportunity to present evidence and/or witnesses and cross examine any witnesses.

9 (d) At the completion of the committee hearing, upon consideration and an affirmative  
10 vote of the majority of the committee members present, said resolution shall be reported to the  
11 floor of the house in accordance with these rules.

12 (e) Any floor vote of the house for expulsion shall require two-thirds (2/3) of the  
13 members elected for approval of the resolution to expel.

14 (f) In those instances where the Speaker deems that censure or reprimand of a member is  
15 in order, the Speaker may, in his or her discretion, impose said discipline. Upon notice of the  
16 imposition by the Speaker of censure or reprimand upon a member, the member may dispute said  
17 discipline within five (5) calendar days by notifying the Speaker in writing and requesting a  
18 hearing before the committee on conduct. In the event a member requests a hearing before the  
19 committee on conduct, the member shall be entitled to the procedures set forth herein.

20 (g) In the alternative, the Speaker may, in his or her discretion, sponsor and refer a  
21 resolution of censure or reprimand to the committee on conduct, or any other standing committee,  
22 for hearing, review, and consideration by the committee consistent with the procedures set forth  
23 herein.

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