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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

HOUSE RESOLUTION

ADOPTING RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS 2015
AND 2016

Introduced By: Representatives Azzinaro, DeSimone, Corvese, Edwards, and Marshall

Date Introduced: January 29, 2015

Referred To: House Rules

1 RESOLVED, That pursuant to Article VI, Section 7 of the Constitution of the State of
2 Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, the following rules be adopted for the House of
3 Representatives for the years ~~2013 and 2014~~ 2015 and 2016:

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 who may preside over the
2 sessions of the House during the absence of the Speaker from the chair. The Speaker may appoint
3 a Deputy Speaker who, in case the Speaker and Speaker pro tempore are absent, may call the
4 House to order and shall preside over the House session. In case of the absence of the Speaker,
5 Speaker pro tempore and Deputy Speaker, the senior member present from Newport, or in the
6 absence of such member, a member chosen by notification to the House clerk by the Speaker
7 shall call the House to order and preside.

8 (b) In the case of the vacancy of the office of the Speaker, the Speaker pro tempore shall
9 preside until a Speaker is elected by ballot.

10 Rules Pertaining to the Order of Business

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

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

19 (i) Reports of standing and select committees.

20 (ii) Introduction and reference of new business.

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

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

23 (v) Consent calendar.

24 (vi) Calendar.

25 (vii) Introduction of guests and announcements.

26 (viii) Matters of personal privilege.

27 (ix) Recess or adjournment.

28 (c) A representative desiring to introduce a bill or resolution shall file the same with the
29 Clerk of the House. At the request of any representative, an announcement presented to the
30 Speaker may be placed directly in the House Journal noting his or her absence from session.

31 (d) All bills and resolutions shall be filed no later than ~~February 14, 2013 (for the 2013~~
32 ~~session) and February 13, 2014 (for the 2014 session)~~ February 12, 2015 (for the 2015 session)
33 and February 11, 2016 (for the 2016 session). The provisions of this section shall not apply to city
34 or town bills, to bills for the reinstatement of corporate charters, to bills relating to the

1 solemnization of marriages, appropriations and budget bills, or to bills to create or extend the
2 reporting dates of study commissions. Further, a member may introduce a public bill or resolution
3 after this date in February if one day previous to such introduction, the member shall have
4 notified the House of his or her intention to introduce such bill or resolution by reading the title
5 and giving a brief explanation of its purpose. A member may avail himself or herself of the
6 opportunity afforded by this rule three (3) times only in each calendar year, but in no event after
7 the fortieth (40th) legislative day unless the matter is submitted with the approval of the Speaker.
8 House Committees may, but shall not be obligated to, hear and consider public bills or resolutions
9 approved for introduction pursuant to this rule.

10 (e) Any bill or resolution introduced on or before ~~April 11, 2013 (for the 2013 session)~~
11 ~~and on or before April 10, 2014 (for the 2014 session)~~ April 28, 2015 (for the 2015 session) and
12 on or before April 12, 2016 (for the 2016 session):

13 (i) ~~if filed prior to the convening of the session in the instance where the desk has been~~
14 ~~left open to receive matters, shall be in order for the first reading and, where appropriate,~~
15 ~~assignment to committee, on that day, if filed after the convening of the session, shall be in order~~
16 for the first reading and where appropriate, assignment to committee, as early as the next
17 legislative day and shall be considered a part of the days business, provided that the Speaker may
18 direct that any given measure may be treated in accord with subparagraph (ii) below, and

19 (ii) ~~if filed after the convening of the session, shall be in order for the first reading and,~~
20 ~~where appropriate, assignment to committee, on the next legislative day and shall be considered a~~
21 ~~part of that day's business, provided that the Speaker may direct that a given measure may be~~
22 ~~treated in accord with subparagraph (i) above if filed prior to the convening of the session in the~~
23 instance where the desk has been left open to receive matters, shall be in order for the first
24 reading and, where appropriate, assignment to committee, as early as that day.

25 (iii) All bills or resolutions introduced after ~~April 11, 2013 (for the 2013 session) and~~
26 ~~after April 10, 2014 (for the 2014 session)~~ April 28, 2015 (for the 2015 session) and after April
27 12, 2016 (for the 2016 session) shall be in order for the first reading and, ~~where appropriate,~~
28 ~~assignment~~ may be assigned to committee, ~~on~~ as early as the day of introduction.

29 (iv) In the discretion of the Speaker, any bill filed after the convening of the session on
30 the last legislative day of any week shall also be in order for the first reading as early as the next
31 day and assigned to committee as if the desk were left open.

32 (f) The Clerk of the House shall cause the title and numbers of all bills and resolutions
33 introduced to be published in the House Journal for the day on which said bill or resolution is
34 deemed, as herein provided, to have been introduced.

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

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

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

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

33 Rules Pertaining to Committees

34 (11)(a) The following standing committees shall be appointed each year in the month of

1 January or as soon as convenient after the adoption of the House Rules;

2 A committee on corporations

3 A committee on environment and natural resources

4 A committee on finance

5 A committee on health, education and welfare

6 A committee on judiciary

7 A committee on labor

8 A committee on municipal government

9 A committee on rules

10 A committee on oversight

11 A committee on small business

12 A committee on veterans' affairs.

13 (b) The Speaker shall appoint all standing committees and create such other
14 subcommittees and committees as may be required from time to time and appoint thereto. All
15 subcommittees and committees shall have proportionate minority membership when feasible.
16 The Speaker, in consultation with the Minority Leader, shall be the appointing authority for
17 minority membership on standing committees and subcommittees thereof, joint committees,
18 boards and commissions. All vacancies occurring in any committee and subcommittee after they
19 have once been named shall be filled in like manner by the Speaker. The Speaker, Majority
20 Leader and Minority Leader shall be ex officio members with voting rights of all House
21 committees but shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. The Speaker shall
22 have the authority to appoint the chair, vice chair and secretary of each committee. In the event
23 that the chair of a committee is unable to serve due to incapacity for medical or other reasons, the
24 Speaker may appoint an acting chair for the period of such incapacity, which acting chair shall
25 have all of the powers and duties of the chair. The chair shall determine all questions of procedure
26 before the committee in cases not provided for in these rules.

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

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

33 (e) It shall be the duty of the committee on finance to take into consideration all
34 propositions relative to the revenue, to inquire into the state of the public debt and to report from

1 time to time their opinion thereon and such propositions relative thereto as to them shall
2 seem expedient.

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

9 (g) The Speaker may appoint from time to time subcommittees of a given standing
10 committee, which shall consist only of members of the committee from which it was appointed.
11 The chair of each standing committee shall be considered a member of each subcommittee of
12 such committee. Each subcommittee may hear testimony on bills and resolutions falling within
13 the subject matter of its charge and shall report to the committee from which it was appointed.
14 Subcommittees will otherwise conduct themselves in conformity with these rules. The Speaker
15 shall appoint the chair of each subcommittee.

16 (12)(a) Committees shall take into consideration all such petitions, resolves, bills, matters
17 or things as may be referred to them by the House with power to report by bill or otherwise;
18 provided, however, that committees shall, whenever possible, consider all bills of substantially
19 the same or of a similar nature at the same time in a manner that is otherwise in conformity with
20 these rules. Any bill filed subsequent to the hearing of a grouping of bills on the same subject
21 matter may or may not be assigned for hearing if it appears from the subject matter that the issues
22 presented would be substantially similar to those matters already heard, even if a bill hearing
23 request is filed pursuant to Rule 12(e).

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

27 (c) The Chair of every committee shall post, in print and electronically, at least forty-
28 eight (48) hours prior to any committee meeting, a list by number and title of the bills
29 and resolutions to be heard at that meeting. Such postings shall be made electronically and on the
30 Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The electronic posting shall be considered the official date of the
31 posting. In the event that the electronic posting system is inoperable then the official posting shall
32 be ~~the printed posting~~ posted on the Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The Chair shall limit
33 such listings to the number of bills or resolutions he or she reasonably expects can be taken up by
34 the committee at that meeting. Any bill or resolution so posted which the committee is not able to

1 take up at the stated meeting must be re-posted as stated above. Such postings shall be made
2 electronically, and ~~on the House bulletin board or~~ on the Legislative Data bulletin board. Copies
3 of all posted bills or resolutions shall be provided in print or electronically to all committee
4 members and principal sponsors. A committee shall not hear any said bill or resolution without
5 such notice except by the consent of a majority of its members and with at least one (1) day's
6 notification to the principal House sponsor. The sponsor may, however, waive such one-
7 day notification. The time requirements of this section shall not apply to House bills returned
8 from the Senate with amendment, or, after the 50th legislative day [\(May 20, 2015 \(for the 2015](#)
9 [session\) and May 11, 2016 \(for the 2016 session\)](#), to any bill originating in the Senate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 (f) Committee Chairs shall bring reports of committee actions to the floor no later than
9 two (2) weeks following the committee votes thereon, provided that this shall not apply to the
10 Committee on Finance, nor shall it apply to bills being held for further study under subdivision
11 (e)(v). A committee member may move reconsideration of any vote taken [under Rule 12\(e\)\(i\)-](#)
12 [\(iv\)](#) so long as the bill or resolution which was the subject of the vote remains in the possession of
13 the committee and that the motion is made by a member voting in the majority. A motion to
14 reconsider in committee shall not be debated.

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

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

22 (h) All bills or resolutions reported from committee shall be placed on the calendar or,
23 pursuant to the restrictions of these rules, on the consent calendar for the required period of time
24 according to these rules before House consideration. Bills and resolutions reported from
25 committees and received by the Clerk of the House prior to the convening of the session on a
26 given legislative day shall be deemed to have been received, and therefore in order to be placed
27 upon the appropriate calendar, as of that day. Bills and resolutions so received after the convening
28 of the session on a given legislative day shall be deemed to have been received, and therefore in
29 order to be placed upon the appropriate calendar, on the next legislative day and shall be
30 considered a part of that day's business.

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

34 (i) No public bill or resolution which originated in the House shall be considered by a

1 House committee unless the committee has held a hearing on that bill or resolution by ~~April 11,~~
2 ~~2013 (or April 10, in the case of 2014)~~ April 28, 2015 (for the 2015 session) and on or before
3 April 12, 2016 (for the 2016 session), and thereafter the committees of the House shall not
4 consider public bills or resolutions except those which have been acted upon by the Senate and
5 transmitted by the Senate to the House of Representatives, provided however, that the committee
6 on finance may hear and consider such House bills, acts or resolutions as it deems to have a fiscal
7 impact after ~~April 11, 2013 (or April 10, in the case of 2014)~~ April 28, 2015 (for the 2015
8 session) and on or before April 12, 2016 (for the 2016 session), except as provided in section (j)
9 hereof, and provided further, that each other House committee may complete consideration of not
10 more than three (3) House bills or resolutions after said date, on which such committee had not
11 been able to complete action, upon approval by the Speaker of a written request from the Chair.
12 All such requests must be filed with the Clerk of the House no later than ~~April 11, 2013 (or April~~
13 ~~10, in the case of 2014)~~ April 28, 2015 (for the 2015 session) and on or before April 12, 2016 (for
14 the 2016 session). The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to House bills of which Senate
15 duplicates have passed the House.

16 (j) No House bill which relates to an individual's pension or retirement shall be accepted
17 as a committee report from the committee on finance unless it shall have been considered by the
18 committee on or before ~~April 11, 2013 (or April 10, in the case of 2014)~~ April 28, 2015 (for the
19 2015 session) and on or before April 12, 2016 (for the 2016 session), and shall have been heard in
20 the committee no later than one (1) week prior to that date.

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

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

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

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

33 (d) The Speaker, wherever feasible with the confines of existing room availability and
34 personnel levels, shall direct Capitol Television to broadcast committee hearings live on Capitol

1 Television or, in the instance where committees are meeting on the same day and time, record the
2 hearings for broadcast on a delayed basis. Committee hearings dealing with the expenditure of
3 public funds shall be given priority for live broadcast. Chairs of the various committees are
4 authorized to make a request of the Speaker, or the Speaker's designee, to broadcast their
5 respective committee hearings on Capitol Television if they believe an agenda item is of
6 particular importance or interest.

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

8 **Rules Pertaining to Bills and Petitions**

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

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

17 (c) No bill or resolution shall be passed or concurred in without two (2) readings. The
18 first reading shall take place by acceptance of the bill or resolution and publication in the House
19 Journal and the second after it has been placed upon the calendar. No bill or resolution upon the
20 calendar shall be taken up for consideration unless copies thereof, in the form in which it was
21 reported from committee, shall have been made available in print or electronically to the
22 members no later than the rise of the House on the legislative day before the day on which it shall
23 be in order for consideration. No matter of business on the calendar shall be considered upon its
24 merits prior to the legislative day after it shall have been placed on the calendar except by vote of
25 the majority of the members present and voting. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply
26 to Senate bills received by the House which are duplicates of House bills.

27 (d) No more than fifty (50) public bills shall be considered upon their merits during any
28 one (1) legislative day and no bill shall be brought before the body after 10:30 p.m., provided,
29 however, that House bills returned from the Senate, Senate bills which are duplicates of and
30 identical to House bills, corporate charter revocation bills, and solemnization of marriage bills
31 and bills removed from the consent calendar may be considered notwithstanding this limit.
32 Provided further, that Senate bills which are duplicates of and identical to House bills, and House
33 bills returned from the Senate, may without objection be bundled and passed by one vote
34 provided that they are provided to members electronically prior to consideration. In the case of

1 bundled bills that contain identical and duplicate Senate bills, at the request of the Majority and
2 Minority Leaders the House journal will reflect that the vote of the members on the bill is
3 consistent with his or her vote on the duplicate House bill previously passed. Prior to the vote on
4 a duplicate bill, it should be stated for the record and be made known to the body that the bill is
5 identical.

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

16 (f) An amendment which was germane when prepared, and which was offered in a timely
17 fashion, but is no longer germane because of an intervening amendment, may, with the agreement
18 of the ~~majority leader and minority leader~~ [Majority Leader and Minority Leader](#), be revised orally
19 or in writing by the sponsor without renewed compliance with the requirements hereof.

20 (g) After the 50th legislative day, bills or resolutions received back from the Senate with
21 amendments requiring House concurrence shall, with the agreement of the House sponsor and the
22 Majority Leader, be placed on the calendar in order for the day upon which they are received [or](#)
23 [any day thereafter](#).

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

27 (b) When any bill or resolution is offered which is intended to amend any part or parts of
28 an existing statute, or the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island, or the House Rules, any part
29 or parts intended to be stricken shall be contained in the bill or resolution and shall be crossed
30 out. All new matter contained in the bill or resolution shall be underlined, so that the new matter
31 may be easily discerned. Existing language not intended to be amended shall be
32 reproduced without change. [In the discretion of Legislative Council in drafting a bill pursuant to](#)
33 [section \(d\) of this rule, or upon the request for a Sub A from the Chair of the committee where the](#)
34 [bill is assigned, additional sections of law that are not being amended may be included in the](#)

1 [explanation to the bill to add context to the changes made in the statutes the bill amends.](#)

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

13 (d) All bills and resolutions, private as well as public, and all proposed amendments
14 thereto, shall be prepared by the Legislative Council, and the Clerk of the House may decline to
15 accept for introduction any bill, resolution or transmittal not in conformity herewith. Once
16 introduced and referred, all bills and resolutions shall be printed and made available
17 electronically, except resolutions of congratulation and condolence. The Legislative Council may
18 decline to accept for drafting any proposal for an amendment submitted to it later than 3 p.m. on
19 the day on which the bill or resolution to be amended is to be heard, provided that the Speaker or
20 his or her designee may waive this restriction.

21 (e) All bills and resolutions which have been introduced at the request of one of the
22 general officers [or any department or agency or from the judicial branch](#) shall bear a stamp [or](#)
23 [designation](#) indicating such request.

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

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

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

34 (ii) A co-sponsor of a bill or resolution may remove his or her name from a bill or

1 resolution at any time prior to its passage upon written notice to the clerk. If the co-sponsor is
2 listed electronically as one of the sponsors, such change in sponsorship shall be amended online
3 as well as reflected in the House journal.

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

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

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

13 (iii) In the event that any member or member-elect shall die after filing and before the
14 first reading, the death of said member or member-elect shall constitute automatic withdrawal of
15 said bill or resolution; provided, however, that where a bill or resolution shall have had more than
16 one sponsor, said bill or resolution and number shall not be withdrawn and the member whose
17 name appears second on said bill or resolution shall become the prime sponsor.

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

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

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

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

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

33 (19) Except with respect to present and former members of the General Assembly,
34 general officers, members of the judiciary, and elected state and federal officials, all expressions

1 in the nature of condolences and in the nature of congratulations may be presented in omnibus
2 resolutions which shall not require concurrent action and which, upon passage, shall be forthwith
3 transmitted to the Secretary of State.

4 (20)(a) No petition to discharge a bill or resolution from Committee shall be appropriate
5 for presentation until after the fiftieth (50th) legislative day and until the bill or resolution shall
6 have been in the possession of the Committee for no less than sixteen (16) legislative days. On
7 any day after those requirements have been met, the prime sponsor of a bill or resolution may
8 present a petition in writing to discharge the committee from further consideration of a public bill
9 or resolution which has been referred to a committee, and by no other procedure, but only one
10 petition may be presented for a public bill or resolution during the course of a session. The
11 petition shall be placed in the custody of the recording clerk of the House who shall arrange
12 some convenient place for the signatures of the members to be placed thereon in the presence of
13 said clerk. A signature may be withdrawn by a member at any time before the petition receives
14 sufficient signatures to become effective, and such petitions shall become effective, and shall
15 serve to discharge a committee from further consideration of the public bill or resolution and shall
16 cause said public bill or resolution to be placed upon the calendar for action, when any thirty-
17 eight (38) representatives shall have affixed their signatures thereto, provided, however, that if,
18 after the bill or resolution is calendared but before it is taken up, enough signatures are withdrawn
19 so that the number of effective signatures falls below thirty-eight (38), the bill or resolution shall
20 pass off the calendar.

21 (b) At the time the petition is properly submitted to the clerk of the House, a notation
22 shall be added to the travel of the bill section for that particular legislation as it appears online.

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

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

31 Rules Pertaining to Decorum and Debates

32 (22) When any member desires to speak in debate, or to deliver any matter to the House,
33 the member shall activate his or her recognition button, and when recognized from the rostrum
34 rise and proceed by respectfully addressing the Speaker. Debate shall be confined to the matter

1 before the House. No member shall be permitted to ask, nor shall the Speaker entertain, any
2 question not directly related to the matter before the House.

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

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

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

15 (26) While the Speaker is putting any question, or addressing the House, or when a
16 member is speaking, none shall entertain private discourse in person or by phone, nor
17 walk between the member who is addressing the Speaker and the chair. At no time while the
18 House is in session on the floor or in committee shall any person use cell phones or cause
19 disruption by any other means.

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 (33)(a) No member shall speak or vote, unless within the bar of the House and at his or
10 her seat, except as hereinafter provided. Every member who shall be in his or her seat or in the
11 House Chamber when the question is put, shall give his or her vote, unless prior thereto the
12 Speaker shall have excused him or her in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Ethics
13 statute (RIGL 36-14-6). Members must file a written request for recusal and the journal shall
14 reflect such recusal with the letter "R." No member may vote for another member, nor activate
15 another member's voting machine except by the express direction of that member who is present
16 in the House chamber. No one may occupy the vacant seat of a member.

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

22 (c) The electronic voting machine of any member not present when the quorum is called
23 shall remain locked until the member has notified the reading clerk of his or her presence. Upon
24 late arrival but prior to adjournment, a member may report his or her presence to the reading clerk
25 which shall be recorded in the journal.

26 (d) Any member who leaves the floor before adjournment for the remainder of that day's
27 session shall report to the reading clerk prior to his or her departure. The reading clerk will then
28 lock the electronic voting machine of that member.

29 (34)(a) The electronic voting system may be used to record attendance and quorums, and
30 shall be used to record all votes on public bills and votes on rule changes and suspensions. It shall
31 be used for other votes by request of a member at the discretion of the Speaker. The results of all
32 votes recorded electronically shall be reported in both the House journal and, as it pertains to
33 votes on bills, reflected in a prominent and conspicuous place on the General Assembly website.
34 The procedure for the recording of such votes online shall be determined by the Speaker and

1 reported to the body.

2 (b) In the event the machine is not to be used or is not operating properly, all votes and
3 other determinations may be taken as otherwise required by House rules, either by voice vote,
4 division vote or by calling the roll alphabetically and recording the ayes and nays. If a
5 member's voting device is out of order, he or she shall rise and announce it to the presiding
6 officer and call his or her vote orally prior to the declaration of the result of the vote. Every
7 member may vote providing he or she is in the chamber of the House at the time the vote is in
8 progress and before the machine is locked.

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

16 (d) When sufficient time has elapsed for each member to vote, the presiding officer shall
17 order the machine locked and activate the recording process. When the vote is completely
18 recorded, the clerk shall advise the presiding officer of the result; and the presiding officer shall
19 announce the result to the House and the result shall be recorded in the journal. No vote may be
20 changed after the system has been locked and the vote recorded.

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

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

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

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

33 (35) There shall be a motion for the previous question, also known as moving the
34 question, which shall always be in order and which shall not be debated, and which may be

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

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

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

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

1 Rules Pertaining to Admission to the Floor

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

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

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

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

24 Miscellaneous Rules

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

1 (41) The procedure to be followed in consideration by the House of a motion to override
2 the Governor's veto of a bill or resolution (whether at an extraordinary or reconvened session as
3 contemplated in ~~Rule 45~~ [Rule 40](#) or at a regular session of the House) shall be as follows: The
4 Governor's objections to the bill or resolution shall be entered into upon the House Journal as
5 required by the Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9, Section 14. The Governor's objections shall
6 be made available to the members in written form or electronically, and upon the request of any
7 member shall be read aloud by the Clerk of the House. Each of the following: the prime sponsor
8 of the bill (in the case of a House bill), the Minority Leader and the Majority Leader may, if he or
9 she wishes, and in the order specified, speak for no more than five (5) minutes. Thereupon the
10 House shall immediately proceed to a vote as prescribed in the Rhode Island Constitution, Article
11 9, Section 14, and such vote once taken shall not be the subject of a motion to reconsider. If the
12 bill or resolution shall have passed notwithstanding the veto of the Governor, the same shall be
13 immediately transmitted to the Senate or to the Secretary of State as may be appropriate.

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

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

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

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

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

34 [Establishment of Caucuses](#)

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

2 (b) Membership in any said Caucus is limited to duly elected members of the House. No
3 party, person, nor organization who is not a duly elected member of the House shall be involved
4 in nor be allowed to join nor participate in any manner in the business of the Caucus except staff
5 members authorized by the highest ranking member present at the majority party caucus and by
6 the highest ranking member present at the minority party caucus.

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

9 (d) Notwithstanding 45(c):

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

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

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

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

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

29 (1) Chairperson:

- 30 (i) To preside over all meetings of the Caucus;
- 31 (ii) To provide an agenda for each meeting to those attending; and
- 32 (iii) To conduct the annual election of officers.

33 (2) Vice Chairperson:

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

- 1 (ii) To conduct all votes, notwithstanding 45(g)(1)(iii), at meetings.
- 2 (h) Office holders shall be elected by a simple majority of a quorum vote by the body for
3 a two (2) - year term.
- 4 (i) In the event an officer cannot fulfill his or her term, the following rules shall apply:
- 5 (1) A vacancy in the Chairperson's office shall be filled by the Vice Chairperson.
- 6 (2) A vacancy in the Vice-Chairperson's office shall be filled by a majority vote of a
7 quorum of the membership of the Caucus.
- 8 (3) The term of the replaced officers shall begin immediately and shall terminate upon the
9 regular election of new officers.
- 10 (j) A quorum shall consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the current membership of the Caucus.
- 11 (k) No budget shall be appropriated for any Caucus nor shall any Caucus engage in the
12 raising of funds nor in-kind donations to pay for any of its activities.
- 13 (l) All caucuses shall be established by written notification to the Speaker or his/her
14 designee with all elections being held one month after the establishment. The two (2) - year
15 election term shall run from the date of said election.
- 16 (m) Rules 45(f), 45(g), 45(h), and 45(i) shall not apply to political party caucuses.
- 17 (n) Nothing shall preclude the formation of joint caucuses between the house and senate.

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