

2021 -- H 5004

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

AMENDING THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS  
2019 AND 2020

Introduced By: Representative Jason Knight

Date Introduced: January 12, 2021

Referred To: House Rules

1           RESOLVED, That section 11 of the rules for the House of Representatives adopted by  
2 the House of Representatives at its January session A.D. 2019 entitled "House Resolution  
3 Adopting the Rules of the House of Representatives for the years 2019 and 2020", be and the  
4 same is hereby amended to read as follows:

5           [Rules Pertaining to Committees](#)

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

- 8           A committee on conduct
- 9           A committee on corporations
- 10          A committee on environment and natural resources
- 11          A committee on finance
- 12          A committee on health, education and welfare
- 13          A committee on judiciary
- 14          A committee on labor
- 15          A committee on municipal government
- 16          A committee on rules
- 17          A committee on oversight
- 18          A committee on small business
- 19          A committee on special legislation

1           A committee on veterans' affairs.

2           (b) The Speaker shall appoint all standing committees and create such other  
3 subcommittees and committees as may be required from time to time and appoint thereto. Each  
4 member of the House of Representatives shall be entitled to membership to at least two (2)  
5 standing committees. Any member may waive this requirement upon written notice to the  
6 Speaker of the House. All subcommittees and committees shall have proportionate minority  
7 membership when feasible. The Speaker, in consultation with the Minority Leader, shall be the  
8 appointing authority for minority membership on standing committees and subcommittees  
9 thereof, joint committees, boards and commissions. All vacancies occurring in any committee and  
10 subcommittee after they have once been named shall be filled in like manner by the Speaker. The  
11 Speaker, Majority Leader and Minority Leader shall be ex officio members with voting rights of  
12 all House committees but shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. The  
13 Speaker shall have the authority to appoint the chair, first vice chair and second vice chair of each  
14 committee. In the event that the chair of a committee is unable to serve due to incapacity for  
15 medical or other reasons, the Speaker may appoint an acting chair for the period of such  
16 incapacity, which acting chair shall have all of the powers and duties of the chair. The chair shall  
17 determine all questions of procedure before the committee in cases not provided for in these rules.

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

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

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

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

34           (g) The Speaker may appoint from time to time subcommittees of a given standing

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

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

12 (1) Any bill filed before or after the 40<sup>th</sup> legislative day, but subsequent to the hearing of  
13 a group of bills on the same subject matter pursuant to Rule 12(a), may or may not be assigned  
14 for hearing if it appears from the subject matter that the issues presented would be substantially  
15 similar to those matters already heard, even if a bill hearing request is filed pursuant to Rule  
16 12(e). If heard, the chair of the committee may limit the testimony to those issues not addressed  
17 in the previous bill hearing.

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

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

1 apply to House bills returned from the Senate with amendment, or, after the 50<sup>th</sup> legislative day  
2 (May 14, 2019 (for the 2019 session) and May 13, 2020 (for the 2020 session), to any bill  
3 originating in the Senate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

33 The originals of bills or resolutions which have failed in committee shall be transmitted  
34 by the committee clerks to the Secretary of State for the State Archives, with an appropriate

1 notation thereon at the time specified in R.I.G.L.

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

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

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

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
HOUSE RESOLUTION  
AMENDING THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS  
2019 AND 2020

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- 1           This resolution would amend section 11 of the rules of the House of Representatives so
- 2   that each member would be entitled to membership in at least two (2) standing committees, but
- 3   any member may waive this requirement upon written notice to the Speaker of the House.

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