

2025 -- H 5007 SUBSTITUTE A

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

**ADOPTING THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS 2025
AND 2026**

Introduced By: Representatives Fogarty, Diaz, Corvese, Hull, Marszalkowski, Kazarian,
O'Brien, Kennedy, Chippendale, and Azzinaro

Date Introduced: January 10, 2025

Referred To: House Rules

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

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 2025
3 and 2026:

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 debate
9 subject to appeal to the House; and have on every appeal the right to assign reasons for any decision,
10 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 shall
13 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 hand
16 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 of
18 his/her deputies, to execute the command of the House, from time to time, together with all such

1 process, issued by authority thereof, as shall be directed to him/her by the Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

- 21 (i) Reports of standing and select committees.
- 22 (ii) Introduction and reference of new business.
- 23 (iii) Communications, including communications from the Senate.
- 24 (iv) Unfinished business in which the House was engaged at the time of last adjournment.
- 25 (v) Consent calendar.
- 26 (vi) Calendar.
- 27 (vii) Introduction of guests and announcements.
- 28 (viii) Matters of personal privilege.
- 29 (ix) Recess or adjournment.

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

1 shall apply:

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

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

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

9 (d)(i) All bills and resolutions shall be filed no later than February ~~16, 2023~~ 27, 2025 (for
10 the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and February ~~15, 2024~~ 12, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session). The provisions
11 of this section shall not apply to city or town bills, to bills for the reinstatement of corporate charters,
12 to bills relating to the solemnization of marriages, to ceremonial resolutions of congratulations or
13 condolences, to appropriations and budget bills, ~~or to bills to create or extend~~ creating or extending
14 the reporting dates of study commissions or to bills introduced on behalf of a study commission by
15 the commission's chairperson or other member with the approval of the Speaker. ~~Further, a~~

16 (ii) A member may introduce a public bill or resolution after this date in February if one
17 day previous to such introduction, the member shall have notified the House of his or her intention
18 to introduce such bill or resolution by reading the title and giving a brief explanation of its purpose.
19 A member may avail himself or herself of the opportunity afforded by this rule three (3) times only
20 in each calendar year, but in no event after the fortieth (40th) legislative day unless the matter is
21 submitted with the approval of the Speaker. House Committees may, but shall not be obligated to,
22 hear and consider public bills or resolutions approved for introduction pursuant to this rule.

23 (e) Any bill or resolution introduced on or before April ~~11, 2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~
24 2025 session) and on or before April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session):

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

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

32 (iii) All bills or resolutions introduced after April ~~11, 2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025
33 session) and after April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session) shall be in order for the first
34 reading and, may be assigned to committee, as early as the day of introduction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11 **Rules Pertaining to Committees**

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

- 14 A committee on conduct
- 15 A committee on corporations
- 16 A committee on education
- 17 A committee on environment and natural resources
- 18 A committee on finance
- 19 A committee on health and human services
- 20 A committee on innovation, internet and technology
- 21 A committee on judiciary
- 22 A committee on labor
- 23 A committee on municipal government and housing
- 24 A committee on rules
- 25 A committee on oversight
- 26 A committee on small business
- 27 A committee on special legislation
- 28 A committee on state government and elections
- 29 A committee on veterans' affairs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Senate.

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

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

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

21 (ii) a motion to report the bill or resolution as amended, or in substitute form, to the House
22 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 by
31 the committee clerks to the Secretary of State for the State Archives, with an appropriate notation
32 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 two
34 (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 reconsider
5 in committee shall not be debated.

6 Bills or resolutions concerning appropriations, revenue or expenditures shall not be subject
7 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 failure
11 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 given
17 legislative day shall be deemed to have been received, and therefore in order to be placed upon the
18 appropriate calendar, as of that day. Bills and resolutions so received after the convening of the
19 session on a given legislative day shall be deemed to have been received, and therefore in order to
20 be placed upon the appropriate calendar, on the next legislative day and shall be considered a part
21 of that day's business.

22 House Rule 12(e) regarding the necessity to hold a hearing at the sponsor's request through
23 12(h) pertaining to the timing of placing a bill onto the floor calendar shall not apply to any bill or
24 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 ~~11,~~
27 ~~2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and on or before April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~
28 2026 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 ~~11,~~
32 ~~2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and after April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026
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 resolutions

1 after such date, on which such committee had not been able to complete action, upon approval by
2 the Speaker of a written request from the Chair. All such requests must be filed with the Clerk of
3 the House no later than April ~~11, 2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and on or before April
4 ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session). The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to
5 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 ~~11, 2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and on or before April
9 ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session), and shall have been heard in the committee no later
10 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 bill
13 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 has recused in accordance
16 with the provisions of the Code of Ethics, RIGL §36-14-6. The member shall sign a recusal form,
17 and the Clerk of the Committee shall note the member's recusal on the bill vote sheet.

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

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

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

33 (c) The Speaker shall formulate a plan for the publication of committee votes and work to
34 implement the plan so committee votes appear online in a prominent and conspicuous location on

1 the General Assembly website prior to the floor votes of the bill occurring.

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

10 (e) All committee hearings shall be audio recorded [or video recorded with audio](#).

11 **Rules Pertaining to Bills and Petitions**

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

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

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

32 (d) No more than fifty (50) public bills shall be considered upon their merits during any
33 one (1) legislative day and no bill shall be brought before the body after 10:30 p.m., provided,
34 however, that House bills returned from the Senate, Senate bills which are duplicates of and

1 identical to House bills, corporate charter revocation bills, and solemnization of marriage bills and
2 bills removed from the consent calendar may be considered notwithstanding this limit. Provided
3 further, that Senate bills which are duplicates of and identical to House bills, and House bills
4 returned from the Senate, may without objection be bundled and passed by one vote provided that
5 they are provided to members electronically prior to consideration. In the case of bundled bills that
6 contain identical and duplicate Senate bills, at the request of the Majority and Minority Leaders the
7 House journal will reflect that the vote of the members on the bill is consistent with his or her vote
8 on the duplicate House bill previously passed. Prior to the vote on a duplicate bill, it should be
9 stated for the record and be made known to the body that the bill is identical.

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

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

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

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

31 (b) When any bill or resolution is offered which is intended to amend any part or parts of
32 an existing statute, or the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island, or the House Rules, any part or
33 parts intended to be stricken shall be contained in the bill or resolution and shall be crossed out. All
34 new matter contained in the bill or resolution shall be underlined, so that the new matter may be

1 easily discerned. Existing language not intended to be amended shall be reproduced without
2 change. In the discretion of Legislative Council in drafting a bill pursuant to section (d) of this rule,
3 or upon the request for a Sub A from the Chair of the committee where the bill is assigned,
4 additional sections of law that are not being amended may be included in the explanation to the bill
5 to add context to the changes made in the statutes the bill amends.

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

16 (d) All bills and resolutions, private as well as public, and all proposed amendments thereto,
17 shall be prepared by the Legislative Council, and the Clerk of the House may decline to accept for
18 introduction any bill, resolution or transmittal not in conformity herewith. Once introduced and
19 referred, all bills and resolutions shall be printed and made available electronically, except
20 resolutions of congratulation and condolence. The Legislative Council may decline to accept for
21 drafting any proposal for an amendment submitted to it later than 12:00 p.m. on the day on which
22 the bill or resolution to be amended is to be heard, provided that the Speaker or his or her designee
23 may waive this restriction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

34 (19) Except with respect to present and former members of the General Assembly, general

1 officers, members of the judiciary, and elected state and federal officials, all expressions in the
2 nature of condolences and in the nature of congratulations may be presented in omnibus resolutions
3 which shall not require concurrent action and which, upon passage, shall be forthwith transmitted
4 to the Secretary of State.

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

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

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

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

32 **Rules Pertaining to Decorum and Debates**

33 (22) When any member desires to speak in debate, or to deliver any matter to the House,
34 the member shall activate his or her recognition button, and when recognized from the rostrum rise

1 and proceed by respectfully addressing the Speaker. Debate shall be confined to the matter before
2 the House. No member shall be permitted to ask, nor shall the Speaker entertain, any question not
3 directly related to the matter before the House.

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

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

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

16 (26) While the Speaker is putting any question, or addressing the House, or when a member
17 is speaking, none shall entertain private discourse in person or by phone, nor walk between the
18 member who is addressing the Speaker and the chair. At no time while the House is in session on
19 the floor or in committee shall any person use cell phones or cause 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, at the
24 request of any member. With the leave of the Speaker, a section that is susceptible of division shall
25 be divided and put separately upon the propositions of which it is compounded, but a motion
26 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 recommit, or to amend. The motions for any
33 of the above actions shall have precedence in the order in which they are here arranged.

34 (31) When a time for a meeting of the House shall have been previously fixed upon, a

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

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

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

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 committee on conduct 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 recording clerk of his or her presence. Upon
24 late arrival but prior to adjournment, a member may report his or her presence to the recording 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 recording clerk prior to his or her departure. The recording clerk will then
28 lock the electronic voting machine of that member.

29 (e) The Speaker may authorize a member to vote at session by limited-directed proxy if the
30 member is unable to be physically present in the chamber due to a health or medical condition.
31 After ~~five (5)~~ [three \(3\)](#) or more consecutive absences [or if a member anticipates three \(3\) or more](#)
32 [consecutive absences due to a health or medical condition](#), a member may provide a written request
33 to the Speaker for authorization to vote by proxy pursuant to this rule. The Speaker may require
34 that the member provide documentation from a physician verifying that the member is unable to be

1 physically present at session, and the Speaker may limit the duration of authorization under this
2 rule. Authorization to vote by proxy pursuant to this rule shall be reported in the House Journal and
3 shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure provided in rule 47 (b).

4 (34)(a) The electronic voting system may be used to record attendance and quorums, and
5 at the direction of the Speaker, to record those members seconding any motion, request, or item. It
6 shall be used to record all votes on public bills and votes on rule changes and suspensions. It shall
7 be used for other votes by request of a member at the discretion of the Speaker. The results of all
8 votes recorded electronically shall be reported in both the House journal and, as it pertains to votes
9 on bills, reflected in a prominent and conspicuous place on the General Assembly website. The
10 procedure for the recording of such votes online shall be determined by the Speaker and reported
11 to the body.

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

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

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

31 (e) When a division is called for, those in the affirmative or the negative, as the case may
32 be, shall cast their votes accordingly and the voting clerk shall activate the recording equipment so
33 as to reflect only the numerical count. When the vote is completely recorded, the clerk shall advise
34 the presiding officer of the result; and the presiding officer shall announce the result to the House.

1 (In the event the electronic voting system is not operating properly, the division vote shall be
2 conducted as otherwise provided in House rules).

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

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

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

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

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

32 (37)(a) The presiding officer may refer to "Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure,"
33 most recent edition, published by the National Conference of State Legislatures, for guidance as to
34 procedure on the floor of the House in all cases in which its provisions are not inconsistent with

1 applicable law or these rules.

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

11 **Rules Pertaining to Admission to the Floor**

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

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

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

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

34 **Miscellaneous Rules**

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

10 (41) The procedure to be followed in consideration by the House of a motion to override
11 the Governor's veto of a bill or resolution (whether at an extraordinary or reconvened session as
12 contemplated in Rule 40 or at a regular session of the House) shall be as follows: The Governor's
13 objections to the bill or resolution shall be entered into upon the House Journal as required by the
14 Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9, Section 14. The Governor's objections shall be made
15 available to the members in written form or electronically, and upon the request of any member
16 shall be read aloud by the Clerk of the House. Each of the following: the prime sponsor of the bill
17 (in the case of a House bill), the Minority Leader and the Majority Leader may, if he or she wishes,
18 and in the order specified, speak for no more than five (5) minutes. Thereupon the House shall
19 immediately proceed to a vote as prescribed in the Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9, Section
20 14, and such vote once taken shall not be the subject of a motion to reconsider. If the bill or
21 resolution shall have passed notwithstanding the veto of the Governor, the same shall be
22 immediately transmitted to the Senate or to the Secretary of State as may be appropriate.

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

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

32 (c) At the beginning of a legislative session, the rules of the previous legislative session
33 shall remain in full force and effect until the permanent rules of the House for the current session
34 have been prepared, presented, debated and adopted by a majority vote of the House. Any member

1 at the beginning of a legislative session who was not a member at the time of the adoption of the
2 rules shall be provided with a copy of the rules.

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

5 (44) The Speaker shall designate a staff member who shall be responsible for providing
6 any Representative, who shall request in writing, with a ~~dvd copy~~ [recording](#) of any of any
7 proceeding of the General Assembly that has been broadcast on Capitol Television within two (2)
8 business days of receiving the request.

9 **Establishment of Caucuses**

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

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

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

18 (d) Notwithstanding 45(c):

19 (1) Any Caucus organized around a political party affiliation is limited solely to those
20 House members who belong to said party, provided that any member elected to the House as an
21 Independent may caucus with any party, but not more than one party, and not before submitting
22 written communication to the House announcing such intention. The party for which the
23 Independent member wishes to caucus with shall not be obligated to accept the Independent into
24 the caucus, and if permission is so denied, shall communicate that decision to the House clerk
25 within seven (7) days of the Independent member's notification to the House. The Speaker shall
26 make such determination for the majority party caucus, and the Minority Leader shall make such
27 decision for the minority party caucus. The Independent then may seek admission to any other party
28 for purposes of joining a caucus. Upon request, the Speaker for the majority party caucus, and the
29 Minority Leader for the minority party caucus, may waive the written communication required by
30 this rule.

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

33 (e) The duties of each Caucus shall be to provide a common association and opportunity
34 for members to interact with each other and to address concerns and to act as a positive body to

1 implement legislation, initiatives, suggestions and other forms of action on issues of common
2 interest to the membership.

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

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

6 (1) Chairperson:

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

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

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

10 (2) Vice Chairperson:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 **Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited**

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

32 The House fully supports the protection and safeguarding of the rights and opportunities
33 of all people to seek, obtain and hold employment without being subjected to sexual harassment of
34 any kind in the workplace. The House recognizes that sexual harassment has a serious detrimental

1 effect on victims of sexually harassing behavior.

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

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

12 (c) Any member of the House who believes that he or she has been the subject of sexual
13 harassment while engaging in the business of the House should report the alleged act as soon as
14 possible to the Office of Compliance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 (a) Authorization to hold Remote Committee Meetings due to an Emergency--
7 Requirements.

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

10 (ii) If the Speaker approves the Chair's request, the legislative committee shall be permitted
11 to conduct remote meetings in order to transact public business. Members and witnesses may
12 participate in a remote meeting through the use of any means of communication; provided that both
13 of the following shall occur:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 When the Speaker issues a public notice pursuant to this rule, the Speaker may allow
3 members to vote on certain matters before the House by limited-directed proxy (hereinafter
4 “proxy”) in accordance with the following procedure:

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

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

11 (iii) The Speaker, if he or she so approves of a member’s proxy request, shall direct the
12 requesting member’s respective majority leader or minority leader to vote for the absent member.
13 If the majority leader or the minority leader is unable to attend session, he or she shall designate
14 another member to execute proxy votes in accordance with this section.

15 (iv) A member authorized by the Speaker to vote by proxy shall prepare and submit written
16 voting instructions prior to each applicable floor session. The instructions shall identify the
17 particular daily calendar item(s) on which the member will be voting by proxy, and shall clearly
18 state how the member wishes to have the member’s vote recorded for each calendar item(s). For
19 each calendar item, a member shall indicate one of the following: a vote in favor of the calendar
20 item or a vote against the calendar item. A member shall also clearly indicate how the member
21 wishes to vote on any consent calendar, if applicable. The Speaker, in his or her discretion, may
22 provide a form to facilitate the proxy process in accordance with this rule.

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

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

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

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

34 (ix) For the purposes of this rule, submission of written requests to vote by proxy and

1 written proxy instructions may include electronic delivery by email.

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

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

8 (48) Discipline of a Member

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

12 (b) The Speaker shall refer the resolution to the committee on conduct, or any other
13 standing committee, for hearing and review. The committee shall investigate the matter and shall
14 have the right to compel witnesses and produce documents by subpoena prepared by the committee
15 and approved and signed by the Speaker. All testimony in the committee shall be under oath and
16 preserved by stenographic record which shall be transcribed upon the order of the chair.

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

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

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

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

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

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