

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 2021

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Order (filed by Mr. Galvin of Canton) relative to the adoption of permanent Joint Rules for the 191st General Court governing the 2019-2020 legislative sessions (House, No. 2020). January 28, 2019

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



*House of Representatives, January 28, 2019.*

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
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1           *Ordered*, the joint rules of the Senate and House of Representatives for the 191st General  
2 Court for the 2019-2020 legislative sessions be adopted, as follows:

3   **Committees.**

4   Joint Rule 1. Joint standing committees shall be appointed at the beginning of the biennial  
5 session as follows:-

6   A committee on Children, Families and Persons With Disabilities;

7   A committee on Community Development and Small Businesses;

8   A committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure;

9   A committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies;

- 10 A committee on Education;
- 11 A committee on Elder Affairs;
- 12 A committee on Election Laws;
- 13 A committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture;
- 14 A committee on Export Development;
- 15 A committee on Financial Services;
- 16 A committee on Health Care Financing;
- 17 A committee on Higher Education;
- 18 A committee on Housing;
- 19 A committee on the Judiciary;
- 20 A committee on Labor and Workforce Development;
- 21 A committee on Marijuana Policy;
- 22 A committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery;
- 23 A committee on Municipalities and Regional Government;
- 24 A committee on Public Health;
- 25 A committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security;
- 26 A committee on Public Service;

27 A committee on Revenue;

28 A committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight;

29 A committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy;

30 A committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development;

31 A committee on Transportation; and

32 A committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs.

33 Each to consist of 6 members of the Senate, and 11 on the part of the House except the  
34 committees on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, Public Safety and  
35 Homeland Security, Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery, Health Care Financing and  
36 Transportation which shall consist of 7 members of the Senate and 13 of the House.

37 Within 4 weeks of the appointment of joint standing committees in the first annual session of the  
38 General Court, each joint standing committee shall adopt rules of procedure regarding its  
39 conduct. Said rules of procedure, together with any amendments, shall be filed with the Clerk of  
40 the Senate and the Clerk of the House and shall be available to the public and members of the  
41 General Court on the official website for the General Court.

42 Except as provided by Joint Rule 1E, each matter shall be referred only to 1 joint committee for  
43 consideration and all reports of matters by joint committees shall be made to the House or the  
44 Senate, under Joint Rule 4, not to another joint committee. The committee to which a matter is  
45 initially referred may discharge the matter to another committee with jurisdiction over the matter.

46 Matters referred by either the Senate or the House to its committee on Ways and Means shall be  
47 considered by the respective committees of the 2 branches, acting as a joint committee, when, in  
48 the judgment of the chairs of the respective committees of the 2 branches, the interests of  
49 legislation or the expedition of business will be better served by such joint consideration. Matters  
50 may also be referred to the committees on Ways and Means, of the 2 branches, as a joint  
51 committee.

52 The committees on Rules, together with the presiding officers of the 2 branches, acting  
53 concurrently, may consider and suggest such measures as shall, in their judgment, tend to  
54 facilitate the business of the session and a majority vote of the 2 branches shall be required to  
55 approve such recommendations.

56 In order to assist the House and the Senate in their: (1) consideration and enactment of new  
57 legislation and modifications of existing laws, when either are deemed to be appropriate; (2)  
58 evaluation of the effectiveness and administration of laws and programs previously enacted; and  
59 (3) appraisal of the conditions and circumstances which may indicate the desirability of enacting  
60 new legislation, the various joint committees shall have the following oversight responsibilities:

61 (i) each joint committee shall review and study, on a continuing basis, the implementation,  
62 administration, execution and effectiveness of those laws, or parts of law, the subject matter of  
63 which is within the jurisdiction of that committee, the administrative regulations adopted to  
64 implement those laws, and those state agencies or entities having responsibilities for the  
65 administration and execution of such laws;

66 (ii) in carrying out these review and study activities, each committee shall determine whether  
67 such laws, administrative regulations and programs under those laws are being implemented in

68 accordance with the intent of the General Court and whether such laws, administrative  
69 regulations and programs should be continued, curtailed or eliminated;

70 (iii) each committee shall also review and study any conditions and circumstances which may  
71 indicate the necessity or desirability of enacting new legislation within the jurisdiction of that  
72 committee, regardless of whether any matter has been introduced on that subject, and shall, on a  
73 continuing basis, undertake research on matters within the jurisdiction of that committee.

74 Committees shall coordinate oversight activities, under the direction of the presiding officers of  
75 both branches, to achieve the maximum objectives of clauses (i), (ii) and (iii).

76 Each committee may, upon completion of its oversight hearings, report to the General Court the  
77 results of its findings and recommendations together with accompanying corrective legislation, if  
78 any, by filing the same with the Clerk of the House of Representatives or the Clerk of the Senate.

79 Copies of such reports shall be, whenever practicable, made available to all members  
80 electronically and to the public via the Internet. The disposition of said reports shall be  
81 determined by the Clerks with the approval of the Speaker and the President.

82 The Senate and House chairs of a joint committee may appoint subcommittees to investigate and  
83 study any matter referred to said subcommittee. Any subcommittee so established shall be co-  
84 chaired by a majority member of the Senate and a majority member of the House who are  
85 members of the joint standing committee appointing the subcommittee. The composition of the  
86 subcommittee shall be proportional to the composition of the appointing joint committee;  
87 provided, however, that not less than 10 per cent of the subcommittee's members shall be from  
88 the minority party. Chairs of subcommittees shall not be considered chairs under section 9B of  
89 chapter 3 of the General Laws. A subcommittee may, upon completion of an investigation and

90 study, report the results of the investigation and study together with legislation, if any, by filing  
91 the same with the Senate and House chairs of the appointing joint committee.

92 Temporary employees of the general court assigned to a joint committee who are students at an  
93 accredited education institution or employees or grantees of other non-profit organizations under  
94 section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code may receive compensation from such  
95 organization, according to that organization's regular program of providing such compensation  
96 for temporary governmental or public service employment. A temporary employee's Senate or  
97 House supervisor shall establish the employee's total compensation, shall verify that the sum of  
98 the employee's state compensation, if any, and that any outside compensation the employee is to  
99 receive under this rule would not exceed this total compensation, and shall file the written terms  
100 of the employee's compensation with the Senate or House Human Resources Office, where it  
101 shall be available for public inspection. The temporary employee shall sign a confidentiality and  
102 ethics agreement provided by the Senate Personnel Office or House Human Resources Office.

103 The Senate and House Offices of Human Resources shall publish an employee handbook for  
104 joint employees of both branches of the general court. The handbook shall be developed with  
105 the advice and approval of both the Counsel to the Senate and the Counsel to the House. Joint  
106 employees may access the human resources related services and programs of either branch of the  
107 general court. Joint employees shall complete any training required by either branch of the  
108 general court, as may be agreed upon by the Senate and House Offices of Human Resources.

109 [Amended Jan. 6, 18 82; Jan. 5, 18 83; Jan. 7, 18 84; Jan. 8 and 26, 1885; Jan. 8, 18 86; Jan. 12,  
110 18 87; Jan. 9, 18 88; Jan. 28, 18 89; Jan. 8, 18 90; Feb. 2, 18 91; Jan. 11 and Feb. 10, 18 92; Feb.  
111 7, 18 93; Jan. 8. 1894; Jan. 7, 18 95; Jan. 7, 18 96; Jan. 11, 18 97; Jan. 10, 18 98; Jan. 9, 18 99;

112 Jan. 22 and 29, 1901; Jan. 6, 19 02; Jan. 9, 19 03; Jan. 8, 19 04; Jan. 6, 19 05; Jan. 4, 19 07; Jan.  
113 5, 19 10; Jan. 4, 19 11; Jan. 1, 19 13; Jan. 12, 19 14; Jan. 2, 19 18; Jan. 1 and 8 and Feb. 21,  
114 1919; Jan. 7, 19 20; Jan. 5, 19 21; April 17 and 30, 1925; Jan. 5, 19 27; Jan. 7, 19 31; Jan. 6, 19  
115 37; Jan. 4, 19 39; Jan. 1, 19 41; Jan. 3, 19 45; Jan. 2, 19 46; Jan. 6, 19 47; Feb. 1, 19 49; Jan. 7,  
116 19 53; Jan. 7, 19 59; Jan. 30, 19 61; Jan. 7, 19 63; Jan. 12, 19 65; Feb. 24, 19 65; Mar. 10, 19 66;  
117 Jan. 30, 19 67; Jan. 7, 1971 ; July 23, 1974 ; Sept. 30 and Oct. 12, 1976 ; Nov. 3, 1981 ; Dec. 21,  
118 1981 ; Mar. 15, 1982 ; Oct. 3, 1983 ; June 3, 1985 ; Jan. 25 and Mar. 14, 1988 ; Mar. 27, 1995 ,  
119 June 12, 1995 ; July 17, 2003 ; Jan. 26, 2005; July 21 and September 20, 2005; Feb. 20, 2007;  
120 Feb 12, 2009; Feb. 15, 2017.]

121 Joint Rule 1A. All meetings of joint committees acting concurrently, Senate and House standing  
122 committees, special committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, and joint special  
123 committees and committees of conference on the disagreeing votes of the 2 branches shall be  
124 open to the public, unless a majority shall vote otherwise. [Adopted July 17, 1973. Amended  
125 July 18, 1974; Feb. 12, 2009.]

126 Joint Rule 1B. A joint standing committee shall hold a public hearing on each matter referred to  
127 it in each legislative session. [Adopted June 3, 1985; Amended Feb. 12, 2009.]

128 Joint Rule 1C. All joint standing committees shall schedule committee hearings and executive  
129 sessions so as not to conflict, to the extent feasible, with the schedules of other committees and,  
130 to the extent feasible, the day of the week and times during that day set aside for formal sessions  
131 by the respective branches from the first Wednesday in January through the fourth Wednesday of  
132 April in the first annual session. [Adopted June 3, 1985; Amended June 12, 1995.]

133 Joint Rule 1D. All meetings of joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the  
134 Senate and House of Representatives, shall be open to the public, and any person shall be  
135 permitted to attend any such meeting unless such committee convenes in executive session, as  
136 provided herein. All joint standing committees shall determine a schedule for committee  
137 hearings to be held from the beginning of the first annual session through the fourth Wednesday  
138 in June in said session. These committee schedules shall be submitted to the Clerk of the House  
139 who shall cause them to be published on the official website for the General Court.

140 Establishment of such schedules shall not preclude joint standing committees from scheduling  
141 additional hearings or meetings as needed. No executive session shall be held except upon  
142 extraordinary circumstances and only after the committee has first convened in an open session  
143 for which notice has been given, the presiding officer has stated the purpose of the executive  
144 session, a majority of the committee members present has voted to go into executive session, the  
145 vote of each member has been recorded on a roll call vote, and the presiding officer has stated  
146 before the executive session if the committee will reconvene after the executive session. The  
147 records of all such roll calls shall be kept in the offices of the committee for the duration of the  
148 General Court during which said vote was recorded, and shall be available for public inspection  
149 upon reasonable notice and during regular office hours.

150 All joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of  
151 Representatives, shall notify the Sergeant-at-Arms of the time, place and agenda of all public  
152 hearings and executive sessions not less than 48 hours prior to the time of such meetings. The  
153 Sergeant-at-Arms shall notify the clerk, who shall inform all members electronically and publish  
154 such information on the official website of the General Court whenever practicable.



155 Nothing contained in this rule shall prohibit a joint standing committee or special joint  
156 committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives from taking appropriate action  
157 including, but not limited to, the exclusion of a person from a committee meeting in order to  
158 prevent the disruption of or interference with committee proceedings. All meetings of joint  
159 standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of Representatives,  
160 shall be limited to no more than 50 bills to be discussed in a hearing, unless it can be determined  
161 that all of the bills being considered are of the same subject matter.

162 The 48 hour requirement shall be suspended in an emergency only after all reasonable efforts  
163 have been made to contact all committee members and upon a recorded vote of at least a  
164 majority of the members of each branch appointed to the committee, but not less than two-thirds  
165 of the members of each branch voting.

166 A meeting of a committee may be recorded by a person in attendance by means of a recorder or  
167 any other means of audio/visual reproduction except when a meeting is held in executive session;  
168 provided, that a person seeking to record a meeting of a committee notifies the Chairs of the  
169 committee prior to commencing such recording; and provided further that during such recording  
170 there is no interference with the conduct of the meeting.

171 The Chairs of each committee shall preserve decorum and order during each committee hearing.  
172 Persons attending hearings shall be required to refrain from the use of cellular telephones,  
173 beepers and pagers. The use of visual aids including, without limitation, posters, displays, or  
174 charts shall be permitted only upon approval of the Chairs. [Adopted June 3, 1985. Amended  
175 June 12, 1995; Feb. 20, 2007; Mar. 14, 2013.]

176 Joint Rule 1E. The joint standing committee on Health Care Financing shall review all  
177 legislation relating to health care to evaluate the appropriateness and fiscal effect of such  
178 legislation. A matter within the jurisdiction of said committee may, if appropriate, initially be  
179 referred to another joint standing committee sharing jurisdiction of the subject-matter. Any  
180 matter reported favorably by such joint standing committee shall be referred to the joint  
181 committee on Health Care Financing; provided, however, that notwithstanding any rule to the  
182 contrary, any such matter so reported shall not be read a first time in the branch in which the  
183 report was received. The next favorable report on any such matter, if made by a joint committee,  
184 may be made to either branch. Such next favorable report shall be considered the first reading.  
185 The branch of origin for any such bill so reported shall be the branch receiving such favorable  
186 report.

187 For all matters initially referred to the joint committee on Health Care Financing and not  
188 previously referred to another joint committee, the joint committee on Health Care Financing  
189 may make favorable reports to either branch, at the discretion of the committee, except that  
190 reports on money bills shall be made to the House.

191 In compliance with section 38A of chapter 3 of the General Laws, the joint committee on Health  
192 Care Financing when reporting on bills shall include a fiscal note prepared under section 3A of  
193 chapter 29 of the General Laws, showing the estimated cost or the fiscal effect of the proposed  
194 legislation, if, in the opinion of said committee, such cost or fiscal effect exceeds the sum of  
195 \$100,000; provided, however, that any matter reported by the committee on Health Care  
196 Financing with a fiscal effect of less than \$100,000 shall not be referred, under the rules, to the  
197 committee on Ways and Means.[Adopted Jan. 26, 2005; Amended May 19, 2005; Feb. 20, 2007;  
198 Feb. 12, 2009.]

199 Joint Rule 1F. [Omitted February 12, 2009].

200 Joint Rule 1G. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
201 Minority Leader of the Senate, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Senate and  
202 House chairs and the Senate and House ranking minority members of the joint committee on  
203 Public Safety and Homeland Security may receive security clearance from federal and state  
204 homeland security officials in order to be granted access to confidential homeland security  
205 briefings, information and materials. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
206 Representatives, the Senate and House committee chairs and the Senate and House ranking  
207 minority members may designate 1 or more members of their staff who may receive such  
208 security clearance.

209 Any person who receives security clearance under this rule shall sign all confidentiality  
210 agreements required by homeland security officials. The breach of any such confidentiality  
211 agreement shall constitute a violation of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of  
212 Representatives. Any alleged violation of a confidentiality agreement shall be referred for  
213 investigation to the Senate committee on Ethics and Rules or the House committee on Ethics,  
214 respectively, and, if appropriate, to law enforcement authorities for potential criminal  
215 prosecution. [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005; Amended Feb. 12, 2009.]

216 Joint Rule 2. No member of either branch shall act as counsel for any party before any committee  
217 of the Legislature.

218 Joint Rule 2A. No member of either branch shall purchase, directly or indirectly, the stock or  
219 other securities of any corporation or association knowing that there is pending before the  
220 General Court any measure specially granting to such corporation or association any immunity,

221 exemption, privilege or benefit or any measure providing for the creation of, or directly affecting  
222 any, contractual relations between such corporation or association and the Commonwealth. This  
223 rule shall not apply to the purchase of securities issued by the Commonwealth or any political  
224 subdivision of the Commonwealth. [See G.L. chapter 268, section 10.] [Adopted Jan. 16, 1922.]

225 Joint Rule 3. When the General Court is in session, authorization for any committee of the  
226 Senate or House of Representatives to travel during the session of the General Court shall be  
227 approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members of its branch present and voting. When the  
228 General Court is in session, authorization for any committee of the Senate or House of  
229 Representatives to sit and travel during the recess of the General Court shall be approved by a  
230 vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting. During the recess of the  
231 General Court, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives may,  
232 by written consent, allow standing committees of their respective branches or appoint special  
233 committees to sit, travel and incur expenses not exceeding sums authorized in writing by said  
234 presiding officers and appropriated for such purposes. When the General Court is in session,  
235 authorization for any joint committee to travel during the session, or to sit or travel during the  
236 recess, of the General Court shall be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members of each  
237 branch present and voting. During the recess of the General Court, the President of the Senate  
238 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, acting jointly, may, by written consent, allow  
239 joint committees or appoint joint special committees to sit, travel and incur expenses not  
240 exceeding sums authorized in writing by said presiding officers and appropriated for such  
241 purposes. The Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives shall be notified of any  
242 appointments made and authorizations granted during the recess for said committees to sit, travel  
243 and incur expenses during the recess and the Clerks shall enter such information in the journals

244 for the next year, as soon as may be practicable. Committees authorized by the presiding officers  
245 to sit during the recess in the odd numbered year shall report not later than the fourth Wednesday  
246 of January during the following year and committees authorized by the presiding officers to sit  
247 during the recess in the even numbered year shall report not later than the fourth Wednesday of  
248 December during the same year.

249 No committee shall travel except at the expense of the Commonwealth. In any case when a  
250 committee is authorized to travel, the Sergeant-at-Arms shall provide transportation only for  
251 members of the committee and the officer accompanying them, and the reasonable traveling  
252 expenses of such members and officers only shall be charged to or paid by the Commonwealth.  
253 Neither the Sergeant-at-Arms nor the officer detailed by the Sergeant-at-Arms shall permit any  
254 person to accompany such committee while in the discharge of its official duties unless invited  
255 by vote of the committee.

256 All bills for the traveling expenses of committees shall be submitted by the Sergeant-at-Arms to  
257 the committee by whom they have been incurred and shall be approved by a majority of said  
258 committee before being presented to the Comptroller for payment. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890;  
259 Amended Feb. 2, 1891 ; Jan. 20, 1904 ; April 17, 1925 ; March 2, 1943 ; July 27, 1950 ; Oct. 18,  
260 1971 ; March 28, 1972 ; Jan. 15, 1973; Feb. 12, 2009.]

261 Joint Rule 3A. A joint standing committee may, upon the written and signed report of two-thirds  
262 of the members of the Senate and two-thirds of the members of the House appointed to said  
263 committee, report a bill or other form of legislation without said legislation being founded upon  
264 petition; provided, however, that matters so reported shall be germane to the subject matters  
265 regularly referred to the committee. The committee shall hold a public hearing on such bill or

266 other form of legislation before it is reported. A bill or other form of legislation so reported shall  
267 be placed in the Orders of the Day by the Clerk of the respective branch to which it is reported or  
268 referred to a standing committee of said branch under the rules. All reports of committees not  
269 founded upon petition shall bear the designation ‘committee bill’, ‘resolve’, ‘order’ or  
270 ‘resolution’, as the case may be, in the Orders of the Day. Committees to which messages from  
271 the Governor, reports of state officers, boards, committees, commissions and others authorized to  
272 report to the General Court, may report by bill or otherwise such legislation as may be germane  
273 to the subject matter referred to them. [Adopted June 3, 1985 .]

274 Joint Rule 4. Favorable reports, and adverse reports on subjects of legislation other than  
275 petitions, by joint committees shall be made to the branch in which the matter was originally  
276 introduced, unless the committee decides otherwise under its own rules and, except that reports  
277 on money bills shall be made to the House and if adverse reports on matters other than petitions  
278 which are accompanied by money bills are accepted by the House, this shall constitute final  
279 rejection. Adverse reports by joint committees on petitions shall be made to the branch in which  
280 the petition was originally introduced, except that such adverse reports on petitions accompanied  
281 by proposed money bills shall be made to the House; and, if accepted by the branch in which  
282 they are made, shall be considered as a final rejection. When a report is made from any  
283 committee to either branch, and the subject-matter of the report is subsequently referred to a joint  
284 committee, such committee, except for the committee on Health Care Financing, shall report its  
285 action to the branch in which the reference originated. [See also Joint Rule 5.]

286 A vote of a joint standing committee to give legislation a favorable or adverse report shall be  
287 conducted by a roll call upon request of 2 committee members present at the committee meeting.  
288 Such votes shall be recorded on appropriate forms that show all votes for and against the

289 particular committee action. The records of all such roll calls shall be kept in the offices of the  
290 committee for the duration of the General Court during which said vote was recorded, and shall  
291 be available for public inspection upon reasonable notice and during regular office hours.

292 All committee members shall have an opportunity to sign a form accompanying a report of the  
293 committee signifying approval of, dissent or abstention from a report of a joint standing  
294 committee before the report is final or filed. No signature shall be valid unless the report to  
295 which the signature is affixed includes the substantially complete text of the legislation being  
296 reported. [Amended Jan. 3, 1952; April 8, 1959; June 7, 1965; Jan. 7, 1971; March 11, 1974;  
297 June 3, 1985; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 15, 2017.]

298 Joint Rule 4A. In compliance with section 38A of chapter 3 of the General Laws, all joint  
299 committees of the General Court when reporting on bills referred to them shall include a fiscal  
300 note prepared under section 3A of chapter 29 of the General Laws, showing the estimated cost or  
301 the fiscal effect of the proposed legislation, if, in the opinion of said committee, such cost  
302 exceeds \$100,000. Such fiscal note shall be filed electronically in the office of the clerk to which  
303 the report is being made, and shall be promptly made available on the official website of the  
304 General Court. [Adopted Jan. 15, 1973.]

305 Joint Rule 5. Matters reported adversely by joint committees and the committees on Rules of the  
306 two branches, acting concurrently, may be recommitted to the same committees at the pleasure  
307 of the branch acting on the report, and bills or resolves may be recommitted in either branch. If a  
308 bill or resolve is laid aside in either branch for the reason that it is declared to be broader in its  
309 scope than the subject-matter upon which it is based, the subject-matter shall be recommitted to  
310 the committee. A concurrent vote shall, however, be necessary for re-committal, with

311 instructions. After recommitment, report shall, in all cases, be made to the branch originating the  
312 recommitment. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; April 11, 1935; Jan. 6, 1947; May 7, 19 53; March 26,  
313 1963; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; March 11, 1974.]

314 Joint Rule 6. Bills and resolves reported by joint committees shall be presented with spaces  
315 between the several sections and shall be made available to all members electronically and to the  
316 public via the Internet. [Amended Jan. 28, 1889; Jan. 9, 1941; Feb. 8, 1949; Feb. 12, 2009.]

317 **Joint Petitions.**

318 Joint Rule6A. A member of the Senate and a member of the House of Representatives may file a  
319 joint petition in either branch and shall endorse their name on the petition and a brief statement  
320 of the nature and object of the instrument and the reading of the instrument shall be dispensed  
321 with, unless specially ordered. The petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of either the  
322 Senate or House of Representatives, depending on whether it is a ‘Joint Senate/House Petition’  
323 or a ‘Joint House/Senate Petition’ but the Journal records in the Senate and House of  
324 Representatives shall carry both members’ names as presenters of the petition. [Adopted Jan. 15,  
325 1973.]

326 Joint Rule 7. Whenever, upon any application for an act of incorporation or other legislation, the  
327 purpose for which such legislation is sought can be secured without detriment to the public  
328 interests by a general law or under existing laws, the committee to which the matter is referred  
329 shall report such general law, or ‘ought not to pass’. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan.  
330 7, 1971.]

331 Joint Rule 7A. A petition for legislation to authorize a county to reinstate in its service a person  
332 formerly employed by it, or to retire or pension or grant an annuity to any person, or to increase



333 any retirement allowance, pension or annuity, or to pay any sum of money in the nature of a  
334 pension or retirement allowance, or to pay any salary which would have accrued to a deceased  
335 official or employee but for their death, or to pay any claim for damages or otherwise, or to alter  
336 the benefits or change the restrictions of any county retirement or pension law, shall,  
337 subsequently to the procedure required by Senate Rule No. 20 and by House Rule No. 24, be  
338 reported adversely, unless, when filed it be the petition of, or be approved by, a majority of the  
339 county commissioners. [Adopted April 29, 1915. Amended Jan. 13, Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920;  
340 May 24, 1926; April 11, 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Feb. 20, 1951; Jan.  
341 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; Jan. 15, 1973.]

342 Joint Rule 7B. A petition, the operation of which is restricted to a particular city or town (and  
343 which does not affect the powers, duties, etc., of state departments, boards, commissions, etc., or  
344 which does not affect generally the laws of the Commonwealth) and which is not filed in  
345 conformity with Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution shall,  
346 subsequent to the procedure required by Senate Rule 20 and House Rule 24, be reported  
347 adversely, unless it be on petition filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor  
348 and city council, or other legislative body, of a city, or the town meeting of a town. A joint  
349 committee to which is inadvertently referred a petition or other subject of legislation the  
350 operation of which is restricted to a particular city or town and which is not in conformity with  
351 Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution shall report a general law  
352 which applies alike to all cities, or to all towns, or to all cities and towns, or to a class of not  
353 fewer than 2; or shall report 'ought not to pass', with the further endorsement that it 'would be  
354 unconstitutional to enact such special law'.

355 Any petition that subsequently conforms to Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to  
356 the Constitution after filing, which have followed the procedures set forth in Senate Rule 20 or  
357 House Rule 24, shall be forthwith reported from the committee on Rules and be referred by the  
358 Clerk to an appropriate committee.[Adopted Jan. 13, 1920. Amended Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920;  
359 May 24, 1926; April 11, 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 9, 1941; Jan. 15, 1945; Feb.  
360 20, 1951; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7 and Mar. 22, 1971 ; Jan. 15, 1973; March 14, 2013.]

361 Joint Rule 7C. The approval vote required to file a petition, the operation of which is restricted to  
362 a particular city or town under Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the  
363 Constitution of the Commonwealth, shall not expire prior to the final day of the next immediate  
364 biennial session in which the petition was filed and no additional vote shall be required to file a  
365 petition unless a vote to rescind such approval is passed by the voters of a city or town, or the  
366 mayor and city council or other legislative body of a city, or the board of selectmen and the town  
367 meeting or other legislative body of the town. [Adopted, Mar. 14, 2013; Amended Feb. 15,  
368 2017.]

369 Joint Rule 7D. The approval of a substantive amendment to a petition restricted to a single city or  
370 town and requiring a vote of the city of town before enactment of the petition shall be provided  
371 to the General Court before the enactment of the petition and shall be reviewed by House  
372 Counsel and Senate Counsel prior to the enactment of the petition in either branch. [Adopted ,  
373 Feb. 15, 2017.]

374 **Notice to Parties Interested.**

375 Joint Rule 8. No legislation affecting the rights of individuals or the rights of a private or  
376 municipal corporation, otherwise than as it affects generally the people of the Commonwealth or

377 the people of the city or town to which it specifically applies, shall be proposed or introduced  
378 except by a petition, nor shall any bill or resolve embodying such legislation be reported by a  
379 committee except upon a petition duly referred, nor shall such a bill or resolve be reported by a  
380 committee, whether on an original reference or on a re-committal with instructions to hear the  
381 parties, until it is made to appear to the satisfaction of the committee that proper notice of the  
382 proposed legislation has been given by public advertisement or otherwise to all parties interested,  
383 without expense to the Commonwealth, or until evidence satisfactory to the committee is  
384 produced that all parties interested have in writing waived notice. A committee reporting  
385 adversely due to lack proper notice or of a waiver of proper notice shall so state in its report and  
386 no bill or resolve shall be in order as a substitute for, or amendment of, such report. Objection to  
387 the violation of this rule may be taken at any stage prior to that of the third reading. [Adopted  
388 Feb. 7, 1890. Amended Dec. 22, 1920 ; Jan. 12, 1939 ; Jan. 15, 1945; Jan. 7, 1971.]

389 Joint Rule 9. A petition for the incorporation of a city or town, for the annexation of 1  
390 municipality to another, for the consolidation of 2 or more municipalities or for the division of an  
391 existing municipality, or for the incorporation or revival of a railroad, street railway, elevated  
392 railroad, canal, telephone, telegraph, water, gas, electric light, power or other public service  
393 corporation, for the amendment, alteration or extension of the charter or corporate powers or  
394 privileges, or for the change of name, of any such company, whether specially incorporated or  
395 organized under the General Laws, or for authority to take water for a water supply, or relative to  
396 building structures in or over navigable or tide waters, shall be placed on file, and not referred to  
397 a committee , unless the petitioner has given the notice and followed the procedure required by  
398 section 5 of chapter 3 of the General Laws . But if, no objection being raised, any such petition is  
399 referred to a committee without such required notice or procedure, the committee shall forthwith

400 report adversely, setting forth as the reason for such report failure to comply with the law, unless  
401 evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that all parties interested have in writing  
402 waived notice. In case a bill or resolve is reported upon such a petition, after proof of such  
403 waiver of notice, this fact shall be set forth in the report of the committee. When an adverse  
404 report is made by a committee, on account of failure to give the required notice, no bill or resolve  
405 shall be substituted for such report, nor shall such report be recommitted or referred to another  
406 committee.

407 A petition for the establishment or revival, or for the amendment, alteration or extension of the  
408 charter or corporate powers or privileges, or for the change of name, of any corporation, except a  
409 petition subject to the preceding paragraph, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the branch in  
410 which it is filed to the office of the State Secretary. If such a petition is returned by said  
411 Secretary with a statement that the petitioner has failed to comply with the requirements of  
412 section 7 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, said petition shall be placed on file, and shall not be  
413 referred to a committee.

414 Any petition placed on file for want of proper notice or procedure under this rule shall not affect  
415 action upon any other measure involving the same subject matter. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890.

416 Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 3, 1898; Jan. 16, 1903; Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; May 24, 1926;  
417 Feb. 27, 1929; April 11, 1935; Jan. 6, 1938; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 9, 1941; Jan. 15, 1945; April 8,  
418 1959; Jan. 7, 1963; Jan. 7, 1971 ; Jan. 15, 1973 , June 12, 1995; Feb. 12, 2009.]

419 Limit of Time allowed for Reports of Committees.

420 Joint Rule 10. All joint committees and the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting  
421 concurrently, shall make final report not later than the first Wednesday in February of the second

422 annual session of the General Court on all matters referred to them before the first day of the  
423 second annual session and within 30 days on all matters referred to them on and after the first  
424 day of the second annual session of the General Court except that the committee on Health Care  
425 Financing shall make final report not later than the last Wednesday of March of the second  
426 annual session on all matters referred to them on or before the fourth Wednesday of February  
427 and within 30 days on all matters referred to it after the fourth Wednesday in February of the  
428 second annual session of the General Court. When the time within which said committees are  
429 required to report has expired, all matters upon which no report has then been made shall  
430 forthwith be reported by the chair of the committee on the part of the branch in which they were  
431 respectively introduced, with an adverse recommendation under this rule. If the chair fails to  
432 make such report by the end of the legislative day next following the expiration date, all matters  
433 remaining unreported shall be placed in the Orders of the Day by the Clerk of the branch in  
434 which the matter was originally filed with an adverse report under this rule. Matters which have  
435 been referred under Joint Rule 29, upon which the chairs of the committees on Rules fail to make  
436 a report, shall be placed by the respective Clerks in the Orders of the Day of the branch in which  
437 the subject matter was referred to said committees. Committees to whom are referred subjects of  
438 legislation may combine petitions of similar subject matter, or other forms of legislation of  
439 similar subject matter, into 1 adverse report, and the report on the petition shall be that said  
440 petitions or other forms of legislation ‘ought NOT to pass,’ and if the report is accepted, all the  
441 matters contained in the report shall be disposed of. However, petitions upon which an adverse  
442 report is accepted in only 1 branch may not be combined with other subjects of legislation upon  
443 which adverse reports must be accepted, in concurrence. This rule shall not apply to petitions  
444 referred to the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, under the second

445 paragraph of Joint Rule 12. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended, except by a  
446 concurrent vote of four-fifths of the members of each branch present and voting thereon.  
447 Notwithstanding Joint Rule 30, this rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended more than  
448 3 times except by unanimous consent. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Jan. 25, 1894; Jan. 16, 1903; Jan.  
449 20, 1904; Dec. 22, 1920; April 17, 1925; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Jan. 6, 1947; May 7, 1953;  
450 Jan. 27, 1955; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; Feb. 4, 1974, June 12, 1995; July 17, 2003; Feb. 20,  
451 2007; Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 15, 2017.]

452 Joint Rule 10A. The form for all subjects of legislation receiving a favorable report shall be  
453 ‘ought to pass.’ The form for all subjects of legislation receiving an adverse report shall be  
454 ‘ought NOT to pass.’ A committee to whom is referred any other matter may report  
455 recommending that the same be placed on file. [Adopted Jan. 7, 1971.]

#### 456 **Committees of Conference.**

457 Joint Rule 11. Committees of conference shall consist of 3 members on the part of each branch,  
458 one member of each branch being a member of the minority party representing its vote; and their  
459 report, if agreed to by a majority of each committee, shall be made to the branch asking for the  
460 conference, and may be either accepted or rejected, but no other action shall be had, except  
461 through a new committee of conference.

462 No committee on conference shall be appointed after July 17 of the second annual session of the  
463 General Court; provided, however, that inaction of either branch in taking action on concurring  
464 in the appointment of committee of conference of the other branch shall result in the branch  
465 refusing to take action forfeiting its previous vote and concurring in the action of the other

466 branch; and the measure shall be endorsed accordingly and forwarded to the Engrossing Division  
467 to be prepared for final passage.

468 Committees of conference to whom are referred matters of difference in respect to bills or  
469 resolves, shall, after filing their reports, but before consideration by either branch, have the same  
470 approved or discharged by each committee on Bills in the Third Reading [Amended April 22,  
471 1937; Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3, 2011; Feb. 15, 2017.]

472 Joint Rule 11A. Committees of conference to whom are referred matters of difference in respect  
473 to appropriation bills, including capital outlay programs, shall, after filing their reports but before  
474 consideration by either branch have the same approved or discharged by each committee on Bills  
475 in the Third Reading.

476 Upon the appointment of a committee of conference to whom matters of difference in respect to  
477 any appropriation bill or in respect to any bill providing for capital outlay programs and projects  
478 are referred, the clerk of the branch requesting said committee of conference shall make  
479 available to members of the General Court a list of the matters in disagreement identified by item  
480 number and item purpose and showing the amount made available by each branch of the General  
481 Court, and any other matters in disagreement and the position of each of the said branches.

482 The report of said committee of conference shall consist of the matters of difference so referred  
483 and so identified, showing the amounts appropriated by each of the said branches and other  
484 matters in disagreement and the position of each branch with respect to those matters, and shall  
485 state said committee's recommendations with respect to the matters so referred. Matters on which  
486 there exists no disagreement between the branches shall not be disturbed by the committee on  
487 conference.

488 The committees on ways and means of each branch of the General Court shall assist such  
489 committee of conference in any and all matters necessary to the preparation and completion of its  
490 report. [Adopted July 30, 1974; Amended Oct. 3, 1983; Feb. 3, 2011.]

491 Joint Rule 11B. No report from a committee of conference shall be considered or acted upon by  
492 either branch until the calendar day following the day on which said report shall have been  
493 available to the public and to the members of the General Court. The committee shall file its  
494 report no later than 8 p.m. on the day preceding its consideration and the General Court shall not  
495 consider said report before 1 p.m. on the following day, except that a report from such committee  
496 of conference that it is unable to agree may be considered and acted upon at the time that such  
497 report is filed. [Adopted Oct. 3, 1983. Amended July 17, 2003; July 21 and September 20, 2005;  
498 Feb. 3, 2011.]

499 Joint Rule 11C. Reports, other than those filed under Rule 11A, from a committee of conference  
500 shall, whenever practicable, be accompanied by a summary which shall be filed with the clerk.  
501 [Adopted Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3, 2011.]

502 Joint Rule 11D. Upon the filing of a report by a committee of conference the clerk of the branch  
503 in which the committee of conference filed its report shall make the report and the summary of  
504 the report available to all members electronically and to the public on the official website of the  
505 General Court by 9 p.m. on the day preceding its consideration. [Adopted Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3,  
506 2011.]

507 Joint Rule 11E. Subsequent to the filing of a report of a committee of conference, an addendum  
508 may be submitted to the clerk of the branch in which the report had been filed. The addendum  
509 shall indicate that it contains only matters inadvertently omitted from or included in the report,



510 and shall be signed by all of members of the House and Senate who had signed the conference  
511 committee report. The addendum shall be approved by both the Counsel to the House and the  
512 Counsel to the Senate. The addendum, having been approved by both the Counsel to the House  
513 and the Counsel to the Senate, shall be posted to the official website of the General Court  
514 immediately upon receipt by the clerk of the branch to which it was submitted. [Adopted Mar.  
515 14, 2013.]

516 **Limit of Time allowed for New Business.**

517 Joint Rule 12. Resolutions intended for adoption by both branches of the General Court,  
518 petitions, and all other subjects of legislation, shall be deposited with the Clerk of either branch  
519 prior to 5 p.m. on the third Friday in January of the first annual session of the General Court.

520 All such matters except messages from the Governor, reports required or authorized to be made  
521 to the General Court and petitions filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor  
522 and city council, or other legislative body of a city, or the town meeting of a town, for the  
523 enactment of a special law under Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the  
524 Constitution and which do not affect the powers, duties, etc., of state departments, boards,  
525 commissions, etc., or which do not affect generally the laws of the Commonwealth deposited  
526 with the respective clerks subsequent to 5 p.m. on the third Friday of January of the first annual  
527 session of the General Court shall be referred by the Clerks to the committees on the Rules of the  
528 two branches, acting concurrently. No such matter shall be admitted for consideration except on  
529 report of the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, and then upon  
530 approval of two-thirds of the members of each branch voting thereon. Matters upon which  
531 suspension of Joint Rule 12 has been negated shall be placed on file.

532 At any special session called under Rule 26A, however, matters relating to the facts constituting  
533 the necessity for convening such session shall, if otherwise admissible, be admitted as though  
534 filed seasonably under the first sentence of this rule. Any recommendations from the Governor  
535 shall be similarly considered. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended, except by  
536 a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting thereon.

537 [Amended Feb. 7, 18 90; Feb. 2, 18 91; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan. 10, 18 98; Jan. 9, 18 99; Feb. 15, 19  
538 01; May 4, 19 04; Jan. 31, 19 10; Feb. 2, 19 17; Dec. 22, 19 20; March 30, 19 21; Jan. 30, 19 23;  
539 Feb. 15, 19 33; Jan. 12 and Aug. 7, 19 39; Jan. 15, 19 45; Jan. 6, 19 47; May 27, 19 48; Jan. 30,  
540 19 67; March 26, 19 69; Jan. 7, 1971 ; Jan. 15 and Oct. 2, 1973 ; Oct 3, 1983 , June 12, 1995 ;  
541 Jan. 26, 2005; July 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; July 21, 2005; Sept. 20, 2005; Feb. 12, 2009.]

542 Joint Rule 12A. All formal business of the first annual session of the General Court shall be  
543 concluded not later than the third Wednesday in November of that calendar year and all formal  
544 business of the second annual session shall be concluded not later than the last day of July of that  
545 calendar year.

546 In order to assist the Senate and House in its analysis and appraisal of laws enacted by the  
547 General Court, each joint standing committee, upon conclusion of the formal business of the  
548 annual sessions, shall, as authorized by Joint Rule 1, initiate oversight hearings to evaluate the  
549 effectiveness, application and administration of the subject matter of laws within the jurisdiction  
550 of that committee. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

551 **Unfinished Business of the Session.**

552 Joint Rule 12B. Any matter pending before the General Court at the end of the first annual  
553 session and any special session held in the same year shall carry over into the second annual

554 session of the same General Court in the same legislative status as it was at the conclusion of the  
555 first annual session or any special session held during that year; provided, however, that any  
556 measure making or supplementing an appropriation for a fiscal year submitted to or returned to  
557 the General Court by the Governor, under Article LXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution,  
558 in the first annual session or in a special session held during that year shall cease to exist upon  
559 the termination of the first annual session. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

560 **Papers to be deposited with the Clerks.**

561 Joint Rule 13. Information intended for presentation to the General Court by any Representative  
562 or Senator shall be deposited with the Clerk of the branch to which the member belongs; and all  
563 such information, unless they be subject to other rules or of the rules of the Senate or House,  
564 shall be referred by the Clerk, with the approval of the President or Speaker, to appropriate  
565 committees, subject to such changes as the Senate or House may make. The reading of  
566 information so referred may be dispensed with, but they shall, except as provided in these rules,  
567 be entered in the Journal of the same on the next legislative day after such reference.

568 A member may include a brief statement of intent with all papers intended for presentation to the  
569 General Court. Upon a favorable report by a joint standing committee, a committee may include  
570 a brief written statement of intent. Said statement shall be dated and shall include the scope of  
571 the matter presented for consideration; provided, however, this rule shall not be construed to  
572 require the presentation of such statement of intent under this rule. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890.  
573 Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 7, 1893; Jan. 25, 1894; Dec. 22, 1920; May 25, 1923; Feb. 15,  
574 1933; Jan. 12, 1971; June 3, 1985; Feb. 12, 2009.]

575 **Dockets of Legislative Counsel and Agents.**

576 Joint Rule 14. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, may prescribe  
577 the manner and form of keeping the dockets of legislative agents which are required by law.  
578 [Adopted Feb. 2, 1891; Amended Feb. 19, 1920.]

579 **Duties of the Clerk.**

580 Joint Rule 15. If any part of the report of a committee over the signature of the chair or members  
581 of the committee is amended in either branch, the Clerk of that branch shall endorse upon the  
582 report such amendment.

583 Joint Rule 16. All papers, while on their passage between the 2 branches, may be under the  
584 signature of the respective Clerks, except as to the adopting of emergency preambles and the  
585 final passage of bills and resolves. Messages may be sent by such persons as each branch may  
586 direct. [Amended Feb. 21, 1919.]

587 Joint Rule 17. After bills and resolves have passed both branches to be engrossed, they shall be  
588 in the charge of the Clerks of the 2 branches, who shall prepare the same for final passage in the  
589 manner prescribed by law; and when so prepared the same shall be delivered to the Clerk of the  
590 House of Representatives; and when the bills have been passed to be enacted or the resolves have  
591 been passed in the House, they shall, in like manner, be delivered to the Senate Clerk and  
592 Parliamentarian. If a bill or resolve contains an emergency preamble, it shall be delivered in like  
593 manner, to the Senate after the preamble has been adopted by the House of Representatives and  
594 before the bill or resolve is put upon its final passage in that branch. If the Senate concurs in  
595 adopting the preamble, the bill or resolve shall be returned to the House to be there first put upon  
596 its final passage, under Joint Rule No. 22. [Amended Feb. 24, 1914; Feb. 21, 1919; Jan. 7, 1971.]

597 Joint Rule 18. [Omitted in 1971.]

598 Joint Rule 19. The Clerk of the branch in which a bill or resolve originated shall make an  
599 endorsement on the envelope of the engrossed copy of the bill, certifying in which branch the bill  
600 originated, which endorsement shall be entered on the journals by the Clerks respectively.  
601 [Amended Jan. 28, 1889; Feb. 24, 1914.]

602 Joint Rule 20. Bills, resolves and other papers requiring the approval of the Governor shall be  
603 laid before the Governor for the Governor's approbation by the Senate Clerk and  
604 Parliamentarian, who shall enter upon the journal of the Senate the day and date on which the  
605 same were so laid before the Governor. [Amended Jan. 28, 1889; Jan. 7, 1971.]

606 **Presentation and Distribution of Documents.**

607 Joint Rule 21. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, may establish  
608 regulations for the distribution of bills, reports or other documents. Bills, reports or other  
609 documents shall be made available to members electronically and, except for petitions or other  
610 documents not assigned bill numbers, published on the Internet. The committees on Rules of the  
611 two branches, acting concurrently, may make such changes pertaining to the availability of bills,  
612 reports or other documents as they deem necessary for expediting the work of the legislature.

613 The Clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate shall be responsible for publishing  
614 the journals of their respective chamber, the book Public Officers of Massachusetts, the  
615 committee book and any other publications per order of the committees on Rules. [Amended Jan.  
616 8, 1886 ; Jan. 28, 1889 ; Jan. 27, 1911 ; Feb. 19, 1920 ; Jan. 6, 1947 ; Apr. 5, 19 67 ; Jan. 7,  
617 1971; Feb. 12, 2009; Mar. 14, 2013.]

618 **Emergency Measures.**

619 Joint Rule 22. The vote on the preamble of an emergency law, which under the requirements of  
620 Article XLVIII, as amended by Article LXVII of the Amendments of the Constitution shall,  
621 upon request of 2 members of the Senate or of 5 members of the House of Representatives, be  
622 taken by call of the yeas and nays, shall be had after the proposed law has been prepared for final  
623 passage; and neither branch shall vote on the enactment of a bill or on the passage of a resolve  
624 containing an emergency preamble until it has been determined whether the preamble shall  
625 remain or be eliminated. If the bill contains an emergency preamble, a motion to amend the bill  
626 may be received in either branch before the adoption of the emergency preamble, and the  
627 amendment may contain a new emergency preamble. If the 2 branches concur in adopting the  
628 preamble, the bill or resolve shall first be put upon its final passage in the House of  
629 Representatives. If either branch fails to adopt the preamble, notice of its action shall be sent to  
630 the other branch; and the bill or resolve, duly endorsed, shall again be prepared for final passage  
631 without the preamble and without any provision that the bill or the resolve shall take effect  
632 earlier than 90 days after it has become law. Procedure shall be otherwise under the joint rules  
633 and the rules of the Senate and the House of Representatives. [Adopted Feb. 21, 1919. Amended  
634 Jan. 30, 1923; Jan. 7, 1971; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 12, 2009.]

635 Joint Rule 22A. Bills and resolves passed to be engrossed by both branches and before being  
636 transmitted by the clerks to the Legislative Engrossing Division shall be made available to the  
637 committees on Bills in the Third Reading of the two branches, acting jointly, who shall examine  
638 them to ensure accuracy in the text; that the legislation is correct as to form; that references to  
639 previous amendments to any particular law are correct and to ensure proper consistency with the  
640 language of existing statutes. These committees, with the approval of the majority and minority  
641 leadership of both branches may make corrections which are not substantive in nature. The

642 clerks of both branches shall be immediately notified, in writing, of any such changes. Errors  
643 discovered by the committees of a substantive nature shall be reported to the General Court,  
644 which in turn shall take appropriate action under its rules. Upon completion of examination and  
645 possible correction of any such bills and resolves, the bills and resolves shall be returned to the  
646 clerks, who in turn, shall transmit them to the Legislative Engrossing Division to be prepared for  
647 final passage. [Adopted Sept. 16, 1971.]

648 **Legislative Amendments to the Constitution.**

649 Joint Rule 23. All proposals for amendments to the Constitution referred to a joint committee on  
650 the first annual session of the General Court shall be reported by said committee not later than  
651 the last Wednesday of April in said year, and proposals for amendments to the Constitution  
652 referred to a joint committee subsequent to the last Wednesday in April of the first annual  
653 session shall be reported by said committee not later than the last Wednesday of April in the  
654 second session of the same General Court. The committee shall file its report, either  
655 recommending that the proposal ought to pass or ought not to pass, with any official papers in its  
656 possession that relate thereto, with the Clerk of the Senate. When the time within which said  
657 committees are required to report has expired, all matters upon which no report has been made  
658 shall forthwith be placed in the Journal of the respective branches, with an adverse report under  
659 this rule; and shall then be placed on file in the office of the Clerk of the Senate. For further  
660 information of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, the respective Clerks  
661 shall also place all such matters under a separate heading in the Calendar of each branch, as soon  
662 as is practicable. In each branch the report shall be read and forthwith placed on file; and no  
663 further legislative action shall be taken on the measure unless consideration in joint session is  
664 called for by vote of either branch, under Section 2 of Part IV of Article XLVIII (as amended by

665 Article LXXXI) of the Amendments to the Constitution. A joint committee to which is referred  
666 any recommendation for an amendment to the Constitution made by the Governor or contained  
667 in a report authorized to be made to the General Court may report on the recommendation a  
668 proposal for a legislative amendment, which shall be deemed to have been introduced by the  
669 member of the Senate who reports for the committee; and the procedure as regards reporting,  
670 filing and subsequent action shall be that provided for legislative amendments by this rule. Or the  
671 joint committee may report ought not to pass for the reason that no legislation is necessary or  
672 that the recommendation ought not to pass; and in such cases the usual procedure as regards  
673 similar reports by joint committees shall be followed. If such an adverse report is amended in the  
674 Senate by substituting a proposal for a legislative amendment, notice of the Senate's action shall  
675 be sent to the House and said proposal, together with the official papers relating to the subject,  
676 shall be in the custody of the Clerk of the Senate; and if said report is so amended in the House,  
677 the proposal, duly endorsed, together with the other papers, shall be sent to the Senate for its  
678 information and shall be kept in the custody of its Clerk. No further legislative action shall be  
679 taken in either branch on a proposal so substituted unless consideration in joint session is called  
680 for under the Constitution. If either branch calls for the consideration of any proposal in joint  
681 session, notice of its action shall be sent to the other branch; and it shall then be the duty of the  
682 Senate and the House of Representatives to arrange for the holding of the joint session not later  
683 than the second Wednesday in May. Subject to the requirements of the Constitution, joint  
684 sessions or continuances of joint sessions of the 2 branches to consider proposals for specific  
685 amendments to the Constitution, and all rules or procedures, shall be determined only by  
686 concurrent votes of the 2 branches. The rules relative to joint conventions shall apply to the joint



687 sessions of the 2 houses. [Adopted Feb. 21, 1919. Amended March 30, 1921; April 11, 1935;  
688 Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Nov. 9, 1951; Jan. 15, 1973; July 1, 1974; Feb. 12, 2009.]

689 **Executive Reorganization Plans.**

690 Joint Rule 23A. Any reorganization plan, accompanied by a bill, submitted by the Governor  
691 under Article LXXXVII of the Amendments to the Constitution shall be referred by the Clerks of  
692 the Senate and the House, with the approval of the President and Speaker, to a joint standing  
693 committee within 5 days of the presentation of the reorganization plan.

694 Said committee, to which is referred any such reorganization plan, shall, as required by said  
695 Article, not later than 30 days after the presentation of such plan by the Governor, hold a public  
696 hearing on the reorganization plan; and shall not later than 10 days after such hearing report that  
697 it either approves or disapproves such plan.

698 When recommending action, the committee shall make, in each branch, a separate report of its  
699 recommendations, and shall file said report together with the committee's recommendations and  
700 the reasons for those recommendations, in writing. Majority and minority reports shall be signed  
701 by the members of said committee. Any official papers in the possession of said committee that  
702 relate thereto shall be filed with the Clerk of the Senate.

703 If the committee recommends favorable action, the report shall be that the reorganization plan  
704 'ought to be approved'. If the committee recommends adverse action, the report shall be that the  
705 reorganization plan 'ought NOT to be approved'. In each instance, the question shall be 'Shall  
706 this reorganization plan be approved?'

707 In each branch, the report shall be read and forthwith recorded in the Journal. On the legislative  
708 day next following the Journal record, the report shall be placed in the Orders of the Day of the  
709 Senate and the House.

710 When the time within which a joint committee is required to report on a reorganization plan has  
711 expired, a matter upon which no report has been made shall forthwith be placed in the Orders of  
712 the Day by the Clerks of each branch and the question shall be ‘Shall this reorganization plan be  
713 approved?’.

714 When such plan is before either branch, no motion relating to said plan shall be allowed except  
715 the motions to lay on the table (only in the Senate), to postpone to a time certain, or to commit or  
716 recommit (at the pleasure of either branch). The motions to take a recess, to adjourn, the previous  
717 question (if provided in the branch debating the issue), to close debate at a specified time, and  
718 the motion to reconsider shall also be in order.

719 A motion to discharge any committee to which is referred or to which is recommitted a  
720 reorganization plan shall not be in order prior to the expiration of 40 days after the Governor's  
721 presentation of such plan. After the expiration of said 40 days, a motion to discharge a committee  
722 shall be decided by a majority vote of the branch in which the motion is made.

723 Unless disapproved by a majority vote of the members of either of the 2 branches of the General  
724 Court present and voting, the General Court not having prorogued within 60 days from the date  
725 of presentation by the Governor, the plan shall be approved and shall take effect as provided by  
726 Article LXXXVII of the Amendments to the Constitution.

727 Within 7 days of the expiration of the 60 days from the date of presentation of said plan by the  
728 Governor, unless the question has already been decided, the Clerks of the Senate and House of

729 Representatives shall place the plan in the Orders of the Day; and no motions except the motions  
730 to take a recess, to adjourn, and previous question, or to close debate at a specified time, shall be  
731 in order.

732 No such reorganization plan presented to the General Court shall be subject to change or  
733 amendment before expiration of such 60 days. [Adopted June 13, 1967; Amended March 27,  
734 1969; June 12, 1995; Feb. 12, 2009.]

735 **Joint Conventions.**

736 Joint Rule 24. The President of the Senate shall preside in Conventions of the 2 branches, and  
737 such Conventions shall be held in the Representatives' Chamber; the Senate Clerk and  
738 Parliamentarian shall be the Clerk of the Convention, and a record of the proceedings of the  
739 Convention shall be entered at large on the journals of both branches. [Amended Feb. 20, 2007.]

740 Joint Rule 25. When an agreement has been made by the 2 branches to go into Convention, such  
741 agreement shall not be altered or annulled, except by concurrent vote, excepting that it shall be in  
742 order to recess the convention from time to time upon a majority vote of said convention.  
743 [Amended Jan. 7, 1971 .]

744 Joint Rule 26. No business shall be entered on, in Convention, other than that which may be  
745 agreed on before the Convention is formed.

746 **Special Sessions.**

747 Joint Rule 26A. If written statements of 21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House  
748 of Representatives, that in their opinion it is necessary that the General Court assemble in special  
749 session on a particular date and time specified in their statements during a recess of the General

750 Court, are filed with their respective Clerks, such Clerks shall forthwith notify all the members  
751 of their respective branches to assemble at the State House in Boston, on said date at the time so  
752 specified. When so assembled, the first business to be taken up shall be the question of the  
753 necessity of so assembling, under Article I of Section I of Chapter I of Part the Second of the  
754 Constitution of the Commonwealth. If 21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House  
755 of Representatives judge by vote taken by call of the yeas and nays that such assembling of the  
756 General Court is necessary, specifying in such vote the facts constituting such necessity, the  
757 General Court shall then complete its organization as a special session, proceed to the  
758 consideration of the suspension of Joint Rule 12A which if suspended by the required two-thirds  
759 of the members of both branches shall permit the General Court to proceed to the consideration  
760 of matters properly before it. Nothing in this rule shall prevent the General Court from  
761 assembling in any other constitutional manner when it judges necessary. [Adopted Aug. 7, 1939.  
762 Amended March 2, 1943; March 27, 19 69; May 5, 1979; July 17, 2003; July 21 and September  
763 20, 2005.]

764 **Joint Elections.**

765 Joint Rule 27. In all elections by joint ballot a time shall be assigned for such election at least 1  
766 day previous to such election.

767 Joint Rule 27A. In all cases of elections by ballot a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary  
768 for a choice, and where there shall be no such a majority on the first ballot the ballots shall be  
769 repeated until a majority is obtained; and in balloting, blanks shall be rejected and not taken into  
770 the count in the enumeration of votes, excepting that when the number of blanks shall be more  
771 than the number of votes received by the candidate having the highest number of votes, then the

772 election shall be declared void and the balloting shall be repeated as provided herein. [Adopted  
773 March 27, 1969 .]

774 Joint Rule 28. [Omitted March 28, 1972 .]

775 **References to the Committees on Rules.**

776 Joint Rule 29. All motions and orders authorizing joint committees to travel or to employ  
777 stenographers, or authorizing joint committees or special commissions composed as a whole or  
778 in part of members of the General Court to make investigations or to file special reports, all  
779 propositions reported by joint committees which authorize investigations or special reports by  
780 joint committees or by special commissions composed as a whole or in part of members of the  
781 General Court, all motions or orders proposed for joint adoption which provide that information  
782 be transmitted to the General Court, and all matters referred under the second paragraph of Joint  
783 Rule 12, shall be referred without debate to the committees on Rules of the two branches acting  
784 concurrently, who shall report on the matter, under Joint Rule 10. All matters which have been  
785 referred under this rule shall, in each instance, be reported back into the branch making such  
786 reference. [Adopted Jan. 10, 1898. Amended Jan. 20, 1904; Jan. 28, 1913; Feb. 19 and Dec. 22,  
787 1920; April 11, 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 27, 1955; Jan. 30, 1967; Oct. 18, 1971.]

788 Joint Rule 29A. Meetings of any special commission, special legislative commission, task force  
789 or other group authorized or required by a statute, resolve, rule, or order to make or conduct an  
790 investigation or study of any issue shall be conducted openly and transparently. Meetings of any  
791 special commission, special legislative commission, task force or other group authorized or  
792 required by a statute, resolve, rule, or order to make or conduct an investigation or study of any  
793 issue and which are chaired by members of the general court shall be posted and conducted

794 pursuant to the rules of the senate and house of representatives and shall be conducted according  
795 to the following requirements:

796 a.) Meetings shall be open to the public, ;

797 b.) Meetings shall be announced by appropriate notice at least 48 hours in advance;

798 c.) Any documents used in a meeting be provided to the public upon request in a manner to  
799 be determined by the chair;

800 d.) Public testimony shall be accepted in a manner to be determined by the chair;

801 e.) The chair shall maintain a summary of the subjects discussed at each meeting, a list of  
802 documents and other exhibits used at the meetings, and shall maintain a record of proceedings,  
803 including a record of all votes. For the purposes of this rule a video or audio recording made  
804 available to the public shall be considered an adequate record of the proceedings.

805 [Adopted, Feb. 15, 2017.]

806 Joint Rule 30. All motions or orders extending the time within which joint committees and the  
807 committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, are required to report shall be  
808 referred without debate to the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently,  
809 who shall report recommending what action should be taken on the motion or order. Such  
810 extension shall be granted by a concurrent majority vote if recommended by the committees on  
811 Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently; but no such extension shall be granted, against  
812 the recommendation of the committees, except by a four-fifths vote of the members of each  
813 branch present and voting on the extension. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or  
814 suspended, except by a concurrent vote of four-fifths of the members of each branch present and

815 voting thereon. [Adopted Jan. 16, 1903. Amended Feb. 6, 1912; Feb. 19, 1920; Jan. 6, 1947; Jan.  
816 27, 1955; June 7, 1965.]

817 **Members.**

818 Joint Rule 31. A member of either branch who directly or indirectly solicits for such member or  
819 others any position or office within the gift or control of a railroad corporation, street railway  
820 company, gas or electric light company, telegraph or telephone company, aqueduct or water  
821 company, or other public service corporation, shall be subject to suspension for such solicitation,  
822 or to such other penalty as the branch of which the person is a member may see fit to impose.  
823 [See G. L. 271, sec. 40.] [Adopted May 22, 1902.]

824 **Accommodations for Reporters.**

825 Joint Rule 32. Subject to the approval and direction of the committees on Rules of the two  
826 branches, acting concurrently, during the session, and of the President of the Senate and the  
827 Speaker of the House of Representatives after prorogation, the use of the rooms and facilities  
828 assigned to reporters in the State House shall be under the control of the organizations of  
829 legislative reporters known as the Massachusetts State House Press Association and the State  
830 House Broadcasters Association. No person shall be permitted to use such rooms or facilities  
831 who is not entitled to the privileges of the reporters' galleries of the Senate or of the House.  
832 Within 10 days after the General Court convenes the Massachusetts State House Press  
833 Association and the State House Broadcasters Association shall each transmit to the President of  
834 the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Sergeant-at-Arms a list of the  
835 legislative reporters with the principal publication or news service which each represents.

836 [Adopted Jan. 27, 1911. Amended Feb. 24, 1914; Feb. 19, 1920; April 17, 1925; May 23, 1979;  
837 Feb. 12, 2009.]

838 **Suspension of Rules.**

839 Joint Rule 33. Any joint rule except Rule 10 and Rule 30 may be altered, suspended or rescinded  
840 by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting thereon.

841 [Amended Feb. 7, 1893. Adopted in revised form Jan. 9, 1899. Amended Jan. 16, 1903; Jan. 26,  
842 2005.]

843 **Audit of Accounts.**

844 Joint Rule 34. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall provide  
845 that an outside independent audit of joint financial accounts be conducted by a certified public  
846 accountant no less frequently than at the end of each second fiscal year. A copy of such audit  
847 shall be filed with the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives and made available for  
848 public inspection upon reasonable notice and during regular office hours. [Adopted May 30,  
849 1985.]

850 Joint Rule 35. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall  
851 reexamine the Joint Rules of the House and Senate as needed, but at least every 4 years, and shall  
852 report to each branch any recommendations it may have to facilitate the work of the respective  
853 branches and the joint standing committees. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

854 **Procurement.**

855 Joint Rule 36. (a) The House Business Manager and Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall  
856 complete the procurement of all goods and services from the joint legislative account.



857 Procurements for goods or services shall be made pursuant to a statewide procurement contract  
858 established by the operational services division, to the extent practicable, as determined by the  
859 House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate. If the Business Manager  
860 and the Chief Financial Officer determine that a procurement cannot be made using a statewide  
861 procurement contract established by the operational services division, they may procure the  
862 required goods or services under subsections (b), (c) or (d).

863 (b) Procurement of a supply or service from a vendor not on a statewide procurement contract  
864 valued at less than \$10,000 shall be made at the discretion of the House Business Manager and  
865 the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate.

866 (c) If the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate seek to procure  
867 a supply or service from a vendor not on a statewide procurement contract valued at \$10,000 or  
868 more, but less than \$100,000, they shall seek quotations from not fewer than 3 persons providing  
869 such supply or service. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the  
870 Senate shall record the names and addresses of all persons from whom quotations were received,  
871 the names of the persons submitting quotations and the date and amount of each quotation. The  
872 House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall award the contract  
873 to the responsible person whose quotation offers the needed quality of supply or service and  
874 which represents the best value for the General Court.

875 (d) If the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate seek to procure  
876 a supply or service from a vendor not on the statewide procurement list valued at \$100,000 or  
877 more, the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall seek

878 proposals through a competitive bid process, which shall be established by the House Business  
879 Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate.

880 (e) The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall maintain a  
881 file on each procurement not executed using the statewide procurement list established by the  
882 operational services division and in excess of \$10,000 and shall include in such file all  
883 documents constituting the agreement for goods and services and all documents evidencing  
884 compliance with this rule. The files maintained shall be available for inspection by members of  
885 the General Court during regular business hours unless the information is otherwise protected by  
886 state or federal law.

887 (f) Whenever the time required to comply with a requirement of this rule would endanger the  
888 health, safety or convenience of the members, staff or visitors to the House of Representatives or  
889 Senate the House Business Manager and the Senate Chief Financial Officer may make an  
890 emergency procurement without satisfying the requirement of this rules; provided, however, that  
891 both the House Business Manager and the Senate Chief Financial Officer certify in writing that:  
892 (i) an emergency exists and explain the nature thereof; (ii) the emergency procurement is limited  
893 to only supplies or services necessary to meet the emergency; (iii) shall conform to the  
894 requirements of rule to the extent practicable under the circumstances; (iv) each contractor's  
895 name, (v) the amount and the type of each contract; (vi) the supplies or services provided under  
896 each contract; (vii) and basis for determining the need for an emergency procurement.

897 (g) In addition to the requirements of this rule, all procurements for legal services shall be  
898 approved by the House and Senate Counsel.

899 (h) If, in the determination of the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the  
900 Senate, an emergency procurement of greater than \$10,000 is necessary, the House Business  
901 Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate may procure the goods or services  
902 immediately and create and maintain a file explaining the nature of the emergency and the goods  
903 or services that were procured as a result. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial  
904 Officer of the Senate shall document the goods or services that were procured, the process used  
905 to procure the goods or services, the vendors that were contacted and any other information  
906 relevant to the procurement, and make that information available to members of the General  
907 Court during regular business hours, unless the information is otherwise protected by state or  
908 federal law.

909 [Adopted Mar. 14, 2013; Amended Feb. 15, 2017.]

910 **Legislative Information Services**

911 Joint Rule 37. The Office of Legislative Information Services may establish policies regarding  
912 the operational and security of information technology resources of the general court. All  
913 policies shall be developed in consultation with the House and Senate Committees on Personnel  
914 and Administration, and no policy shall take effect without the review and approval of both the  
915 Counsel to the House and the Counsel to the Senate.