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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

ADOPTING THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS 2021  
AND 2022

Introduced By: Representative Arthur J. Corvese

Date Introduced: January 12, 2021

Referred To: House Rules

1           RESOLVED, That pursuant to Article VI, Section 7 of the Constitution of the State of  
2 Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, the following rules be adopted for the House of  
3 Representatives for the years ~~2019~~ 2021 and ~~2020~~ 2022:

4           [Rules Pertaining to the Speaker](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

31 (d) All bills and resolutions shall be filed no later than ~~February 14, 2019~~ February 11,  
32 2021 (for the ~~2019~~ 2021 session) and ~~February 13, 2020~~ February 10, 2022 (for the ~~2020~~ 2022  
33 session). The provisions of this section shall not apply to city or town bills, to bills for the  
34 reinstatement of corporate charters, to bills relating to the solemnization of marriages,

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

10 (e) Any bill or resolution introduced on or before ~~April 11, 2019~~ April 13, 2021 (for the  
11 ~~2019~~ 2021 session) and on or before ~~April 16, 2020~~ April 12, 2022 (for the ~~2020~~ 2022 session):

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

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

19 (iii) All bills or resolutions introduced after ~~April 11, 2019~~ April 13, 2021 (for the ~~2019~~  
20 2021 session) and after ~~April 16, 2020~~ April 12, 2022 (for the ~~2020~~ 2022 session) shall be in  
21 order for the first reading and, may be assigned to committee, as early as the day of introduction.

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

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

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

32 (8) Bills and resolutions which are of a routine, ceremonial, or non-controversial nature,  
33 may be granted "Immediate Consideration" and brought before the body for its approval without  
34 appearing on the printed floor calendar, with the approval of the Majority Leader, Minority

1 Leader, and Speaker. The representative seeking such approval shall request the permission of the  
2 Majority and Minority Leaders and then during the floor session indicate, by activating their  
3 recognition light, that he or she has such a matter to present before the body. The resolution or  
4 bill will then be presented to the House clerk who shall proceed to present the matter to the  
5 Speaker who will bring it before the body for a voice vote. At the request of the prime sponsor  
6 and in the discretion of the Speaker, the clerk may be instructed to read the resolution to the body.

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

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

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

### 30 Rules Pertaining to Committees

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

33 A committee on conduct

34 A committee on corporations

- 1            [A committee on education](#)
- 2            A committee on environment and natural resources
- 3            A committee on finance
- 4            A committee on health ~~, education and welfare~~ [and human services](#)
- 5            [A committee on innovation, internet and technology](#)
- 6            A committee on judiciary
- 7            A committee on labor
- 8            A committee on municipal government [and housing](#)
- 9            A committee on rules
- 10           A committee on oversight
- 11           A committee on small business
- 12           A committee on special legislation
- 13           [A committee on state government and elections](#)
- 14           A committee on veterans' affairs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 (1) Any bill filed before or after the 40<sup>th</sup> legislative day, but subsequent to the hearing of  
24 a group of bills on the same subject matter pursuant to Rule 12(a), may or may not be assigned  
25 for hearing if it appears from the subject matter that the issues presented would be substantially  
26 similar to those matters already heard, even if a bill hearing request is filed pursuant to Rule  
27 12(e). If heard, the chair of the committee may limit the testimony to those issues not addressed  
28 in the previous bill hearing.

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

32 (c) The Chair of every committee shall post, in print and electronically, at least forty-  
33 eight (48) hours prior to any committee meeting, a list by number and title of the bills  
34 and resolutions to be heard at that meeting. Such postings shall be made electronically and on the

1 Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The electronic posting shall be considered the official date of the  
2 posting. In the event that the electronic posting system is inoperable then the official posting shall  
3 be posted on the Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The Chair shall limit such listings to the  
4 number of bills or resolutions he or she reasonably expects can be taken up by the committee at  
5 that meeting. Any bill or resolution so posted which the committee is not able to take up at the  
6 stated meeting must be re-posted as stated above. Such postings shall be made electronically, and  
7 on the Legislative Data bulletin board. Copies of all posted bills or resolutions shall be provided  
8 in print or electronically to all committee members and principal sponsors. A committee shall not  
9 hear any said bill or resolution without such notice except by the consent of a majority of its  
10 members and with at least one (1) day's notification to the principal House sponsor. The sponsor  
11 may, however, waive such one-day notification. The time requirements of this section shall not  
12 apply to House bills returned from the Senate with amendment, or, after the 50<sup>th</sup> legislative day  
13 ~~(May 14, 2019 (for the 2019 session) and May 13, 2020 (for the 2020 session))~~, to any bill  
14 originating in the Senate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 considered a part of that day's business.

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

5 (i) No public bill or resolution which originated in the House shall be considered by a  
6 House committee unless the committee has held a hearing on that bill or resolution by ~~April 11,~~  
7 ~~2019~~ April 13, 2021 (for the ~~2019~~ 2021 session) and on or before ~~April 16, 2020~~ April 12, 2022  
8 (for the ~~2020~~ 2022 session), and thereafter the committees of the House shall not consider public  
9 bills or resolutions except those which have been acted upon by the Senate and transmitted by the  
10 Senate to the House of Representatives, provided however, that the committee on finance may  
11 hear and consider such House bills, acts or resolutions as it deems to have a fiscal impact after  
12 ~~April 11, 2019~~ April 13, 2021 (for the ~~2019~~ 2021 session) and after ~~April 16, 2020~~ April 12, 2022  
13 (for the ~~2020~~ 2022 session), except as provided in section (j) hereof, and provided further, that  
14 each other House committee may complete consideration of not more than three (3) House bills  
15 or resolutions after such date, on which such committee had not been able to complete  
16 action, upon approval by the Speaker of a written request from the Chair. All such requests must  
17 be filed with the Clerk of the House no later than ~~April 11, 2019~~ April 13, 2021 (for the ~~2019~~  
18 2021 session) and on or before ~~April 16, 2020~~ April 12, 2022 (for the ~~2020~~ 2022 session). The  
19 provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to House bills of which Senate duplicates have passed  
20 the House.

21 (j) No House bill which relates to an individual's pension or retirement shall be accepted  
22 as a committee report from the committee on finance unless it shall have been considered by the  
23 committee on or before ~~April 11, 2019~~ April 13, 2021 (for the ~~2019~~ 2021 session) and on or  
24 before ~~April 16, 2020~~ April 12, 2022 (for the ~~2020~~ 2022 session), and shall have been heard in  
25 the committee no later than one (1) week prior to that date.

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

29 (l) Members of a committee shall, if present, cast a vote on legislation before the  
30 committee, unless prior to the discussion of the bill and vote, the member recuses himself in  
31 accordance with the provisions of the Code of Ethics, RIGL §36-14-6. The member shall sign a  
32 recusal form, and the Clerk of the Committee shall note the member's recusal on the bill vote  
33 sheet.

34 (m) Any proposed committee amendment to a bill, in a substitute amended bill format,

1 shall be posted in print and electronically by the chair of the committee hearing the bill at least  
2 twenty-four (24) hours prior to its committee consideration. Such postings shall be made on the  
3 legislative data bulletin board and electronically. The electronic posting shall be considered the  
4 official date of the posting. In the event that the electronic posting system is inoperable, then the  
5 official posting shall be posted on the legislative data bulletin board. The chair of the committee  
6 may waive this twenty-four (24) hours posting requirement, if he or she deems the proposed  
7 amendment either technical, grammatical, or not substantive or substantial in nature. This section  
8 shall not apply to the budget bill.

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

12 (ii) With written notice to the Speaker by December 31 of the first-year session of a  
13 legislative term, a member may avail himself or herself of the opportunity afforded by this rule  
14 three (3) times in each legislative term. Only bills or resolutions introduced in the first-year  
15 session of a legislative term may be carried over pursuant to this rule. A member may request a  
16 hearing in the second-year session by filing a request for hearing pursuant to subsection 12(e) of  
17 this rule.

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

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

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

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

31 (d) The Speaker, wherever feasible with the confines of existing room availability and  
32 personnel levels, shall direct Capitol Television to broadcast committee hearings live on Capitol  
33 Television or, in the instance where committees are meeting on the same day and time, record the  
34 hearings for broadcast on a delayed basis. Committee hearings dealing with the expenditure of

1 public funds shall be given priority for live broadcast. Chairs of the various committees are  
2 authorized to make a request of the Speaker, or the Speaker's designee, to broadcast their  
3 respective committee hearings on Capitol Television if they believe an agenda item is of  
4 particular importance or interest.

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

6 **Rules Pertaining to Bills and Petitions**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 explanation to the bill to add context to the changes made in the statutes the bill amends.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 31 Rules Pertaining to Decorum and Debates

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 (30) When a question is under debate no motion shall be received except: to adjourn, for  
31 the previous question, to take a recess, to lay on the table, to fix a time for closing debate, to  
32 postpone indefinitely, to postpone to a day certain, to 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  
7 or 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  
9 her seat, except as hereinafter provided. No member may vote for another member, nor activate  
10 another member's voting machine except by the express direction of that member who is present  
11 in the House chamber. No one may occupy the vacant seat of a member. Every member who shall  
12 be in his or her seat in the House Chamber when the question is put, shall give his or her vote,  
13 unless prior thereto the Speaker shall have excused him or her in accordance with the provisions  
14 of the Code of Ethics statute (RIGL 36-14-6). Members seeking to recuse themselves on  
15 legislation before the full House must file a written request for recusal, if they are present when  
16 the House 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 House Rules Committee to investigate, hold  
19 hearings, ascertain the facts and report its findings and recommendation to the House, which may  
20 then take appropriate action including but not limited to expulsion as authorized by Article 6,  
21 Section 7 of the Constitution of the State.

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

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

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

1 reported to the body.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 (36) When any vote is passed, any member voting in the majority may move  
21 to reconsider on the same or a subsequent legislative day, if the matter has not been previously  
22 transmitted to the proper party. A motion to reconsider shall not be debated and once a motion for  
23 reconsideration has been decided, the motion itself shall not be reconsidered. (37)(a) The  
24 presiding officer may refer to "Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure," most recent  
25 edition, published by the National Conference of State Legislatures, for guidance as to procedure  
26 on the floor of the House in all cases in which its provisions are not inconsistent with applicable  
27 law or these rules.

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

1 argument under the guise of a point of order, a point of parliamentary inquiry, or a question. No  
2 member shall resort to persistent irrelevance or persistent repetition.

3 **Rules Pertaining to Admission to the Floor**

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

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

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

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

26 **Miscellaneous Rules**

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

1 provided electronically to the members at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the opening of  
2 the session.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 receiving the request.

2 **Establishment of Caucuses**

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

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

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

11 (d) Notwithstanding 45(c):

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

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

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

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

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

31 (1) Chairperson:

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

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

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

- 1 (2) Vice Chairperson:
- 2 (i) To assume duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence; and
- 3 (ii) To conduct all votes, notwithstanding 45(g)(1)(iii), at meetings.
- 4 (h) Office holders shall be elected by a simple majority of a quorum vote by the body for
- 5 a two (2) - year term.
- 6 (i) In the event an officer cannot fulfill his or her term, the following rules shall apply:
- 7 (1) A vacancy in the Chairperson's office shall be filled by the Vice Chairperson.
- 8 (2) A vacancy in the Vice-Chairperson's office shall be filled by a majority vote of a
- 9 quorum of the membership of the Caucus.
- 10 (3) The term of the replaced officers shall begin immediately and shall terminate upon the
- 11 regular election of new officers.
- 12 (j) A quorum shall consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the current membership of the Caucus.
- 13 (k) No budget shall be appropriated for any Caucus nor shall any Caucus engage in the
- 14 raising of funds nor in-kind donations to pay for any of its activities.
- 15 (l) All caucuses shall be established by written notification to the Speaker or his/her
- 16 designee with all elections being held one month after the establishment. The two (2) - year
- 17 election term shall run from the date of said election.
- 18 (m) Rules 45(f), 45(g), 45(h), and 45(i) shall not apply to political party caucuses.

19 **Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited**

20 (46)(a) The House of Representatives is committed to creating and maintaining a work

21 environment in which all members and employees are treated with respect and are free from

22 sexual harassment and discrimination.

23 The House fully supports the protection and safeguarding of the rights and opportunities

24 of all people to seek, obtain and hold employment without being subjected to sexual harassment

25 of any kind in the workplace. The House recognizes that sexual harassment has a serious

26 detrimental effect on victims of sexually harassing behavior.

27 The House acknowledges that the question of whether a particular action or incident is of

28 a purely personal or social nature, without a discriminatory employment effect, could require an

29 extensive determination based on all facts in each case. The House further recognizes that false

30 accusations of sexual harassment can have serious effects on innocent individuals.

31 (b) Sexual harassment is a violation of the state Civil Rights Act of 1990 (chapter 112 of

32 title 42), the state Fair Employment Practices Act (chapter 5 of title 28), and Title VII of the Civil

33 Rights Act of 1964. It is against the policy of the House for any member or employee of the

34 House of Representatives to sexually harass another person involved in the business of the House.

1 Members of the House and its employees are expected to comply with applicable law and take  
2 appropriate measures to ensure that prohibited conduct does not occur.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

31 (a) Authorization to hold Remote Committee Meetings due to an Emergency--  
32 Requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

33 (ii) A member of the House who is unwilling or unable to be physically present during a  
34 public health emergency may submit a written request to the Speaker that the member wishes to

1 cast a vote by proxy under the limited parameters established by this rule.

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

4 (iv) A member authorized by the Speaker to vote by proxy shall prepare and submit  
5 written voting instructions prior to each applicable floor session. The instructions shall identify  
6 each daily calendar item on which the member will be voting by proxy, and shall clearly state  
7 how the member wishes to have the member's vote recorded for each calendar item. A member  
8 shall also clearly indicate how the member wishes to vote on any consent calendar, if applicable.  
9 A member voting by proxy shall grant the majority leader or minority leader the discretion to vote  
10 on behalf the member on any floor amendment and any matter of parliamentary procedure which  
11 may arise during the course of the session during which the proxy has been granted.

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

14 (vi) Any member casting a proxy vote for another member voting by proxy shall follow  
15 the written voting instructions exactly as submitted, by operating the other member's electronic  
16 voting machine or by responding to a voice vote or roll call for the member voting by proxy.

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

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

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

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

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