

1 removal of the senator serving in that capacity. The president shall preside over the senate in
2 accordance with these Rules.

3 **1.7 "President Pro Tempore"** is a member of the senate elected to that position, who
4 presides over the senate in the absence of the president of the senate.

5 **1.8 "Prime Sponsor"** shall be that senator whose signature first appears upon the bill.

6 **1.9 "Public Bill"** shall include all bills except: those which pertain to a particular city or
7 town; those which relate to an individual's pension and retirement; those which pertain to
8 restoration of corporation charters, and to amendments to authorized holdings by nonprofit
9 organizations of a charitable, civic, library or like nature; resolutions memorializing congress, or
10 of congratulations, or expressing sympathy of condolences, and all resolutions requesting the
11 several departments of state government to grant some privilege, consideration or relief.

12 **1.10 "Reading Clerk"** is the person elected to that position under provisions of section
13 22-3-2 of the general laws who shall, at the direction of the presiding officer, read to the chamber
14 any communication to the senate, resolution, bill or other document and who shall, at the direction
15 of the presiding officer, date the bills and other documents before the senate, date recording thereon
16 the action taken and/or the disposition thereof. The reading clerk also shall, at the direction of the
17 senate, amend any bill and transmit any bill to the house of representatives and perform such other
18 duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the president of the senate.

19 **1.11 "Secretary of the Senate"** is the person elected to that position under provisions of
20 section 22-3-2 of the general laws who shall, at the direction of the presiding officer, record the
21 proceedings of the senate in a journal, signing said journal as secretary of the senate, and who shall,
22 upon their referral, deliver bills and other documents to their respective committees, hold and
23 maintain in good order any bill assigned to the calendar or the consent calendar, and transmit any
24 bill or document to the governor. The secretary of the senate also shall perform those duties
25 prescribed in other sections hereof and those which may from time to time be prescribed by the
26 president of the senate.

27 **1.12 "The Rise of the Senate"** occurs upon the conclusion of senate floor business and
28 the exact time varies by the amount of business to be conducted on a particular legislative day.

29 **1.13 "The Senate Chamber" or "Chamber"** shall include the floor, the corridor behind
30 the floor, the cloak room and the senate lounge.

31 **1.14 "Vote" or "Majority Vote"** as used herein shall mean a majority of members present
32 and voting unless specifically stated otherwise.

33 **SECTION 2.**

34 **PRESIDING OFFICER**

1 dispensed with by a majority of the senators present and voting.

2 **3.3 Daily Business.**

3 After the reading of the proceedings of the previous legislative day the order of business
4 shall be as follows unless otherwise ordered by the President of the Senate:

- 5 (1) Introduction of guests
- 6 (2) Communications
- 7 (3) Reports of committees
- 8 (4) Introduction and reference of new business
- 9 (5) Unfinished business
- 10 (6) Consideration of house transmittals
- 11 (7) Consent calendar
- 12 (8) Calendar
- 13 (9) Introduction of guests
- 14 (10) Personal privilege
- 15 (11) Address of important matters
- 16 (12) Daily adjournment

17 **3.4 Final Adjournment.**

18 The last order of business of the annual session of the senate shall be the vote in conformity
19 with the resolution of final adjournment or recess which must be carried by a majority vote of the
20 senators present and voting.

21 **3.5 Time for Sessions.**

22 Unless otherwise provided for by agreement of president of the senate, the majority leader
23 and minority leader, sessions of the senate shall convene at 4:00 p.m. All sessions must adjourn at
24 or before 11:00 p.m.

25 **SECTION 4.**

26 **ACTS AND RESOLUTIONS**

27 **4.1 Form of Bills.**

28 Every bill offered which is intended to amend any part or parts of an existing statute, any
29 part or parts intended to be stricken shall be contained in the bill and by appropriate mechanical
30 mark, struck through. All new matter contained in the bill shall be underlined, underscored or
31 printed in italics so that the new matter shall be easily discerned. If the bill contains all new matter
32 constituting a totally new law or a totally new section, and the bill itself so indicates, no underlining,
33 underscoring or italics shall be required. Every bill containing a commission to which appointments
34 shall be made shall be indicated in the title of such bill.

1 No bill without a body or substantive content shall be introduced at any time, nor shall a
2 substitute bill be accepted which is not consistent with the title and substance of the original bill.

3 All bills introduced on behalf of any general officer, branch, department or division of state
4 government shall state on the face sheet thereof with the title of the general officer or the name of
5 the branch, department or division on whose behalf the bill is introduced.

6 A prime sponsor may withdraw a bill or resolution previously introduced at any time prior
7 to its consideration by a committee, upon written request to the secretary of the senate.

8 Other than the prime sponsor of a bill, a senator may elect in writing to the secretary of the
9 senate to have his or her name disassociated from the bill and the secretary of the senate shall
10 immediately notify the committee clerk to which the bill is assigned.

11 All bills shall be processed through legislative council.

12 **4.2 Explanation of Bills.**

13 There shall be attached to each bill a brief explanation thereof and the explanation of such
14 bill shall indicate the proposed changes, and/or the statute or existing law which such bill purports
15 to amend.

16 **4.3 Copies of Bills.**

17 Each bill introduced shall be accompanied by not less than eight (8) copies thereof, with
18 said copies delivered by the secretary of the senate to the office of the president of the senate for
19 subsequent distribution as determined by the president of the senate. Nothing in this section shall
20 prevent a senator from obtaining a preliminary draft of legislation for his or her review prior to
21 introduction.

22 **4.4 Filing with Secretary of the Senate**

23 All senators desiring to introduce a bill shall file the bill with the secretary of the senate
24 not later than the time at which the presiding officer calls the senate to order. The secretary of the
25 senate shall transmit to the office of the president of the senate all bills on the legislative day of
26 their introduction. On the day of introduction, the president shall, upon adjournment, assign bills
27 to committee. The secretary of the senate shall cause all bills introduced to be published in the
28 senate journal for that legislative day. Any senator may object to the committee assignment of any
29 bill on the first or second legislative day following the bill's introduction. Upon objection being
30 made, the presiding officer shall assign the bill to the committee requested by the senator making
31 the objection; provided, however, that if another senator objects to any assignment or proposed
32 assignment of the bill, then the presiding officer shall call for a vote of the senate on any motion
33 for assignment which has been made and seconded, such motion requiring a majority vote of those
34 Senators present and voting for assignment to a particular committee. First reading of all such bills

1 and resolutions shall be by acceptance of the bill and the committee assignment.

2 **4.5 Deadline for Introductions.**

3 No public bill shall be introduced in the senate after the second Thursday in February of
4 each session, except with the consent of the President of the Senate. Except as otherwise expressly
5 directed by the president of the senate, all requests for the preparation of public bills shall be
6 submitted to the offices of Legislative Council no later than the close of business on the Friday next
7 preceding the bill-introduction deadline set forth herein.

8 **4.6 Omnibus Claims Against the State.**

9 Claims against the state in the amount of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or less shall not be
10 presented in bill or resolution form, but shall be submitted to the clerk of the joint committee on
11 accounts and claims in writing upon a form approved by the chairperson of the joint committee on
12 accounts and claims. Any claims approved by the joint committee shall be submitted in the form
13 of an omnibus bill which will be placed upon the consent calendar.

14 **4.7 Resolutions of Congratulations and Condolences.**

15 Notwithstanding any other provisions of these rules, all resolutions of congratulations or
16 expressing sympathy or condolences except with respect to former and present members of the
17 general assembly, general officers, members of the judiciary and elected state or federal officials,
18 shall be placed on the consent calendar, unless otherwise ordered by the president of the senate.
19 Said resolution of congratulations and condolences shall not require concurrent action; upon
20 passage, shall be forthwith transmitted to the secretary of state, and an appropriate notice of the
21 action of the senate thereon shall be forwarded, as requested in the resolution, by the secretary of
22 state. One formal resolution may include all the expressions of sympathy or congratulations of the
23 several senators.

24 **4.8 Enactment of Laws.**

25 The concurrence of the two houses in the same session shall be necessary for the enactment
26 of all bills except for senate resolutions.

27 **4.9 Electronic Availability of Public Bills--Requirements.**

28 **4.9-1 Public Bills.**

29 No public bill shall be considered upon its merits unless it has been electronically available
30 to the members at least two (2) calendar days prior to its consideration on the merits, except any
31 public bill passed by the senate and amended by the house, provided that the amended public bill
32 shall be electronically available to the senators before consideration.

33 **4.9-2 Committee Amendments.**

34 Except by majority vote, no public bill amended in a committee of the senate shall be

1 considered upon the senate floor unless it has been electronically available to the senators.

2 **4.9-3 Materially Altered Bills.**

3 Whenever a committee shall have determined to report a bill which has been materially
4 altered by the committee, the committee chair shall forthwith provide for printing and electronic
5 reproduction of the same. In the event that a bill is not deemed to have been materially altered,
6 which determination shall be made by the committee chair, a bill shall be printed only upon the
7 request of the president of the senate, the majority leader or the minority leader. Nothing in these
8 rules shall preclude the committee chair, with a majority of the committee, to change an act to a
9 resolution or a resolution to an act on a substitute bill.

10 **4.10 Copies of Bills and Voting Records.**

11 The secretary of the senate shall retain in the files of the senate as many copies of each bill
12 as the secretary of the senate deems necessary and the voting records on each question.

13 **4.11 Requests for Funding of Community Service Objectives.**

14 Requests for the funding of community service objectives grants shall not be presented in
15 bill or resolution form, but shall be submitted to the senate fiscal advisor in writing upon a form
16 approved by the chairperson of the senate committee on finance.

17 **4.12 Death or Resignation of a Member.**

18 In the event that any member or member-elect shall die or resign after filing and before
19 consideration by committee, the death or resignation of said member or member-elect shall
20 constitute automatic withdrawal of said bill or resolution and automatic withdrawal of the number
21 of said bill or resolution and said number shall not be used again during the legislative session;
22 provided, however, that where a bill or resolution shall have had more than one sponsor, said bill
23 or resolution and number shall not be withdrawn and the member whose name appears second on
24 said bill or resolution shall become the prime sponsor.

25 **4.13 Limitation on Number of Bills Introduced.**

26 No Senator shall introduce more than twenty-five (25) public bills during the annual
27 session except with the permission of the President of the Senate.

28 **SECTION 5.**

29 **COMMITTEES**

30 **5.1 Standing Committees.**

31 The senate shall have the following standing committees:

- 32 1. Committee on Judiciary
- 33 2. Committee on Finance
- 34 3. Committee on Housing and Municipal Government

- 1 4. Committee on Labor
- 2 5. Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans' Affairs
- 3 6. Committee on Health and Human Services
- 4 7. Committee on Education
- 5 8. Committee on Commerce
- 6 9. Committee on Environment and Agriculture
- 7 10. Committee on Rules, Government Ethics and Oversight

8 **5.1-1 Committee on Judiciary.**

9 It shall be the duty of the committee on judiciary to consider the appointments of the
10 governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent of the senate and all
11 legislation and matters which affect the penal code, judicial system, ethics, open meetings, access
12 to public records and election laws of the state, to maintain oversight over the application, execution
13 and operation of the laws within its jurisdiction, expulsion of a member and to consider such other
14 matters as may be referred to it by the senate. In the matters of judicial appointments, expulsion of
15 a member and those public hearings designated by the committee chair, all testimony shall be under
16 oath and preserved by stenographic record which shall be transcribed upon the order of the chair.

17 **5.1-2 Committee on Finance.**

18 It shall be the duty of the committee on finance to consider the appointments of the
19 governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent of the senate and all
20 legislation and matters relative to revenue, appropriations and taxes, to inquire into the state of the
21 public debt, to report from time to time its opinion thereon and such propositions relative thereto
22 as it shall deem expedient, to maintain oversight over the application, execution and operation of
23 the laws within its jurisdiction and to consider such other matters as may be referred to it by the
24 senate. The chair of the committee shall be authorized to appoint as many sub- committees as he
25 or she deems necessary, including, but not limited to, a sub-committee on veterans affairs.

26 **5.1-3 Committee on Housing and Municipal Government.**

27 It shall be the duty of the committee on housing and municipal government to consider the
28 appointments of the governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent of
29 the senate and all legislation and matters affecting housing, municipal government, transportation,
30 to maintain oversight over the application, execution and operation of the laws within its
31 jurisdiction and to consider such other matters as may be referred to it by the senate.

32 **5.1-4 Committee on Labor.**

33 It shall be the duty of the committee on labor to consider the appointments of the governor
34 referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent of the senate and all legislation

1 and matters relating to the workers' compensation and labor laws of the state, to maintain oversight
2 over the application, execution and operation of the laws within its jurisdiction and to consider such
3 other matters as may be referred to it by the senate.

4 **5.1-5 Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans' Affairs.**

5 It shall be the duty of the committee on special legislation and veterans' affairs to consider
6 the appointments of the governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent
7 of the senate and all legislation and matters relating to constitutional amendments, liquor laws,
8 gaming issues, license plates, veterans' affairs, domestic animals, commissions and resolutions, to
9 maintain oversight over the application, execution and operation of the laws within its jurisdiction
10 and to consider such other matters as may be referred to it by the senate.

11 **5.1-6 Committee on Health and Human Services.**

12 It shall be the duty of the committee on health and human services to consider the
13 appointments of the governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent of
14 the senate and to consider all reports of the departments of health, of human services, of behavioral
15 healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals, of children, youth and families, and of elderly
16 affairs; to consider all legislation and matters expanding or defining further areas of responsibility
17 of the foregoing and to consider all legislation and matters relative to public health and welfare;
18 health care and human service access and quality; health and human service professional standards
19 of practice, and facility standards of care; to maintain oversight over the application, execution and
20 operation of the laws within its jurisdiction; and to consider such other matters as may be referred
21 to it by the senate.

22 **5.1-7 Committee on Education.**

23 It shall be the duty of the committee on education to consider the appointments of the
24 governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent of the senate and all
25 legislation and matters relating to student performance, governance, programming, teacher
26 preparation and planning, as well as the work and operation of all state agencies regarding all levels
27 of education, make findings, and recommend policy initiatives and other actions to the general
28 assembly. The ~~commission~~ [committee](#) shall also exercise oversight in relation to the
29 implementation of all legislation and grants of authority relating to all levels of public education in
30 the state by all agencies, state and local, charged and empowered by the general assembly in relating
31 to all levels of public education, to maintain oversight over the application, execution and operation
32 of the laws within its jurisdiction and to consider such other matters as may be referred to it by the
33 senate.

34 **5.1-8 Committee on Commerce.**

1 It shall be the duty of the committee on commerce to consider the appointments of the
2 governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent of the senate and all
3 legislation and matters relating to financial institutions, business regulation, property and casualty
4 insurance, technology and telecommunications, for profit as well as not-for-profit business entities,
5 to maintain oversight over the application, execution and operation of the laws within its
6 jurisdiction and to consider such other matters as may be referred to it by the senate.

7 **5.1-9 Committee on Environment and Agriculture.**

8 It shall be the duty of the committee on environment and agriculture to consider the
9 appointments of the governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent of
10 the senate and all legislation and matters relating to the conservation of the air, land, water, plant,
11 animal, mineral and other natural resources of the state, and to adopt all means necessary and proper
12 by law to protect the natural environment of the people of the state by providing adequate resource
13 planning for the control and regulation of the use of the natural resources of the state and for the
14 preservation, regeneration, and restoration of the natural environment of the state, to maintain
15 oversight over the application, execution and operation of the laws within its jurisdiction and to
16 consider such other matters as may be referred to it by the senate.

17 **5.1-10 Committee on Rules, Government Ethics and Oversight**

18 It shall be the duty of the committee on rules, government ethics and oversight consider
19 the appointments of the governor referred to it by the senate which require the advice and consent
20 of the senate, and (1) Consider all matters relating to the rules of the senate; (2) to ensure that the
21 members of the Senate and its staff, through education, monitoring and disseminating the opinions
22 of the Rhode Island Ethics Commission, adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, respect
23 the public trust and the rights of all persons, be open, accountable and responsive, avoid the
24 appearance of impropriety, and not use their position for private gain or advantage; (3) to monitor
25 and evaluate past, current and prospective performance of public bodies and statutory entities,
26 including quasi-public agencies that exercise executive governmental functions (except public
27 bodies and statutory entities of the legislative and judiciary branches of the state) and any other
28 public or private person, including any agencies, partnerships, corporation or business entity insofar
29 as such person is acting on behalf of and/or in place of any public agency; (4) to consider the
30 organization, reorganization, creation or termination of such public bodies, statutory entities,
31 including quasi-public agencies and public or private persons; (5) to review and consider the reports
32 of the auditor general; (6) to report its opinion and/or recommendation of legislation or action
33 regarding the foregoing matters; (7) to consider any bill referred to it by the senate, including, but
34 not limited to any act, resolve, resolution or petition; and (8) to consider such other matters that are

1 referred to it by the senate.

2 **5.2 Committee Membership.**

3 Each of the standing committees of the senate shall consist of the president of the senate,
4 ex officio with voting rights, and the majority and minority leaders of the senate, ex officio, with
5 voting rights, and senators appointed by the president of the senate, each to serve until ~~January 5,~~
6 ~~2021~~ [January 3, 2023](#). Provided, however, that the president of the senate may change the
7 committee assignment of a member without the member's consent, for cause only; and provided
8 further, however, that each senator other than the president and the majority and minority leaders,
9 shall serve as a member of one of the following standing committees: committee on health and
10 human services; committee on commerce; committee on finance; committee on the judiciary. In
11 addition to the committees appointed by the president of the senate, the majority and minority whips
12 of the senate shall serve ex officio, with voting rights on all standing committees of the senate.

13 **5.3 Vacancies on Committees.**

14 All vacancies occurring in any committee of the senate shall be filled by the president of
15 the senate.

16 **5.4 Officers of Committees.**

17 The president of the senate shall appoint from the membership of each committee a chair,
18 vice chair and secretary and such other committee officers as the president of the senate deems
19 appropriate.

20 **5.5 Select Committees.**

21 The senate may, from time to time, by resolution, provide for the establishment of select
22 committees upon such subjects as it may deem proper, and upon the adoption of such resolution,
23 the president of the senate shall appoint the chair and members thereof, and shall provide for
24 minority party representation. Any committee created pursuant to this rule shall be deemed a
25 standing committee for all purposes of law, including the applicability of section 22-6-2.1 of the
26 general laws.

27 **5.6 Referral to Committee.**

28 No bill shall be considered or acted upon by the senate unless the same has been considered
29 by, reported, or recalled from a committee thereof, or from a joint committee, except as otherwise
30 provided in these rules. All acts seeking to vacate the forfeiture of a charter previously granted
31 under the laws of this state shall not be referred to committee but rather directly assigned to the
32 calendar.

33 **5.7 Committees of Conference.**

34 There shall be appointed from time to time committees of conference to which are referred

1 matters of difference with the house with respect to bills or resolutions. Such committees shall be
2 appointed by the speaker and the president of the senate, and shall be comprised of five (5) members
3 from the house and five (5) members from the senate. At least one (1) member in each chamber
4 shall be a member of the minority party. When possible, one (1) member shall be the prime sponsor
5 of the bill or resolution being considered before the committee of conference and one (1) member
6 shall be from the committee that shall have considered the bill or resolution. The committee may
7 propose any changes within the scope of the bill or resolution, but any action, including changes,
8 taken by committee shall be by a majority vote of the members of each chamber on the committee.
9 The committee report shall be made to both chambers at the same time. Each chamber shall vote
10 to accept or reject the report. A vote by either chamber to accept the report of the committee shall
11 be the final action by that chamber on the bill or resolution. If both chambers vote to accept the
12 report of the committee, the bill is passed or the resolution adopted as of the time the last chamber
13 votes to accept the report. If either chamber rejects the report of the committee, the bill or resolution
14 is defeated and the second chamber shall not be required to consider the committee report. The
15 report of the committee may be accepted or rejected, but it may not be amended. The committee
16 report shall contain the following information: the bill number and title, the members of the
17 committee, the action of the committee, and the signature of the members of the committee
18 accepting or rejecting the report.

19 The conferees shall confine themselves to the differences which exist within bills or
20 resolutions between the house and senate. The presentation of reports of committees of conference
21 shall be in order after having been signed by a majority of the members of the committee of each
22 chamber. Consideration of a report of a committee of conference by the senate shall be in order
23 when it has been made electronically available to all members and listed on the calendar for the
24 required period of time according to these rules.

25 **5.8 Oaths Administered in Committee.**

26 In the discretion of the chair, any witness may, before testifying, be required to declare that
27 they will testify truthfully, by oath or affirmation.

28 **SECTION 6.**

29 **PROCEEDINGS IN COMMITTEE**

30 **6.1 Time for Committee Meetings.**

31 The president of the senate, in consultation with the chairs, shall establish regular calendar
32 days and times for the meetings of all standing committees. The committee chair may call such
33 other meetings as may be required to conduct the business of the committee.

34 **6.2 Committee Agenda – Posting.**

1 At least forty-eight (48) hours before any standing committee meeting, a committee agenda
2 containing the number, title and a short explanation of each bill to be considered will be placed on
3 the official general assembly website, as well as on a bulletin or electronic board of which shall be
4 for the public's use and shall be situated at the main entrance to the state library and the legislative
5 data bulletin board. The rule shall not apply to bills previously passed by the senate and amended
6 by the house.

7 **6.3 Convening of Meeting.**

8 The chair of the committee or, in the chair's absence, the vice chair, shall call all regular
9 sessions of the committee, set agenda and proceed with the order of business.

10 **6.4 Public Participation.**

11 **6.4-1 Open Meetings.**

12 Every standing committee meeting, except executive sessions, shall be open to the public
13 during the consideration of all matters coming before it. At such open meetings, persons other than
14 members of the committee may testify at the discretion of the committee chair on any matter posted
15 for a hearing. Any matter posted for consideration only shall not be open for public testimony.

16 **6.4-2 Executive Sessions.**

17 Any standing committee may be called into executive session by the chair or upon motion
18 of one of the committee members if the matter under consideration is deemed by the chair to comply
19 with those provisions of the "Open Meetings" law (chapter 42-46) which provides for closed
20 meetings; provided, however, when the chair of any standing committee calls the committee into
21 executive session, the majority of those members present in the executive session may vote not to
22 meet in executive session after having heard the reasons for such executive session but no other
23 votes shall be permitted in executive sessions. The chair of the committee which may be called into
24 executive session shall provide a general description to the public of the reason for calling such
25 committee into executive session.

26 **6.4-3 Public Hearings.**

27 In the discretion of the chair, public hearings may be advertised in newspapers,
28 stenographic records kept and hearings held at locations other than the state house. The purpose of
29 the public hearing shall be to solicit the comments of the public on the matter being considered. At
30 the public hearing all persons shall be permitted to testify; provided, however, the committee chair
31 may limit the amount of time allotted to speakers except that the prime sponsor shall not have a
32 time limit to speak and shall upon request be the first speaker at the hearing. After the public hearing
33 has been held for a reasonable period and if there are still persons wishing to speak, the committee
34 chair may continue the hearing until another date.

1 **6.5 Hearing and Consideration of Bills.**

2 Upon a written request by the prime sponsor of any public bill received by the secretary of
3 the senate before the closing of the next legislative day after the deadline for introduction as
4 specified in section 4.5 that a committee hearing be held with respect to such bill, the committee
5 chair shall schedule a committee hearing within eight (8) legislative days of such request unless a
6 later date is agreed to by the prime sponsor. "Received" as used herein shall mean receipt in hand
7 by the secretary of the senate or his or her designee. The secretary shall note the date and time of
8 receipt on the request and such notation shall be dispositive. On the same day, the sponsor shall
9 hand deliver copies of the request to the president of the senate and to the committee chair or their
10 designees. The committee shall consider said bill not more than eight (8) legislative days after the
11 committee hearing, unless a later date is agreed to by the prime sponsor. If the committee does not
12 consider the bill then the committee shall be discharged of its responsibility to consider such bill
13 and such bill shall be placed on the senate calendar pursuant to section 7.6 hereof. Consideration
14 by a committee shall mean any one of the following actions: recommendation of passage,
15 recommendation of passage as amended, transfer to another committee, indefinite postponement,
16 hold for further study or defeat of the bill. Provided further, the minority leader may request in
17 writing within twenty-four (24) hours after the deadline for introductions specified in section 4.5 a
18 hearing on any senate bill in committee. In the event a request is made pursuant to this rule at a
19 time less than sixteen (16) days before the deadline for committee consideration set forth in section
20 6.9, then such request shall not be proper and shall be automatically denied.

21 **6.6 Quorum.**

22 A committee shall not vote upon any bill in the absence of a quorum which shall consist of
23 a majority of the committee's members; provided, however, that at the discretion of the chair, less
24 than a quorum may conduct any hearing including public hearings.

25 **6.7 Minority Representation.**

26 When there is no minority member present and the committee is to consider a bill, the
27 committee chair shall notify the office of the minority leader. Unless waived by the minority leader,
28 the committee shall not conduct business for a reasonable time not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes
29 or until a minority member of the committee is present. Once a minority member is present, his or
30 her subsequent absence will not require further notice to the minority leader. For purposes of this
31 rule, an independent senator shall be considered to be a minority member.

32 **6.8 Committee Votes.**

33 All votes in committee on public bills shall be a recorded roll call vote. The vote upon all
34 motions or bills not considered a "public bill" shall, upon the request of any member of the

1 committee, be a recorded roll call vote. Otherwise all votes shall be put by yeas and nays.
2 Committee chairs shall submit all bills approved by committee to the floor forthwith, with a record
3 of the committee vote.

4 **6.9 Deadline for Consideration.**

5 After the Thursday preceding the spring recess week of each session, committees shall
6 consider only those public bills which have been acted upon and transmitted to the senate by the
7 house of representatives; provided, however, that the president of the senate may request a senate
8 committee to immediately consider a senate bill then in committee and said bill shall be considered
9 by the committee.

10 **6.10 Discharge from Committee.**

11 No bill shall be taken or called from any such committee, or the committee discharged
12 from the consideration thereof, except:

13 Any senator may present a petition, in writing, to discharge a committee from further
14 consideration of a bill which has been in the possession of the committee for thirty (30) legislative
15 days without having been considered, but only one petition on a particular bill may be presented
16 during the course of a session. Prior to presenting the petition, the senator must introduce a
17 resolution of intent to discharge such committee. Such resolution of intent shall contain the bill
18 number and the committee to be discharged. The presiding officer shall cause the resolution of
19 intent to be printed in the journal of the senate. The petition shall be placed in the custody of the
20 secretary of the senate who shall arrange some convenient place for the signatures of the senators
21 to be placed thereon in the presence of the reading clerk during the hours in which the senate is in
22 session. A signature may be withdrawn by a senator at any time before the petition shall become
23 effective.

24 On the first day of each week, there shall be printed in the journal of the senate the petitions
25 pending under these rules, together with the signatures thereto; provided, however, that as soon as
26 a majority of all the senators elected to the senate shall have affixed their signatures to any such
27 petition to discharge a committee under this rule, the presiding officer shall cause notice thereof to
28 be given to chair and clerk of the committee to which such bill was referred, and such notice shall,
29 thereupon, automatically discharge the committee from further consideration of the bill and the bill
30 shall be placed upon the calendar in accordance with section 7.6 hereof.

31 Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to change the deadline for
32 consideration as specified in section 6.9.

33 **6.11 Compelling Committee Action.**

34 If a committee to which a bill has been referred fails to consider such bill within sixteen

1 (16) legislative days of its referral, the prime sponsor of such bill, or a majority of the appointed
2 members, but not less than four (4) committee members, may, in writing, request the chair of the
3 committee, through the presiding officer of the senate, that such bill be considered. The request
4 shall be printed in the journal of the senate. The committee shall consider such bill at its first
5 meeting held at least three (3) legislative days after such request is made. If the committee does not
6 consider the bill within nine (9) legislative days of receipt of the request then the committee shall
7 be discharged of its responsibility to consider such bill and such bill shall be placed on the senate
8 calendar pursuant to section 7.6 hereof. Consideration by a committee shall be interpreted to mean
9 any one of the following actions: recommendation of passage, recommendation of passage as
10 amended, transfer to another committee, indefinite postponement, hold for further study or defeat
11 of the bill. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to change the deadline for
12 consideration as specified in section 6.9.

13 **6.12 Defeat of a Bill.**

14 Once a bill is defeated in committee, the same shall not be acted upon or considered again
15 during the same legislative year.

16 **6.13 Indefinite Postponement.**

17 Whenever any bill is postponed indefinitely in committee, the same shall not be acted upon
18 or considered again during the same legislative year.

19 **6.14 Transfer of Bills.**

20 In the event the chair of any standing committee determines that any bill then pending
21 before the committee would more properly be pending before another standing committee of the
22 senate, the chair shall transfer such bill to such other standing committee as is deemed appropriate
23 during the reports of committees.

24 **6.15 Committee Records.**

25 All recorded votes of committees, all written testimony submitted to a committee, and the
26 transcripts of any recorded testimony shall be retained by the clerk of each committee, shall
27 constitute public records, and shall be available for inspection to any senator and to any person
28 upon request. All committee votes, transcripts and testimony shall be transmitted to the secretary
29 of state pursuant to state law and senate policy following final adjournment in even numbered years.

30 **6.16 Attribution of Bills.**

31 Upon presentation of testimony before a committee, the prime sponsor of the bill shall
32 provide to the committee the name of any individual, group or organization responsible for the
33 substantive basis or text of the bill.

34 **6.17 Companion Bills.**

1 Any house bill, identical to a senate bill previously heard in committee, may be considered
2 without further hearing.

3 **6.18 Substitute Bills.**

4 Any proposed substitute bill, or a substitute of a bill held by a committee, shall be posted
5 at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to consideration. Such postings will be placed on the official
6 general assembly website, as well as on the legislative data bulletin board and on a bulletin or
7 electronic board of which shall be for the public's use and shall be situated at the main entrance to
8 the state library. The electronic posting shall be considered the official date of the posting. In the
9 event that the electronic posting is inoperable, then the official posting shall be the legislative data
10 bulletin board. The chair may waive this twenty-four (24) hour posting requirement, for
11 amendments technical, grammatical, or not substantive or substantial in nature. This section shall
12 not apply to the annual state budget bill.

13 **SECTION 7.**

14 **PROCEEDINGS ON THE SENATE FLOOR**

15 **7.1 Right to the Floor.**

16 No senator shall address another except through the presiding officer. A senator shall rise
17 to put a question, may state it or read a paper sitting. When any senator wishes to speak or to deliver
18 any matter to the senate, the senator shall press his or her recognition control and the presiding
19 officer shall recognize the senator who so requests recognition and the order of recognition shall
20 be determined by the presiding officer. The senator so recognized shall not be interrupted while
21 speaking except by a call to order or a motion to suspend section 3.5. The senator shall then
22 immediately be seated unless permitted by the senate to proceed, which shall be determined upon
23 motion without debate. No senator, exclusive of the majority and minority leaders, the prime
24 sponsor or floor manager, or the chair of the committee from which the bill or resolution was
25 reported, shall speak more than twice to the same question without leave of the senate, which shall
26 be determined without debate; nor more than once until every member choosing to speak shall have
27 spoken; nor for longer than five (5) minutes without the leave of the senate, which shall be
28 determined without debate. A senator may yield his or her right to the floor to another senator.

29 **7.2 Personal Privilege.**

30 Only at the time provided for in section 3.3, a senator may claim the floor to address the
31 senate on personal privilege. Personal privilege shall include the right to reply to criticism, or to
32 discuss anything clearly derogatory to the member or which reflects upon his or her character that
33 appears in the press or other public medium but shall not include the right to discuss favorable
34 references to the senator, nor to reply to generalized criticism of the senate which does not refer to

1 him or to her specifically, nor to attack another member of the senate personally. Whether a
2 member's remarks constitute personal privilege shall be determined by the presiding officer.

3 **7.3 Addressing the Senate on Important Matters.**

4 Only at the time provided for in section 3.3, a senator may request unanimous consent of
5 the senators present to address the senate on a topic or matter of importance to the welfare of the
6 state. A senator granted the right to so address the senate may be interrupted at any time by another
7 senator who wishes to object to the first senator's right to continue to address the senate and upon
8 such objection the first senator's right to address the senate shall terminate.

9 **7.4 Objectionable Language.**

10 No senator shall use profane, insulting, or abusive language or act in any manner that is
11 disruptive to the course of public debate on the senate floor, or in testimony before any committee
12 of the general assembly.

13 **7.5 Priority of Business.**

14 All questions relating to priority of business to be acted upon shall be decided by the
15 presiding officer without debate.

16 **7.6 Calendar.**

17 There shall be a calendar kept by the secretary of the senate upon which shall be placed the
18 bills reported by all committees, and all other matters ordered placed thereon by the senate. Matters
19 on the calendar shall be arranged by the secretary of the senate in numerical order by committee
20 unless otherwise ordered by the president of the senate in agreement with the majority leader and
21 the minority leader. Such calendar shall be electronically available to all members of the senate.
22 Except as provided in section 7.13, and during consideration of the calendar, no other business shall
23 intervene except to receive a communication from the house or a motion to suspend section 3.5.

24 All business on the calendar not disposed of at the time of adjournment shall be first in
25 order on the calendar the next day. No matter of business on the calendar shall be considered upon
26 its merits unless it has been on such calendar for at least two (2) calendar days; except that the
27 president of the senate may order a bill placed on the calendar for less than two (2) calendar days;
28 provided, however, a bill passed by the senate and amended by the house of representatives may
29 be considered by the senate without being on the calendar for two (2) calendar days if the
30 requirements of section 4.9-1 have been met.

31 **7.7 Consent Calendar.**

32 Notwithstanding the provisions of section 7.6, the secretary of the senate shall also
33 maintain a separate calendar, designated as the consent calendar, upon which shall be placed
34 resolutions required by section 4.7, acts seeking to vacate the forfeiture of a corporate charter and

1 such other bills as directed by the president of the senate. Matters on the consent calendar shall be
2 in order for disposal on each day and shall include all such matters reported or referred thereto from
3 the previous day. Such consent calendar shall be posted in the chamber of the senate. All matters
4 on the consent calendar shall be disposed by roll call vote on a single motion except such matters
5 as may be objected to by any single senator, which said matter or matters shall be held over on the
6 regular calendar for the next legislative day.

7 **7.8 Reports of Joint Committees.**

8 No bill reported by or forwarded on the recommendation of a joint committee of the two
9 houses shall be in order for concurrence by the senate if it shall appear that the members of such
10 joint committee on the part of the senate, if in attendance on the general assembly, shall not have
11 been notified or present when the subject was acted on by such joint committee. No report shall be
12 acted on in the senate from any joint committee unless as subscribed by a senator who is a member
13 of said committee. Any report from a joint committee shall be made on the floor of the senate by a
14 member of said committee, notwithstanding that said member may not have concurred in the report
15 and said report shall be held on the desk unless ordered placed on the calendar pursuant to section
16 7.6 by the president of the senate or by a majority vote of the senate.

17 **7.9 Messages from the House.**

18 When a message is received from the house of representatives, transmitting any papers, the
19 secretary of the senate shall transmit to the office of the president of the senate all house transmittals
20 received on that day. The president of the senate shall assign house transmittals to committees upon
21 adjournment of the senate. The secretary of the senate shall cause all house transmittals to be
22 published in the senate journal for the day such transmittals are received. Any senator may object
23 to the committee assignment for any transmittal received during the previous legislative day. Upon
24 objection being made, the presiding officer shall assign the transmittal to the committee requested
25 by the senator making the objection, provided, however, that if another senator objects to any
26 assignment or proposed assignment of the transmittal, then the presiding officer shall call for a vote
27 of the senate on any motion for assignment which has been made and seconded, such motion
28 requiring a majority vote of those senators present and voting for assignment to a particular
29 committee.

30 During the time for consideration of house transmittals, a senator may move for immediate
31 consideration of a house transmittal, received by the secretary of the senate on the previous
32 legislative day. If there is no objection to the motion, it is deemed to be approved, but if there is
33 objection to the motion for immediate consideration, the presiding officer shall submit the motion
34 to a vote of the senate, such motion for immediate consideration shall require the votes of two-

1 thirds (2/3) of those senators present and voting, for approval.

2 **7.10 Amendments.**

3 No senator may amend from the floor any bill pending before the senate unless such
4 amendment be submitted, electronically or in writing, with sufficient copies signed by the
5 proponent, and read to the body; provided, however, that no amendment to the annual budget bill
6 making appropriations for the support of the state may be offered, except with the agreement of
7 two-thirds (2/3) of the members present, unless copies thereof shall have been filed with the
8 secretary of the senate no later than 12:00 o'clock noon on the legislative day preceding the
9 legislative day on which the budget bill shall be in order for consideration: provided however that
10 with majority consent a senator may make an oral amendment of a technical or minor nature.

11 **7.11 Votes in Concurrence.**

12 Whenever any bill shall come before the senate for concurrence, and the senate concurs
13 without amendments, or fails to concur, the secretary of the senate may announce the concurrence
14 or nonconcurrence to the other house, but the original bill received by the senate shall not be
15 transmitted to the other house.

16 **7.12 Motions.**

17 No motion shall be debated until it has been seconded. For the purpose of recorded votes
18 only the first second shall be recorded. A motion may be withdrawn by the mover at any time before
19 a decision or a motion to amend, except a motion to reconsider, which shall not be withdrawn after
20 the time has elapsed within which it could be originally made.

21 **7.13 Interruption of Debate.**

22 When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received except to suspend section
23 3.5, to adjourn, to recommit, for the previous question, to close debate, to fix a time for closing
24 debate, to take a recess, to lay on the table, to take from the table, to transmit, to postpone
25 indefinitely, to change calendar arrangement, or to amend, and any motion or resolution the purpose
26 of which is to take any bill or any other matter from committees of the senate or to discharge a
27 committee from the consideration thereof, which several motions shall have precedence in the order
28 in which they are here arranged and shall be decided by majority vote without debate; provided
29 further that a motion to recommit as to any bill which is placed on the senate calendar may be voted
30 by yeas and nays; however, if the prime sponsor timely objects, the motion shall be voted on by
31 electronic roll of the senate.

32 **7.14 Adjournment.**

33 When time for meeting of the senate shall have been previously fixed, a motion to adjourn
34 and a motion to suspend section 3.5 shall always be in order. The senate shall not be adjourned

1 except by affirmative vote of a majority of the senators present and voting.

2 **7.15 Lay on the Table.**

3 When an amendment proposed to any pending measure be laid on the table, it shall not
4 carry with it, or prejudice such measure.

5 **7.16 Dividing Questions.**

6 A question that is susceptible of division shall, at the request of the majority, be divided
7 and put separately upon the propositions of which it is compounded.

8 **7.17 Non-Germane Amendments.**

9 No motion or proposition of a subject different from that under consideration shall be
10 admitted under color of amendment.

11 **7.18 Motion for Reconsideration.**

12 A senator on the prevailing side of any vote may, on the same legislative day, move to
13 reconsider the vote on the same or following legislative day. When a bill has been reconsidered it
14 shall not be reconsidered again during the session. Bills and other papers in reference to which a
15 motion to reconsider is pending shall, unless otherwise ordered, remain in the possession of the
16 secretary of the senate until the right of reconsideration has expired. The privilege to reconsider
17 granted by this rule may be suspended by a majority vote of the senators present and voting.

18 **7.19 Printed Material.**

19 If the reading of any printed or written paper be objected to, the matter shall be determined
20 by a majority vote of the senate without debate.

21 **7.20 Recommittal.**

22 No motion to recommit shall be entertained by the presiding officer as to any bill which is
23 placed on the calendar as the result of section 6.10 until every senator desiring to be heard has been
24 recognized, notwithstanding the provisions of section 7.13.

25 **7.21 Immediate Consideration.**

26 During the time for introduction and reference of new business, as provided in section 3.3,
27 a senator may introduce a bill and move for immediate consideration of the bill at that time. If there
28 is no objection to the motion, for immediate consideration it is deemed to be approved, but if there
29 is objection to the motion for immediate consideration, the presiding officer shall submit the motion
30 to a vote of the senate; such motion for immediate consideration shall require the votes of two-
31 thirds (2/3) of those senators present and voting, for approval. If the bill is not available
32 electronically to all members of the senate at the time of the request for immediate consideration,
33 then a hard copy of the bill shall be made available to any senator upon request.

34 **7.22 Questions During Debate.**

1 A senator, while speaking after recognition by the chair, may, upon request of a senator,
2 yield to him or her temporarily without thereby relinquishing his or her prior right to the floor and,
3 thereafter, may terminate such interruption and resume speaking at any time; provided, however,
4 that it shall not be in order for a senator to rise and request that a senator, other than the one with
5 the right to the floor, yield to a question. Furthermore, it shall not be in order for a senator, with the
6 right to the floor, to ask another senator to yield to a question, unless such senator has previously
7 spoken during the debate on the matter. All questions and responses shall be directed through the
8 chair and the presiding officer shall not be interrupted when speaking.

9 SECTION 8.

10 VOTING ON THE SENATE FLOOR

11 8.1 Method of Voting.

12 The electronic roll call of the senate shall be called on any vote pertaining to an election,
13 public bill, on passage of the consent calendar and on any other vote at the request of any senator
14 present; otherwise, votes shall be put by yeas and nays. In naming sums or numbers, and fixing
15 times, the largest sum or longest time shall be put first.

16 8.2 Voting Machine Inoperative.

17 In the event the machine is not to be used to record a vote or is not operating properly, all
18 votes and other determinations may be taken as required by senate rules, either by voice vote,
19 division vote or by calling the roll alphabetically and recording the yeas and nays. If a senator's
20 voting device is out of order, the senator shall rise and announce it to the presiding officer and cast
21 his or her vote orally prior to the declaration of the result of the vote.

22 8.3 Who May Vote.

23 Any member who is present on the senate floor must vote. Any senator who is not on the
24 floor at such time, but who returns before the machine is locked, shall be permitted to vote. Without
25 objection or with a majority vote, a senator may be permitted to cast a vote after the results have
26 been announced, provided however such request shall be made on the same legislative day and,
27 only if the vote if so permitted, will not change the result previously announced.

28 8.4 Control of Electronic Voting System.

29 The electronic voting system shall be under the control of the presiding officer and shall
30 be operated by such personnel as the president of the senate so designates.

31 8.5 Conducting a Vote.

32 At a reasonable time prior to any vote being taken, the presiding officer shall announce that
33 a vote is about to be taken. When any senator other than the president of the senate is presiding,
34 such senator may direct either the Secretary of the Senate or the reading clerk to cast his or her vote

1 at his or her voting station, but at no other time may a senator designate any other person to cast
2 his or her vote. Until the completion of the voting, no senator shall be recognized, and no other
3 business shall be transacted. When sufficient time has elapsed for each senator to vote prior to
4 locking the machine, the presiding officer shall ask if any member present desires to vote or change
5 his or her vote. The presiding officer shall then order the machine locked and activate the recording
6 process. The voting machine shall remain locked between all votes.

7 **8.6 Announcing the Tally.**

8 When the vote is completely recorded, the Secretary of the Senate shall advise the presiding
9 officer of the result; and the presiding officer shall announce the result to the senate and the result
10 shall be recorded in the journal.

11 **8.7 Changing a Vote.**

12 No vote may be changed after the system has been locked and the vote recorded except
13 that, after a vote has been recorded, any senator may, by a majority vote of the senate, be permitted
14 to change his or her vote, provided that such change be effected on the same calendar day as his or
15 her original vote.

16 **8.8 Recording Votes.**

17 **8.8-1** On any recorded vote, no senator shall be recorded as having voted unless he or she
18 has been recorded or recognized as being present prior to the conduct of said vote.

19 **8.8-2** Upon request, on any non-recorded vote, any senator shall have his or her vote
20 recorded so that it shall appear in the journal of the senate.

21 **8.9 Voting for Another.**

22 No senator may vote for another senator; nor may any person cast a vote for a senator,
23 except as otherwise provided in section 8.5. A senator who voted for another senator may be
24 punished in a manner the senate determines. A person voting for a senator, when not authorized by
25 section 8.5, is barred from the floor of the senate and may be further punished as the senate
26 determines.

27 **8.10 Explanation of Vote.**

28 No explanation of any vote will be permitted during the voting or after a vote has been cast.

29 **8.11 Statement of the Question.**

30 After the question has been put, but before the system is locked, any senator may call for a
31 statement of the question.

32 **8.12 No Interruption.**

33 While the presiding officer is putting the question, or the vote is being recorded, no senator
34 shall speak or leave his or her place.

1 parliamentary and one head page and as many assistant pages, doorkeepers and legislative aides
2 as the president of the senate shall deem necessary; and any or all of them may be removed at the
3 pleasure of the president of the senate.

4 **10.2 Absence of a Quorum.**

5 When there shall be seven (7) or more senators, but less than a quorum of the senate
6 present, a majority of the senators present may direct the presiding officer to compel the attendance
7 of absent senators in accordance with law.

8 **10.3 Amendment and Suspension of Rules.**

9 No rule shall be repealed, suspended or amended, or the operation thereof temporarily
10 suspended except by two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting.

11 **10.4 Access to the Senate Chamber.**

12 **10.4-1 Access During Senate Session.**

13 Ten minutes prior to the time the senate is scheduled to convene, the secretary of the senate
14 shall clear the senate chamber of all persons other than members of the general assembly, general
15 assembly staff, guests of a senator, and authorized representatives of the news media. From this
16 time to the adjournment or recess of said session no persons other than those listed above shall be
17 admitted to the senate chamber except with permission from the senate president.

18 **10.4-2 Senators' Seats.**

19 The seat of each senator shall be assigned by the president of the senate, and in no event
20 shall any other person be permitted to occupy such assigned seat.

21 **10.4-3 Sheriff's Duties.**

22 It shall be the duty of the sheriff, or the sheriff's deputies in attendance in the senate, or in
23 their absence, a member of the capitol police department, to see that sections 10.4-1, 10.4-2, 10.4-
24 3, 10.4-4 and 10.4-9 are enforced, and that all senate entrances and exits are kept completely clear
25 and open to passage to and from the chamber.

26 **10.4-4 Gallery.**

27 When the normal seating accommodations for visitors in the gallery have been filled, no
28 additional seats shall be installed, and no persons shall be thereafter admitted to the gallery of the
29 senate while in session except to fill vacancies.

30 **10.5 Confidentiality of Drafting.**

31 At the request of any senator or senate attorney to the director of the legislative council, an
32 entry into the word processing system may be made confidential so that the entry shall be accessible
33 only to the senator or senate attorney making such request or his or her designee. An entry may be
34 a bill, letter, memorandum or any other document.

1 **10.6 Misuse of Rules.**

2 If it appears that the rules are being used as a tactic to impede senate business, the presiding
3 officer may make a decision to that effect and put the matter before the senate and a majority vote
4 of the senators present shall sustain with finality the ruling of the presiding officer.

5 **10.7 Extraordinary and Special Session.**

6 In the event of the calling of an extraordinary session of the general assembly by the
7 governor, or a reconvened session by the speaker of the house and the president of the senate, said
8 session shall be conducted pursuant to these rules; provided, however, that sections 4.9-1, 6.2, 7.6
9 and 7.8 are not applicable to any such session; and, provided further, that any bill, act or resolution
10 for consideration of which the session is called shall have been provided to the members at least
11 twenty-four (24) hours prior to the consideration of the senate.

12 **10.7.1 Voting by Proxy During Declared State of Emergency.**

13 Notwithstanding any senate rule to the contrary, during any declared state of emergency
14 and while the senate is in session, a senator may request from the presiding officer permission to
15 vote by proxy on any bill or matter before the senate. The presiding officer shall, when deciding to
16 grant or deny the request, consider whether the senator making the request would face a hardship
17 in attending session, or, during a contagion, falls within a high-risk category as defined by the
18 Rhode Island Department of Health or an equivalent agency. If the presiding officer grants a senator
19 permission to vote by proxy, the presiding officer shall notify the secretary of the senate of the
20 decision to allow such vote by proxy. The secretary of the senate shall prepare a proxy(ies) for each
21 senator voting by proxy, in a form substantially as follows: The bill number or matter to be voted
22 on followed by a box to approve and a box to disapprove. The secretary of the senate shall deliver
23 the proxy(ies), by email or hand delivery, to each senator authorized to vote by proxy. Any senator
24 voting by proxy shall have their signature notarized and shall return the notarized proxy(ies), by
25 email or hand delivery, to the leader of their respective caucus. The majority or minority leader
26 shall forward the executed proxy(ies) to the secretary of the senate to be recorded in the journal.
27 The right to vote by proxy shall cease on the date that the state of emergency is officially declared
28 over.

29 **10.7.2 Remote committee hearings.**

30 Notwithstanding any senate rule to the contrary, during any declared state of emergency
31 and while the senate is in session, a committee chairperson, with the permission of the presiding
32 officer, may schedule a remote meeting of the committee in which they serve as chairperson for
33 the purpose of hearing and/or considering any matter that has been assigned to the committee.
34 Unless otherwise provided for, the chairperson or vice chairperson of the committee shall ensure

1 [that all requirements of section 6 of these rules are complied with. This rule shall be construed to](#)
2 [allow for both remote and in person/remote participation.](#)

3 **10.8 Mason's Rules.**

4 Mason's Rules of Order shall govern procedure on the senate floor and in the committees
5 of the senate in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with these rules or with any joint rules
6 of the senate and house.

7 **10.9 Use of Facilities.**

8 The senate locker room, lounge and corridor adjacent to them shall be for the exclusive use
9 of the senators and their guests.

10 **10.10 Decorum.**

11 No senator shall use profane, insulting or abusive language or act in any manner that
12 interferes with the orderly conduct of the session of the senate. [The president of the senate shall](#)
13 [preserve decorum and order in the senate chamber. While in the senate chamber, members, staff](#)
14 [and guests shall be required to dress in proper and appropriate attire, such as blouses, dress slacks](#)
15 [and collared shirts with accompanying jacket.](#)

16 **10.11 Smoking Prohibited.**

17 Smoking shall be prohibited in all senate areas including, but not limited to: the chamber,
18 gallery, lounge, committee rooms, offices, restrooms or hallways. The presiding officer shall
19 enforce this rule.

20 **10.12 Consumption of Food and Alcoholic Beverages.**

21 The consumption of food and alcoholic beverages shall be prohibited on the senate floor.
22 Except at the specific request of a member, all beverages consumed on the floor shall be in paper
23 or plastic cups.

24 ~~**10.13 Appropriate Attire Required.**~~

25 ~~All persons on the floor of the senate while the senate is in session shall be properly dressed,~~
26 ~~and the presiding officer shall enforce this rule by appropriate means.~~

27 ~~**10.14**~~ **10.13 Electronic Devices.**

28 ~~During sessions cell phones shall not be used on the floor of the senate or in committee~~
29 ~~hearing rooms when committee meetings are in session.~~ [Members shall be courteous and](#)
30 [professional when using electronic devices.](#)

31 ~~**10.15**~~ **10.14 Photographic Equipment.**

32 During sessions, photographic equipment that blocks ingress or egress or unduly creates a
33 disturbance as determined by the president of the senate or the senate committee chair, shall not be
34 used on the floor of the senate or in committee hearing rooms when committee meetings are in

1 session.

2 ~~10.16~~ 10.15 **Display of Posters, Signs, and Banners on the Floor.**

3 No placard, sign, poster, banner, chart or other visual aid of similar nature shall be
4 displayed on the floor of the Senate or used in debate at any time when the Senate is in session
5 without the consent of the presiding officer. Any decision of the presiding officer under this rule
6 may be appealed to the body.

7 ~~10.17~~ 10.16 **Display of Posters, Signs, and Banners Prohibited in the Gallery or
8 Hearing Rooms.**

9 No placard, sign, poster, banner, chart or visual aid of similar nature shall be displayed in
10 the gallery or committee hearing room at any time when the Senate or a committee is in session.
11 The presiding officer shall order any such object so displayed to be removed.

12 ~~10.18~~ 10.17 **Official Notice.**

13 Except as otherwise provided in these rules, notice to a member transmitted from the Office
14 of the President through the Rhode Island General Assembly email system to the rilegislature.gov
15 email address assigned to the member shall constitute official written notice to the member as of
16 the date and time of the transmission. It is the responsibility of the members to monitor their
17 rilegislature.gov email address on a regular basis, or to have email messages forwarded to an
18 address which is monitored on a regular basis. Alternatively, a member may elect to receive such
19 notice directly at an email address other than the member's rilegislature.gov email address by
20 executing a form available in the Office of the President. Once designated, transmissions to the
21 alternate email address shall constitute written notice to the member as of the date and time of the
22 transmission and will continue to be such until the Office of the President is notified of a different
23 address.

24 ~~10.19~~ 10.18 **Continuing Ethics Education.**

25 All state senators and senate employees shall annually participate in a continuing education
26 program presented by the Rhode Island Ethics Commission on the Rhode Island Code of Ethics
27 and related laws.

28 ~~10.20~~ 10.19 **Continuing Education and Training.**

29 All state senators and senate employees, shall annually participate in a continuing
30 education program presented by the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights.

31 ~~10.21~~ 10.20 **Discipline of a Member.**

32 The extraordinary power of expulsion generally should be reserved for very serious
33 breaches of legal or ethical responsibilities of members. A complaint to expel a member shall
34 commence with a resolution sponsored by the senate president; provided however, if the president

1 is the subject of the resolution to expel, the resolution shall be sponsored by the president pro
2 tempore. The secretary of the senate shall refer the resolution to the committee on judiciary. The
3 committee shall investigate the matter and shall have the right to compel witnesses and produce
4 documents by subpoena and other customary means. The committee shall afford the member due
5 process. Due process shall be defined as customary legislative process for hearings, to include:
6 properly served notice of all hearings, the right to testify and refute the allegations and the right to
7 present evidence. In addition, individual notice shall be served upon the member and the member
8 shall have the right to cross examine any witness. The vote of a majority of the committee shall be
9 sent to the floor for the next legislative day available for consideration. All testimony shall be under
10 oath and preserved by stenographic record which shall be transcribed upon the order of the chair.
11 Expulsion shall require by two-thirds of the members elected voting for approval of the resolution
12 to expel.

13 ~~10.22~~ 10.21 Elections.

14 (1) On the first day of session, in an odd-numbered year, the senate shall be called to order
15 by the senior member in continuous service present from Newport: "from Newport" shall be defined
16 as any member who lives in Newport, if none, then the senior member whose district includes any
17 of the City of Newport. If there are two (2) or more members of equal seniority of service, then by
18 that one of them that shall be senior in age. The roll of members as appears by the list of senators
19 shall then be called by the clerk. If a quorum is present, the member calling the senate to order as
20 provided above shall call for nominations for the office of president of the senate, and shall call for
21 a roll call vote of all members voting, and after the votes have been counted by him or her and by
22 the clerks of the senate, he or she shall declare the result, and the voting shall continue until some
23 person receives a majority of all the votes, and the person receiving that majority shall be the
24 president of the senate for the ensuing term of two (2) years; (2) The member so calling the senate
25 to order shall not receive, entertain, or put to vote any motion or question whatever, or point of
26 order, excepting, the adoption of interim Senate Rules which shall precede any election; (3)
27 Immediately upon the election of a president, the senate shall proceed to elect by roll call vote a
28 president pro tempore, deputy president pro tempore, secretary of the senate and reading clerk, and
29 shall immediately notify the house of representatives that it is duly organized and ready to proceed
30 with the business of the session; (4) The secretary and clerk shall be employees of the legislative
31 department under the jurisdiction and control of the senate, and shall hold office for two (2) years,
32 and until their successors are elected and qualified; (5) Should the office of president pro tempore,
33 deputy president pro tempore, secretary of the senate and reading clerk become vacant during the
34 session term, the president shall call for elections. Should the office of president become vacant

1 during the session term, the president pro tempore shall preside over an election using subsection
2 (1) above.

3 **SECTION 11.**

4 **TRANSPARENCY**

5 **11.1 Policy.**

6 It is declared to be the policy of the senate that to the maximum extent possible senate votes
7 on public bills, elections and proceedings on the floor and in committee shall be recorded, or video
8 screened and published on the general assembly website and/or broadcast on capitol television.

9 **11.2 Publication of Committee Votes.**

10 To the extent possible, committee votes shall be published on the general assembly website
11 prior to the floor vote on the bill; provided however, that failure of a committee vote to appear on
12 the website prior to the floor vote shall not be grounds for objection to consideration of the bill on
13 the floor.

14 **11.3 Televising or Otherwise Recording Committee Hearing.**

15 To the extent possible, committee hearings shall be video recorded and broadcast to the
16 public on capitol television.

17 **11.4 Publication of Votes.**

18 All votes on public bills recorded electronically or by roll call shall be placed forthwith on
19 the general assembly website.

20 **11.5 Publication of the Senate Rules.**

21 The senate rules together with an index thereof shall be published on the general assembly
22 website.

23 **11.6 Authorization and Direction.**

24 The president of the senate and the senate staff are authorized and directed to take such
25 reasonable and prudent action as may be necessary to carry out the policies and directives set forth
26 in this section.

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