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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

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

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

Date Introduced: January 10, 2025

Referred To: House Rules

1 RESOLVED, That pursuant to Article VI, Section 7 of the Constitution of the State of
2 Rhode Island, the following rules be adopted for the House of Representatives for the years 2025
3 and 2026:

4 [Rules Pertaining to the Speaker](#)

5 (1) The Speaker is authorized to: take the chair each legislative day, call the members to
6 order, and, if a quorum be present, proceed to business; refer bills and resolutions upon
7 introduction; preserve order and decorum; call some other member to the chair in order to speak
8 from the floor as other members are entitled on general matters; decide all questions without
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 and a Deputy Speaker. In the
2 event the Speaker is unable or chooses not to preside over the House session, the Speaker may
3 designate either the Speaker pro tempore or the Deputy Speaker to call the House to order and
4 preside over the House session. In the event the Speaker is incapacitated or otherwise unavailable
5 to make a designation, the majority leader shall make the designation pursuant to this rule. In case
6 of the absence of the Speaker, Speaker pro tempore and Deputy Speaker, the senior member
7 present from Newport, or in the absence of such member, a member chosen by notification to the
8 House clerk by the Speaker shall call the House to order and preside.

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

11 Rules Pertaining to the Order of Business

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

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

20 (i) Reports of standing and select committees.

21 (ii) Introduction and reference of new business.

22 (iii) Communications, including communications from the Senate.

23 (iv) Unfinished business in which the House was engaged at the time of last adjournment.

24 (v) Consent calendar.

25 (vi) Calendar.

26 (vii) Introduction of guests and announcements.

27 (viii) Matters of personal privilege.

28 (ix) Recess or adjournment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (e) Any bill or resolution introduced on or before April ~~11, 2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~
25 2025 session) and on or before April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session):

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

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

33 (iii) All bills or resolutions introduced after April ~~11, 2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025
34 session) and after April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session) shall be in order for the

1 first reading and, may be assigned to committee, as early as the day of introduction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 discussion unless, at any time prior to the motion for passage, a member requests removal of a
2 bill or resolution from the consent calendar in which case such bill or resolution may be so
3 removed and placed on then regular calendar. Any bill or resolution appropriate for placement on
4 the consent calendar under these rules but so removed shall be placed on the regular calendar for
5 the same day and shall be considered as having appeared on the regular calendar for a period of
6 time equivalent to that during which it appeared on the consent calendar.

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

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

13 Rules Pertaining to Committees

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

16 A committee on conduct

17 A committee on corporations

18 A committee on education

19 A committee on environment and natural resources

20 A committee on finance

21 A committee on health and human services

22 A committee on innovation, internet and technology

23 A committee on judiciary

24 A committee on labor

25 A committee on municipal government and housing

26 A committee on rules

27 A committee on oversight

28 A committee on small business

29 A committee on special legislation

30 A committee on state government and elections

31 A committee on veterans' affairs.

32 (b) The Speaker shall appoint all standing committees and create such other
33 subcommittees and committees as may be required from time to time and appoint thereto. Each
34 member of the House shall be entitled to membership to at least (2) standing committees, as

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 may, however, waive such one-day notification. The time requirements of this section shall not
2 apply to House bills returned from the Senate with amendment, or, after the 50th legislative day,
3 to any bill originating in the Senate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (i) No public bill or resolution which originated in the House shall be considered by a
29 House committee unless the committee has held a hearing on that bill or resolution by April ~~11,~~
30 ~~2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and on or before April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~
31 2026 session), and thereafter the committees of the House shall not consider public bills or
32 resolutions except those which have been acted upon by the Senate and transmitted by the Senate
33 to the House of Representatives, provided however, that the committee on finance may hear and
34 consider such House bills, acts or resolutions as it deems to have a fiscal impact after April ~~11,~~

1 ~~2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and after April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026
2 session), except as provided in section (j) hereof, and provided further, that each other
3 House committee may complete consideration of not more than three (3) House bills or
4 resolutions after such date, on which such committee had not been able to complete action, upon
5 approval by the Speaker of a written request from the Chair. All such requests must be filed with
6 the Clerk of the House no later than April ~~11, 2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and on
7 or before April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session). The provisions of this paragraph
8 shall not apply to House bills of which Senate duplicates have passed the House.

9 (j) No House bill which relates to an individual's pension or retirement shall be accepted
10 as a committee report from the committee on finance unless it shall have been considered by the
11 committee on or before April ~~11, 2023~~ 22, 2025 (for the ~~2023~~ 2025 session) and on or before
12 April ~~10, 2024~~ 21, 2026 (for the ~~2024~~ 2026 session), and shall have been heard in the committee
13 no later than one (1) week prior to that date.

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

17 (l) Members of a committee shall, if present, cast a vote on legislation before the
18 committee, unless prior to the discussion of the bill and vote, the member has recused in
19 accordance with the provisions of the Code of Ethics, RIGL §36-14-6. The member shall sign a
20 recusal form, and the Clerk of the Committee shall note the member's recusal on the bill vote
21 sheet.

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

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

34 (b) Each committee shall file with the Clerk of the House and with legislative data

1 services a list of all measures on which formal action was taken and a copy of the recorded vote
2 tally on each such measure.

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

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

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

15 **Rules Pertaining to Bills and Petitions**

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

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

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

1 calendar or consent calendar as early as the first legislative day of the next week.

2 (d) No more than fifty (50) public bills shall be considered upon their merits during any
3 one (1) legislative day and no bill shall be brought before the body after 10:30 p.m., provided,
4 however, that House bills returned from the Senate, Senate bills which are duplicates of and
5 identical to House bills, corporate charter revocation bills, and solemnization of marriage bills
6 and bills removed from the consent calendar may be considered notwithstanding this limit.
7 Provided further, that Senate bills which are duplicates of and identical to House bills, and House
8 bills returned from the Senate, may without objection be bundled and passed by one vote
9 provided that they are provided to members electronically prior to consideration. In the case of
10 bundled bills that contain identical and duplicate Senate bills, at the request of the Majority and
11 Minority Leaders the House journal will reflect that the vote of the members on the bill is
12 consistent with his or her vote on the duplicate House bill previously passed. Prior to the vote on
13 a duplicate bill, it should be stated for the record and be made known to the body that the bill is
14 identical.

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

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

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

33 (15)(a) There shall be attached to every public bill or resolution when first introduced an
34 explanation of such bill or resolution indicating the proposed changes, and/or the statute or

1 existing law which such bill or resolution purports to amend.

2 (b) When any bill or resolution is offered which is intended to amend any part or parts of
3 an existing statute, or the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island, or the House Rules, any part
4 or parts intended to be stricken shall be contained in the bill or resolution and shall be crossed
5 out. All new matter contained in the bill or resolution shall be underlined, so that the new matter
6 may be easily discerned. Existing language not intended to be amended shall be
7 reproduced without change. In the discretion of Legislative Council in drafting a bill pursuant to
8 section (d) of this rule, or upon the request for a Sub A from the Chair of the committee where the
9 bill is assigned, additional sections of law that are not being amended may be included in the
10 explanation to the bill to add context to the changes made in the statutes the bill amends.

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

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

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

33 (i) Upon presentation of testimony before a committee, the prime sponsor of a bill or
34 resolution shall provide to the committee the name of any individual, group or organization

1 responsible for the substantive basis or text of the bill.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

34 (b) When an amendment proposed to any pending measure is laid on the table, it shall not

1 be construed to be a motion to table the measure on which the amendment has been offered.

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

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

8 (19) Except with respect to present and former members of the General Assembly,
9 general officers, members of the judiciary, and elected state and federal officials, all expressions
10 in the nature of condolences and in the nature of congratulations may be presented in omnibus
11 resolutions which shall not require concurrent action and which, upon passage, shall be forthwith
12 transmitted to the Secretary of State.

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

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

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

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

6 **Rules Pertaining to Decorum and Debates**

7 (22) When any member desires to speak in debate, or to deliver any matter to the House,
8 the member shall activate his or her recognition button, and when recognized from the rostrum
9 rise and proceed by respectfully addressing the Speaker. Debate shall be confined to the matter
10 before the House. No member shall be permitted to ask, nor shall the Speaker entertain, any
11 question not directly related to the matter before the House.

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

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

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

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

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

32 (28) Any bill or resolution of more than one section shall be passed upon by section,
33 at the request of any member. With the leave of the Speaker, a section that is susceptible of
34 division shall be divided and put separately upon the propositions of which it is compounded, but

1 a motion to strike out and substitute shall not be divided.

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

5 (30) When a question is under debate no motion shall be received except: to adjourn, for
6 the previous question, to take a recess, to lay on the table, to fix a time for closing debate, to
7 postpone indefinitely, to postpone to a day certain, to recommit, or to amend. The motions for any
8 of the above actions shall have precedence in the order in which they are here arranged.

9 (31) When a time for a meeting of the House shall have been previously fixed upon, a
10 motion to adjourn shall be always in order. Motions to take from the table, to reconsider, for the
11 previous question, to take a recess, to adjourn, and for the vote, shall be decided without debate.
12 Motions to lay on the table shall also be non-debatable except that the mover of an amendment
13 shall be allowed two (2) minutes to reply when a motion is made to table his or her amendment as
14 referenced in Rule 17(c).

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

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

26 (b) When a violation of Rule 33(a) in regard to voting is alleged in writing by a member,
27 the Speaker may refer said written allegation to the committee on conduct to investigate, hold
28 hearings, ascertain the facts and report its findings and recommendation to the House, which may
29 then take appropriate action including but not limited to expulsion as authorized by Article 6,
30 Section 7 of the Constitution of the State.

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

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

4 (e) The Speaker may authorize a member to vote at session by limited-directed proxy if
5 the member is unable to be physically present in the chamber due to a health or medical
6 condition. After ~~five (5)~~ three (3) or more consecutive absences or if a member anticipates three
7 (3) or more consecutive absences due to a health or medical condition, a member may provide a
8 written request to the Speaker for authorization to vote by proxy pursuant to this rule. The
9 Speaker may require that the member provide documentation from a physician verifying that the
10 member is unable to be physically present at session, and the Speaker may limit the duration of
11 authorization under this rule. Authorization to vote by proxy pursuant to this rule shall be
12 reported in the House Journal and shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure provided
13 in rule 47 (b).

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

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

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

1 transacted.

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

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

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

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

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

21 (35) There shall be a motion for the previous question, also known as moving the
22 question, which shall always be in order and which shall not be debated, and which may be
23 moved and ordered upon any bill or section thereof, amendment, motion, resolution or question
24 which is debatable, any of which shall be considered as the main question for the purpose of
25 applying the previous question. When a motion for the previous question has been made, no other
26 motion shall be entertained by the Speaker until it has been put to the House and decided. All
27 incidental questions of order arising after a motion for the previous question has been made, and
28 before the vote has been taken on the main question, shall be decided whether on appeal or
29 otherwise without debate. When the previous question has been ordered, a motion to reconsider
30 such vote shall not be in order, and no motion to adjourn or take a recess while a quorum is
31 present shall be entertained between the taking of such vote and the taking of the vote on the main
32 question. Ten (10) minutes shall be allowed for further debate upon the main question during
33 which no member shall speak more than three (3) minutes, and a further period of ten
34 (10) minutes, if desired, shall be allowed for debate to the member introducing the bill or question

1 to be acted upon, or to the member or members to whom he or she may yield the floor, at the
2 close of which time, or at the close of the first ten (10) minutes, in case the introducer does not
3 desire to so use his or her time, the vote on the main question shall be taken. If incidental
4 questions of order are raised after the previous question has been ordered, the time occupied in
5 deciding such question shall be deducted from the time allowed for debate.

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

10 (37)(a) The presiding officer may refer to "Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure,"
11 most recent edition, published by the National Conference of State Legislatures, for guidance as
12 to procedure on the floor of the House in all cases in which its provisions are not inconsistent
13 with applicable law or these rules.

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

23 Rules Pertaining to Admission to the Floor

24 (38)(a) No person or persons, except currently elected members of the general assembly,
25 legislative staff assigned by the Speaker or Minority Leader and authorized representatives of
26 the public press shall be admitted to the floor of the House during the session thereof, except by
27 the approval of the Speaker for a designated purpose. The Speaker may make special provision
28 for admission to the floor of the House during the session thereof for persons, who by reason of
29 disability, are unable to gain access to the House galleries. All persons so admitted by the Speaker
30 to the floor of the House during the session thereof shall be present for the sole purpose of
31 observing the proceedings of the House and shall remain seated, refrain from conversation, and
32 maintain the decorum of the House. No person so admitted shall contact, address, speak or
33 gesture to, or communicate in any way with any House member while present on the floor of the
34 House. No person on the floor of the chamber shall dress in a manner offensive to the decorum of

1 the House. Any House member who observes conduct in violation of the House Rules
2 shall immediately notify the Speaker thereof and the Speaker shall forthwith take appropriate
3 corrective action and may order the removal of the offending person.

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

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

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

12 Miscellaneous Rules

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

23 (41) The procedure to be followed in consideration by the House of a motion to override
24 the Governor's veto of a bill or resolution (whether at an extraordinary or reconvened session as
25 contemplated in Rule 40 or at a regular session of the House) shall be as follows: The Governor's
26 objections to the bill or resolution shall be entered into upon the House Journal as required by the
27 Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9, Section 14. The Governor's objections shall be made
28 available to the members in written form or electronically, and upon the request of any member
29 shall be read aloud by the Clerk of the House. Each of the following: the prime sponsor of the bill
30 (in the case of a House bill), the Minority Leader and the Majority Leader may, if he or she
31 wishes, and in the order specified, speak for no more than five (5) minutes. Thereupon the House
32 shall immediately proceed to a vote as prescribed in the Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9,
33 Section 14, and such vote once taken shall not be the subject of a motion to reconsider. If the bill
34 or resolution shall have passed notwithstanding the veto of the Governor, the same shall be

1 immediately transmitted to the Senate or to the Secretary of State as may be appropriate.

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

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

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

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

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

22 [Establishment of Caucuses](#)

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

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

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

31 (d) Notwithstanding 45(c):

32 (1) Any Caucus organized around a political party affiliation is limited solely to those
33 House members who belong to said party, provided that any member elected to the House as an
34 Independent may caucus with any party, but not more than one party, and not before submitting

1 written communication to the House announcing such intention. The party for which the
2 Independent member wishes to caucus with shall not be obligated to accept the Independent into
3 the caucus, and if permission is so denied, shall communicate that decision to the House clerk
4 within seven (7) days of the Independent member's notification to the House. The Speaker shall
5 make such determination for the majority party caucus, and the Minority Leader shall make such
6 decision for the minority party caucus. The Independent then may seek admission to any other
7 party for purposes of joining a caucus. Upon request, the Speaker for the majority party caucus,
8 and the Minority Leader for the minority party caucus, may waive the written communication
9 required by this rule.

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

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

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

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

19 (1) Chairperson:

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

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

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

23 (2) Vice Chairperson:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 **Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited**

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

11 The House fully supports the protection and safeguarding of the rights and opportunities
12 of all people to seek, obtain and hold employment without being subjected to sexual harassment
13 of any kind in the workplace. The House recognizes that sexual harassment has a serious
14 detrimental effect on victims of sexually harassing behavior.

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

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

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

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

32 (e) All reported complaints of sexual harassment shall be investigated by the Office of
33 Compliance in a timely and confidential manner. No person investigating on behalf of the Office
34 of Compliance shall discuss the subject outside the investigation. The purpose of this provision is

1 to protect the confidentiality of the person who files a complaint, to encourage the reporting of
2 any incidents of sexual harassment and to protect the reputation of any person who may be
3 wrongfully accused.

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

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

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

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

19 (a) Authorization to hold Remote Committee Meetings due to an Emergency--
20 Requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

34 (iv) For the purposes of voting, a member participating from another location by remote

1 means shall be deemed to have voted as if the member were physically present at the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (iv) A member authorized by the Speaker to vote by proxy shall prepare and submit
29 written voting instructions prior to each applicable floor session. The instructions shall identify
30 the particular daily calendar item(s) on which the member will be voting by proxy, and shall
31 clearly state how the member wishes to have the member's vote recorded for each calendar
32 item(s). For each calendar item, a member shall indicate one of the following: a vote in favor of
33 the calendar item or a vote against the calendar item. A member shall also clearly indicate how
34 the member wishes to vote on any consent calendar, if applicable. The Speaker, in his or her

1 discretion, may provide a form to facilitate the proxy process in accordance with this rule.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 (48) Discipline of a Member

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

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

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

34 (d) At the completion of the committee hearing, upon consideration and an affirmative

1 vote of the majority of the committee members present, said resolution shall be reported to the
2 floor of the house in accordance with these rules.

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

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

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

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