

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT

NO. SJC-13909

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REQUEST FOR AN ADVISORY OPINION FROM  
THE MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

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BRIEF OF AMICUS CURIAE  
MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## STATEMENT OF INTEREST OF AMICUS CURIAE

The Senate has requested the opinion of this Court regarding important questions of law related to Initiative Petition No. 25-37, which is currently pending before the General Court as House No. 5010. If enacted, House No. 5010 would directly impact the operations of the House of Representatives.

### STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Pursuant to the requirements of art. 48 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution (“Article 48”), Initiative Petition No. 25-37, *An Initiative Petition for an Act to Reform and Regulate Legislative Stipends* (the “Initiative Petition”) was certified by the Secretary of the Commonwealth and transmitted to the Clerk of the House of Representatives on January 7, 2026.<sup>1</sup> The Initiative Petition was assigned a bill number, House No. 5010, and then referred by the Clerk to the Special Joint Committee on Initiative Petitions (“Special Joint Committee”). On March 17, 2026, the Special Joint Committee held a public hearing on the Initiative Petition, which remains under consideration by the Special Joint Committee.

The title of House No. 5010 is “*an Act to Reform and Regulate Legislative Stipends*,” while the declared “purpose” of House No. 5010 “*is to establish*

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<sup>1</sup> This brief cites to the Initiative Petition by line number, using the abbreviation “IP.”

*legislative stipends that provide reasonable compensation linked to performance, promoting transparent and efficient lawmaking and the people’s right to full and effective representation in the general court.”* IP at 1-3 (emphasis added). On March 12, 2026, the Senate adopted an order requesting the opinion of this Court on specific questions of law. See 2026 Senate Doc. No. 3016. In essence, the Senate asks the Court to opine whether House No. 5010: (1) proposes a rule as opposed to a law in violation of Article 48; and (2) impermissibly intrudes upon the unicameral rulemaking powers of both houses of the General Court.

***A. Exclusive Rulemaking Authority of the General Court***

The House of Representatives (“House”) and the Senate each unilaterally possess the exclusive constitutional authority to settle their own rules and orders of proceedings. See Part II, c. 1, § 3, art. 10 (“Article 10”) (“The house of representatives . . . shall choose their own speaker; appoint their own officers, and settle the rules and orders of proceeding in their own house[.]”); Part II, c. 1, § 2, art. 7 (“Article 7”) (“The senate shall choose its own president, appoint its own officers, and determine its own rules of proceedings.”). The Massachusetts Constitution imposes no deadline by which the House and Senate must exercise this authority. As this Court explained, “[l]egislative rule-making authority is a *continuous power* absolute and beyond the challenge of any other tribunal.” Paisner v. Attorney General, 390 Mass. 593, 600 (1983) (emphasis added).

## ***B. Rules of the General Court***

On January 1, 2025, the first day of session for the 194<sup>rd</sup> General Court, the House and Senate each adopted orders providing that the rules that had governed their respective chambers for the 193<sup>rd</sup> session, as well as the rules that governed the joint operations of the chambers, be observed as temporary rules until such time as permanent rules could be adopted by each chamber.<sup>2</sup> Then, on February 13, 2025, and February 25, 2025, the Senate and House, respectively, exercised their exclusive constitutional authority to unilaterally adopt rules and orders of proceeding for their chambers for the 194<sup>th</sup> General Court (referred to herein as “House Rules” and “Senate Rules”, respectively). On June 26, 2025, the House and Senate jointly adopted the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives (“Joint Rules”).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A biennial session of the General Court begins on the first Wednesday of January following the state election. See Article 10; art. 64, § 1, of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution. It is on this first day of session that the House and Senate traditionally adopt temporary House, Senate, and Joint Rules, which govern until such time as permanent rules may be adopted. See, e.g., 2025 House J. for Jan. 1, at 21 (uncorrected proof); 2025 Senate J. for Jan. 1, at 21, 25 (uncorrected proof). Upon its inception, the 195<sup>th</sup> biennial session of the General Court will likely continue this customary practice.

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise specified, a reference to a specifically numbered House, Senate, or Joint rule refers to its current text for the 194<sup>th</sup> session. The House Rules are contained in 2025 House Doc. No. 2025, the Senate Rules are contained in 2025 Senate Doc. No. 19 and the Joint Rules are contained in 2025 Senate Doc. No. 2545.

The House, Senate, and Joint Rules, inter alia, organize the House and Senate by establishing a tiered leadership and committee structure consistent with G.L. c. 3, § 9B. In terms of leadership, House Rules 4A, 9A, and 18 establish several House leadership positions for both the majority and minority parties and requires the Speaker of the House (the “Speaker”) and the Minority Leader of the House (the “Minority Leader”) to appoint the House majority and minority leadership, subject to ratification votes of their respective party caucus.

In terms of committees, House Rule 17 establishes twelve House committees and Joint Rule 1 establishes thirty-one joint committees.<sup>4</sup> House Rule 18 requires the Speaker to appoint the chair and vice chair of each House and joint committee and the Minority Leader to appoint the ranking member to each House and joint standing committee, all of which are subject to ratification votes of their respective party caucus. Pursuant to House Rule 18A, the Speaker and Minority Leader appoint the remaining members of each House and joint committee subject to a formula to ensure the appropriate and proportional representation of each political party on every committee.

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<sup>4</sup> For purposes of this brief, “joint committees” refers to the joint standing committees established in Joint Rule 1, while “House committees” refers to the house standing committees established in House Rule 17.

The House, Senate, and Joint Rules set forth the standards by which committees are to conduct their business. Among other procedures, these rules establish the minimum procedural and transparency requirements for all committees. See e.g., Joint Rule 1A (requiring all meetings of a joint committee be open to the public); Joint Rule 1B (requiring public hearings be held on each matter referred to a joint committee); Joint Rule 1D (requiring the vote of a joint committee on a matter be taken by roll call or electronic poll and that the results be posted on the General Court's website within 48 hours).<sup>5</sup>

The House, Senate, and Joint Rules also prescribe the timing and flow of bills through the legislative process. See, e.g., Joint Rule 10 (establishing a default rule that joint committees must report, by the first Wednesday in December of the first annual session, all matters referred to them by October 1<sup>st</sup> of that session, and within 60 days for all matters referred to them after October 1<sup>st</sup> of the first annual session. The purpose of these rules is to enable the House and Senate to efficiently discharge their legislative, oversight, and operational functions as an independent branch of government. While certain committees principally consider legislation, others provide oversight, administer procedure, and oversee operational matters.

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<sup>5</sup> Similarly, pursuant to the House Rules, meetings of House committees must be open to the public following publicly posted notice. See House Rule 17. Votes of a House committee on legislation must be recorded and posted on the website within 48 hours. See House Rule 17B.

Regardless of its function, each joint committee is required to continuously review and study the matters within its purview. See Joint Rule 1. And within a given session, the House and Joint Rules provide flexibility to adjust the rules as necessary. See, e.g., House Rule 7C; Joint Rule 35.

Under the Rules, committees are vested with the necessary autonomy and discretion to independently conduct their business. In addition, as a matter of precedent,<sup>6</sup> the House has historically upheld the independence of committees, repeatedly ruling, when an objection is raised on the floor, that it is “not within the province of the Chair . . . to inquire into the internal workings of a committee [for purposes of] determining whether the subject-matter in question has been properly considered by such committee.” 1956 House J. 408; see also 1987 House J. 35 (discussing House vote affirming ruling that “Chair [could not] inquire into the internal workings of a committee”); 1891 House J. 1127 (“[N]ot within the province

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<sup>6</sup> While the Massachusetts Constitution and the rules adopted by each chamber at the start of each biennial session establish matters of procedure for the General Court, they are not the only sources from which procedural rules derive. Indeed, matters of procedure not governed by constitutional provisions or adopted rules are governed by rules of parliamentary procedure, which include the procedural precedents of a legislative body. Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedures, §§ 4, 37 (2020 ed.).

of the chair to decide as to the internal workings of the committee on Rules, but only whether or not the report of that committee was in the proper form.”).<sup>7</sup>

***C. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 3.***

As noted above, the House and Senate have the unicameral authority to establish their own respective rules, and the two bodies may also utilize this rulemaking authority by acting together to establish mutually agreed-upon joint rules. Supra at 9-10. As a matter of established practice, the House and Senate have also historically acted bicamerally to enact the statutes contained in Chapter 3 of the General Laws, which relate to the General Court. While certain statutes codified in Chapter 3 establish laws, see, e.g., G.L. c. 3, §§ 39 to 50 (regulating lobbyists), others establish rules for the General Court. See Paisner v. Attorney Gen., 390 Mass. 593, 601 (1983) (“The enactment of statutes [in Chapter 3] relating to internal proceedings was obviously accomplished by the voluntary participation of each of the two Houses. Thus each House was essentially engaged in its rule-making function.”); see, e.g., G.L. c. 3, § 12B (requiring clerks to prepare manual for the General Court in odd-numbered years) G.L. c. 3, § 33 (requiring committee on rules to publish bulletins of committee hearings). And some may contain both laws and

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<sup>7</sup> The reference to “Chair” in these rulings refers to the Speaker, or member appointed to act as Speaker, who is present on the rostrum and presiding over the legislative session.

rules. See, e.g., G.L. c. 3, § 7 (requiring clerks of House or Senate to transmit petitions concerning corporations to secretary of commonwealth and requiring secretary to opine).

General Law c. 3, § 9B (“Section 9B”) provides members of the General Court with additional regular compensation<sup>8</sup> for leadership and certain committee positions they hold within the organizational structure created by the House, Senate, and Joint Rules. Furthermore, G.L. c. 3, § 9C (“Section 9C”) provides all members of the General Court with payments for expenses based on the distance between their residence and the State House.

The compensation structure established by Section 9B is tiered to reflect the duties and responsibilities of each leadership position. Section 9B further recognizes that not every leadership position or committee is focused exclusively on policy matters. While most committees are policy focused (e.g., House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing), some are focused on oversight responsibilities (e.g., House Division Chairs, House and

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<sup>8</sup> Article 118 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth, approved by the voters on November 3, 1998, establishes the base compensation of members of the General Court, maintaining it at the rate paid to members as of January 1, 1996, except for automatic increases or decreases based on median household income for the commonwealth. Statute 1994, c. 192, § 3, as amended by St. 2017, c. 1, § 1, codifies in statute the amount of base compensation set in Article 118.

Senate Committees on Post Audit and Oversight, Joint Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Management), some are focused on the operations of the House and Senate (e.g., House Committee on Operations, Facilities and Security, Senate Committee on Personnel and Administration), and others are focused on the legislative proceedings of the House and Senate (e.g., House Committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling, Senate Committee on Bills in the Third Reading). In establishing these positions, the House and Senate have, in accordance with their judgment and exclusive constitutional authority, determined that these positions are essential to the “orders of proceedings” within the House and Senate. In addition, the House and Senate have determined the amount of additional regular compensation provided for positions is commensurate with the duties and responsibilities of each position.

***D. House No. 5010***

House No. 5010 would replace Section 9B with a new scheme that makes payment of additional compensation contingent upon the General Court’s adherence to a set of legislative rules prescribed by statute. One aspect of the new scheme bears some resemblance to the existing Section 9B in that it provides for additional compensation based on an individual member’s leadership role, but that is where the resemblance ends. The remainder of the proposal upends Section 9B’s general scheme, conditioning additional legislative pay for future General Courts on the

adoption of specific legislative rules consistent with the requirement of House No. 5010.

The set of rules that House No. 5010 prescribes would establish four tiers of leadership roles. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House are “Group 1 legislative leaders.” IP at 9-10. The chairs of the Senate and the House committees on Ways and Means and the floor leaders of the “two leading political parties” in each house are classified as “Group 2 legislative leaders.” IP at 11-13. “Group 3 legislative leaders” includes assistant floor leaders as well as the vice chairs and ranking minority members of the House and Senate committees on Ways and Means. IP at 14-20. “Group 4 legislative leaders” includes all Senate and House chairs of “eligible committees,” which are those committees “established by the joint rules of the senate and house of representatives to which more than 50 bills are referred by the senate and house of representatives before March 1 of the first year of a biennial session of the general court.” IP at 21-24.

House No. 5010 would set the amount of additional compensation payable to Group 1 through Group 4 legislative leaders as a percentage of the constitutional base compensation amount: 75% for Group 1 legislative leaders, 50% for Group 2, 33% for Group 3, and 33% for Group 4. IP at 48-59. Members of the Senate or House who are not within one of these four groups—as well as Senators in Group 2 or Group 3—but who serve on one or more eligible committees are eligible to

receive additional regular compensation equal to no more than 20% of their base compensation; Senators who serve on four or more eligible committees may receive an additional 20% of their base compensation amount (i.e., 40% of the base amount). IP at 66-73.

For members who receive additional regular compensation but are not a leader within Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, or Group 4 (e.g., members whose additional regular compensation is derived solely from serving on one or more committees), the entire amount is paid on a bi-weekly basis. IP at 93-96. However, for members in Group 1 through Group 4, only half of the additional regular compensation is paid on a bi-weekly basis. IP at 97-99. The remainder of the additional regular compensation for these leaders is paid based on whether the relevant eligible committee—or committees—achieves two specific compliance metrics. “First year compliance” means that, for the first year of the biennial session, the committee has “held a public hearing and a public mark-up session on each bill referred to it before November 1 of such year” and “every report made by the committee has been approved by a vote of a majority of the members eligible to vote at a public meeting at which a quorum of such members was present.” IP at 30-34. House No. 5010 requires the Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House to “jointly examine” the records of every eligible committee on the “third Monday in December of the first year of a biennial session of the general court,” and, if a given committee has met

the criteria for “first year compliance,” to so “jointly certify.” IP at 78-82. “Second year compliance” is defined in a similar manner to “first year compliance,” except it applies to the second year of the biennial session and the relevant date for holding public hearings and mark-up sessions is April 15 and the deadline by which the clerks are required to “jointly examine” and certify records is the last Friday in May. IP 35-39, 83-87.

Members who hold a Group 4 position, *e.g.* chairs of eligible committees, are paid the remaining 50% of their additional regular compensation if, and only if, the clerks certify that their committee is compliant for a given year. IP 104-108. Members who serve as Group 1, Group 2, or Group 3 leaders would be paid the remaining 50% of the additional regular compensation for their role, prorated based on the percentage of eligible committees that met the compliance standard for a given year, as determined by the clerks. IP at 100-103.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Initiative Petition defines “compliance percentage” as, “for each of the first year and the second year of a biennial session of the general court, the percentage of eligible committees that have achieved first year or second year compliance.” IP at 40-42.

## **SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT**

The Senate has asked this Court to answer two questions regarding the constitutionality of House No. 5010. First, the Senate asks whether House No. 5010 complies with the Constitution's requirement that a popular initiative propose a law—not an internal rule for each chamber of the General Court. Second, the Senate asks whether House No. 5010 improperly intrudes on each branch's exclusive constitutional authority to determine their own rules of proceeding.

As described below, House No. 5010 fails to comply with a foundational requirement of Article 48 because it prescribes internal rules for the House and Senate. While proponents of the initiative petition engaged in creative legislative drafting to camouflage their attempt to prescribe such rules, their attempt fails because House No. 5010 explicitly mandates the Clerks of the House and Senate to take certain action, redefining their roles in contravention of the House and Senate's unicameral authority to direct their functions. In addition, and dependent on this unconstitutional directive, House No. 5010's remaining provisions work together to functionally require that the House and Senate adopt a different organizational structure and set of rules governing how committees function. This Court should therefore conclude that House No. 5010 proposes rules and is, therefore, not in compliance with Article 48's requirements.

Even if this Court concludes that House No. 5010 does propose a law, the fact remains that the initiative petition impermissibly intrudes and impedes upon the unicameral authority granted to the House and Senate to govern their internal affairs. Article 10 and Article 7 stand on their own, irrespective of the limits of Article 48 initiative petitions, and they protect the House and Senate from external efforts to control how they go about their respective business. House No. 5010 is an improper coercive attempt to force the two hundred legislators of the General Court—in each future session—to engage in the legislative business of the Commonwealth according to a specific set of rules.

### **ARGUMENT**

#### **I. HOUSE NO. 5010 PROPOSES A RULE, NOT A LAW, IN VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 48 OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH.**

House No. 5010 fails to comply with a fundamental requirement of Article 48 in that it proposes a statute that prescribes both a law regarding legislative compensation together with rules governing the internal operations of the House and Senate. The first may be an appropriate subject for the initiative petition process, but Article 48 does not allow the popular initiative to propose or establish internal rules for the House or the Senate.

**A. Initiative Petitions May Not Propose a Statute That Contains Rules Relating to the Internal Operations of the House or Senate.**

Article 48 provides that the “[l]egislative power shall continue to be vested in the general court,” but grants to the people the power of the popular initiative, “which is the power of a specified number of voters to submit constitutional amendments and laws to the people for approval or rejection.” Article 48, I. As this Court explained in Paisner v. Attorney General, the General Court’s legislative power is broader than its bicameral lawmaking power and includes certain unicameral rulemaking powers. 390 Mass. at 601-602. The power of the people when acting pursuant to Article 48 “is coextensive with the [General Court’s] law-making power,” but it does not, and cannot, intrude upon the unicameral rulemaking powers granted to each chamber of the General Court, which includes “the power to determine their own rules of proceedings.” Id. at 601. See Article 10; Article 7. Each chamber’s exclusive constitutional authority to settle their own rules of proceeding is unilateral, and this unilateral authority is distinguishable from the bicameral authority of the General Court to enact legislation approved by both chambers and, therefore, falls outside of the purview of Article 48.

Paisner involved a challenge to the Attorney General’s decision not to certify a proposed initiative that would have, inter alia, added sections to G.L. c. 3 that prescribed procedures for the appointment of leadership roles within each chamber,

the appointment of legislative committee chairs and members, how committees handled bills and other internal matters, and limitations on differentials in compensation for legislative leaders. See Paisner, 390 Mass. at 596. The Paisner Court held that the Attorney General’s decision was correct because the initiative improperly sought to impose rules on the General Court in derogation of the exclusive unicameral rulemaking authority of each chamber. Id. at 599-600.

As the Court explained, “laws govern conduct external to the legislative body, while rules govern internal procedures.” Id. at 600. The proposed initiative at issue “establishe[d] rules rather than laws because its principal purpose [was] to order the internal operations of the Senate and the House rather than to alter the legal duties of persons outside the Legislature.” Id. The Court further explained that “a law is binding [but] a rule is not,” and that “[l]egislative rule-making authority is a continuous power absolute and beyond the challenge of any other tribunal.” Id. As such, “each branch of each successive Legislature may proceed to make rules without seeking concurrence or approval of the other branch, or of the executive, and without being bound by action taken by an earlier Legislature.” Id.

Notably, the petitioners in Paisner argued that the initiative under Article 48 could “encompass the internal proceedings of the Houses” because the General Court has enacted statutes in G.L. c. 3 “directly relat[ing] to the internal proceedings of the two Houses.” Id. at 601. The Court rejected this argument and explained that

“[t]he enactment of statutes relating to internal proceedings was obviously accomplished by the voluntary participation of each of the two Houses,” with each “essentially engaged in its rule-making function,” and so “[i]t does not follow, from this voluntary exercise by the Houses, that others, through the popular initiative, may introduce rules under the guise of laws.” Id.

Opinion of the Justices to the House of Representatives is equally instructive in distinguishing between initiatives affecting legislative compensation that are proper subjects under Article 48 and those that are not. 422 Mass. 1212 (1996), adopted sub nom. Anderson v. Attorney Gen., 422 Mass. 809 (1996). The initiative petition in that matter (“House No. 5780”) would have decreased the compensation provided to members of the General Court by half and required that it be paid out during the first six months of the calendar year. Id. at 1213-1214. The Court was asked to determine, inter alia, whether House No. 5780 proposed a law or a rule. Id. at 1214, 1221-1222. The Court opined that legislative compensation—taken on its own—was properly the subject of a law because the Constitution requires the General Court to set compensation through the bicameral lawmaking process. Id. at 1221-1222.

The Court then turned to the question of whether House No. 5780 impermissibly interfered with “the right of each house of the General Court to determine its own rules of proceedings, and its power to assemble, adjourn, and

recess at particular times” by effectively establishing a six-month legislative session. Id. at 1223. On this issue, the Court opined that House No. 5780 did not establish a six-month session “or in any other way mandate that the Legislature curtail or modify its meeting times or rules of proceeding” because it intended to “encourage” a part-time legislature but did not “mandate” one. Id. at 1223-1224. Central to this conclusion was that House No. 5780 directed that legislators’ compensation be paid in the first half of the year but did not modify the rules of proceeding to require that the business of the legislature be completed during that time. Id. at 1224. Critically, House No. 5780 did not limit the per diem paid to legislators or the allowance paid for legislative business conducted after prorogation of the General Court. Id. “Thus, under [House No. 5780], legislators would continue to receive payment for their duties without regard to when or how often those duties are performed.” Id.

Accordingly, while a popular initiative may establish or alter the amount of legislators’ compensation, it may not dictate or intrude upon the unilateral authority of the House and Senate to determine how it will operate.

**B. House No. 5010 Violates Article 48 Because It Mandates Internal Rules and Conditions Compliance with its Proposal on Adopting Specific Rules.**

As described above, while this Court has opined that an initiative petition may establish or alter additional compensation for legislators or may provide for additional sums to be paid out for travel and other expenses, what laws—and thus,

popular initiatives—may not do, directly or indirectly, is mandate how the House and the Senate exercise their exclusive authority to “settle the rules and orders of proceeding in their own house.” Paisner, 390 Mass. at 598-601. Yet this is precisely what House No. 5010 would do. House No. 5780 did not implicate the Senate, House, or Joint Rules; nor did it require that the House and Senate abide by a rule established by the proposal or modify their rules to comply with the proposal. House No. 5010 would do both.<sup>10</sup>

**1. House No. 5010 Explicitly Proposes a Legislative Rule That Directs the House and Senate Clerks to Determine Compliance.**

The roles of Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate are defined in the rules adopted by each chamber and in certain jointly adopted statutes in G.L. c. 3. See, e.g., G.L. c. 3, §§ 12A-13; House Rules 10-13A; Senate Rules 6-9. These

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<sup>10</sup> There is no debate that Section 9B is a duly enacted statute. In enacting Section 9B, the General Court exercised both its bicameral lawmaking power to set additional member compensation and its unicameral rulemaking power to establish rules of proceedings for how the House and Senate should be organized. See Paisner, 390 Mass. at 601. In other words, Section 9B codifies in statute a law establishing additional member compensation and also codifies in statute rules establishing a leadership structure for positions that exist in the Senate, House, and Joint Rules. While House No. 5010 seeks to amend the law in Section 9B with respect to the amount of additional compensation for certain members (which, pursuant to Opinion of the Justices, is permissible), it also seeks to simultaneously impose rules governing internal procedures on the House and Senate. As this Court held in Paisner, while each House may voluntarily engage such rulemaking, “[i]t does not follow . . . that others, through the popular initiative, may introduce rules under the guise of laws.” Id. at 601. This is precisely what House No. 5010 would do.

officials' duties are established by their respective chambers each session, although the House and Senate have long-established traditions regarding what services—and how—the clerks provide.<sup>11</sup>

The framework established by House No. 5010 hinges on the role of the Clerks. It is the Clerks who are mandated by House No. 5010 to “jointly examine the records of each eligible committee” on an annual basis and to certify whether each “eligible committee” “has met the definition of first [and second] year compliance.” IP at 77-91. Inherent in this process is the requirement that the Clerks first determine which committees are “eligible,” as that term is defined by the proposed statute. The Clerks must then analyze the records of each such committee and determine, according to their own judgment, whether each committee has met the requirements for compliance: that is, whether each committee has held a public hearing and public mark-up session on each bill referred to it that year and whether or not the committee reported on every single bill at a public meeting with a quorum present. IP at 30-39. House No. 5010 provides the Clerks—and the House and the

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<sup>11</sup> The role of the Clerks is not defined in the Constitution, though the Clerks of the House and Senate are both mentioned at various points. See, e.g., Article 48, The Initiative, II, § 4 (requiring the Secretary of the Commonwealth to submit an initiative petition signed by the required number of voters to the Clerk of the House); art. 87, § 2, of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution (providing that the Clerks of the House and Senate, upon approval by the Speaker and Senate President, shall refer executive agency reorganization plans to an appropriate committee).

Senate—with no choice in the matter: the Clerks “shall” then declare whether each committee they have deemed eligible did or did not meet the standards.

This directive is clearly a rule of proceeding, in that it has nothing to do with the appropriate amount of additional compensation to be paid to some members of the House and Senate and has everything to do with the role of the Clerks within the legislative process. The Clerks are not officials within the executive branch, but are rather legislative officers whose duties are set by the members of the House and Senate every session—a determination that is central to each chamber’s authority and responsibility to “settle the rules and orders of proceeding in their own house.” Moreover, this mandate would also contravene 135 years of House precedent that the internal workings of each committee are not to be questioned once a matter is presented to the chamber by the committee: House No. 5010 would vest the Clerks with more authority to inquire into these very internal workings than the Chair or the chamber holds per the House’s parliamentary precedent. See supra at 13-14. To direct the actions of the Clerks is to usurp the constitutional authority given to the House and Senate: only the House and Senate may direct their respective Clerk to take action.

**2. House No. 5010 Functionally Requires that the House and the Senate Adopt Certain Rules.**

Standing alone, House No. 5010’s explicit mandate redefining the roles of the House and Senate Clerks renders this initiative improper under Article 48. House

No. 5010's deficiencies, however, do not end there. Indeed, the rule it sets for the Clerks is meaningless under the current organization and rules of the House and Senate. This is why the remaining provisions of House No. 5010 work together to functionally require that the House and Senate adopt a different organizational structure and set of rules governing how a committee functions.

First, House No. 5010 requires that the House and Senate organize themselves into joint committees. It does this by defining an "eligible committee" as a committee "established by the joint rules of the senate and house of representatives to which more than 50 bills are referred by the senate and house of representatives before March 1 of the first year of a biennial session of the general court." IP at 23-25. Yet whether or not to create committees, and for what purposes, is a matter for each chamber to determine on its own: there is no constitutional requirement for the House or Senate to organize committees at all, let alone to establish them jointly.<sup>12</sup> House No. 5010 forecloses the possibility that future sessions of the General Court, whether acting based on their own sense of how best to order their affairs or in

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<sup>12</sup> During the current session, the House and the Senate established certain committees unilaterally within their respective branches (e.g., Ways and Means, Rules, Ethics) as well as jointly (e.g., Education, Public Health, Transportation). See House Rule 17; Senate Rule 12; Joint Rule 1. However, future sessions of the General Court could choose to forgo joint committees entirely or could combine some of the now-distinct committees into joint committees—as was the case in the not-too-distant past. See, e.g., Murphy v. Adm'r of Div. of Pers. Admin., 377 Mass. 217 (1979) (discussing a challenge involving the General Court's "Joint Committee on Ways and Means").

response to some future event, might exercise their exclusive authority to adopt a different committee structure.

Second, House No. 5010 requires that all eligible committees conduct themselves in a specific way by dictating that they hold a public hearing and a public mark-up session on all bills by certain arbitrary dates in each year of the two-year session, and also that all reports made by such committees be voted on in the manner prescribed. IP at 30-34 (“first year compliance”); IP at 35-39 (“second year compliance”). However, there is no constitutional requirement that committees review bills in any specific way; there is in fact no constitutional requirement that the House or Senate involve committees in the legislative process at all. To the extent the House and Senate now utilize a committee structure that functions in this way, that is a decision that the two branches have made—separately and jointly—based on their respective exclusive constitutional authority to order their own affairs. See, e.g., House Rules 17A and 17B; Senate Rule 12; Joint Rules 1, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, and 1F. Indeed, as discussed above, over time the General Court has adopted a variety of approaches to how committees review potential legislation.

House No. 5010 also introduces the idea of a “public mark-up session,” which does not now exist as a part of the General Court’s rules. This concept is utilized in some form or another by very few other state legislatures, and where it is utilized it

is authorized by rules adopted by that body.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, requiring ten days' notice before a joint committee may hold a hearing (a rule of legislative procedure required by House No. 5010) is currently provided for in the Joint Rule 1D<sup>14</sup> for the 194<sup>th</sup> General Court, although it was not provided for in the Joint Rules of certain previous sessions of the General Court, including the 191<sup>st</sup>, 192<sup>nd</sup> and 193<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the General Court.<sup>15</sup> More importantly, it is unclear whether future sessions of the House and Senate, and the General Court collectively, would reach the same procedural determination as the current session regarding the number of days, if any, that should be required prior to filing notice for a joint committee hearing. House No. 5010 seeks to strip the House and Senate of their exclusive constitutional

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<sup>13</sup> The National Conference of State Legislatures has identified only three state legislatures that utilize any sort of public “markup” or “work sessions” as part of their committee processes. See Nat’l Conf. of State Legislatures, Public Markup Sessions & Floor Amendments (March 2026). Maine’s legislature has adopted joint rules governing “work sessions,” where formal changes are made to bills before the committee after a public hearing. Both branches of Oregon’s legislature have adopted rules for public work sessions, subject to the state’s public meetings law, wherein bills are discussed but public testimony is generally not allowed. Washington’s legislative committees hold “work sessions” but these meetings are dedicated to exploring potential legislation rather than discussing specific bills.

<sup>14</sup> Joint Rule 1D requires meetings of joint committees be open to the public following a notice of no less than 10 days prior to the meeting. The committee may vote to enter executive session after a meeting is first convened in open session following proper notice.

<sup>15</sup> Joint Rule 1D for the 191<sup>st</sup>, 192<sup>nd</sup>, and 193<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the General Court required 72-hour notice for hearings.

authority to unilaterally or jointly make this decision, along with all others, from future sessions of the General Court by establishing rules dictating legislative procedures for all future sessions.

The framers, however, clearly recognized the importance of an iterative approach, and the likelihood that each session of the General Court may—and likely will—need to modify their rules to address unforeseen legislative or operational circumstances. Even within a given session, the House has long recognized that events may require flexibility. See House Rule 7C (providing that the “committee on Rules may consider and make recommendations designed to improve and expedite the business and procedures of the House and its committees, and to recommend to the House any amendments to the Rules deemed necessary”). The wisdom of this approach was demonstrated during the COVID pandemic, when mid-session the General Court was forced to grapple with unprecedented disruptions to the regular course of business and both chambers were required to adopt temporary emergency rules. See 2020 House Doc. No. 4690; 2020 House J. for May 4, at 5 (adopting temporary emergency rules contained in 2020 House Doc. No. 4690 for the House). More recently, the 194<sup>th</sup> General Court, recognizing the value of allowing certain critical business to extend beyond July 31<sup>st</sup> of the second year of the session, updated Joint Rule 12A to allow formal business on certain matters past that deadline for the first time since the original adoption of Joint Rule 12A in 1995.

Compare Joint Rule 12A (2025-2026) with Joint Rule 12A (1995-1996), as appearing in 1995-1996 House J. Appendix, 2857. House No. 5010 is fundamentally opposed to any such evolution and attempts to set in stone how and when the General Court's committees function.

Third, and related to the first and second points, House No. 5010 also seeks to force the House and the Senate to utilize committees for purely legislative matters—and only legislative matters of a certain type, at a certain volume and by a certain time, at that. House No. 5010 deems only those committees that receive 50 bills by March 1 to be “eligible”—that is, sufficiently important to the functioning of the General Court for their chairs and members to be eligible for additional compensation. But some committees handle legislation in a manner that reflects the reality of their domain rather than some idealized timeline of when a committee should act. The Joint Committee on Municipalities, for example, receives home rule petitions throughout the session, based on the emerging needs of Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns, not necessarily in accordance with an established legislative calendar. See Joint Rule 12 (home rule petitions need not be filed by the general bill-filing deadline). The House and the Senate also utilize committees for administrative and operational purposes, for oversight purposes, and to develop policy through research and study, which results in better legislation in future sessions.

House No. 5010 attempts to avoid Paisner's prohibition on establishing legislative rules through the initiative process as—with the exception of the rule directing the Clerks to take certain actions—many of its provisions do not explicitly mandate that the House and Senate take action. However, House No. 5010's attempt to end-run Paisner does not change the fact that it functionally dictates “rules and orders of proceeding.” Its drafters could have amended the compensation-related portions of Section 9B to revise the additional compensation amounts for legislative leaders, but instead they chose to dictate through financial coercion when and how the House and the Senate utilize committees as part of the legislative process. Cf. Opinion of the Justices to the House of Representatives, 422 Mass. at 1224 (opining that the initiative merely encouraged that the General Court establish a six-month session because it did not restrict the time period for which legislators could receive per diem payments and allowances for legislative business).

That House No. 5010's drafters intended to impose a specific committee structure on the General Court is further made clear by considering what would happen if the House and Senate choose to meet the substantive standards for “compliance” in some different way, such as establishing mirrored committees in each chamber but not joint committees or by adjusting the dates for compliance from year to year. In every instance, House No. 5010 would deny legislative leaders and committee chairs a significant portion of their compensation despite the General

Court responding to House No. 5010's alleged encouragement. In the end, there is no method by which a future session of the General Court could comply with the requirements of House No. 5010 other than by modifying their internal rules.

**II. HOUSE NO. 5010 INTRUDES ON THE EXCLUSIVE UNICAMERAL AUTHORITY GRANTED TO THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE BY THE MASSACHUSETTS CONSTITUTION.**

Even if this Court concludes that House No. 5010 proposes a law, it still impermissibly intrudes on the unicameral authority granted to the House and the Senate for all the reasons discussed above. The unicameral authority to settle their own "rules and orders of proceedings" is vested exclusively in each respective chamber alone: the Massachusetts Constitution protects each chamber from outside interference with its internal affairs, even when that outside interference comes from the other chamber. See Paisner, 390 Mass. 593, 600 ("It cannot be emphasized too strongly that this power over procedures rests, not in the 'General Court,' but in the separate Houses of the Legislature. Thus each branch of each successive Legislature may proceed to make rules without seeking concurrence or approval of the other branch, or of the executive, and without being bound by action taken by an earlier Legislature.") (citations omitted).

House No. 5010 seeks to curtail each chamber's independence and bind future sessions of the General Court. It conditions a significant portion of the additional compensation that may be provided to legislative leaders on the House and Senate's

willingness to establish joint committees that approach the task of legislating in the same manner. Even if this Court concludes that House No. 5010 does not “mandate” compliance, see Opinion of the Justices to the House of Representatives, 422 Mass. at 1223-1224, it should still opine that House No. 5010 intrudes on and impedes the exclusive constitutional authority granted to each chamber. How could it not, when it conditions the additional compensation of House leadership not only on their own chamber’s performance but on how the Senate acts or does not act? How can the Senate’s leadership tend to the business of their own chamber, when half of their additional compensation is contingent on members of the House agreeing to the same committee structure as the Senate has chosen for itself and by a date certain? In effect, the petition gives each chamber a veto over the other: the Senate can threaten to withhold participation in the joint committee structure required by House No. 5010, thereby denying additional compensation to House leaders, unless the House agrees to some Senate demand, and the House could do the same to the Senate. The Massachusetts Constitution allows for no such weapon to be wielded by one chamber against the other, nor does it allow any statute to dictate when and how the two chambers engage in the business of lawmaking.

### **CONCLUSION**

For the reasons set forth above, the Court should answer that House 5010 does not propose a law, as required by Article 48. In the alternative, if the Court answers

that House 5010 does propose a law, it should answer that House 5010 intrudes on the Senate's ability to set its own rules of proceedings in violation of Article 7, just as it intrudes on the House's ability to set its own rules of proceedings in violation of Article 10.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: April 3, 2026

## CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I, James C. Kennedy, hereby certify that the foregoing Brief of Amicus Curiae, Massachusetts House of Representatives complies with the rules of Court that pertain to the filing of briefs, including, but not limited to Rules 17 and 20. The brief uses Times New Roman 14-point font and was composed in Microsoft Word. The brief contains 7,401 non-excluded words, which was ascertained using Microsoft Word's word count function.

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I, James C. Kennedy, hereby certify that on April 3, 2026, I caused to be filed, via e-fileMA, the foregoing Brief of Amicus Curiae, Massachusetts House of Representatives in No. SJC-13909, Request for an Advisory Opinion from the Massachusetts Senate, in addition to a copy via email to:

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Dated: April 3, 2026

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M.G.L.A. Const. Pt. 2, C. 1, § 2, Art. 7

Art. VII. President; officers; rules of proceedings

Currentness

ART. VII. The senate shall choose its own president, appoint its own officers, and determine its own rules of proceedings.

M.G.L.A. Const. Pt. 2, C. 1, § 2, Art. 7, MA CONST Pt. 2, C. 1, § 2, Art. 7

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M.G.L.A. Const. Pt. 2, C. 1, § 3, Art. 10

Art. X. House as judge of returns; elections and qualifications of its  
members; officers; rules; punishment for offenses; privileges of members

Currentness

ART. X. The house of representatives shall be the judge of the returns, elections, and qualifications of its own members, as pointed out in the constitution; shall choose their own speaker; appoint their own officers, and settle the rules and orders of proceeding in their own house: They shall have authority to punish by imprisonment, every person, not a member, who shall be guilty of disrespect to the house, by any disorderly, or contemptuous behavior, in its presence; or who, in the town where the general court is sitting, and during the time of its sitting, shall threaten harm to the body or estate of any of its members, for any thing said or done in the house; or who shall assault any of them therefor; or who shall assault, or arrest, any witness, or other person, ordered to attend the house, in his way in going or returning; or who shall rescue any person arrested by the order of the house. And no member of the house of representatives shall be arrested, or held to bail on mesne process, during his going unto, returning from, or his attending the general assembly.

M.G.L.A. Const. Pt. 2, C. 1, § 3, Art. 10, MA CONST Pt. 2, C. 1, § 3, Art. 10  
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Art. XLVIII. Initiative and Referendum  
I. Definition.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Pt. 1, Def.

I. DEFINITION

Currentness

Legislative power shall continue to be vested in the general court; but the people reserve to themselves the popular initiative, which is the power of a specified number of voters to submit constitutional amendments and laws to the people for approval or rejection; and the popular referendum, which is the power of a specified number of voters to submit laws, enacted by the general court, to the people for their ratification or rejection.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Pt. 1, Def., MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Pt. 1, Def.  
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M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 1

Section 1. Contents

Currentness

An initiative petition shall set forth the full text of the constitutional amendment or law, hereinafter designated as the measure, which is proposed by the petition.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 1, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 1  
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II. Initiative Petitions. (Refs & Annos)

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 2

Section 2. Excluded matters

Currentness

No measure that relates to religion, religious practices or religious institutions; or to the appointment, qualification, tenure, removal, recall or compensation of judges; or to the reversal of a judicial decision; or to the powers, creation or abolition of courts; or the operation of which is restricted to a particular town, city or other political division or to particular districts or localities of the commonwealth; or that makes a specific appropriation of money from the treasury of the commonwealth, shall be proposed by an initiative petition; but if a law approved by the people is not repealed, the general court shall raise by taxation or otherwise and shall appropriate such money as may be necessary to carry such law into effect.

Neither the eighteenth amendment of the constitution, as approved and ratified to take effect on the first day of October in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen, nor this provision for its protection, shall be the subject of an initiative amendment.

No proposition inconsistent with any one of the following rights of the individual, as at present declared in the declaration of rights, shall be the subject of an initiative or referendum petition: The right to receive compensation for private property appropriated to public use; the right of access to and protection in courts of justice; the right of trial by jury; protection from unreasonable search, unreasonable bail and the law martial; freedom of the press; freedom of speech; freedom of elections; and the right of peaceable assembly.

No part of the constitution specifically excluding any matter from the operation of the popular initiative and referendum shall be the subject of an initiative petition; nor shall this section be the subject of such a petition.

The limitations on the legislative power of the general court in the constitution shall extend to the legislative power of the people as exercised hereunder.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 2, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 2  
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II. Initiative Petitions. (Refs & Annos)

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 3

Section 3. Mode of Originating

Currentness

Such petition shall first be signed by ten qualified voters of the commonwealth and shall be submitted to the attorney-general not later than the first Wednesday of the August before the assembling of the general court into which it is to be introduced, and if he shall certify that the measure and the title thereof are in proper form for submission to the people, and that the measure is not, either affirmatively or negatively, substantially the same as any measure which has been qualified for submission or submitted to the people at either of the two preceding biennial state elections, and that it contains only subjects not excluded from the popular initiative and which are related or which are mutually dependent, it may then be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth. The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a fair, concise summary, as determined by the attorney-general, of the proposed measure as such summary will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers. All initiative petitions, with the first ten signatures attached, shall be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth not earlier than the first Wednesday of the September before the assembling of the general court into which they are to be introduced, and the remainder of the required signatures shall be filed not later than the first Wednesday of the following December.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter: s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 3, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 3  
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II. Initiative Petitions. (Refs & Annos)

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 4

Section 4. Transmission to the General Court

Currentness

If an initiative petition, signed by the required number of qualified voters, has been filed as aforesaid, the secretary of the commonwealth shall, upon the assembling of the general court, transmit it to the clerk of the house of representatives, and the proposed measure shall then be deemed to be introduced and pending.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 4, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 2, § 4  
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the Initiative.  
III. Legislative Action. General Provisions.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 3, § 1

Section 1. Reference to Committee

Currentness

If a measure is introduced into the general court by initiative petition, it shall be referred to a committee thereof, and the petitioners and all parties in interest shall be heard, and the measure shall be considered and reported upon to the general court with the committee's recommendations, and the reasons therefor, in writing. Majority and minority reports shall be signed by the members of said committee.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 3, § 1, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 3, § 1  
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M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 3, § 2

Section 2. Legislative Substitutes

Currentness

The general court may, by resolution passed by yea and nay vote, either by the two houses separately, or in the case of a constitutional amendment by a majority of those voting thereon in joint session in each of two years as hereinafter provided, submit to the people a substitute for any measure introduced by initiative petition, such substitute to be designated on the ballot as the legislative substitute for such an initiative measure and to be grouped with it as an alternative therefor.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 3, § 2, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 3, § 2  
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the Initiative.  
IV. Legislative Action on Proposed Constitutional Amendments.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 1

Section 1. Definition

Currentness

A proposal for amendment to the constitution introduced into the general court by initiative petition shall be designated an initiative amendment, and an amendment introduced by a member of either house shall be designated a legislative substitute or a legislative amendment.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 1, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 1  
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IV. Legislative Action on Proposed Constitutional Amendments.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 2

Section 2. Joint Session

Currentness

If a proposal for a specific amendment of the constitution is introduced into the general court by initiative petition signed in the aggregate by not less than such number of voters as will equal three per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election, or if in case of a proposal for amendment introduced into the general court by a member of either house, consideration thereof in joint session is called for by vote of either house, such proposal shall, not later than the second Wednesday in May, be laid before a joint session of the two houses, at which the president of the senate shall preside; and if the two houses fail to agree upon a time for holding any joint session hereby required, or fail to continue the same from time to time until final action has been taken upon all amendments pending, the governor shall call such joint session or continuance thereof.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 2, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 2  
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IV. Legislative Action on Proposed Constitutional Amendments.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 3

Section 3. Amendment of Proposed Amendments

Currentness

A proposal for an amendment to the constitution introduced by initiative petition shall be voted upon in the form in which it was introduced, unless such amendment is amended by vote of three-fourths of the members voting thereon in joint session, which vote shall be taken by call of the yeas and nays if called for by any member.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 3, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 3  
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IV. Legislative Action on Proposed Constitutional Amendments.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 4

Section 4. Legislative Action

Currentness

Final legislative action in the joint session upon any amendment shall be taken only by call of the yeas and nays, which shall be entered upon the journals of the two houses; and an unfavorable vote at any stage preceding final action shall be verified by call of the yeas and nays, to be entered in like manner. At such joint session a legislative amendment receiving the affirmative votes of a majority of all the members elected, or an initiative amendment receiving the affirmative votes of not less than one-fourth of all the members elected, shall be referred to the next general court.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 4, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 4  
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IV. Legislative Action on Proposed Constitutional Amendments.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 5

Section 5. Submission to the People

Currentness

If in the next general court a legislative amendment shall again be agreed to in joint session by a majority of all the members elected, or if an initiative amendment or a legislative substitute shall again receive the affirmative votes of at least one-fourth of all the members elected, such fact shall be certified by the clerk of such joint session to the secretary of the commonwealth, who shall submit the amendment to the people at the next state election. Such amendment shall become part of the constitution if approved, in the case of a legislative amendment, by a majority of the voters voting thereon, or if approved, in the case of an initiative amendment or a legislative substitute, by voters equal in number to at least thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election and also by a majority of the voters voting on such amendment.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 5, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 4, § 5  
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the Initiative.  
V. Legislative Action on Proposed Laws.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 5, § 1

Section 1. Legislative Procedure

Currentness

If an initiative petition for a law is introduced into the general court, signed in the aggregate by not less than such number of voters as will equal three per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election, a vote shall be taken by yeas and nays in both houses before the first Wednesday of May upon the enactment of such law in the form in which it stands in such petition. If the general court fails to enact such law before the first Wednesday of May, and if such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth, not earlier than the first Wednesday of the following June nor later than the first Wednesday of the following July, a number of signatures of qualified voters equal in number to not less than one half of one per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election, in addition to those signing such initiative petition, which signatures must have been obtained after the first Wednesday of May aforesaid, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such proposed law to the people at the next state election. If it shall be approved by voters equal in number to at least thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election and also by a majority of the voters voting on such law, it shall become law, and shall take effect in thirty days after such state election or at such time after such election as may be provided in such law.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 5, § 1, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 5, § 1  
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V. Legislative Action on Proposed Laws.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 5, § 2

Section 2. Amendment by Petitioners

Currentness

If the general court fails to pass a proposed law before the first Wednesday of May, a majority of the first ten signers of the initiative petition therefor shall have the right, subject to certification by the attorney-general filed as hereinafter provided, to amend the measure which is the subject of such petition. An amendment so made shall not invalidate any signature attached to the petition. If the measure so amended, signed by a majority of the first ten signers, is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth before the first Wednesday of the following June, together with a certificate signed by the attorney-general to the effect that the amendment made by such proposers is in his opinion perfecting in its nature and does not materially change the substance of the measure, and if such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth, not earlier than the first Wednesday of the following June nor later than the first Wednesday of the following July, a number of signatures of qualified voters equal in number to not less than one half of one per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election in addition to those signing such initiative petition, which signatures must have been obtained after the first Wednesday of May aforesaid, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit the measure to the people in its amended form.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 5, § 2, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 5, § 2  
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VI. Conflicting and Alternative Measures.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 6  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;i(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

If in any judicial proceeding, provisions of constitutional amendments or of laws approved by the people at the same election are held to be in conflict, then the provisions contained in the measure that received the largest number of affirmative votes at such election shall govern.

A constitutional amendment approved at any election shall govern any law approved at the same election.

The general court, by resolution passed as hereinbefore set forth, may provide for grouping and designating upon the ballot as conflicting measures or as alternative measures, only one of which is to be adopted, any two or more proposed constitutional amendments or laws which have been or may be passed or qualified for submission to the people at any one election: provided, that a proposed constitutional amendment and a proposed law shall not be so grouped, and that the ballot shall afford an opportunity to the voter to vote for each of the measures or for only one of the measures, as may be provided in said resolution, or against each of the measures so grouped as conflicting or as alternative. In case more than one of the measures so grouped shall receive the vote required for its approval as herein provided, only that one for which the largest affirmative vote was cast shall be deemed to be approved.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 6, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Init., Pt. 6  
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the Referendum.  
I. When Statutes Shall Take Effect.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 1  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

No law passed by the general court shall take effect earlier than ninety days after it has become a law, excepting laws declared to be emergency laws and laws which may not be made the subject of a referendum petition, as herein provided.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 1, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 1  
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II. Emergency Measures.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 2  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

A law declared to be an emergency law shall contain a preamble setting forth the facts constituting the emergency, and shall contain the statement that such law is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety or convenience. A separate vote, which shall be recorded, shall be taken on the preamble, and unless the preamble is adopted by two-thirds of the members of each House voting thereon, the law shall not be an emergency law. Upon the request of two members of the Senate or of five members of the House of Representatives, the vote on the preamble in such branch shall be taken by call of the yeas and nays. But if the governor, at any time before the election at which it is to be submitted to the people on referendum, files with the secretary of the commonwealth a statement declaring that in his opinion the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety or convenience requires that such law should take effect forthwith and that it is an emergency law and setting forth the facts constituting the emergency, then such law, if not previously suspended as hereinafter provided, shall take effect without suspension, or if such law has been so suspended such suspension shall thereupon terminate and such law shall thereupon take effect: but no grant of any franchise or amendment thereof, or renewal or extension thereof for more than one year shall be declared to be an emergency law.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 2, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 2  
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III. Referendum Petitions.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 1

Section 1. Contents

Currentness

A referendum petition may ask for a referendum to the people upon any law enacted by the general court which is not herein expressly excluded.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 1, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 1  
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III. Referendum Petitions.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 2

Section 2. Excluded Matters

Currentness

No law that relates to religion, religious practices or religious institutions; or to the appointment, qualification, tenure, removal or compensation of judges; or to the powers, creation or abolition of courts; or the operation of which is restricted to a particular town, city or other political division or to particular districts or localities of the commonwealth; or that appropriates money for the current or ordinary expenses of the commonwealth or for any of its departments, boards, commissions or institutions shall be the subject of a referendum petition.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 2, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 2  
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III. Referendum Petitions.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 3

Section 3. Mode of Petitioning for the Suspension of a Law and a Referendum thereon

Currentness

A petition asking for a referendum on a law, and requesting that the operation of such law be suspended, shall first be signed by ten qualified voters and shall then be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than thirty days after the law that is the subject of the petition has become law. The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a fair, concise summary of the proposed law as such summary will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers. If such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than ninety days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law a number of signatures of qualified voters equal in number to not less than two per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election, then the operation of such law shall be suspended, and the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such law to the people at the next state election, if sixty days intervene between the date when such petition is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth and the date for holding such state election; if sixty days do not so intervene, then such law shall be submitted to the people at the next following state election, unless in the meantime it shall have been repealed; and if it shall be approved by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon, such law shall, subject to the provisions of the constitution, take effect in thirty days after such election, or at such time after such election as may be provided in such law; if not so approved such law shall be null and void; but no such law shall be held to be disapproved if the negative vote is less than thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 3, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 3  
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III. Referendum Petitions.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 4

Section 4. Petitions for Referendum on an Emergency Law or a Law the Suspension of which is not asked for  
Currentness

A referendum petition may ask for the repeal of an emergency law or of a law which takes effect because the referendum petition does not contain a request for suspension, as aforesaid. Such petition shall first be signed by ten qualified voters of the commonwealth, and shall then be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than thirty days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law. The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a fair, concise summary of the proposed law as such summary will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers. If such petition filed as aforesaid is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than ninety days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law a number of signatures of qualified voters equal in number to not less than one and one half per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election protesting against such law and asking for a referendum thereon, than the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such law to the people at the next state election, if sixty days intervene between the date when such petition is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth and the date for holding such state election. If sixty days do not so intervene, then it shall be submitted to the people at the next following state election, unless in the meantime it shall have been repealed; and if it shall not be approved by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon, it shall, at the expiration of thirty days after such election, be thereby repealed; but no such law shall be held to be disapproved if the negative vote is less than thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election.

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & "Pt. II" & 1).>

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 4, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Ref., Pt. 3, § 4  
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I. Identification and Certification of Signatures.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 1  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

Provision shall be made by law for the proper identification and certification of signatures to the petitions hereinbefore referred to, and for penalties for signing any such petition, or refusing to sign it, for money or other valuable consideration, and for the forgery of signatures thereto. Pending the passage of such legislation all provisions of law relating to the identification and certification of signatures to petitions for the nomination of candidates for state offices or to penalties for the forgery of such signatures shall apply to the signatures to the petitions herein referred to. The general court may provide by law that no co-partnership or corporation shall undertake for hire or reward to circulate petitions, may require individuals who circulate petitions for hire or reward to be licensed, and may make other reasonable regulations to prevent abuses arising from the circulation of petitions for hire or reward.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 1, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 1  
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II. Limitation on Signatures.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 2  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

Not more than one-fourth of the certified signatures on any petition shall be those of registered voters of any one county.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 2, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 2  
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 III. Form of Ballot.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 3  
 Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
 s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

A fair, concise summary, as determined by the attorney general, subject to such provision as may be made by law, of each proposed amendment to the constitution, and each law submitted to the people, shall be printed on the ballot, and the secretary of the commonwealth shall give each question a number and cause such question, except as otherwise authorized herein, to be printed on the ballot in the following form:--

In the case of an amendment to the constitution:

Do you approve of the adoption of an amendment  
 to the constitution summarized below, (here state,  
 in distinctive type, whether approved or disap-  
 proved by the general court, and by what vote  
 thereon)?

	YES.	
	NO.	

**(Set forth summary here)**

In the case of a law: Do you approve of a law  
 summarized below, (here state, in distinctive type,  
 whether approved or disapproved by the general  
 court, and by what vote thereon)?

	YES.	
	NO.	

**(Set forth summary here)**

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 3, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 3  
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IV. Information for Voters.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 4  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

The secretary of the commonwealth shall cause to be printed and sent to each person eligible to vote in the commonwealth or to each residence of one or more persons eligible to vote in the commonwealth the full text of every measure to be submitted to the people, together with a copy of the legislative committee's majority reports, if there be such, with the names of the majority and minority members thereon, a statement of the votes of the general court on the measure, and a fair, concise summary of the measure as such summary will appear on the ballot; and shall, in such manner as may be provided by law, cause to be prepared and sent other information and arguments for and against the measure.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 4, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 4  
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V. The Veto Power of the Governor.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 5  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

The veto power of the governor shall not extend to measures approved by the people.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 5, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 5  
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VI. The General Court's Power of Repeal.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 6  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

Subject to the veto power of the governor and to the right of referendum by petition as herein provided, the general court may amend or repeal a law approved by the people.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 6, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 6  
Current through amendments approved February 1, 2024.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated  
Constitution or Form of Government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [Annotated]  
Articles of Amendment  
Art. XLVIII. Initiative and Referendum  
General Provisions.  
VII. Amendment Declared to be Self-Executing.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 7  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;i(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

This article of amendment to the constitution is self-executing, but legislation not inconsistent with anything herein contained may be enacted to facilitate the operation of its provisions.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 7, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 7  
Current through amendments approved February 1, 2024.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated  
Constitution or Form of Government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [Annotated]  
Articles of Amendment  
Art. XLVIII. Initiative and Referendum  
General Provisions.  
VIII. Articles IX and XLII of Amendments of the Constitution Annulled.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 8  
Currentness

<Each part and section of a part under Article XLVIII has been set out as a separate document. For Part II, § 1 enter:  
s;tc;ci(Const & Art & XLVIII & “Pt. II” & 1).>

Article IX and Article XLII of the amendments of the constitution are hereby annulled.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 8, MA CONST Amend. Art. 48, Gen. Prov., Pt. 8  
Current through amendments approved February 1, 2024.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated  
Constitution or Form of Government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [Annotated]  
Articles of Amendment  
Art. LXIV. Terms of Office; Assembly of General Court

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 64, § 1

Section 1

Currentness

The governor, lieutenant-governor, secretary, treasurer and receiver-general, attorney-general, and auditor shall be elected quadrennially and councillors, senators and representatives shall be elected biennially. The terms of the governor and lieutenant-governor shall begin at noon on the Thursday next following the first Wednesday in January succeeding their election and shall end at noon on the Thursday next following the first Wednesday in January in the fifth year following their election. If the governor elect shall have died before the qualification of the lieutenant-governor elect, the lieutenant-governor elect upon qualification shall become governor. If both the governor elect and the lieutenant-governor elect shall have died both said offices shall be deemed to be vacant and the provisions of Article LV of the Amendments to the Constitution shall apply. The terms of the secretary, treasurer and receiver-general, attorney-general, and auditor shall begin with the third Wednesday in January succeeding their election and shall extend to the third Wednesday in January in the fifth year following their election and until their successors are chosen and qualified. The terms of the councillors shall begin at noon on the Thursday next following the first Wednesday in January succeeding their election and shall end at noon on the Thursday next following the first Wednesday in January in the third year following their election. The terms of senators and representatives shall begin with the first Wednesday in January succeeding their election and shall extend to the first Wednesday in January in the third year following their election and until their successors are chosen and qualified.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 64, § 1, MA CONST Amend. Art. 64, § 1  
Current through amendments approved February 1, 2024.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated  
Constitution or Form of Government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [Annotated]  
Articles of Amendment

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 67

Art. LXVII. Amendment of Forty-eighth Article of Amendment in relation to emergency measures

Currentness

ART. LXVII. Article XLVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution is hereby amended by striking out, in that part entitled “II. Emergency Measures”, under the heading “The Referendum”, the words “A separate vote shall be taken on the preamble by call of the yeas and nays, which shall be recorded, and unless the preamble is adopted by two-thirds of the members of each House voting thereon, the law shall not be an emergency law; but” and substituting the following:--A separate vote, which shall be recorded, shall be taken on the preamble, and unless the preamble is adopted by two-thirds of the members of each House voting thereon, the law shall not be an emergency law. Upon the request of two members of the Senate or of five members of the House of Representatives, the vote on the preamble in such branch shall be taken by call of the yeas and nays. But

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 67, MA CONST Amend. Art. 67  
Current through amendments approved February 1, 2024.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated  
Constitution or Form of Government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [Annotated]  
Articles of Amendment

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 87

Art. LXXXVII. Reorganization plan procedure for the executive department

Currentness

ART. LXXXVII. SECTION 1. For the purpose of transferring, abolishing, consolidating or co-ordinating the whole or any part of any agency, or the functions thereof, within the executive department of the government of the commonwealth, or for the purpose of authorizing any officer of any agency within the executive department of the government of the commonwealth to delegate any of his functions, the governor may prepare one or more reorganization plans, each bearing an identifying number and may present such plan or plans to the general court, together with a message in explanation thereof.

SEC. 2. (a) Every such reorganization plan shall be referred to an appropriate committee, to be determined by the Clerks of the Senate and the House of Representatives, with the approval of the President and Speaker, which committee shall not later than thirty days after the date of the Governor's presentation of said plan hold a public hearing thereon and shall not later than ten days after such hearing report that it approves or disapproves such plan and such reorganization plan shall have the force of law upon expiration of the sixty calendar days next following its presentation by the governor to the general court, unless disapproved by a majority vote of the members of either of the two branches of the general court present and voting, the general court not having been prorogued within such sixty days.

(b) After its presentation by the governor to the general court, no such reorganization plan shall be subject to amendment by the general court before expiration of such sixty days.

(c) Any such reorganization plan may provide for its taking effect on any date after expiration of such sixty days and every such reorganization plan shall comply with such conditions as the general court may from time to time prescribe by statute regarding the civil service status, seniority, retirement and other rights of any employee to be affected by such plan.

SEC. 3. Article LXVI of the Amendments to the Constitution is hereby annulled.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 87, MA CONST Amend. Art. 87

Current through amendments approved February 1, 2024.

Massachusetts General Laws Annotated  
Constitution or Form of Government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [Annotated]  
Articles of Amendment

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 118

Art. CXVIII. Compensation of members of general court

Currentness

ART. CXVIII. The base compensation as of January first, nineteen hundred and ninety-six, of members of the general court shall not be changed except as provided in this article. As of the first Wednesday in January of the year two thousand and one and every second year thereafter, such base compensation shall be increased or decreased at the same rate as increases or decreases in the median household income for the commonwealth for the preceding two year period, as ascertained by the governor.

M.G.L.A. Const. Amend. Art. 118, MA CONST Amend. Art. 118  
Current through amendments approved February 1, 2024.

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 KeyCite Yellow Flag  
Proposed Legislation

Massachusetts General Laws Annotated

Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182)

Title I. Jurisdiction and Emblems of the Commonwealth, the General Court, Statutes and Public Documents (Ch. 1-5)

Chapter 3. The General Court

M.G.L.A. 3 § 7

§ 7. Petitions for legislation respecting corporations

Currentness

Any petition to the general court, except a petition subject to the provisions of section five for the establishment or revival, or for the amendment, alteration or extension of the charter or corporate powers or privileges, or for the change of name of any corporation, except for a body politic and corporate, which is seasonably filed in the office of the clerk of either branch and is accompanied by a bill embodying in substance the legislation petitioned for, shall, with said accompanying bill, be transmitted as soon as may be by the clerk of the branch in which they were filed to the office of the state secretary.

The petition shall contain the business or mailing address of the petitioner and, if such petition relates to a corporation organized or to be organized for purposes of business or profit, shall be accompanied by a fee of twenty-five dollars, which shall be paid to the commonwealth.

Said secretary shall, not later than the thirtieth day following the date of receipt thereof, return the same with the accompanying bill to the clerk of the branch in which they were originally filed, together with a memorandum stating whether or not, in his opinion, the object sought may be accomplished under the General Laws or whether the same requires legislation. He may also insert in said memorandum any other relevant statement which, in his opinion, might be of assistance to the general court in passing on the petition.

**Credits**

Amended by St.1937, c. 364, § 3; St.1943, c. 549, § 2A; St.1962, c. 750, § 1; St.1984, c. 44, § 2.

M.G.L.A. 3 § 7, MA ST 3 § 7

Current through Chapter 11 of the 2026 2nd Annual Session. Some sections may be more current; see credits for details.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated

Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182)

Title I. Jurisdiction and Emblems of the Commonwealth, the General Court, Statutes and Public Documents (Ch. 1-5)

Chapter 3. The General Court

M.G.L.A. 3 § 9B

§ 9B. Additional regular compensation for certain members

Effective: January 4, 2017

Currentness

(a) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$80,000.

(b) The chair of the senate committee on ways and means and the chair of the house committee on ways and means shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$65,000. The floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$60,000. The president pro tempore of the senate and the speaker pro tempore of the house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$50,000.

(c) The assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate, the assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the house of representatives, the second assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives and the third assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$35,000.

(d) The chairs of each of the 4 divisions of the house of representatives, the chair of the senate committee on rules, the chair of the house committee on rules, the senate and house chairs of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the vice chair of the senate committee on ways and means, the vice chair of the house committee on ways and means, the ranking minority members of the house and senate committees on ways and means, the chair of the senate committee on post audit and oversight, the chair of the house committee on post audit and oversight, the chair of the senate committee on bills in the third reading, the chair of the house committee on bills in the third reading, the chair of the senate committee on steering and policy, the chair of the house committee on steering, policy and scheduling, the senate and house chairs of the committee on state administration and regulatory oversight, the senate and house chairs of the committee on health care financing, the senate and house chairs of the committee on financial services, the senate and house chairs of the committee on revenue, the senate and house chairs of the committee on economic development and emerging technologies, the senate and house chairs of the committee on the judiciary, the senate and house chairs of the committee on education, the senate and house chairs of the committee on telecommunications, utilities and energy and the senate and house chairs of the committee on transportation shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$30,000.

(e) The chairs of all other committees of the senate and house of representatives established by the joint rules of the senate and house of representatives or by the rules of the senate or the rules of the house of representatives, the vice chair of the house committee on rules, the ranking minority member of the house committee on rules, the vice chair of the house committee on post audit and oversight, the assistant vice chair of the senate committee on ways and means, the assistant vice chair of the house committee on ways and means, the assistant ranking minority member of the house committee on ways and means, the house vice chair of the committee on financial services, the ranking minority member of the house committee on financial services, the house vice chair of the committee on health care financing, the house vice chair of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the house ranking minority member of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the house vice chair of the committee on state administration and regulatory oversight, the house vice chair of the committee on economic development and emerging technologies, the ranking minority member of the house committee on economic development and emerging technologies, the vice chair of the house committee on revenue, the senate and house ranking minority members of the committee on health care financing, the house vice chair of the committee on the judiciary, the ranking minority member of the house committee on the judiciary, the house vice chair of the committee on transportation, the vice chair of the house committee on bills in the third reading, the vice chair of the house committee on steering, policy and scheduling, the house vice chair of the committee on education and the house vice chair of the committee on telecommunications, utilities and energy shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$15,000.

(f) The vice chairs of all other committees of the senate and house of representatives established by the joint rules of the senate and house of representatives or by the rules of the senate or the rules of the house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$5,200. Except as otherwise provided in the rules of the senate or house of representatives, no member of the general court shall be compensated for service as chair of more than 1 committee, and no member of the general court shall be compensated for service in more than 2 positions, whether as a member of leadership or as chair, vice chair or ranking member of a committee. Each member of the general court shall be entitled to be paid that member's compensation for each session on a bi-weekly basis. Compensation shall include any amounts a member is entitled to under this section, section 9C or as otherwise established by law.

(g) The amount of additional regular compensation established pursuant to subsections (a) to (f), inclusive, for each regular annual session, exclusive of the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, shall be adjusted biennially to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce; provided, however, that the amount of additional regular compensation for any regular annual session, exclusive of the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, shall not be less than that provided in said subsections (a) to (f), inclusive.

#### **Credits**

Added by St.1953, c. 263, § 1. Amended by St.1969, c. 19, § 5; St.1979, c. 686, §§ 1, 2; St.1994, c. 192, § 5; St.1994, c. 230, § 3; St.2000, c. 159, § 10; St.2000, c. 313, §§ 2, 3; St.2017, c. 1, § 2, eff. Jan. 4, 2017.

M.G.L.A. 3 § 9B, MA ST 3 § 9B

Current through Chapter 11 of the 2026 2nd Annual Session. Some sections may be more current; see credits for details.

Massachusetts General Laws Annotated

Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182)

Title I. Jurisdiction and Emblems of the Commonwealth, the General Court, Statutes and Public Documents (Ch. 1-5)

Chapter 3. The General Court

M.G.L.A. 3 § 9C

§ 9C. Annual expenses for members of general court

Effective: January 4, 2017

Currentness

Each member of the general court shall annually receive an amount for expenses to be paid as follows: (i) for members whose primary residence is located at a distance that is equal to or less than 50 miles from the state house, \$15,000; and (ii) for members whose primary residence is located at a distance that is greater than 50 miles from the state house, \$20,000.

**Credits**

Added by St.1994, c. 60, § 17. Amended by St.2017, c. 1, § 2, eff. Jan. 4, 2017.

M.G.L.A. 3 § 9C, MA ST 3 § 9C

Current through Chapter 11 of the 2026 2nd Annual Session. Some sections may be more current; see credits for details.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated

Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182)

Title I. Jurisdiction and Emblems of the Commonwealth, the General Court, Statutes and Public Documents (Ch. 1-5)

Chapter 3. The General Court

M.G.L.A. 3 § 12A

§ 12A. Facsimile signatures of clerks

Currentness

Facsimiles of the signatures of the clerk of the senate and the clerk of the house of representatives on endorsements of bills, reports of committees and other legislative documents shall have the same validity and effect as their written signatures.

**Credits**

Added by St.1952, c. 3.

M.G.L.A. 3 § 12A, MA ST 3 § 12A

Current through Chapter 11 of the 2026 2nd Annual Session. Some sections may be more current; see credits for details.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated

Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182)

Title I. Jurisdiction and Emblems of the Commonwealth, the General Court, Statutes and Public Documents (Ch. 1-5)

Chapter 3. The General Court

M.G.L.A. 3 § 12B

§ 12B. Manual

Effective: January 1, 2013

Currentness

The clerks of the 2 branches shall in every odd-numbered year prepare a manual for the general court. Such number of copies of the manual as the committees on rules shall determine shall be printed under the direction of the clerks of the 2 branches.

**Credits**

Added by St.2012, c. 165, § 2, eff. Jan. 1, 2013.

M.G.L.A. 3 § 12B, MA ST 3 § 12B

Current through Chapter 11 of the 2026 2nd Annual Session. Some sections may be more current; see credits for details.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated

Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182)

Title I. Jurisdiction and Emblems of the Commonwealth, the General Court, Statutes and Public Documents (Ch. 1-5)

Chapter 3. The General Court

M.G.L.A. 3 § 13

§ 13. Assistant clerks and clerical assistance; appointment, salary and tenure

Currentness

The clerks of the senate and house of representatives, subject to the approval of the senate and house, respectively, may each appoint an assistant clerk and a second assistant clerk, who shall receive such salaries as may be established by the committee on rules of the senate or the committee on rules of the house, as the case may be. The assistant clerk shall, in the absence of the clerk, perform the duties of the clerk unless a temporary clerk is chosen. The second assistant clerk shall, in the absence of the clerk and the assistant clerk, perform the duties of clerk, unless a temporary clerk is chosen. Salaries established for said assistant clerks and second assistant clerks under this section shall be for the period of two years commencing January first of the year in which established. Each clerk may remove the assistant clerk and the second assistant clerk appointed by him. Each clerk may also employ such clerical assistance as may be necessary, and may expend therefor such amounts as are appropriated.

**Credits**

Amended by St.1937, c. 360, § 2; St.1941, c. 230; St.1943, c. 260, § 2; St.1967, c. 1.

M.G.L.A. 3 § 13, MA ST 3 § 13

Current through Chapter 11 of the 2026 2nd Annual Session. Some sections may be more current; see credits for details.

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Massachusetts General Laws Annotated

Part I. Administration of the Government (Ch. 1-182)

Title I. Jurisdiction and Emblems of the Commonwealth, the General Court, Statutes and Public Documents (Ch. 1-5)

Chapter 3. The General Court

M.G.L.A. 3 § 33

§ 33. Publication of bulletins of committee hearings

Effective: January 1, 2013

Currentness

The committees on rules of the 2 branches, acting concurrently, shall publish electronically during each regular session of the general court bulletins of committee hearings.

**Credits**

Amended by St.2012, c. 165, § 6, eff. Jan. 1, 2013.

M.G.L.A. 3 § 33, MA ST 3 § 33

Current through Chapter 11 of the 2026 2nd Annual Session. Some sections may be more current; see credits for details.

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1994 Mass. Legis. Serv. Ch. 192 (H.B. 5534) (WEST)

MASSACHUSETTS 1994 LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

General Court, 1994 Regular Session

Additions and deletions are not identified in this document.

CHAPTER 192

H.B. No. 5534

LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—COMPENSATION

AN ACT further regulating legislative and constitutional officers' compensation.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. To provide for supplementing certain items in the general appropriation act for fiscal year nineteen hundred and ninety-five, the sums set forth in section two are hereby appropriated for the several purposes and subject to the conditions specified in chapter sixty of the acts of nineteen hundred and ninety-four, and subject to the provisions of law regulating the disbursement of public funds and the conditions pertaining to appropriations in said chapter sixty for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and ninety-five, the sums so appropriated shall be in addition to any amount available for the purpose.

SECTION 2.

EXECUTIVE.

0411-1000	.....	\$15,000
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STATE SECRETARY.

0511-1000	.....	\$7,500
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TREASURER.

0610-0000	.....	\$7,500
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STATE AUDITOR.

0710-0000	.....	\$7,500
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ATTORNEY GENERAL.

0810-0000	.....	\$7,500
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LEGISLATURE.

*Senate.*

9511-0000	For the compensation of senators; provided, that the funds appropriated herein shall be expended only in accordance with the provisions of section three of this act, prior appropriation continued .....	\$352,200
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*House of Representatives.*

9621-0000 For the compensation of representatives; provided, that the funds appropriated herein shall be expended only in accordance with the provisions of section three of this act, prior appropriation continued ..... \$1,408,800

EXECUTIVE.

0411-1000 ..... \$15,000

STATE SECRETARY.

0511-1000 ..... \$7,500

TREASURER.

0610-0000 ..... \$7,500

STATE AUDITOR.

0710-0000 ..... \$7,500

ATTORNEY GENERAL.

0810-0000 ..... \$7,500

LEGISLATURE.

Senate.

9511-0000 For the compensation of senators; provided, that the \$352,200 funds appropriated herein shall be expended only in accordance with the provisions of section three of this act, prior appropriation continued .....

House of Representatives.

9621-0000 For the compensation of representatives; provided, that \$1,408,800 the funds appropriated herein shall be expended only in accordance with the provisions of section three of this act, prior appropriation continued .....

SECTION 3. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law to the contrary and except as herein provided, each member of the general court shall receive for each regular annual session forty-six thousand four hundred and ten dollars. The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall each receive for each regular session eighty-one thousand four hundred and ten dollars. The chairman of the senate committee on ways and means and the chairman of the house committee on ways and means shall each receive for each regular session seventy-one thousand four hundred and ten dollars. The floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives shall each receive sixty-eight thousand nine hundred and ten dollars. The assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and the assistant floor leader of each of the major political parties in the house of representatives, and the second assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives, the third assistant floor leader of the minority party in the senate and house of representatives, the vice chairman of the house committee on ways and means and the vice chairman of the senate committee on ways and means and the ranking minority members of the house and senate committees on ways and means, the senate chairman and the house chairman of the committee on post audit and oversight, the senate chairman and the house chairman of the committee on taxation, the senate chairman and the house chairman of the committee on science and technology shall each receive sixty-one thousand four hundred and ten dollars. Other chairmen of committees of the house of representatives and the senate established by the joint rules or the house or senate rules, and the house vice chairman of the committee on post audit and oversight, the assistant vice chairman of the senate committee on ways and means and the assistant vice chairman of the house committee on ways and means and the vice chairman of the house committee on taxation shall each receive fifty-three thousand nine hundred and ten dollars; provided, however, that no chairman who serves as chairman of more than one such committee shall receive more than the compensation established for a chairman of one of any such committees. Each member of the general court shall be entitled to be paid for his compensation for each such session at the rate of one-twelfth the amount of compensation for such session for each full month of the session. Such payment shall be to him, upon his request, on the last legislative day in which the general court is in session preceding the fifteenth day of each month, and on the date preceding the last legislative day of each month, and shall be for an amount not exceeding the proportion then due

at the aforesaid rate; provided, that the state treasurer may, during such regular session, make additional payments on account, in excess of such monthly rate, to any member making written request but the amount of such additional payments shall not exceed, in the aggregate, fifteen hundred dollars in any one such session, or two thousand dollars if such session continues beyond July first, and in no event shall the amount of all payments under this section during such session to any member exceed, in the aggregate, the compensation of such member for such session.

SECTION 4. Section three of this act shall survive the expiration of the fiscal year.

SECTION 5. Section 9B of said chapter 3 as appearing in the 1992 Official Edition is hereby amended by striking out the first paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:—

<< MA ST 3 § 9B >>

Each member of the general court shall receive thirty-six hundred dollars annually for expenses to be paid as follows:—

each member shall be entitled to receive three hundred dollars on the first day of each session and the first day of each month thereafter until said sum of thirty-six hundred dollars shall have been paid; and on the last day of the session there shall be paid to each member of the general court the balance, if any, of said sum of thirty-six hundred dollars.

<< MA ST 6 § 1 >>

SECTION 6. Section 1 of chapter 6 of the General Laws as appearing in the 1992 Official Edition is hereby amended by striking out, in line 1, the word “seventy-five” and inserting in place thereof the following word:— ninety.

<< MA ST 6 § 2 >>

SECTION 7. Section 2 of said chapter 6 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 1, the word “sixty” and inserting in place thereof the following word:— seventy-five.

<< MA ST 9 § 1 >>

SECTION 8. Section 1 of chapter 9 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 1992 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 8, the word “sixty” and inserting in place thereof the word:— seventy-five.

<< MA ST 10 § 1 >>

SECTION 9. Section 1 of chapter 10 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 1992 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 3, the word “sixty” and inserting in place thereof the following word:— seventy-five.

<< MA ST 11 § 1 >>

SECTION 10. Section 1 of chapter 11 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 1992 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 4, the word “sixty” and inserting in place thereof the following word:— seventy-five.

<< MA ST 12 § 1 >>

SECTION 11. Section 1 of chapter 12 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 1992 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 3, the word “sixty-five” and inserting in place thereof the following word:— eighty.

<< Note: MA ST 3 §§ 9, 9B >>

SECTION 12. There is hereby established a special commission on the compensation of legislators consisting of the president and chief executive officer of the New England Electric System, the president of Robinson Lake Sawyer Miller, the president of Suffolk University and two members to be appointed by the governor. The commission shall make an investigation and study of the most independent method of determining cost-of-living adjustments to the salaries of members of the general court. Said commission shall report to the general court the results of its investigation and study, and its recommendations, if any, together

with drafts of legislation necessary to carry such recommendations into effect by filing the same with the clerk of the senate and the clerk of the house of representatives on or before the second Wednesday of December, nineteen hundred and ninety-five.

SECTION 13. The provisions of sections two, three, four and five shall take effect as of January fourth, nineteen hundred and ninety-five. The provisions of sections six and seven shall take effect as of January fifth, nineteen hundred and ninety-five. The provisions of sections eight, nine, ten and eleven shall take effect as of January eighteenth, nineteen hundred and ninety-five. The remaining provisions of this act shall take effect upon passage.

Approved December 8, 1994.

MA LEGIS 192 (1994)

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2017 Mass. Legis. Serv. Ch. 1 (H.B. 58) (WEST)

MASSACHUSETTS 2017 LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

General Court, 2017 First Annual Session

Additions and deletions are not identified in this document.

Vetoed are indicated by ~~Text~~ ;

stricken material by ~~Text~~ .

CHAPTER 1

H.B. No. 58

PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES—COMPENSATION AND SALARIES

AN ACT further regulating the compensation of certain public officials.

*Whereas*, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to make certain changes in law relative to the compensation of certain public officials, therefore, it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 3 of chapter 192 of the acts of 1994, as most recently amended by section 7 of chapter 5 of the acts of 2009, is hereby further amended by striking out the words “\$46,410. The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall each receive for each regular session \$35,000 additional compensation. The chairman of the senate committee on ways and means and the chairman of the house committee on ways and means shall each receive for each regular session \$25,000 additional compensation. The floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives shall each receive for each regular session \$22,500 additional compensation. The president pro tempore of the senate, the speaker pro tempore of the house of representatives, the assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate, the assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the house of representatives, the second assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives, the third assistant floor leaders of the minority party in the senate and house of representatives and of the majority party in the senate, the chairmen of each of the four divisions of the house of representatives, the chairman of the house committee on rules, the senate and house chairmen of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the vice chairman of the senate committee on ways and means, the vice chairman of the house committee on ways and means, the ranking minority members of the house and senate committees on ways and means, the chairman of the senate committee on post audit and oversight, the chairman of the house committee on post audit and oversight, the senate and house chairmen of the committee on state administration and regulatory oversight, the senate and house chairmen of the committee on health care financing, the senate and house chairmen of the committee on financial services, and the senate and the house chairmen of the joint committee on revenue, and the senate and house chairmen of the committee on economic development and emerging technologies, shall each receive for each regular annual session \$15,000 additional compensation, and shall not receive any other additional compensation under this section. Chairmen of all other committees of the senate and the house of representatives established by the joint rules, or by the senate or house rules, the vice chairman of the house committee on rules, the ranking minority member of the house committee on rules, the vice chairman of the house committee on post audit and oversight, the assistant vice chairman of the senate committee on ways and means, the assistant vice chairman of the house committee on ways and means, the house vice chairman of the committee on financial services, the house vice chairman of the committee on health care financing, the house vice chairman of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the house ranking minority member of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the house vice chairman of the committee on state administration

and regulatory oversight, the house vice chairman and the house ranking minority member of the committee on economic development and emerging technologies, the house vice chairman of the committee on revenue, and the senate and house ranking minority members of the committee on health care financing shall each receive for each regular annual session \$7,500 additional compensation for each such position. Each member of the general court shall be entitled to be paid for his compensation for each such session on a bi-weekly basis.” and inserting in place thereof the following words:— \$46,410 as base compensation, as calculated biennially, as of the first Wednesday in January, 2001, pursuant to Article CXVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution.

SECTION 2. Chapter 3 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out sections 9B to 10, inclusive, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the following 3 sections:—

<< MA ST 3 § 9B >>

Section 9B. (a) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$80,000.

(b) The chair of the senate committee on ways and means and the chair of the house committee on ways and means shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$65,000. The floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$60,000. The president pro tempore of the senate and the speaker pro tempore of the house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$50,000.

(c) The assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate, the assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the house of representatives, the second assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives and the third assistant floor leaders of each of the major political parties in the senate and house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$35,000.

(d) The chairs of each of the 4 divisions of the house of representatives, the chair of the senate committee on rules, the chair of the house committee on rules, the senate and house chairs of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the vice chair of the senate committee on ways and means, the vice chair of the house committee on ways and means, the ranking minority members of the house and senate committees on ways and means, the chair of the senate committee on post audit and oversight, the chair of the house committee on post audit and oversight, the chair of the senate committee on bills in the third reading, the chair of the house committee on bills in the third reading, the chair of the senate committee on steering and policy, the chair of the house committee on steering, policy and scheduling, the senate and house chairs of the committee on state administration and regulatory oversight, the senate and house chairs of the committee on health care financing, the senate and house chairs of the committee on financial services, the senate and house chairs of the committee on revenue, the senate and house chairs of the committee on economic development and emerging technologies, the senate and house chairs of the committee on the judiciary, the senate and house chairs of the committee on education, the senate and house chairs of the committee on telecommunications, utilities and energy and the senate and house chairs of the committee on transportation shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$30,000.

(e) The chairs of all other committees of the senate and house of representatives established by the joint rules of the senate and house of representatives or by the rules of the senate or the rules of the house of representatives, the vice chair of the house committee on rules, the ranking minority member of the house committee on rules, the vice chair of the house committee on post audit and oversight, the assistant vice chair of the senate committee on ways and means, the assistant vice chair of the

house committee on ways and means, the assistant ranking minority member of the house committee on ways and means, the house vice chair of the committee on financial services, the ranking minority member of the house committee on financial services, the house vice chair of the committee on health care financing, the house vice chair of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the house ranking minority member of the committee on bonding, capital expenditures and state assets, the house vice chair of the committee on state administration and regulatory oversight, the house vice chair of the committee on economic development and emerging technologies, the ranking minority member of the house committee on economic development and emerging technologies, the vice chair of the house committee on revenue, the senate and house ranking minority members of the committee on health care financing, the house vice chair of the committee on the judiciary, the ranking minority member of the house committee on the judiciary, the house vice chair of the committee on transportation, the vice chair of the house committee on bills in the third reading, the vice chair of the house committee on steering, policy and scheduling, the house vice chair of the committee on education and the house vice chair of the committee on telecommunications, utilities and energy shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$15,000.

(f) The vice chairs of all other committees of the senate and house of representatives established by the joint rules of the senate and house of representatives or by the rules of the senate or the rules of the house of representatives shall each receive for each regular annual session, in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, additional regular compensation in the amount of \$5,200. Except as otherwise provided in the rules of the senate or house of representatives, no member of the general court shall be compensated for service as chair of more than 1 committee, and no member of the general court shall be compensated for service in more than 2 positions, whether as a member of leadership or as chair, vice chair or ranking member of a committee. Each member of the general court shall be entitled to be paid that member's compensation for each session on a bi-weekly basis. Compensation shall include any amounts a member is entitled to under this section, section 9C or as otherwise established by law.

(g) The amount of additional regular compensation established pursuant to subsections (a) to (f), inclusive, for each regular annual session, exclusive of the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, shall be adjusted biennially to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce; provided, however, that the amount of additional regular compensation for any regular annual session, exclusive of the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII, shall not be less than that provided in said subsections (a) to (f), inclusive.

<< MA ST 3 § 9C >>

Section 9C. Each member of the general court shall annually receive an amount for expenses to be paid as follows: (i) for members whose primary residence is located at a distance that is equal to or less than 50 miles from the state house, \$15,000; and (ii) for members whose primary residence is located at a distance that is greater than 50 miles from the state house, \$20,000.

<< MA ST 3 § 10 >>

Section 10. Each member of the general court who is chosen to fill a vacancy or who resigns from the general court during a regular annual session shall be entitled to any additional compensation that a member may receive pursuant to section 9B and an allowance for expenses pursuant to section 9C, prorated for the time of that person's membership.

SECTION 3. Said chapter 3 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 9C the following section:—

<< MA ST 3 § 9D >>

Section 9D. The president of the senate and speaker of the house of representatives shall not receive earned income from any other source, but may receive unearned or passive income. The senate and the house of representatives shall biennially adopt rules for the administration and enforcement of this section. The house committee on ethics and the senate committee on ethics, respectively, shall have the exclusive jurisdiction over the administration and enforcement of this section.

SECTION 4. Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out sections 1 and 2, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the following 2 sections:—

<< MA ST 6 § 1 >>

Section 1. (a) The governor shall receive a salary of \$185,000 and an additional amount to be adjusted biennially to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce.

(b) The governor shall receive \$65,000 annually for expenses related to housing.

(c) The governor shall not receive earned income from any other source, but may receive unearned or passive income.

<< MA ST 6 § 2 >>

Section 2. (a) The lieutenant governor shall receive a salary of \$165,000 and an additional amount to be adjusted biennially to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce.

(b) The lieutenant governor shall not receive earned income from any other source but may receive unearned or passive income.

SECTION 5. Chapter 9 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section 1, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:—

<< MA ST 9 § 1 >>

Section 1. (a) There shall be a department of the state secretary under the supervision and control of the state secretary, which shall be organized as provided in this chapter. The state secretary shall make a quarterly return on oath to the governor of all fees of office received by the state secretary and give to the state treasurer a bond, in a penal sum and with sureties approved by the governor, conditioned satisfactorily to account for all money received by the state secretary in the state secretary's official capacity. The state secretary shall receive a salary of \$165,000, and an additional amount to be adjusted biennially to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce.

(b) The state secretary shall not receive earned income from any other source but may receive unearned or passive income.

SECTION 6. Chapter 10 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section 1, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:—

<< MA ST 10 § 1 >>

Section 1. (a) There shall be a department of the state treasurer, under the supervision and control of the state treasurer, which shall be organized as provided in this chapter. The state treasurer shall receive a salary of \$175,000 and an additional amount to

be adjusted biennially to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce.

(b) The state treasurer shall not receive earned income from any other source but may receive unearned or passive income.

SECTION 7. Chapter 11 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section 1, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:—

<< MA ST 11 § 1 >>

Section 1. (a) There shall be a department of the state auditor, under the supervision and control of the state auditor, which shall be organized as provided in this chapter. The state auditor shall receive a salary of \$165,000 and an additional amount to be adjusted biennially to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce. The state auditor shall give to the state treasurer a bond for the faithful performance of the state auditor's official duties in a penal sum and with sureties approved by the governor and council.

(b) The state auditor shall not receive earned income from any other source but may receive unearned or passive income.

SECTION 8. Chapter 12 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section 1, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:—

<< MA ST 12 § 1 >>

Section 1. (a) There shall be a department of the attorney general, under the supervision and control of the attorney general, which shall be organized as provided in this chapter. The attorney general shall receive a salary of \$175,000 and an additional amount to be adjusted biennially to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce. The attorney general shall be a member of the bar of the commonwealth.

(b) The attorney general shall not receive earned income from any other source but may receive unearned or passive income.

<< MA ST 211 § 22 >>

SECTION 9. Section 22 of chapter 211 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 1, the figure, "\$181,239" and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$187,489.

<< MA ST 211 § 22 >>

SECTION 10. Said section 22 of said chapter 211 is hereby further amended by striking out the figure "\$187,489", inserted by section 9, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$193,739.

<< MA ST 211 § 22 >>

SECTION 11. Said section 22 of said chapter 211 is hereby further amended by striking out the figure "\$193,739", inserted by section 10, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$199,989.

<< MA ST 211 § 22 >>

SECTION 12. Said section 22 of said chapter 211 is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$199,989”, inserted by section 11, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$206,239.

<< MA ST 211 § 22 >>

SECTION 13. Said section 22 of said chapter 211, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 2, the figure “\$175,984” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$182,234.

<< MA ST 211 § 22 >>

SECTION 14. Said section 22 of said chapter 211 is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$182,234”, inserted by section 13, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$188,484.

<< MA ST 211 § 22 >>

SECTION 15. Said section 22 of said chapter 211 is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$188,484”, inserted by section 14, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$194,734.

<< MA ST 211 § 22 >>

SECTION 16. Said section 22 of said chapter 211 is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$194,734”, inserted by section 15, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$200,984.

<< MA ST 211A § 2 >>

SECTION 17. Section 2 of chapter 211A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 1, the figure “\$170,358” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$176,608.

<< MA ST 211A § 2 >>

SECTION 18. Said section 2 of said chapter 211A is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$176,608”, inserted by section 17, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$182,858.

<< MA ST 211A § 2 >>

SECTION 19. Said section 2 of said chapter 211A is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$182,858”, inserted by section 18, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$189,108.

<< MA ST 211A § 2 >>

SECTION 20. Said section 2 of said chapter 211A is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$189,108”, inserted by section 19, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$195,358.

<< MA ST 211A § 2 >>

SECTION 21. Said section 2 of said chapter 211A, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 2, the figure “\$165,087” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$171,337.

<< MA ST 211A § 2 >>

SECTION 22. Said section 2 of said chapter 211A is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$171,337”, inserted by section 21, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$177,587.

<< MA ST 211A § 2 >>

SECTION 23. Said section 2 of said chapter 211A is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$177,587”, inserted by section 22, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$183,837.

<< MA ST 211A § 2 >>

SECTION 24. Said section 2 of said chapter 211A is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$183,837”, inserted by section 23, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$190,087.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 25. Section 4 of chapter 211B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 3, the figure “\$159,694” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$165,944.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 26. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$165,944”, inserted by section 25, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$172,194.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 27. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$172,194”, inserted by section 26, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$178,444.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 28. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$178,444”, inserted by section 27, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$184,694.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 29. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 5, the figure “\$165,124” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$171,374.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 30. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$171,374”, inserted by section 29, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$177,624.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 31. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$177,624”, inserted by section 30, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$183,874.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 32. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$183,874”, inserted by section 31, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$190,124.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 33. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 7, the figure “\$170,358” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:—\$176,878.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 34. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$176,878”, inserted by section 33, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$183,128.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 35. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$183,128”, inserted by section 34, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$189,378.

<< MA ST 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 36. Said section 4 of said chapter 211B is hereby further amended by striking out the figure “\$189,378”, inserted by section 35, and inserting in place thereof the following figure:— \$195,628.

<< Note: MA ST 3 § 9B; 3 § 9C; 6 § 1; 6 § 2; 9 § 1; 10 § 1; 11 § 1; 12 § 1 >>

SECTION 37. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the amount of compensation established pursuant to subsections (a) to (f), inclusive, of section 9B of chapter 3 of the General Laws for each regular annual session of the general court shall be adjusted on January 2, 2019, and biennially thereafter on the first Wednesday in January, to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce; provided, however, that the amount of additional regular compensation for any regular annual session of the general court shall not be less than provided in said subsections (a) to (e), inclusive, of said section 9B of said chapter 3.

(b) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the amount received by members of the general court for each regular annual session of the general court for expenses pursuant to section 9C of chapter 3 of the General Laws shall be adjusted on January 2, 2019, and biennially thereafter on the first Wednesday in January, to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce; provided, however, that the amount for each regular annual session of the general court for expenses shall not be less than provided in said section 9C of said chapter 3.

(c) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the amount of compensation established pursuant to sections 1 and 2 of chapter 6 of the General Laws, section 1 of chapter 9 of the General Laws, section 1 of chapter 10 of the General Laws, section 1 of chapter 11 of the General Laws and section 1 of chapter 12 of the General Laws shall be adjusted on January 1, 2019, and biennially thereafter on January 1, to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce; provided, however, that the amount of compensation pursuant to said sections 1 and 2 of said chapter 6, said section 1 of said chapter 9, said section 1 of said chapter 10, said section 1 of said chapter 11 and said section 1 of said chapter 12 shall not be less than provided in said sections 1 and 2 of said chapter 6, said section 1 of said chapter 9, said section 1 of said chapter 10, said section 1 of said chapter 11 and said section 1 of said chapter 12.

(d) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the amount annually received by the governor for expenses related to housing pursuant to subsection (b) of section 1 of chapter 6 of the General Laws shall be adjusted on January 1, 2019, and biennially thereafter on January 1, to reflect the aggregate quarterly change in salaries and wages in the commonwealth for the most recent 8 quarters as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the United States Department of Commerce; provided, however, that the annual amount shall not be less than provided in said subsection (b) of said section 1 of said chapter 6.

<< Note: MA ST 3 § 9B; 3 § 9C >>

SECTION 38. Sections 1 and 2 and subsections (a) and (b) of section 37 shall take effect as of January 4, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 3 § 9D >>

SECTION 39. Section 3 shall take effect on August 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 6 § 1; 6 § 2 >>

SECTION 40. Subsection (c) of section 1 of chapter 6 of the General Laws and subsection (b) of section 2 of said chapter 6, inserted by section 4, shall take effect on August 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 9 § 1 >>

SECTION 41. Subsection (b) of section 1 of chapter 9 of the General Laws, inserted by section 5, shall take effect on August 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 10 § 1 >>

SECTION 42. Subsection (b) of section 1 of chapter 10 of the General Laws, inserted by section 6, shall take effect on August 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 11 § 1 >>

SECTION 43. Subsection (b) of section 1 of chapter 11 of the General Laws, inserted by section 7, shall take effect on August 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 12 § 1 >>

SECTION 44. Subsection (b) of section 1 of chapter 12 of the General Laws, inserted by section 8, shall take effect on August 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 6 § 1; 6 § 2; 9 § 1; 10 § 1; 11 § 1; 12 § 1 >>

SECTION 45. Except as otherwise provided, sections 4 to 8, inclusive, and subsections (c) and (d) of section 37, shall take effect as of January 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 211 § 22; 211A § 2; 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 46. Sections 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29 and 33 shall take effect as of January 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 211 § 22; 211A § 2; 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 47. Sections 10, 14, 18, 22, 26, 30 and 34 shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

<< Note: MA ST 211 § 22; 211A § 2; 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 48. Sections 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31 and 35 shall take effect on January 1, 2018.

<< Note: MA ST 211 § 22; 211A § 2; 211B § 4 >>

SECTION 49. Sections 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32 and 36 shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

SECTION 50. Except as otherwise provided, this act shall take effect on February 1, 2017.

#### VETO OVERRIDE

Office of the Secretary, Boston, Massachusetts February 6, 2017

This bill was returned by the Governor to the House of Representatives, the branch in which it originated, with his objections thereto, was passed by the House of Representatives on February 2, 2017, and in concurrence by the Senate on February 2, 2017, the objections of the Governor notwithstanding, in the manner prescribed by the Constitution, and therefore has the force of law.

Approved February 2, 2017.

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**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4690**

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Text of an amendment, offered by Mr. Galvin of Canton, to the Order relative to temporary emergency House Rules (House, No. 4676). May 4, 2020.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**



*House of Representatives, May 4, 2020.*

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
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By striking out the text contained therein and inserting in place thereof the following:—

- 1   Whereas, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization designated the Coronavirus
- 2   Disease 2019, hereinafter COVID-19, outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International
- 3   Concern; and
  
- 4   Whereas, COVID-19 is a highly contagious, and at times fatal, respiratory disease;
  
- 5   Whereas, on March 10, 2020, pursuant to Executive Order No. 591, the Governor declared a
- 6   state of emergency in the Commonwealth to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak; and
  
- 7   Whereas, on March 11, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the
- 8   World Health Organization; and

9     Whereas, on March 23, 2020, the Governor issued COVID-19 Order No. 13, Assuring  
10    Continued Operation of Essential Services in the Commonwealth, Closing Certain Workplaces,  
11    and Prohibiting Gatherings of More than 10 People ordering all non-essential workplaces and  
12    facilities closed and prohibiting public and private gatherings of more than 10 people through  
13    April 7, 2020; and

14    Whereas, on March 27, 2020 the President of the United States declared that beginning on  
15    January 20, 2020 and continuing a major disaster exists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
16    and ordered Federal assistance to supplement Commonwealth, tribal, and local recovery efforts  
17    in areas of the Commonwealth affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

18    Whereas, on March 31, 2020, the Governor issued COVID-19 Order No. 21, Extending the  
19    Closing of Certain Workplaces and the Prohibition on Gatherings of More than 10 People  
20    through May 4, 2020; and

21    Whereas, pursuant to Article XXX of Part the First of the Constitution of the Commonwealth,  
22    Executive Order No. 591, COVID-19 Order No. 13 and COVID-19 Order No. 21 do not apply to  
23    the General Court; and

24    Whereas, at the direction of the Governor, the Department of Public Health issued a stay at home  
25    advisory on March 23, 2020, urging all residents of the Commonwealth to limit activities outside  
26    of the home and to practice social distancing at all times to limit the spread of this highly  
27    contagious and potentially deadly virus; and

28    Whereas, the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 and the effects of its extreme risk of person-to-  
29    person transmission significantly affect the life and health of Members, officers and employees,

30 as well as the economy, and is a disaster that impacts the health, security, safety and convenience  
31 of the public; and

32 Whereas, the House of Representatives concurs with the Governor’s declaration of a state of  
33 emergency and a public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

34 Whereas, Article X of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth requires that  
35 the General Court assemble for the political year on the first Wednesday in January and also  
36 authorizes the General Court to assemble “at such other times as they shall judge necessary”; and

37 Whereas, Article XXII of Part the First of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, advises that  
38 the General Court “ought frequently to assemble for the redress of grievances, for correcting,  
39 strengthening and confirming the laws, and for making new laws, as the common good may  
40 require”; and

41 Whereas, pursuant to Article X of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth,  
42 the General Court assembled for the 2020 political year on January 1, 2020; and

43 Whereas, pursuant to Article XXXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution of the  
44 Commonwealth, a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives are required to  
45 establish a quorum for the transaction of business; and

46 Whereas, it is critical for the House of Representatives to continue to meet to take additional  
47 steps to respond to, and mitigate the spread of, COVID-19 to protect the health, security, safety  
48 and convenience the people of the Commonwealth; and

49 Whereas, the House of Representatives must, consistent with the guidance of federal and state  
50 public health authorities, complete its business in a manner that will ensure the safety of its  
51 Members, officers and employees; and

52 Whereas, pursuant to Article 10 of Section 3 of Chapter 1 of Part the Second of the Constitution  
53 of the Commonwealth, the House of Representatives has the exclusive constitutional authority to  
54 settle the rules and orders of proceeding in the House of Representatives; and

55 Whereas, the House of Representatives exercised its exclusive constitutional authority to settle  
56 the rules and orders of proceeding in the House of Representatives for the 191st General Court  
57 pursuant to Article 10 of Section 3 of Chapter 1 of Part the Second of the Constitution of the  
58 Commonwealth on January 30, 2019, hereinafter the standing rules; now therefore be it

59 Ordered, That, the House of Representatives hereby declares that a state of emergency exists  
60 within the House of Representatives; and be it further

61 Ordered, That, the House of Representatives does hereby exercise its exclusive constitutional  
62 authority to settle the rules and orders of proceeding in the House of Representatives pursuant to  
63 Article 10 of Section 3 of Chapter 1 of Part the Second of the Constitution of the Commonwealth  
64 by establishing, in addition to the standing rules, the following temporary emergency rules for  
65 the operation of the House of Representatives, notwithstanding any provision of the standing  
66 rules to the contrary, for the duration of the state of emergency within the House of  
67 Representatives:

68 Temporary Emergency Rules for the Operation of the House of Representatives

69 Emergency Rule 1. As used in Temporary Emergency Rules 1 through 20, inclusive, the  
70 following terms shall have the following meanings:-

71 “Clerk”, the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

72 “Formal session”, a formal session of the House during a declared state of emergency within the  
73 House.

74 “House”, the House of Representatives.

75 “House Chamber”, the House Chamber within the Massachusetts State House in Boston or the  
76 location to which the House at its previous formal or informal session adjourned to meet.

77 “Member”, a Member of the House of Representatives for the 191st General Court.

78 “Monitor”, one of the Members appointed by the Speaker pursuant to Standing Rule 8.

79 “Participating remotely” or “remotely present”, participating by telephone, teleconference, video  
80 conference or other means.

81 “Present”, a Member either physically present in the House Chamber for a formal session or  
82 remotely present, and participating in a formal session.

83 “Quorum”, eighty-one Members present for a formal session.

84 “Speaker”, the Speaker of the House or the Member presiding at the formal session of the House  
85 after being appointed by the Speaker to perform the duties of the Chair pursuant to Standing Rule  
86 5.

87 “Standing rules”, rules and orders of proceeding for the 191st Session General Court adopted by  
88 the House on January 30, 2019.

89 Emergency Rule 2. (a)(1) During the state of emergency within the House, the House may  
90 assemble in a formal session with Members participating remotely. Members participating  
91 remotely in a formal session may vote on any question or other matter before the House.  
92 Members participating remotely in a formal session shall be considered present and in attendance  
93 at the formal session for all purposes, including for purposes of determining a quorum pursuant  
94 to Article XXXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth or any standing  
95 rules.

96 (2) A Member participating remotely in a formal session shall have the same privileges, rights  
97 and responsibilities as if the Member were physically present in the House Chamber, including  
98 the right, privilege and responsibility to cast votes on all questions or other matters brought to a  
99 vote.

100 (3) The Speaker shall provide to all Members via electronic mail by 5:00 P.M. on Friday of the  
101 week preceding the formal session in which Members may be participating remotely, the mode  
102 of participation to be used by Members participating remotely and specific instructions for each  
103 Member on how to join the session and participate remotely.

104 (4) At the commencement of a formal session, the Speaker shall take the Chair at the hour to  
105 which the House stands adjourned, call the House to order and immediately order a quorum roll  
106 call.

107 (5) (i) The House shall not be called to order before the hour of 10:00 A.M. nor meet beyond the  
108 hour of midnight unless by unanimous consent of the Members present.

109 (ii) All votes taken on the enactment of any bill or resolve during any formal session where  
110 Members are participating remotely shall be by roll call vote.

111 (6) The Clerk shall prepare a Journal for the House for any formal session of the House held  
112 during the state of emergency within the House. The Journal for the House may reflect that the  
113 formal session was convened pursuant to emergency rules, but shall not deviate in any  
114 substantive manner from the Journal of the House required to be prepared by the Clerk pursuant  
115 to Standing Rule 10. The Journal of the House for any formal session of the House held during  
116 the state of emergency within the House shall not specify which Members participated remotely.

117 (b)(1) The Speaker shall preside from within the House Chamber over any formal session of the  
118 House where any Member is participating remotely. The Minority Leader, Chair of the  
119 committee on Ways and Means, Ranking Minority Member of the committee on Ways and  
120 Means, the House Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the joint committee from which any  
121 bill being debated at the formal session has been reported, or their designees, and the division  
122 monitors may also be physically present. All other Members are strongly encouraged to  
123 participate remotely in a formal session.

124 (2) Officers and employees essential to the conduct of the formal session may be present in the  
125 House Chamber during a formal session with the express authorization of the Speaker in  
126 consultation with the Minority Leader. The Speaker and Minority Leader may have one  
127 employee from their office present in the House Chamber during a formal session. No other  
128 officer or employee shall be physically present in the House Chamber unless deemed essential to  
129 the conduct of the formal session by the Speaker.

130 (3) All Members, officers and employees physically present in the House Chamber during a  
131 formal session shall maintain social or physical distancing and shall undertake any other  
132 mitigation measures ordered by the Speaker. Court Officers shall strictly enforce social or  
133 physical distancing by and between Members, officers and employees in and around the House  
134 Chamber, including a 6-foot buffer zone between any Members, officers and employees  
135 physically present in the House Chamber. Any Member, officer or employee in violation of the  
136 House's social or physical distancing protocol shall be removed from the House Chamber.

137 Emergency Rule 3. (a) For purposes of this emergency rule, "bill or resolve" shall mean any bill  
138 or resolve, other than the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021.

139 (b)(1) Any bill or resolve to be considered by the House at a formal session shall be available to  
140 all Members electronically and to the public via the Internet in a format to be determined by the  
141 Speaker in consultation with the Clerk no later than 12:00 P.M. the day prior to consideration  
142 thereof by the House in a formal session.

143 (2) When the House considers any bill or resolve, it shall be read a second time and, subsequent  
144 to the consideration of any amendments recommended by a committee or committees, it shall  
145 forthwith be considered by the House, the question being on ordering it to a third reading,  
146 without any other amendments. A bill or resolve so ordered to a third reading shall be  
147 immediately referred to the committee on Bills in the Third Reading and, upon being released by  
148 said committee, it shall be read a third time and shall then be open to amendments, the main  
149 question being on passing the bill or resolve to be engrossed.

150 (c)(1) Notwithstanding Standing Rule 33A, amendments to any bill or resolve to be considered  
151 by the House at a formal session shall be filed with the Clerk in a format to be determined by the

152 Clerk by 5:00 P.M. on the day the bill is made available to the Members pursuant to subsection  
153 (b). The Clerk shall print each amendment so filed and such printed copy shall be considered to  
154 be the official amendment for that bill.

155 (2) Notwithstanding Standing Rule 33A, the committee on Ways and Means may direct the  
156 Clerk to categorize, with the assistance of the committee, the subject-matter of amendments to  
157 any bill or resolve to be considered at a formal session and arrange such amendments for  
158 consideration sequentially by subject as appearing in the bill or resolve or as otherwise  
159 determined by the committee.

160 (3) Before the main question on any bill or resolve is placed before the House, an amendment  
161 may be postponed or withdrawn at the request of the primary sponsor of the amendment or  
162 postponed by the committee on Ways and Means. In the event that the committee on Ways and  
163 Means directs the Clerk to categorize amendments pursuant to paragraph (2), further  
164 consideration of any amendment so postponed shall take place immediately subsequent to  
165 consideration of the amendments within the particular subject-matter to which the postponed  
166 amendment was assigned pursuant to paragraph (2); provided, that if more than 1 amendment is  
167 so postponed, subsequent consideration of said amendments shall be in the order determined by  
168 the committee on Ways and Means; and provided further, an amendment so postponed shall not  
169 be subsequently considered outside of its assigned subject-matter. The committee on Ways and  
170 Means may submit perfecting or substitute amendments for any bill or resolve to be considered  
171 by the House at a formal session, including, but not limited to, an amendment consolidating more  
172 than 1 amendment; provided, however, that an amendment may be removed from a consolidated  
173 amendment at the request of the primary sponsor of said amendment for the purpose of it being  
174 offered as an amendment in the first degree to the bill under consideration.

175 (4) Except for consolidated amendments or perfecting amendments offered by the committee on  
176 Ways and Means pursuant to paragraph (3), no proposition on a subject different from the  
177 amendment under consideration shall be admitted under color of a further amendment to the bill  
178 being considered by the House.

179 (5) Any amendment may be removed from a consolidated amendment offered pursuant to  
180 paragraph (3) by the primary sponsor of the amendment. Any such amendment so removed from  
181 a consolidated amendment shall be offered as an amendment to the bill being considered by the  
182 House, to be acted upon in the first degree before action is taken on the consolidated amendment,  
183 except that any amendment so removed from the consolidated amendment may be moved by the  
184 committee on Ways and Means from 1 subject category to any category not yet disposed of in  
185 consideration of the resolve or bill.

186 (6) Notwithstanding Standing Rule 74, consolidated amendments offered pursuant to paragraph  
187 (3) may not be divided.

188 (7) Any amendment not complying with this emergency rule shall be considered withdrawn.

189 Emergency Rule 4. (a) Standing Rules 20, 20A, 20B and 21 shall apply to the General  
190 Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021 considered by the House during a formal session unless  
191 said standing rules conflict with this rule; in which case this rule shall control.

192 (b) Amendments to the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021 shall be properly filed  
193 with the Clerk in an electronic format to be determined by the Clerk as directed by the Speaker;  
194 provided that the Clerk shall notify by electronic communication the primary sponsor of each  
195 amendment of the receipt of such amendment and the number assigned by said Clerk to the

196 amendment; provided further, that the Clerk shall print each amendment so filed electronically  
197 and such printed copy shall be considered to be the official amendment for that bill.

198 (c) Notwithstanding Standing Rule 20B, any amendment to the General Appropriation Bill for  
199 Fiscal Year 2021 relative to enhancing or reducing revenue shall be considered prior to the third  
200 reading of said bill to be in order, and all other amendments to the General Appropriation Bill  
201 for Fiscal Year 2021 shall be considered subsequent to the third reading of said bill.

202 (d) Except for consolidated amendments or perfecting amendments offered by the committee on  
203 Ways and Means, no proposition on a subject different from the amendment under consideration  
204 shall be admitted under color of a further amendment to the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal  
205 Year 2021.

206 (e) No amendment to the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021: (i) that amends or  
207 notwithstands sections 2DDDD through 2EEEE, inclusive, of chapter 29 of the General Laws,  
208 (ii) that amends or notwithstands chapter 23K of the General Laws, except for subclause (j) of  
209 clause (2) of section 59 of said chapter 23K and section 63 of said chapter 23K, or (iii) that  
210 amends or notwithstands chapter 194 of the acts of 2011, except for section 95 of said chapter  
211 194, shall be in order.

212 (f) Notwithstanding Standing Rule 20A, any amendment may be removed from the consolidated  
213 amendment by the primary sponsor of the amendment. Any such amendment so removed from a  
214 consolidated amendment shall be offered as an amendment to the General Appropriation Bill for  
215 Fiscal Year 2021, to be acted upon in the first degree before action is taken on the consolidated  
216 amendment, except that any amendment so removed from the consolidated amendment may be

217 moved by the committee on Ways and Means from 1 subject category to any category not yet  
218 disposed of in the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021.

219 (g) A consolidated amendment to the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021, offered  
220 by the committee on Ways and Means, shall contain a fiscal note indicating its total  
221 expenditures.

222 (h) Notwithstanding Standing Rule 74, consolidated amendments may not be divided.

223 (i) Any amendment to the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021 not complying with  
224 this emergency rule shall be considered withdrawn; provided that, in the case of the General  
225 Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021, any such amendments shall be published as part of the  
226 amendment list published by the committee on Ways and Means.

227 (j) Except as otherwise provided in this emergency rule, all amendments to the General  
228 Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2021 shall be in compliance with Standing Rule 20A.

229 Emergency Rule 5. (a) A Member participating remotely may make any motion authorized  
230 pursuant to the standing rules, raise a point of order, raise a point of personal privilege, or raise a  
231 point of parliamentary inquiry. Members participating remotely shall notify their division  
232 monitor of their desire to make a motion, raise a point of order, raise a point of personal privilege  
233 or raise a point of parliamentary inquiry. The division monitor shall immediately notify the  
234 Speaker who shall recognize the Member seeking to make a motion, raise a point of order, raise  
235 a point of personal privilege or raise a point of parliamentary inquiry. No Member shall interrupt  
236 another Member while that Member is speaking, including to request that the Member speaking  
237 yield, except for the reasons authorized herein.

238 (b) A vote on any motion made pursuant to subsection (a) shall be conducted by voice vote as  
239 prescribed by subsection (b) of Emergency Rule 7, unless the Constitution or the standing rules  
240 specifically require a roll call vote.

241 (c) A motion made by a Member participating remotely may be made and submitted by the  
242 division monitor for the floor division of the House wherein the seat assigned to said Member  
243 pursuant to Standing Rule 79 is located.

244 Emergency Rule 6. (a) A Member participating remotely wishing to speak on any question  
245 before the House shall notify the monitor for the floor division of the House wherein the seat  
246 assigned to said Member pursuant to Standing Rule 79 is located as follows:

247 (i) A Member wishing to speak on a bill, resolve or the General Appropriation Bill, or an  
248 amendment thereto, shall notify their floor division monitor no later than 10:00 A.M. on the day  
249 that the bill, resolve, General Appropriation Bill, or amendment thereto, is scheduled to be  
250 considered by the House. Said notification shall include: (1) the number of the bill, resolve  
251 General Appropriation Bill, or amendment thereto, that the Member wishes to speak to; and (2)  
252 whether the Member wishes to speak in favor of or in opposition to the bill, resolve, General  
253 Appropriation Bill, or amendment thereto.

254 (ii) A Member wishing to speak on a consolidated amendment shall notify their floor division  
255 monitor no later than 45 minutes after the consolidated amendment shall have been first filed  
256 with the Clerk and made available electronically to the Members. Said notification shall include:  
257 (1) the number or letter of the consolidated amendment the Member wishes to speak to; and (2)  
258 whether the Member wishes to speak in favor of or in opposition to the consolidated amendment.

259 (iii) A Member wishing to speak on a conference committee report filed pursuant to Joint Rule  
260 11B shall notify their floor division monitor no later than 10:00 A.M. on the day the conference  
261 committee report is scheduled to be considered by the House. Said notification shall include: (1)  
262 the bill number of the conference committee report; and (2) whether the Member wishes to speak  
263 in favor of, or in opposition to the report. The provisions of this paragraph shall be inoperative if  
264 the conference committee report is filed later than 8:00 P.M. on the day preceding its  
265 consideration by the House.

266 (b) The monitor for each division shall prepare a list of Members of their division notifying the  
267 monitor of said Member's desire to speak in favor of a question before the House and a list of  
268 Members of their division notifying the monitor of said Member's desire to speak in opposition  
269 to a question before the House. Each list shall be arranged in order of the time the monitor  
270 received the notification with the notification received the earliest being first.

271 (c) Upon completion of the lists required pursuant to subsection (b), the monitors for each  
272 division shall transmit the lists to the Speaker and the Minority Leader. The Speaker shall  
273 combine the lists received from each of the division monitors and, in consultation with the  
274 Minority Leader, shall prepare a consolidated list of Members notifying their monitor of the  
275 Member's desire to speak in favor of a question before the House and a consolidated list of  
276 Members of their division notifying the monitor of said Member's desire to speak in opposition  
277 to a question before the House.

278 (d) The Speaker shall distribute the lists compiled pursuant to subsection (c) to all Members  
279 electronically prior to the commencement of the formal session. The Speaker shall distribute the  
280 list compiled pursuant to subsection (a)(ii) as soon as practicable upon completion.

281 (e) The consolidated lists prepared by the Speaker pursuant to subsection (c) and distributed to  
282 the membership pursuant to subsection (d) shall be the order in which Members are recognized  
283 during the debate of the respective question. In recognizing Members from said lists, the Speaker  
284 shall, to the extent practicable, alternate between Members wishing to speak in favor of the  
285 question and Members wishing to speak in opposition to the question.

286 (f) A Member participating remotely may, in lieu of speaking on a bill, resolve, amendment,  
287 consolidated amendment or a conference committee report, submit written remarks in favor of,  
288 or in opposition to, any bill, resolve, amendment, consolidated amendment or conference  
289 committee report to the Clerk before the adjournment of the formal session in which said bill,  
290 resolve, amendment, consolidated amendment or conference committee report was considered by  
291 the House. Said remarks shall be transmitted to the Clerk electronically in a format prescribed by  
292 the Clerk. The Clerk shall include any remarks submitted by a Member participating remotely  
293 pursuant to this section in the Journal of the House required to be kept by the Clerk pursuant to  
294 Standing Rule 10 and Emergency Rule 2.

295 Emergency Rule 7. (a) Notwithstanding Standing Rules 50 through 52, inclusive, during a formal  
296 session where Members are participating remotely a vote on any question shall be by either a  
297 voice vote of the Members present and voting pursuant to subsection (b) or a roll call vote of the  
298 Members present and voting pursuant to subsection (c). Any question that would require a  
299 standing vote under the Standing Rules shall be decided by a voice vote of the Members present  
300 and voting pursuant to subsection (b).

301 (b) When a question is put, the sense of the House shall be taken by the voices of the Members,  
302 and the Speaker shall first announce the vote as it appears to the Speaker by the sound. If the

303 Speaker is unable to decide by the sound of the voices, or if the announcement made thereupon is  
304 doubted by a Member, the Speaker shall order the division monitors to ascertain the number of  
305 Members within in their division voting in the affirmative and the number of Members within in  
306 their division voting in the negative, without further debate upon the question. The division  
307 monitors shall report the total vote of their division count to the Speaker. After receiving the  
308 reports of the total vote counts from each of the division monitors, the Speaker shall tally said  
309 votes and then announce the vote.

310 (c) The sense of the House shall be taken by yeas and nays whenever required by 10 percent of  
311 the Members elected or when required pursuant to the Constitution of the Commonwealth. The  
312 Speaker shall state the pending question and shall order the division monitors to commence the  
313 roll call of the Members. The division monitors shall call the roll of the Members assigned to  
314 said division in alphabetical order. The division monitors shall record the votes of each Member  
315 on a form prescribed by the Clerk. Upon completion of the roll call, the division monitors shall  
316 sign the form upon which the roll call for their division was recorded and submit the completed  
317 form to the Clerk. The Clerk shall tally the votes of the Members of each division and shall enter  
318 the votes into the electronic roll call machine. Upon completion of the tally and the entry of the  
319 votes into the electronic roll call machine, the Clerk shall notify the Speaker that the vote has  
320 been completed. Upon instruction from the Speaker, the Clerk shall display the tally of the vote  
321 on the 2 monitors in the House Chamber. The Speaker shall then announce the vote.

322 (d) If a Member doubts the presence of a quorum, the Speaker shall order the division monitors  
323 to ascertain the number of Members within in their divisions who are present. Any Member  
324 confirmed by the division monitor to be participating remotely shall be considered present. The  
325 division monitors shall report the total number of Members present to the Speaker. After

326 receiving the reports of the total number of Members present from each of the division monitors,  
327 the Speaker shall tally the numbers and then announce the number of Members present. If, after  
328 tallying the numbers from each of the division monitors a quorum is not present, the Speaker  
329 shall order a roll call vote pursuant to subsection (c).

330 (e) The call for yeas and nays shall be decided without debate. If the yeas and nays have been  
331 ordered before the question is put, the proceedings under subsection (b) shall be omitted.

332 (f) Except as heretofore provided, any Member who shall vote or attempt to vote for another  
333 Member or any person not a Member who votes or attempts to vote for a Member, or any  
334 Member or other person who willfully tampers with or attempts to impair or destroy in any  
335 manner whatsoever the voting equipment used by the House, or change the records thereon shall  
336 be punished in such manner as the House determines; and provided further, that such a violation  
337 shall be reported to the committee on Ethics.

338 Emergency Rule 8. No consolidated amendment to any bill offered by the committee on Ways  
339 and Means shall be considered by the House until the expiration of at least 30 minutes after the  
340 consolidated amendment shall have been first filed with the Clerk and made available  
341 electronically to the Members. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of  
342 the Members present.

343 Emergency Rule 9. No consolidated amendment to any bill offered by the committee on Ways  
344 and Means shall be adopted except by a roll call vote.

345 Emergency Rule 10. Notwithstanding any standing rule to the contrary, with the approval of the  
346 Speaker, a Member, officer or employee may take photographs and videos of, and in, the House

347 Chamber provided said photographs or videos are to facilitate the remote participation in the  
348 formal session by a Member.

349 Emergency Rule 11. (a) Notwithstanding any standing rule to the contrary, unless authorized  
350 pursuant to subsection (b) or subsection (c), no Member participating in a formal session shall be  
351 recognized more than once on any question before the House without unanimous consent or on  
352 any question before the House for more than 10 minutes without unanimous consent.

353 (b) The following Members may, notwithstanding subsection (a), be recognized more than once  
354 on any question before the House: (1) the Minority Leader; (2) the Member carrying the report of  
355 the committee; (3) and the Ranking Minority Member of the committee reporting the bill.

356 (c) Notwithstanding subsection (a), after all Members have been recognized pursuant to  
357 Emergency Rule 6, a Member who is the primary sponsor of a bill, resolve or an amendment, or  
358 a designee of said Member, may, in addition to being recognized pursuant to Emergency Rule 6,  
359 be recognized for purposes of providing rebuttal or further explanation. If a Member who is the  
360 primary sponsor of a bill, resolve or amendment or their designee is recognized pursuant to this  
361 subsection a Member from the opposite political party designated by the Member carrying the  
362 report of the committee or the Ranking Minority Member of the committee reporting the bill  
363 may also be recognized in addition to being recognized pursuant to Emergency Rule 6. No  
364 Member shall be recognized pursuant to this subsection for more than 5 minutes without  
365 unanimous consent.

366 Emergency Rule 12. Notwithstanding any standing rule to the contrary, any formal session  
367 where Members are participating remotely shall be webcast live on the General Court website.

368 Audio or video recordings of all such sessions shall be made available to the public on the

369 General Court website. All House sessions conducted by electronic means shall be broadcast on  
370 House television.

371 Emergency Rule 13. Notwithstanding any standing rule to the contrary, no technical failure that  
372 breaks the remote connection of a Member or Members of the House of Representatives  
373 participating remotely in a formal session shall invalidate any action taken by the House of  
374 Representatives.

375 Emergency Rule 14. Notwithstanding Standing Rule 49, Members participating remotely may  
376 vote in a quorum roll call.

377 Emergency Rule 15. Notwithstanding Standing Rule 27, the committee on Ways and Means  
378 shall report the General Appropriation Bill by July 1, 2020.

379 Emergency Rule 16. Standing Rule 1A, Standing Rule 80 and Standing Rule 82 are hereby  
380 waived for the duration of the emergency.

381 Emergency Rule 17. Except as otherwise indicated, Emergency Rules 1 through 20, inclusive,  
382 shall not be suspended unless by a 2/3 vote of the Members present and voting. Debate upon a  
383 motion for the suspension of Emergency Rules 1 through 20, inclusive, shall be limited to 15  
384 minutes and no Member shall speak for more than 3 minutes.

385 Emergency Rule 18. The provisions of any standing or emergency rules pertaining to procedures  
386 of the House may be suspended and alternative procedures may be used if said alternative  
387 methods are approved by a 2/3 majority of the committee on Rules and approved, in writing, by  
388 the Speaker and the Minority Leader. The Clerk shall enter any such approvals in the House

389 Journal for the formal session required to be kept by the Clerk pursuant to Standing Rule 10 and  
390 Emergency Rule 20.

391 Emergency Rule 19. Except to the extent that they conflict with Emergency Rules 1 through 20,  
392 inclusive, the standing rules shall remain in full force and effect.

393 Emergency Rule 20. Emergency Rules 1 through 20, inclusive, shall remain effective until a  
394 majority of the House adopts an Order declaring the state of emergency within the House has  
395 ceased or until 11:59 P.M. on January 5, 2021.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

INITIATIVE PETITION OF JOHN A. LIPPITT AND OTHERS.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY.

BOSTON, January 7, 2026.

Timothy Carroll  
*Clerk of the House of Representatives*  
State House  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Sir: — I herewith transmit to you, in accordance with the requirements of Article XLVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution “An Initiative Petition for an Act to Reform and Regulate Legislative Stipends,” signed by ten qualified voters and filed with this department on or before December 3, 2025, together with additional signatures of qualified voters in the number of 96,797, being a sufficient number to comply with the provisions of said Article.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM FRANCIS GALVIN  
*Secretary of the Commonwealth.*

AN INITIATIVE PETITION.

Pursuant to Article XLVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth, as amended, the undersigned qualified voters of the Commonwealth, ten in number at least, hereby petition for the enactment into law of the following measure:

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 5010**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**

An Act to reform and regulate legislative stipends.

*Be it enacted by the People, and by their authority, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. The purpose of this act is to establish legislative stipends that provide  
2 reasonable compensation linked to performance, promoting transparent and efficient lawmaking  
3 and the people’s right to full and effective representation in the general court.

4           SECTION 2. Chapter 3 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section  
5 9B, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the following new  
6 section:

7           SECTION 9B

8           (a) Definitions

9           “Group 1 legislative leaders” shall mean the president of the senate and the speaker of the  
10 house of representatives.

11 “Group 2 legislative leaders” shall mean the chair of the senate committee on ways and  
12 means, the chair of the house committee on ways and means, and the floor leader of each of the  
13 two leading political parties in the senate and house of representatives.

14 “Group 3 legislative leaders” shall mean the assistant floor leader and the second  
15 assistant floor leader of each of the two leading political parties in the senate and house of  
16 representatives, the third assistant floor leader of the minority party in the senate and the house  
17 of representatives, the vice chair of the senate committee on ways and means, the vice chair of  
18 the house committee on ways and means, the ranking minority member of the senate committee  
19 on ways and means, and the ranking minority member of the house committee on ways and  
20 means.

21 “Group 4 legislative leaders” shall mean the senate chairs and the house chairs of eligible  
22 committees.

23 “Eligible committees” shall mean committees established by the joint rules of the senate  
24 and house of representatives to which more than 50 bills are referred by the senate and house of  
25 representatives before March 1 of the first year of a biennial session of the general court.

26 “Public mark-up session” shall mean a meeting of a legislative committee open to the  
27 public, for which notice has been publicly posted not less than 10 days prior to the time of such  
28 meeting, at which members of the committee may propose amendments to bills referred to the  
29 committee.

30 “First year compliance” shall mean, for each eligible committee, both (1) the committee,  
31 by the certification date specified in subsection (c)(1), has held a public hearing and a public

32 mark-up session on each bill referred to it before November 1 of such year; and (2) every report  
33 made by the committee has been approved by a vote of a majority of the members eligible to  
34 vote at a public meeting at which a quorum of such members was present.

35 “Second year compliance” shall mean, for each eligible committee, both (1) the  
36 committee, by the certification date specified in subsection (c)(2), has held a public hearing and a  
37 public mark-up session on each bill referred to it before April 15 of such year; and (2) the  
38 committee has made a report on each such bill approved by a vote of a majority of the members  
39 eligible to vote at a public meeting at which a quorum of such members was present.

40 “Compliance percentage” shall mean, for each of the first year and the second year of a  
41 biennial session of the general court, the percentage of eligible committees that have achieved  
42 first year or second year compliance.

43 “Base compensation amount” shall mean the compensation amount calculated pursuant to  
44 Article CXVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution.

45 (b) Additional compensation

46 Subject to the terms of this section and subject to appropriation, the following additional  
47 regular compensation shall be paid to members of the senate and house of representatives:

48 (i) Group 1 legislative leaders shall each receive for each regular annual session  
49 additional regular compensation equal to no more than 75% of the base compensation amount,  
50 subject to the adjustment in subsection (d)(iii).

51 (ii) Group 2 legislative leaders shall each receive for each regular annual session  
52 additional regular compensation equal to no more than 50% of the base compensation amount,  
53 subject to the adjustment in subsection (d)(iii).

54 (iii) Group 3 legislative leaders shall each receive for each regular annual session  
55 additional regular compensation equal to no more than 33% of the base compensation amount,  
56 subject to the adjustment in subsection (d)(iii).

57 (iv) Group 4 legislative leaders shall each receive for each regular annual session  
58 additional regular compensation equal to no more than 33% of the base compensation amount,  
59 subject to the adjustment in subsection (d)(iv).

60 (v) Senators who are Group 2 or Group 3 legislative leaders and are members of one or  
61 more eligible committees shall each receive for each regular annual session further additional  
62 regular compensation equal to no more than 20% of the base compensation amount.

63 (vi) Senators who are Group 4 legislative leaders and are members of more than one  
64 eligible committee shall each receive for each regular annual session further additional regular  
65 compensation equal to no more than 20% of the base compensation amount.

66 (vii) Senators and representatives who are not Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, or Group 4  
67 legislative leaders and are members of one or more eligible committees shall each receive for  
68 each regular annual session additional regular compensation equal to no more than 20% of the  
69 base compensation amount.

70 (viii) Senators who are not Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, or Group 4 legislative leaders and  
71 are members of more than four eligible committees shall each receive for each regular annual

72 session further additional regular compensation equal to no more than 20% of the base  
73 compensation amount.

74 (ix) No senator shall receive additional regular compensation for service in more than 2  
75 positions and no representative shall receive additional regular compensation for service in more  
76 than 1 position.

77 (c) Certification by clerks

78 (i) On the third Monday in December of the first year of a biennial session of the general  
79 court, the clerk of the senate and the clerk of the house of representatives shall jointly examine  
80 the records of each eligible committee. If, as of that date, such committee has met the definition  
81 of first year compliance, the clerk of the senate and the clerk of the house of representatives shall  
82 so certify jointly.

83 (ii) On the last Friday of May of the second year of a biennial session of the general  
84 court, the clerk of the senate and the clerk of the house of representatives shall jointly examine  
85 the records of each eligible committee. If, as of that date, such committee has met the definition  
86 of second year compliance, the clerk of the senate and the clerk of the house of representatives  
87 shall so certify jointly.

88 (iii) On each of the dates specified in subsections (c)(i) and (c)(ii) of this section, the  
89 clerk of the senate and the clerk of the house of representatives shall jointly calculate the  
90 compliance percentage for each of the first year and the second year of a biennial session of the  
91 general court.

92 (d) Payment of additional compensation

93 (i) Except as otherwise provided in this section, each member of the general court shall  
94 be paid that member's compensation for each session on a bi-weekly basis. Compensation shall  
95 include any amounts a member is entitled to pursuant to Article CXVIII of the Amendments to  
96 the Constitution, this section, section 9C or as otherwise established by law.

97 (ii) Each Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, and Group 4 legislative leader shall be paid 50% of  
98 that member's additional regular compensation pursuant to subsection (b)(i), (b)(ii), (b)(iii), or  
99 (b)(iv) of this section on a bi-weekly basis.

100 (iii) Each Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3 legislative leader shall be paid 50% of that  
101 member's additional regular compensation pursuant to subsection (b)(i), (b)(ii), or (b)(iii) of this  
102 section, multiplied by the compliance percentage for the applicable year of a biennial session of  
103 the general court, in the last bi-weekly payment in such year.

104 (iv) If the eligible committee of which a Group 4 legislative leader serves as chair has  
105 been certified as meeting the definition of first year or second year compliance, such member  
106 shall be paid 50% of their additional regular compensation pursuant to subsection (b)(iv) of this  
107 section for the applicable year of a biennial session of the general court in the last bi-weekly  
108 payment in such year.

109 (v) Each member of the general court who serves in a position for which additional  
110 regular compensation is paid pursuant to this section for a period less than an entire biennial  
111 session of the general court shall receive such additional regular compensation prorated for the  
112 time of that member's service in that position.

113 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on January 6, 2027.

FIRST TEN SIGNERS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RESIDENCE</u>	<u>CITY OR TOWN</u>
John A. Lippitt	23 Mineral Street	Reading
Jennifer Ann Nassour	12 Mountview Road	Wellesley
Jonathan Hecht	159 Russell Avenue	Watertown
Amy Carnevale	20 Dodge Road	Marblehead
Michael J. Widmer	126 Gilbert Road	Belmont
Danielle Susan Allen	102 Otis Street	Cambridge
Jeanne M. Kempthorne	74 North Street, #602	Pittsfield
Scotia Hille	182 Thorndike	Cambridge
Jordan Berg-Powers	18 Townsend Street, #1	Worcester
Jay R. Kaufman	1 Childs Road	Lexington

CERTIFICATE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

September 3, 2025.

Honorable William Francis Galvin  
*Secretary of the Commonwealth*  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1705  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Re: Initiative Petition No. 25-37: Initiative Petition for an Act to Reform  
and Regulate Legislative Stipends

Dear Secretary Galvin:

In accordance with the provisions of Article 48 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution, I have reviewed the above-referenced initiative petition, which was submitted to me on or before the first Wednesday of August of this year.

I hereby certify that this measure is in proper form for submission to the people; that the measure is not, either affirmatively or negatively, substantially the same as any measure which has been qualified for submission or submitted to the people at either of the two preceding biennial state elections; and that it contains only subjects that are related or are mutually dependent and which are not excluded from the initiative process pursuant to Article 48, the Initiative, Part 2, Section 2.

In accordance with Article 48, I enclose a fair, concise summary of the measure.

Sincerely,

ANDREA JOY CAMPBELL,  
*Attorney General.*

## SUMMARY OF 25-37

This proposed law would change the method for calculating stipends paid to certain state legislators on top of their base salaries.

Under the proposed law, legislators would receive stipends, subject to appropriation, based on their leadership positions and/or committee membership. The Senate President and Speaker of the House (Group 1) would receive a stipend of up to 75% of their base salaries. The floor leaders of the two largest parties in each house of the legislature and the chairs of each house's ways and means committee (Group 2) would receive a stipend of up to 50% of their base salaries. The assistant and second assistant floor leaders of the two largest parties in each house, the third assistant floor leaders of the minority party in each house, and the vice chairs and ranking minority members of each house's ways and means committee (Group 3) and the chairs of eligible committees (Group 4) would receive a stipend of up to 33% of their base salaries. Legislators who are not in Groups 1-4 who are members of an eligible committee would receive a stipend of up to 20% of their base salaries. A committee would be "eligible" under the proposed law if it was established by the joint rules of the House and Senate and had more than 50 bills referred to it before March 1 of the first year of the legislative session.

The proposed law would provide a further 20% stipend to three categories of senators: (1) any senator in Group 2 or Group 3 who is a member of one or more eligible committees, (2) any senator in Group 4 who is a member of more than one eligible committee, or (3) any senator not in Groups 1-4 who is a member of more than four eligible committees.

Under the proposed law, no senator could receive a stipend for more than two positions, and no representative could receive a stipend for more than one position.

This proposed law would also establish various terms and conditions for the payment of legislative compensation. A Group 4 leader would receive 50% of the leader's stipend in biweekly paychecks; the leader would receive the other 50% in the last paycheck of the year if the leader's eligible committee had achieved compliance that year. Under the proposed law, "compliance" would mean that, on or before the first Monday in December (in the first year of the legislative session) or on or before the last Friday in May (in the second year of the session), an eligible committee had (1) held a public hearing and public mark-up session on each bill referred to it before a specified cutoff date and (2) approved all of its reports by a majority vote at a public meeting with a quorum present. A Group 1-3 leader would receive 50% of the leader's stipend in biweekly paychecks; the leader would receive the other 50%, multiplied by the percentage of eligible committees achieving compliance in that year, in the last paycheck of the year. The proposed law would require the House and Senate clerks to jointly certify compliance and to calculate the compliance percentage each legislative year. Except as otherwise provided, legislators would receive their compensation on a biweekly basis.

Legislators who served in a qualifying position for less than the full biennial session would receive prorated stipends.

The proposed law would take effect on January 6, 2027.

**SENATE . . . . . No. 3016**

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Senate, March 12, 2026 -- (Filed by Ms. Friedman) Order relative to requesting the opinions of the Honorable Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court on important questions of law relative to legislative stipends

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

Senate, March 12, 2026.



\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Whereas*, Initiative Petition 25-37 has been filed and certified, in accordance with Article XLVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth, seeking passage of legislation, House No. 5010 entitled “An Act to reform and regulate legislative stipends,” hereinafter referred to as “the petition,” which is pending before the General Court; and

*Whereas*, The petition purports to amend certain provisions of Chapter 3 of the General Laws, which currently govern additional regular compensation for members; that compensation is in addition to the base compensation calculated pursuant to Article CXVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth; and

*Whereas*, The petition purports to condition a member’s receipt of additional regular compensation on legislative “compliance” with a number of procedural requirements also set forth in the petition; and

*Whereas*, Senate, House and joint rules govern the same procedures set forth in the petition; and

*Whereas*, Grave doubt exists as to whether the petition fails to propose a law within the meaning of Article XLVIII, The Initiative, Part II, Section 3 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth by mandating changes to internal legislative procedures that are within the constitutional unicameral powers of the Senate and House of Representatives; and

*Whereas*, Grave doubt further exists as to whether the petition, if enacted, would violate and intrude upon the ability of the Senate and House of Representatives to set their own rules of proceedings; now therefore be it

*Ordered*, That the opinions of the Honorable Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court be required by the Senate on the following important questions of law:-

1. Does the petition—which has been filed and certified in accordance with Article XLVIII, The Initiative, Part II, Section 3 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth (“art. 48”), seeking passage of legislation entitled “An Act to reform and regulate legislative stipends,” and which is pending before the General Court—violate art. 48 by making changes to internal legislative procedures that are within the constitutional unicameral powers of the Senate, thus failing to propose a law, where:

a. The petition reshapes and codifies existing legislative rules on how and when bills are heard and reported out of legislative committees, setting specific procedures for bill hearings and reporting;

b. The petition assigns additional duties to the Clerks of the House of Representatives and Senate, who are officers of those bodies and whose duties are set by internal rule by the respective bodies;

c. The petition makes the rate of pay for Senators dependent, in part, on “compliance” by the House of Representatives with the petition’s procedural requirements, thus interfering with the independence of both bodies; or where

d. The petition supplants and codifies existing legislative rules on compensation, ensuring that members of the House of Representatives and members of the Senate are compensated differently?

2. If the answer to question 1 and all its subparts is in the negative, does the petition, if enacted, intrude on the Senate’s ability to set its own rules of proceedings in violation of Part II, Chapter 1, Section 2, Article VII of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, where:

a. The petition reshapes and codifies existing legislative rules on how and when bills are heard and reported out of legislative committees, setting specific procedures for bill hearings and reporting;

b. The petition assigns additional duties to the Clerks of the House of Representatives and Senate, who are officers of those bodies and whose duties are set by internal rule by the respective bodies;

c. The petition makes the rate of pay for Senators dependent, in part, on “compliance” by the House of Representatives with the petition’s procedural requirements, thus interfering with the independence of both bodies; or where

d. The petition supplants and codifies existing legislative rules on compensation, ensuring that members of the House of Representatives and members of the Senate are compensated differently?

The Resolve in favor of Mary E. O'Neill was read a third time, and was passed to be engrossed, in concurrence.

The Bill relative to the sale of fishes artificially propagated or maintained was read a second time and considered.

Mr. Bill of Paxton moved to amend in section 1, line 2, by inserting after the word "maintained" the words "in the county of Plymouth." Mr. Babson of Gloucester moved that the bill and pending amendment be referred to the next General Court, which motion was lost by a vote of 39 to 74. After debate, the previous question having been ordered, on motion of Mr. McFarland of Wales, the amendment moved by Mr. Bill was rejected, and the bill was ordered to a third reading by a vote of 73 to 40.

On motion of Mr. Greene of North Andover, at twenty minutes before one o'clock the House adjourned.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION.

##### *Introduced on Leave.*

By Mr. Turner of Malden, a Bill providing for the compensation of members of the Legislature. The bill was read, and the committee on Rules having reported that it came within the provisions of the 12th joint rule, Mr. Turner moved that the 12th joint rule be suspended.

Mr. Bill of Paxton raised the point of order that the bill had not been properly considered by the committee on Rules. The Speaker stated that it was not within the province of the chair to decide as to the internal workings of the committee on Rules, but only whether or not the report of that committee was in proper form. In this case the report seemed to be in proper form and complied with the rules of the House, and he therefore declared the point of order not well taken.

After debate the 12th joint rule was suspended by a vote of 152 to 11, and the bill was sent up for concurrence in the suspension of the rule.

Compensation  
of members of  
the General  
Court.

Point of order.

Pending the question on ordering the bill to a third reading, Mr. Johnson of Brockton moved that it be referred to the next annual session.

After debate the House refused, by a vote of 3 to 17, to refer the bill to the next annual session; and it was ordered to a third reading.

Highway  
Safety Act, —  
repeal of  
assessment of  
insurance  
premium  
surcharges.

During consideration of the Orders of the Day, Mr. Thompson of Ludlow moved that the House Bill repealing the assessment of insurance premium surcharges under the Highway Safety Act (House, No. 1104) be discharged from its position therein and considered forthwith, under suspension of Rule 61; and after remarks the motion was negatived, by a vote of 52 to 45 (less than four-fifths of the members present and voting having voted in the affirmative).

Subsequently the bill was read a second time.

Pending the question on ordering the bill to a third reading, Mr. Sullivan of Springfield moved that it be amended by inserting before the enacting clause the following emergency preamble:—  
“Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to repeal immediately the assessment of insurance premium surcharges, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.”

Point of  
order.

Pending the question on adoption of the amendment, Mr. Gibbons of Stoneham raised the point of order that the pending bill was improperly before the House for the reason that it did not receive proper committee consideration.

In reply to the point of order the Speaker stated that it was not within the province of the Chair upon a point of order to inquire into the internal workings of a committee with a view to determining whether the subject-matter in question has been properly considered by such committee. He therefore ruled that the point of order was not well taken.

Mr. Gibbons then moved that the bill be recommitted to the committee on Insurance.

After debate Mr. O’Dea of Lowell moved that Rule 79 be suspended in order that debate on the motion to recommit might be unlimited.

After further debate Mr. McEvoy of Somerville moved that Rule 102 be suspended in order that debate on the motion to suspend Rule 79 might be unlimited; and after further debate this motion was negatived.

The motion to suspend Rule 79 then also was negatived.

On the motion to recommit the bill to the committee on Insurance, 59 members voted in the affirmative and 74 in the negative.

Motion to  
recommit  
negatived.

The sense of the House then was taken by yeas and nays, at the request of Mr. Gibbons; and on the roll call (Mr. Pothier of Haverhill having been in the chair) 96 members voted in the affirmative and 133 in the negative, as follows:

to the alleviation of the financial burden imposed on the city of Fall River by the fire of nineteen hundred and eighty-seven (House, No. 1933) [Estimated Cost: \$950,000.00], which was read.

financial  
burden.

Under suspension of the rules, on motion of Mr. Correia of Fall River, the bill was read a second and (having been reported by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading to be correctly drawn) a third time forthwith; and it was passed to be engrossed, its title having been changed by said committee to read: An Act relative to the alleviation of the financial burden imposed on the city of Fall River by the fire of January twelfth, nineteen hundred and eighty-seven. Sent to the Senate for concurrence.

By Mrs. Menard, for the same committee, on a petition of Robert Correia and others, a Bill providing planning assistance to the city of Fall River (House, No. 1934) [Estimated Cost: \$400,000.00], which was read.

Fall River  
fire, —  
planning  
assistance.

Under suspension of the rules, on motion of Mr. Correia of Fall River, the bill was read a second and (having been reported by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading to be correctly drawn) a third time forthwith; and it was passed to be engrossed. Sent to the Senate for concurrence.

#### *Orders of the Day.*

The House Resolutions providing for a declaration of the intent of the House of Representatives relative to the distribution and the amount of new local aid to the cities, towns and regional school districts of the Commonwealth during fiscal year nineteen hundred and eighty-eight (House, No. 3300) were considered.

Local aid  
distribution,—  
declaration  
of intent.

Pending the question on adoption of the resolutions, Mr. Pierce of Westfield raised a point of order that the pending resolutions were improperly before the House for the reason that he had not been informed of a hearing on the resolutions and that to his knowledge, the committee on Rules had not held a public hearing on said resolutions.

Point of  
order.

In answer to the point of order, the Speaker stated that it was not within the province of the Chair to inquire into the internal workings of a committee.

Mr. Pierce thereupon appealed from the decision of the Chair; and the appeal was seconded by Mr. Poirier of North Attleborough.

Appeal from  
decision of  
Chair.

The question then was put "Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?"

After debate on this question, the sense of the House was taken by yeas and nays, at the request of Mr. Pierce; and on the roll call 114 members voted in the affirmative and 27 in the negative.

Decision of  
Chair  
sustained,  
— yea and nay  
No. 27.

#### **[See Yea and Nay No. 27 in Supplement.]**

Therefore the decision of the Chair was sustained.

Subsequently Ms. Fox of Boston asked unanimous consent to make a statement; and, there being no objection, she addressed the House as follows:

MR. SPEAKER: During the taking of the above yeas and nays, I was absent from the House Chamber on official business in another

Statement of  
Representative  
Fox of Boston.

and which do not affect the powers, duties, etc., of state departments, boards, commissions, etc., or which do not affect generally the laws of the Commonwealth) deposited with the respective clerks subsequent to five o'clock on the first Wednesday of December preceding the first annual session of the General Court shall be referred by the Clerks to the committees on the Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently. No such matter shall be admitted for consideration except on report of the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, and then upon approval of four-fifths of the members of each branch voting thereon. Matters upon which suspension of Joint Rule 12 has been negatived shall be placed on file.

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

[Amended Feb. 7, 1890; Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 7, 1893; Jan. 10, 1898; Jan. 9, 1899; Feb. 15, 1901; May 4, 1904; Jan. 31, 1910; Feb. 2, 1917; Dec. 22, 1920; Mar. 30, 1921; Jan. 30, 1923; Feb. 15, 1933; Jan. 12 and Aug. 7, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Jan. 6, 1947; May 27, 1948; Jan. 30, 1967; Mar. 26, 1969; Jan. 7, 1971; Jan. 15 and Oct. 2, 1973; Oct. 3, 1983; June 12, 1995.]

12A. All formal business of the first annual session of the General Court shall be concluded no later than the third Wednesday in November of that calendar year and all formal business of the second annual session shall be concluded no later than the last day of July of that calendar year.

In order to assist the Senate and House in its analysis and appraisal of laws enacted by the General Court, each joint standing committee, upon conclusion of the formal business of the annual sessions, shall, as authorized by Joint Rule 1, initiate oversight hearings for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness, application and administration of the subject matter of laws within the jurisdiction of that committee.

[Adopted June 12, 1995.]

#### *Unfinished Business of the Session.*

12B. Any matter pending before the General Court at the end of the first annual session and any special session held in the same year shall carry over into the second annual session of the same General Court in the same legislative status as it was at the conclusion of the first annual session or any special session held during that year; provided, however, that any measure making or supplementing an appropriation for a fiscal year submitted to or returned to the General Court by the Governor, under the provisions of Article LXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution, in the first annual session or in a special session held during that year shall cease to exist upon the termination of the first annual session.

[Adopted June 12, 1995.]

The House Order relative to special procedures for consideration of the temporary emergency House Rules (House, No. 4676), was considered, the main question being on adoption of the order.

Emergency  
House Rules.

The amendment, offered by Messrs. Jones of North Reading and Vieira of Falmouth, on Wednesday, April 29, was withdrawn, at the request of Mr. Jones.

Mr. Galvin of Canton then moved to amend the order by striking out the text contained therein and inserting in place thereof the text contained in House document numbered 4690; and the amendment was adopted.

The order (House, No. 4676, amended) then was adopted.

#### House bills

Authorizing the town of Hopkinton to remove certain land from a conservation restriction (House, No. 4319);

Third  
reading  
bills.

Authorizing the city of Fitchburg to grant an additional license for the sale of all alcoholic beverages not to be drunk on the premises (House, No. 4334) (its title having been changed by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading);

Authorizing the town of Wakefield to establish a means tested senior citizen property tax exemption (House, No. 4475);

Establishing a sick leave bank for Kimberly Brantley, an employee of Department of Developmental Services (House, No. 4653);

Establishing a sick leave bank for Jessica Ocasio, an employee of Department of Transitional Assistance (House, No. 4654); and

Establishing a sick leave bank for Amanda Caruso, an employee of the Department of Correction (House, No. 4657) (its title having been changed by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading);

Severally reported by said committee to be correctly drawn, were read a third time; and they were passed to be engrossed. Severally sent to the Senate for concurrence.

---

The House Bill establishing a sick leave bank for Marta Romero, an employee of the Department of Developmental Services (House, No. 4632) (its title having been changed by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading), reported by said committee to be correctly drawn, was read a third time.

Marta  
Romero,—  
sick leave.

Pending the question on passing the bill to be engrossed, Mr. Speliotis of Danvers moved to amend it by substitution of a bill with the same title (House, No. 4691), which was read.

The amendment was adopted; and the substituted bill was passed to be engrossed. Sent to the Senate for concurrence.

#### *Order.*

On motion of Mr. DeLeo of Winthrop,—

*Ordered*, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Wednesday next at eleven o'clock A.M.; and that notwithstanding the provisions of House Rule 12, the Clerk be authorized to dispense with the printing of a Calendar for said sitting.

Next  
sitting.

*Orders.*

<p>On motion of Mr. Garballey of Arlington,— <i>Ordered,</i> That, a special committee be appointed to inform the Senate that the House of Representatives has been organized by the election of a Speaker and a Clerk. There being no objection, the Speaker then appointed Representatives Hogan of Stowe, Tyler of Boston, Lipper-Garabedian of Melrose, Sabadosa of Northampton, Haggerty of Woburn, Ayers of Quincy, Diggs of Barnstable, MacGregor of Boston, Ryan of Boston, Garcia of Chelsea, Domb of Amherst, Kane of Shrewsbury, Orrall of Lakeville and Wong of Saugus, to the committee.</p>	<p>Senate notified of organization of the House.</p>
<p>On motion of Mr. O’Day of West Boylston,— <i>Ordered,</i> That, a special committee be appointed to inform Her Excellency the Governor and the Council that the House of Representatives has been organized by the election of a Speaker and a Clerk. There being no objection, the Speaker then appointed Representatives O’Day of West Boylston, Michael Moran of Boston, Armini of Marblehead, Consalvo of Boston, Duffy of Holyoke, Fluker-Reid of Boston, Mendes of Brockton, Scarsdale of Pepperell, González of Springfield, Gentile of Sudbury, Ultrino of Malden, Hendricks of New Bedford, Jones of North Reading, McKenna of Webster and Smola of Warren, to the committee.</p>	<p>Governor and Council notified of organization of the House.</p>
<p>On motion of Mr. Galvin of Canton,— <i>Ordered,</i> That the Rules of the House of Representatives of 2023-2024 be observed, so far as they are applicable, until rules shall be adopted by the present House.</p>	<p>Temporary House Rules.</p>
<p>On motion of Mr. Galvin of Canton,— <i>Ordered,</i> That the Clerk begin the keeping of, and making available daily, as authorized by House Rule 10, and that the daily reading thereof be dispensed with; that, under authority of Section 22A of Chapter 3 of the General Laws, copies of the Journals for the entire session be printed and bound with the customary appendices and an index; and that an attested bound copy be deposited with the Secretary of the Commonwealth as the official Journal of the House.</p>	<p>Journal of the House.</p>
<p><i>Papers from the Senate.</i></p>	
<p>The following order was adopted, in concurrence: <i>Ordered,</i> That the joint Rules observed in the preceding General Court (2023-2024) be observed as the temporary joint rules of the two branches for the present General Court until the adoption of permanent joint rules.</p>	<p>Temporary Joint Rules.</p>
<p>The following order was adopted, in concurrence: <i>Ordered,</i> That a convention of the two Houses be held at a quarter before twelve o’clock noon on Thursday, January 2 for the purpose of administering the oaths of office to the several Councillors-elect.</p>	<p>Convention of the two branches.</p>
<p>At the request of the Speaker, prayer was offered by Very Reverend Richard W. Fitzgerald, Saint Columbkille Church of Boston, as follows:</p>	<p>Benediction.</p>

us to keep a steadier pace of vetting, debating and passing bills before the end of formal session gridlock.

When I look back on my years of Senate President, I am amazed at all we have accomplished together. Not only have we made concrete changes that will lower costs for residents while expanding opportunities for all of us.

We have increased representation in this Chamber through installing a portrait of Abigail Adams in our lobby, unveiling our new bust of Frederick Douglass, and – soon – through the selection of a woman to be represented in our Chamber by our Senate Art Committee.

We’ve done this, even with the disruption of a global pandemic – during which we showed the rest of America just how important effective, responsive, collaborative, reality-based bipartisan government can be.

This work isn’t easy, I know. But true leadership never is.

To quote a philanthropist and American legend, Dolly Parton, “If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, then you are an excellent leader.”

I’m excited to work with you to inspire the people of Massachusetts to dream more, learn more, do more and become more.

And so, once again, I thank you for your vote, and for the trust you have again placed in me as your Senate President.

I encourage you to enjoy this day and celebrate your great achievement with your friends and family...

...And then let’s get to work – and let’s fight (like hell) for the people of this great Commonwealth.

Thank you.

Mr. Tarr asked unanimous consent to make a statement; and, there being no objection, he addressed the Senate as follows:

*Committee of the House.*

The President welcomed a committee of the House of Representatives that arrived to declare that the House of Representatives is now assembled and ready to proceed to business and that the House had chosen Ronald A. Mariano of Quincy as Speaker, Bradley Jones of North Reading as Minority Leader and Timothy Carroll of Hull as Clerk.

Organization of the House of Representatives.

*Orders Adopted.*

On motion of Mr. Rodrigues,--

*Ordered*, That the joint rules observed in the preceding General Court (2023-2024) be observed as the temporary joint rules of the two branches for the present General Court until the adoption of permanent joint rules.

Temporary Joint Rules.

On motion of Mr. DiDomenico,--

*Ordered*, That a convention of the two Houses be held at a quarter before twelve o’clock noon, on Thursday, January 5, for the purpose of administering the oaths of office to the several Councillors-elect.

Joint convention of the two branches.

*Remarks of Senate Minority Leader Bruce E. Tarr.*

Thank you, Madame President, and Good Afternoon.

Remarks of Senate Minority Leader Bruce E. Tarr

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
SENATE  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

January 1, 2025

Senator Ryan C.  
Fattman.

Michael D. Hurley,  
*Clerk of the Senate*  
State House, Room 335  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Clerk:

As the Chair of the Republican party Caucus, I wish to inform you that the caucus has unanimously appointed Bruce E. Tarr of First Essex and Middlesex District as the Minority Leader in the Senate for the 2025-2026 legislative session.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Ryan C. Fattman  
State Senator

*Orders Adopted.*

On motion of Ms. Brownsberger,--

*Ordered,* That the Senate Rules of the last session be observed as the temporary Senate Rules for the present General Court.

Temporary  
Senate Rules.

On motion of Mr. Eldridge,--

*Ordered,* That the Clerk begin the daily printing of the Journal of the Senate, as authorized by Senate Rule 6, and that the daily reading thereof be dispensed with; that, under authority of Section 22A of Chapter 3 of the General Laws, copies of the Journals of the entire session be printed and bound with the customary appendices and an index; and that a certified copy thereof be deposited with the Secretary of the Commonwealth as the official bound Journal of the Senate.

Daily printing of the  
Journal.

On motion of Mr. Driscoll,--

*Ordered,* That when the Senate adjourns today, it adjourn to meet again tomorrow at a half past eleven o'clock A.M.

Time of meeting.

*Moment of Silence.*

At the request of the Chair (Mr. Collins), the members, guests and staff stood in a moment of silence and reflection to the memory of Mary J. Hurley.

Moment of silence.

*Adjournment in Memory of Mary J. Hurley.*

The Senator from Suffolk, Mr. Collins, moved that when the Senate adjourns today, it do so in memory of Mary J. Hurley of South Boston.

Mary J. Hurley of South Boston passed away peacefully on January 12, 2024. She was 94.

Mary was born on December 30, 1929 to Cliff and Bridget Swain. She was one of six children growing up in South Boston.



13 [Adopted Jan. 12, 1983; Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 14, 1997; May 16,  
14 2000.]

15 2. The Speaker shall preserve decorum and order in the House Chamber. While in the House  
16 Chamber, members, staff and guests shall be required to dress in proper and appropriate attire  
17 and be courteous and professional when using electronic devices. The committee on Operations,  
18 Facilities and Security, in consultation with the Speaker, may establish policies and procedures  
19 for the preservation of decorum and order in the galleries of the House Chamber to ensure that  
20 the House may conduct its business without undue disruption.

21 Members, staff and guests shall not take photographs or videos of, or in, the House Chamber  
22 during formal or informal sessions unless otherwise permitted by this Rule. Members may take  
23 photographs at their assigned seats in the chamber during formal or informal sessions; provided,  
24 however, that any photographs or video taken by members during formal or informal sessions  
25 shall not include images of any other member, staff or guest without their express written  
26 consent.

27 The Speaker may permit photographs or videos during special occasions, which shall include,  
28 but shall not be limited to, swearing-in ceremonies and addresses by constitutional officers or  
29 other dignitaries. The use of audio-visual aids including, without limitation, videos, computers,  
30 posters, displays or charts shall be permitted only upon approval of the Speaker.

31 The Speaker also may speak to points of order in preference to other members; and shall  
32 decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the House. [2.] (2.) [With regard to appeals,  
33 see Rule 77.]

34 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 20, 2011; Jan. 29, 2015; Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 25,  
35 2025.]

36 3. The Speaker shall declare all votes, subject to verification as hereinafter provided. [3.] (55.)  
37 [See Rules 49 to 53, inclusive.]

38 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

39 4. In all cases the Speaker may vote. [4.] (3.)

40 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

41 4A. There shall be a Speaker pro Tempore. The Speaker pro Tempore shall assist the Speaker  
42 in the coordination of policy development and the ceremonial functions of the House and shall  
43 perform such duties assigned to them by the Speaker. Upon a vacancy in the office of Speaker,  
44 the office of Speaker pro Tempore shall be considered vacant.

45 [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005, Amended, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 25, 2025.]

46 4B. (a) As used in this Rule, the following words shall have the following meanings:-

47 “Earned income”, income derived from salaries, wages, tips and commissions for performing  
48 services as an employee of an employer.

49 “Unearned income”, all other income that is not earned income.

50 (b) The Speaker shall not receive earned income for:

51 (1) affiliating with or being employed by a firm, partnership, association, corporation or other  
52 entity that provides professional services involving a fiduciary relationship;

53 (2) permitting their name to be used by such a firm, partnership, association, corporation or  
54 other entity;

55 (3) receiving compensation for practicing a profession that involves a fiduciary relationship;  
56 or

57 (4) serving as an officer or member of the board of an association, corporation or other entity.

58 (c) The provisions of this rule shall take effect on August 1, 2017.

59 [Added Feb. 2, 2017; Amended Jan 30, 2019.]

60 5. The Speaker may appoint a member to perform the duties of the Chair. In the event the  
61 Speaker fails to appoint a member to perform the duties of the Chair, the Speaker pro Tempore  
62 shall be the Acting Speaker until the Speaker otherwise provides or until a vacancy in the office  
63 of Speaker occurs. In the event that the Speaker pro Tempore is absent or is unable to perform  
64 the duties of Acting Speaker, the Majority Leader, the Assistant Majority Leader, the Second  
65 Assistant Majority Leader or other designee shall be the Acting Speaker. [7.] (4.)

66 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 26, 2005.]

67 6. In case of a vacancy in the office of Speaker, or in case the Speaker or the member named  
68 by said Speaker in accordance with the preceding rule is absent at the hour to which the House  
69 stands adjourned, the senior member present shall call the House to order, and shall preside until  
70 a Speaker is elected, which shall be the first business in order. [8.] (5.)

71 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985, Amended, Jan. 23, 2007.]

72 7. At the beginning of the first year of the two-year General Court, the Speaker may, unless  
73 the House otherwise directs, appoint a Chaplain; and the Speaker may fill any vacancy in the  
74 office of Chaplain. [7A.] (4.)

75 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 29, 2015.]

76 **SCHEDULING.**

77 7A. There shall be appointed a standing committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling  
78 consisting of eleven members. The committee shall not be subject to the provisions of Rule 17A,  
79 but shall be authorized to meet from time to time at the call of the Chair for the purpose of  
80 assisting the members of the House of Representatives in identifying the major matters pending  
81 before the General Court, the relative urgency and priority for consideration of such matters, and  
82 alternative methods of responding to such matters by the General Court. Said committee shall  
83 schedule legislative matters in a manner that will provide for an even distribution and orderly  
84 consideration of reports of legislative committees on the daily Calendar.

85 The committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling shall not be authorized to recommend  
86 changes or amendments to legislation or recommend that a matter ought to pass or ought not to  
87 pass, but shall only report asking to be discharged from further consideration of a bill, and  
88 recommending that it be referred or recommitted to another committee; provided, however, that  
89 it shall not recommend that a matter be referred or recommitted to the committee on Rules or the  
90 committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, or what date a matter shall be  
91 scheduled for consideration by the House and placed in the Orders of the Day. All reports by the  
92 committee on petitions filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or by the mayor and city  
93 council, or other legislative body of a city or the town meeting of a town with respect to a law

94 relating to that city or town shall be read and considered by the House at a formal or informal  
95 session before being accepted, rejected or otherwise acted upon. Any such petition and any  
96 attachment to the petition shall be filed in both paper and electronic format approved by the  
97 Clerk.

98 All matters received from the Senate or reported from standing committees of the House and  
99 joint standing committees of the General Court shall, unless subject to provisions of any other  
100 House or joint rules, be referred to the committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling. All  
101 matters reported by said committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling recommending that a  
102 matter shall be scheduled for consideration by the House shall be placed in the Orders of the Day  
103 for the next sitting. Said committee may report on a legislative matter within thirty days  
104 following the day the matter was referred. If the committee fails to report a matter within thirty  
105 days following the date of its reference, the Clerk shall place the matter on the Calendar of the  
106 House as if it had been scheduled for consideration by said committee on Steering, Policy and  
107 Scheduling.

108 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997; Amended Jan. 26, 1999; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005.]

109 7B. The committee on Rules shall be authorized to originate and report special orders for the  
110 scheduling and consideration of legislation on the floor of the House. Said committee shall not  
111 be subject to the notification provisions contained in Rule 17A but may hold public hearings and  
112 shall accept testimony only from the members of the House. A majority of the members  
113 appointed to the committee shall constitute a quorum. When reported, such orders may be  
114 amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, and shall be subject to  
115 approval by a majority of the members of the House present and voting. Debate on the question

116 on adoption of such orders shall be limited to one hour. No orders adopted pursuant to this  
117 paragraph shall limit the powers of the Speaker as provided in Rules 1 to 6, inclusive. Such  
118 orders shall not be subject to reconsideration.

119 The committee on Rules shall not be subject to the provisions of Rule 17A, but may meet in  
120 private to discuss or consider the appointment, discipline or dismissal of any individual the  
121 committee is authorized by law or rule to appoint, discipline or dismiss.

122 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997; Amended Jan. 24, 2001; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 1, 2023.]

123 7C. The committee on Rules may consider and make recommendations designed to improve  
124 and expedite the business and procedures of the House and its committees, and to recommend to  
125 the House any amendments to the Rules deemed necessary; provided that a majority of the  
126 members of the House present and voting shall be required to approve such recommendations.

127 The committee shall be privileged to report at any time.

128 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997.]

129 7D. The Speaker shall, in consultation with the committee on Rules and the committee on  
130 Steering, Policy and Scheduling, establish a committee scheduling system that minimizes to the  
131 greatest extent possible scheduling conflicts for members of committees.

132 The Speaker shall determine a schedule for the House for each week relative to formal and  
133 informal sessions and shall make such schedule available to the members in writing or by  
134 electronic mail by 5:00 P.M. on Friday of the preceding week; provided, however, that the  
135 Speaker may make, notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 7A, changes in the schedules to  
136 facilitate the business of the House in an efficient and timely fashion. The Speaker shall

137 communicate notice of any such scheduling change to the members in writing or by electronic  
138 mail as soon as practicable, and whenever possible, the Speaker shall provide such notice not  
139 less than twenty-four hours before the event so rescheduled is set to commence.

140 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997; January 9, 2003; Jan. 30, 2019.]

141 **MONITORS.**

142 8. Two monitors shall be appointed by the Speaker for each division of the House, whose  
143 duty it shall be to see to the due observance of the rules, and, on request of the Speaker, to return  
144 the number of votes and members in their respective divisions. [9.]

145 9. If a member transgresses any of the rules after being notified thereof by a monitor, it shall  
146 be the duty of such monitor to report the case to the House.

147 It shall be the duty of a monitor to report their knowledge of the occurrence of a member  
148 voting for another member, in their division of the House, to the Speaker of the House and to the  
149 Minority Leader. [10.] [See Rules 16 and 16A.]

150 [Amended Jan. 9, 1991; May 5, 1993; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019.]

151 9A. There shall be established a Floor Division Committee for each of the four divisions of  
152 the House. The Speaker shall appoint a Floor Division chairperson for each of the four divisions.  
153 Said committee shall consist of the members assigned to the respective divisions.

154 In order to create a continuous flow of debate, each chairperson shall be responsible for  
155 reviewing the daily Calendar and providing advance notice to committee members in the  
156 respective divisions of all matters scheduled for consideration in the Orders of the Day. Said  
157 committee chairpersons shall provide information to members of their committees on pending

158 legislation and other matters of business before the House, and shall serve as the primary liaison  
159 between their respective committees and the Speaker of the House. The committee chairpersons  
160 shall advise the Speaker on operational matters, including session coordination, debate, and  
161 remote voting, as necessary, and other critical business before the House. The committee  
162 chairpersons shall facilitate discussions among committee members and ensure that committee  
163 members are fully equipped to engage in informed and productive debate.

164 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997; Amended Feb. 25, 2025.]

165 **CLERK.**

166 10. The Clerk shall keep the Journal of the House. The Clerk shall enter therein a record of  
167 each day's proceedings and, whenever practicable, submit it to the Speaker and the Minority  
168 Leader before the hour fixed for the next sitting, and shall cause the same to be available daily in  
169 a format to be determined by the Clerk; and provided further that a copy of said Journal shall  
170 also be made available to each member of the House. Any objection to the Journal shall be made  
171 before the House proceeds to the consideration of the Orders of the Day. [11.] (6.)

172 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan 11, 1985; Jan. 17, 1995; Jan. 9, 2003.]

173 10A. The Clerk shall be the official parliamentarian of the House of Representatives.

174 [Adopted Jan. 9, 1991.]

175 10B. The Clerk shall be the official keeper of records of the House of Representatives for  
176 legislative records that remain in the office of said Clerk at the end of each biennial session, and  
177 until such time as said records are transferred to the State Archives or destroyed in accordance  
178 with law.

179 [Adopted Jan. 29, 2015.]

180 11. Every question of order with the decision thereof shall be entered at large in the Journal,  
181 and shall be noted in an appendix, which shall also contain the rules of the House and of the two  
182 branches. [12.] (6.)

183 12. The Clerk shall prepare and make available on each day of formal session a Calendar of  
184 matters in order for consideration and such other memoranda as the House or the Speaker may  
185 direct. The Clerk shall prepare a Calendar on which shall appear any question on passage of a  
186 bill or resolve notwithstanding the objections of Their Excellency the Governor which may be  
187 considered forthwith at the direction of the House or Speaker.

188 When, in the determination of the Clerk, a volume of matters exists for the next legislative  
189 day, the Clerk shall be authorized to prepare and cause to be made available an advance calendar  
190 of the matters in order of consideration for the next legislative day and such other memoranda as  
191 the House or Speaker may direct. The Clerk may indicate on the advance calendar that the  
192 matters contained therein are subject to change.

193 The Clerk shall be authorized to dispense with preparing and making available a Calendar for  
194 designated formal sessions of the House only after two-thirds of the members present and voting  
195 consent thereto on a recorded yea and nay vote. Debate on this question shall be limited to fifteen  
196 minutes, no member shall speak more than three minutes, and such question shall not be subject  
197 to reconsideration.

198 The Clerk shall dispense with preparing and making available a Calendar for designated  
199 Informal Sessions of the House.

200 As soon as practicable whenever the Clerk prepares a Calendar or advance Calendar under  
201 this rule, they shall also cause a true copy thereof to be posted on the website of the General  
202 Court that is generally available to all members and their staff, and reasonably promptly  
203 thereafter the Clerk shall cause the members and their staff to be notified of the same by way of  
204 electronic mail. [13.] (7.)

205 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Jan. 17, 1995; Jan. 24,  
206 2001; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 1, 2023.]

207 13. Any objection to the Calendar shall be made and disposed of before the House proceeds to  
208 the consideration of the Orders of the Day. [14.]

209 13A. The Clerk shall make available to all members electronically and, to the public via the  
210 website of the General Court, the text of all dockets and bills introduced and admitted for  
211 consideration in the House.

212 [Adopted, Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019; July 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023.]

213 **COUNSEL.**

214 13B. (a) The House shall employ a full-time Counsel pursuant to section 51 of chapter 3 of  
215 the General Laws. The committee on Rules shall appoint a qualified person to act as Counsel at  
216 such compensation as the committee on Rules shall approve.

217 Counsel shall serve a term of two years from the date of appointment, unless the Counsel  
218 sooner resigns, retires or is removed; provided, however, that the Counsel may only be removed:  
219 (i) for misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance, as determined by the Director of Human

220 Resources appointed pursuant to Rule 90 and approved by a majority vote of the committee on  
221 Rules; or (ii) by a majority roll call vote of the House.

222 Counsel may employ such legal and other assistants as may be necessary in the discharge of  
223 Counsel's duties, subject to the approval of the committee on Rules, and may expend with like  
224 approval such sums as may be necessary for the discharge of their duties.

225 (b) Counsel shall be the chief legal officer of the House and shall perform all duties generally  
226 required of a counsel to an organization and specifically those required pursuant to any general  
227 or special law, rule, regulation, or order of the House. Counsel shall provide legal and legislative  
228 drafting services to all members regardless of party or seniority.

229 [Added Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 25, 2025.]

### 230 **HOUSE BUSINESS MANAGER.**

231 13C. (a) The House shall employ a full-time House Business Manager. The committee on  
232 Operations, Facilities and Security shall appoint a qualified person to act as House Business  
233 Manager at such compensation as the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security shall  
234 approve.

235 Subject to the approval of the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security, the House  
236 Business Manager may employ such assistants as may be necessary in the discharge of their  
237 duties and may expend with like approval such sums as may be necessary for the discharge of  
238 their duties.

239 (b) The House Business Manager shall be the chief finance manager of the House and shall  
240 report to the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security, which shall provide oversight of

241 the House Business Manager generally and approval of any decisions made by the House  
242 Business Manager having a substantial impact on the House of Representatives, as determined  
243 by the committee. The House Business Manager shall perform all duties generally required of a  
244 finance manager to an organization and specifically those required pursuant to House Rules or as  
245 directed by the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security. Such duties shall include,  
246 without limitation, overseeing the provision of outside, independent audits of House financial  
247 accounts pursuant to House Rule 85A; the execution and management of all procurements  
248 pursuant to House Rule 87; the maintenance of and adherence to internal control policies and  
249 procedures related to the House's finances and administration; and the maintenance of House  
250 invoices, receipts, vouchers, contracts, and related documentation.

251 [Adopted Feb. 25, 2025.]

252 **MEMBERS.**

253 14. No member shall stand up, to the inconvenience of others, while a member is speaking; or  
254 be involved in disturbing conversation while another member is speaking in debate; or pass  
255 unnecessarily between the Speaker of the House and the member speaking; or stand in the  
256 passages, or in the area in front of the Chair; or stand at the Clerk's desk while a roll call is in  
257 progress. [16.]

258 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1989; Jan. 26, 1999.]

259 14A. [Adopted Feb. 11, 2009; Omitted Jan. 29, 2015.]

260 15. When it appears to the Chair that the presence of a quorum is endangered, the Chair shall  
261 order the doors closed. If a quorum is doubted the Chair shall order the doors closed and  
262 thereafter no member shall enter or leave the House until an initial determination has been made

263 as to the presence of a quorum or lack thereof; and thereafter, provided that no quorum is  
264 present, no member shall leave the House unless by permission of the Chair, but members shall  
265 be admitted, at any time.

266 Upon the doubting of a quorum and after ascertaining that a quorum is not present, the  
267 Speaker may order a recorded attendance roll call to be taken by use of the electronic roll call  
268 system.

269 Said roll call, if ordered, shall be taken at a time determined by the Speaker.

270 Members answering a quorum call shall vote “YES” on the roll call system. [17.] (11.)

271 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Feb. 22, 1982; Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991.]

272 **ETHICS.**

273 16. There shall be appointed a committee on Ethics as authorized by Rule 17. The committee  
274 shall consist of 11 members, 7 of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker, 4 of whom shall be  
275 appointed by the Minority Leader.

276 A member appointed to the committee shall not be considered to be a member of the  
277 committee subsequent to the declaration of candidacy for any other state or federal elective  
278 office.

279 The committee shall investigate and evaluate, (i) at the direction of the Speaker, (ii) by a  
280 sworn written complaint filed and delivered by a member, officer or employee to the chair, (iii)  
281 or by a majority vote of the members appointed to the Ethics committee, any matters relative to  
282 alleged violations of Rule 16A by a member, officer or employee.

283       Upon the receipt of a sworn written complaint, at the direction of the Speaker or by a majority  
284 vote of the members appointed to the Ethics committee, the committee shall notify any person  
285 named of the nature of the alleged violation and a list of prospective witnesses, and also shall  
286 notify said person of the final disposition and the recommendations, if any, of the committee.

287       Any member, officer, or employee of the House named relative to an alleged violation shall  
288 be afforded the opportunity to appear before the committee on Ethics with counsel.

289       All proceedings including the filing of the initial complaint shall be considered confidential  
290 information.

291       If the alleged violation received in the manner described above is deemed to have merit by a  
292 majority vote of the members appointed to the committee, the committee shall file a report with  
293 the Clerk of the House. Said report shall be a public document. The committee shall not disclose  
294 any allegation deemed to be frivolous or without merit.

295       If a majority appointed finds that any member, officer, or employee of the House has violated  
296 any provision of Rule 16A, a majority appointed may, in the case of a member, recommend a  
297 reprimand, censure, removal from a committee or position of authority, including leadership,  
298 chair or vice chair, or expulsion; and in the case of an officer or employee, a majority appointed  
299 may recommend a reprimand, suspension, or removal from employment.

300       Should such an alleged violation be filed with the committee regarding a member or members  
301 of the House Ethics committee, said member or members shall not participate in the committee  
302 deliberations on said alleged violation.

303 Any member, officer, or employee of the House may request in writing from the House  
304 committee on Ethics or from the Counsel to the House appointed pursuant to Rule 13B a  
305 confidential written advisory opinion on the requirements of chapters 268A and 268B of the  
306 General Laws as well as an opinion on any other general or special law, rule or regulation  
307 applicable to their official position or concerning any contemplated personal action which may  
308 conflict with their official position. The committee on Ethics or the Counsel to the House shall  
309 issue confidential written advisory opinions and clarification in response to said written request.

310 No member, officer or employee of the House shall be penalized in any manner for having  
311 acted within the guidelines of a written advisory opinion from the House committee on Ethics or  
312 from the Counsel to the House appointed pursuant to Rule 13B, provided that all pertinent facts  
313 are stated in the request for an advisory opinion.

314 A written advisory opinion from the House committee on Ethics or from the Counsel to the  
315 House appointed pursuant to Rule 13B shall be a defense in any proceeding arising from said  
316 opinion or advice unless material facts were omitted or misstated by the person in the request of  
317 the opinion.

318 The chair of the Ethics committee may convene the committee at any time.

319 The chair shall also convene the committee at the written request of at least 5 members of the  
320 committee.

321 The committee may, upon the written and signed report of two-thirds of the members of the  
322 committee, file a special report containing legislation without said legislation being founded  
323 upon petition which shall be referred under the provisions of Rule 24 and consistent with the  
324 provisions of Joint Rule 13, to the appropriate joint standing committee. Any special report

325 containing legislation filed pursuant to this paragraph shall be germane to subject matters  
326 regularly considered by the committee. The committee shall not include in any such special  
327 report a bill that would have a fiscal impact as described in Rule 33.

328 Upon convening of the first annual session of the General Court and after the adoption of  
329 rules, all members, officers and employees of the House shall be provided with a current copy of  
330 the Code of Ethics contained in Rule 16A. [19.] (12A.)

331 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Jan. 17, 1995; Mar. 6, 1995; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 20,  
332 2011; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 29, 2015; Jan. 30, 2019; July 7, 2021; Feb. 25, 2025.]

333 **CODE OF ETHICS.**

334 16A. (1.) While members, officers and employees should not be denied those opportunities  
335 available to all other citizens to acquire and retain private, economic and other interests;  
336 members, officers, and employees should exercise prudence in any and all such endeavors and  
337 make every reasonable effort to avoid transactions, activities, or obligations, which are in  
338 substantial conflict with or will substantially impair their independence of judgment.

339 (2.) No member, officer or employee shall solicit or accept any compensation or political  
340 contribution other than that provided for by law for the performance of official legislative duties.

341 (3.) No member, officer or employee shall serve as a legislative agent as defined in section 39  
342 of chapter 3 of the General Laws regarding any legislation before the General Court.

343 (4.) No member, officer or employee shall receive any compensation or permit any  
344 compensation to accrue to their beneficial interest by virtue of influence improperly exerted from  
345 their official position in the House.

346 (5.) No member, officer or employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or  
347 professional activity, which will require the disclosure of confidential information gained in the  
348 course of, and by reason of, their official position.

349 (6.) No member, officer or employee shall willfully and knowingly disclose or use  
350 confidential information gained in the course of their official position to further their own  
351 economic interest or that of any other person.

352 (7.) Except as provided in Rule 49, no member shall cast a vote for any other member, nor  
353 shall any officer or employee vote for any member, except that the Clerk or an assistant Clerk  
354 may record a vote for a member who votes late under the provisions of Rule 52, or is prohibited  
355 from voting from his desk due to a malfunction of the electronic roll call voting system; provided  
356 the Clerk's action shall not be construed as voting for said member.

357 (8.) No member shall use profane, insulting, or abusive language in the course of public  
358 debate in the House Chamber or in testimony before any committee of the General Court.

359 (9.) No member, officer or employee shall employ anyone from public funds who does not  
360 perform tasks which contribute substantially to the work of the House and which are  
361 commensurate with the compensation received. Unless their personnel record indicates  
362 otherwise, no officer or full-time employee of the House shall engage in any outside business  
363 activity during regular business hours, whether the House is in session or not, and all employees  
364 of the House are assumed to be full-time.

365 (10.) No member, officer or employee shall accept or solicit compensation for non-legislative  
366 services which is in excess of the usual and customary value of such services.

367 (11.) No member, officer or employee shall accept or solicit an honorarium for a speech,  
368 writing for publication, or other activity from any person, organization or enterprise having a  
369 direct interest in legislation or matters before any agency, authority, board or commission of the  
370 Commonwealth which is in excess of the usual and customary value of such services.

371 (12.) No member, officer or employee shall knowingly accept any gifts from any legislative  
372 or executive agent as prohibited by law. No member, officer or employee shall knowingly accept  
373 any gift from any person or entity having a direct interest in legislation before the General Court  
374 as prohibited by law. (For the purposes of this paragraph, the terms “gift” and “person” shall be  
375 the same as their definitions in section 1 of chapter 268B of the General Laws).

376 (13.) No member shall convert campaign funds to personal use in excess of reimbursements  
377 for legitimate and verifiable campaign expenditures. Members shall consider all proceeds from  
378 testimonial dinners and other fundraising activities as campaign funds.

379 (14.) No member shall serve on any committee or vote on any question in which their private  
380 right is immediately concerned, distinct from the public interest. [19.]

381 (15.) No member, officer or employee shall violate the confidentiality of any proceeding  
382 before the Ethics committee. [19A.]

383 (16.) Members, officers and employees may utilize public resources to support charitable and  
384 community service activities consistent with the Conflict of Interest Law, G.L. c. 268A, pursuant  
385 to policies established by committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement pursuant  
386 to Rule 90(h)(2).

387 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; May 5, 1993; Jan. 24, 2001; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 29, 2015; Jan. 30,  
388 2019; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

389 16B. The committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement shall develop and  
390 conduct an ethics law training program for every member, officer and employee of the House;  
391 provided further, that said training program shall include, without limitation, a review of the  
392 requirements and prohibitions of chapter 268A and chapter 268B of the General Laws, and the  
393 regulations of the State Ethics Commission, as they apply to legislators and legislative staff; and  
394 provided further, that said training program shall be offered virtually or in-person and shall be  
395 mandatory for all members, officers and employees.

396 [Adopted Jan. 9, 2003, Amended Feb. 11, 2009; Jan 20, 2011; Jul. 7, 2021.]

397 16C. Bills involving lobbyists' reporting laws, and laws pertaining to the ethical conduct of  
398 public officials shall, after their first reading, be referred to the committee on Ethics, for report  
399 on their relation to the ethics laws of the Commonwealth. No new provisions shall be added to  
400 such measures by the committee, unless directly pertaining to ethics. [Adopted Feb. 11, 2009.]

401 **COMMITTEES.**

402 17. At the beginning of the first year of the two-year General Court, standing committees  
403 shall be appointed as follows:

404 A committee on Rules;

405 (to consist of 15 members).

406 A committee on Ways and Means;

407 (to consist of 35 members).

408 A committee on Bills in the Third Reading;

409 (to consist of 3 members).

410 A committee of each Floor Division;

411 (to consist of the members of each division).

412 A committee on Ethics;

413 (to consist of 11 members).

414 A committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement;

415 (to consist of 13 members).

416 A committee on Post Audit and Oversight;

417 (to consist of 11 members).

418 A committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling;

419 (to consist of 11 members).

420 A committee on Climate Action and Sustainability;

421 (to consist of 11 members).

422 A committee on Federal Funding, Policy and Accountability;

423 (to consist of 11 members).

424 A committee on Operations, Facilities and Security;

425 (to consist of 11 members).

426 A committee on Intergovernmental Affairs;

427 (to consist of 11 members).

428 Committee meetings, insofar as practicable, shall not be scheduled in conflict with formal  
429 sessions of the House of Representatives. [20.] (12, 12A, 12B.)

430 [Amended March 6, 1979; Sept. 16, 1981; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Oct. 6,  
431 1993; May 23, 1996; Jan. 14, 1997; Jul. 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 29, 2015;  
432 Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 25, 2025.]

433 17A. (a) For the purposes of this rule, the following terms shall, unless the context clearly  
434 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

435 “Deliberation”, a verbal exchange between a quorum of members of a committee attempting  
436 to arrive at a decision on any public business within its jurisdiction.

437 “Emergency”, a sudden generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding  
438 immediate action.

439 “Executive conference”, any meeting or part of a meeting of a committee which is closed to  
440 certain persons for deliberation on certain matters.

441 “Executive session”, any meeting or part of a meeting of a committee wherein the committee  
442 is voting on legislation and where public participation is limited to observance.

443 “Meeting”, any corporal convening and deliberation of a committee for which a quorum is  
444 required in order to make a decision at which any public policy matter over which the committee  
445 has supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power is discussed or considered; provided,  
446 however, that “meeting” shall not include an on-site visitation or inspection of any project or  
447 program.

448 “Quorum”, a simple majority of a committee unless otherwise defined by constitution, rule or  
449 law applicable to such committee; provided further, that a quorum shall be presumed to be  
450 present unless otherwise doubted.

451 (b) All meetings, except executive conferences, of House standing and special committees,  
452 shall be open to the public and any person shall be permitted to attend any meeting except as  
453 otherwise provided pursuant to this rule or Rule 7A. All meetings of House standing and special  
454 committees open to the public shall be conducted in-person with the option of remote  
455 participation available to the public; provided, however, that the members of such committees  
456 shall be physically present at the hearing location where in-person public testimony is offered.  
457 All House standing and special committees, in the conduct of their hearings, shall utilize, to the  
458 extent practicable, online platforms or systems that allow for synchronous, audio-visual  
459 communication between the members of the committee and individuals offering testimony  
460 remotely. All hearings of House standing and special committees shall be publicly livestreamed  
461 on the official website of the General Court which shall display and transmit, in real-time, the  
462 audio-visual attributes of public testimony offered remotely; provided further, that said  
463 livestream shall be archived on the official website of the General Court for the duration of the  
464 legislative session. The chairperson of any House standing or special committee conducting a  
465 hearing shall use best efforts to prioritize the testimony of those physically present at the hearing

466 location and may, in their discretion, allow individuals participating in-person a greater amount  
467 of time to testify than those participating remotely. All notices of hearings shall include  
468 instructions on how to offer testimony both in-person and remotely. The chairperson of a House  
469 standing or special committee shall record the attendance of members during committee hearings  
470 and shall cause the attendance to be published on the official website of the General Court  
471 alongside the livestream of the hearing archived on said website.

472 No quorum of a committee shall meet in private for the purpose of deliberation except as  
473 provided pursuant to this rule.

474 No executive session shall be held until: (i) the committee has first convened in an open  
475 session for which notice has been given; (ii) the presiding officer has stated the authorized  
476 purpose of the executive session; (iii) a majority of the members of the committee present have  
477 voted to go into executive session and the vote of each member has been recorded on a roll call  
478 vote and entered into the minutes: and (iv) the presiding officer has stated before the executive  
479 session if the committee will reconvene after the executive session.

480 (c) Executive conferences shall be held only for the following purposes: (i) to discuss the  
481 reputation, character, physical condition or mental health rather than the professional  
482 competence of a member, officer or employee; (ii) to consider the discipline or dismissal of, or to  
483 hear complaints or charges brought against a member, officer or employee; (iii) to discuss  
484 strategy with respect to litigation if an executive session or other open meeting may have a  
485 detrimental effect on the legal position of the committee; or (iv) to consider the purchase,  
486 exchange, lease or value of real property, if such discussions may have a detrimental effect on  
487 the negotiating position of the Commonwealth or a person, firm or corporation.

488 A member, officer or employee subject to an executive conference pursuant to clause (i) or  
489 clause (ii) shall be notified in writing no less than 48 hours prior to the proposed executive  
490 conference; provided, however, that upon agreement of the parties involved, the notification  
491 requirements of clause (i) and clause (ii) may be waived. Upon request of the member, officer or  
492 employee subject to an executive conference pursuant to clause (i) or clause (ii) the executive  
493 conference shall be open to the public.

494 A member, officer or employee subject to an executive conference pursuant to clause (i) or  
495 clause (ii) shall have the right to: (a) be present at such executive conference during discussions  
496 or considerations which involve that member, officer or employee; (b) have counsel or a  
497 representative of their own choosing present and attending for the purpose of advising said  
498 member, officer or employee; provided, however, that said counsel or representative shall not  
499 actively participate in the executive conference; and (c) to speak on their own behalf to the  
500 committee assembled in executive conference.

501 (d) This rule shall not apply to any chance meeting or social meeting at which matters relating  
502 to official business are discussed so long as no final agreement is reached. No chance meeting or  
503 social meeting shall be used in circumvention of the spirit or requirements of this section to  
504 discuss or act upon a matter over which the committee has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or  
505 advisory power.

506 (e) Except pursuant to an emergency, a notice and agenda of every meeting of a committee  
507 subject to this rule shall be filed with the Clerk of the House, publicly posted by the Clerk on the  
508 bulletin board outside the Clerk's Office and in such other places as are designated in advance  
509 for such purpose by said Clerk, made available to all members electronically and made available

510 to the public via the website of the General Court at least 72 hours prior to the time of such  
511 meeting and a list of the bills, petitions, and resolutions to be considered for a vote or other  
512 action by the committee. The notice shall include the date, time and place of such meeting. Such  
513 filing and posting shall be the responsibility of the committee scheduling such meeting. If public  
514 testimony is being solicited, agendas shall include an electronic mail address and physical mail  
515 address for the submission of testimony and instructions on how the public may participate  
516 remotely, and the committee shall make reasonable efforts to ensure diversity among those from  
517 whom testimony is solicited. The notice and posting requirements shall not apply to executive  
518 conferences held pursuant to clause (i) or clause (ii) of subsection (c) of this rule unless the  
519 member, officer or employee subject to the executive conference requests that the executive  
520 conference be open to the public.

521 (f) A committee shall maintain accurate records of its meetings and hearings setting forth the  
522 date, time and place thereof, and recording any action taken at each meeting, hearing, executive  
523 conference or executive session. All votes requested to be taken in executive sessions shall be  
524 recorded roll call votes and shall become a part of the record of said executive sessions. The  
525 record of each meeting shall be available to the public on the official website of the General  
526 Court; provided, however, that the records of any executive conference shall remain confidential  
527 as long as publication may defeat the lawful purposes of the executive conference.

528 (g) Upon prior notification and approval of the chair, a meeting of a committee may be  
529 recorded by a person in attendance by means of a recorder or any other means of audio/visual  
530 reproduction; provided, however, that said recording shall not interfere with the conduct of the  
531 meeting. Executive conferences conducted pursuant to clause (i) or clause (ii) of subsection (c)  
532 of this rule shall not be recorded unless upon the request of the member, officer or employee who

533 is subject to said executive conference, and then only at such member's, officer's or employee's  
534 expense. Executive conferences conducted pursuant to clause (iii) or (iv) of subsection (c) of this  
535 rule may be recorded at the discretion of the chair.

536 (h) Copies of all redrafted bills that are to be voted on at an executive session by the House  
537 Ways and Means Committee shall be available to all members of the committee electronically in  
538 the form they will be considered no less than twenty-four hours prior to their consideration;  
539 provided, however, that said committee may vote on a bill that has not been available for said  
540 period of time by vote of a majority of the committee members present.

541 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; May 5, 1993; Jan. 17, 1995;  
542 Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 9, 2003, Jan. 23, 2007, Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 1,  
543 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

544 17B. The vote on any legislation in committee shall be a recorded vote of the full committee.  
545 Such votes shall be recorded on appropriate forms that show all votes for and against the  
546 particular committee action; provided, that votes may also be recorded in LAWS. The record of  
547 all such roll calls shall be posted on the official website of the General Court within 48 hours of  
548 the vote.

549 No report of a House committee on any legislation shall be final until those members of the  
550 committee present and voting with the majority have been given the opportunity to sign such  
551 appropriate forms before the report is made to the House. No signature shall be valid unless the  
552 forms to which the signatures are affixed include the substantially complete text of the legislation  
553 being reported.

554 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Jan. 12, 1987, Amended Jan. 29, 2015; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb.  
555 1, 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

556 17C. There shall be a committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement on the part  
557 of the House consisting of thirteen members.

558 Said committee shall discharge its duties pursuant to the Rules, including Rule 16B and Rules  
559 88 through 100, and shall also be responsible for the allocation of office space as equitably as  
560 possible among the various members and joint and standing committees. The committee shall  
561 allocate space among the various committees on the part of the House taking into account the  
562 workload, duties and responsibilities and size of staff of each.

563 The Speaker may make temporary office assignments in accordance with the foregoing  
564 principles.

565 The committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement may from time to time make  
566 changes in the assignment of office space for committees and the various staffs in accordance  
567 with the established standards.

568 Said committee shall establish the staffing levels and positions for each joint and standing  
569 committee of the House together with a classification plan for all employees of the House of  
570 Representatives.

571 The House staff members of each committee shall be appointed solely on the basis of fitness  
572 to perform the duties of their respective positions, consistent with section 4 of chapter 151B of  
573 the General Laws. The committee staff shall not:

574 (1) engage in any work other than legislative business during business hours unless pursuant  
575 to the pro-bono service policy or charitable and community service activity policy established by  
576 the committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement pursuant to Rule 90(h)(2); and  
577 (2) be assigned any duties other than those pertaining to legislative business.

578 The committee shall meet on request of the chair or any 3 members of the committee. Any  
579 such meeting requested shall be convened on or within the fifth business day following such  
580 request. All such requests shall be in writing and forwarded to the chair and each member of the  
581 committee.

582 Funds shall be allocated from the budget to carry out the determination of the committee.

583 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985; Amended Jan. 16, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Feb. 11, 2009;  
584 Jan. 29, 2015; Jan. 30, 2019; July 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

585 17D. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

586 17E. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

587 17F. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

588 17G. [Omitted Jul. 7, 2021.]

589 18. The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the Speaker pro  
590 Tempore, the Majority Floor Leader, Assistant Majority Floor Leader and two Second Assistant  
591 Majority Floor Leaders. The Minority Leader shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of,  
592 the Assistant Minority Floor Leader, Second Assistant Minority Floor Leader, and two Third  
593 Assistant Minority Floor Leaders, Ranking minority member of Ways and Means, two Assistant

594 Ranking minority members of the Ways and Means committee, Ranking minority member of the  
595 committee on Rules, Ranking minority member of the committee on Financial Services, Ranking  
596 minority member of the committee on Health Care Financing, Ranking minority member of the  
597 committee on the Judiciary, Ranking minority member of the committee on Bonding, Capital  
598 Expenditures, and State Assets, Ranking minority member of the committee on Public Safety  
599 and Homeland Security, Ranking minority member of the committee on Transportation and  
600 Ranking minority member of the committee on Economic Development and Emerging  
601 Technologies. The Minority Leader shall be that member of the minority party who is selected  
602 for that position by the members of their party.

603 Each of the foregoing appointments or removals shall be ratified by a majority vote of the  
604 respective party caucus. In the event that an appointment is rejected by such caucus another  
605 appointment shall be made by the person designated to make the initial appointment, which shall  
606 also be subject to ratification in the same manner.

607 The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the chair of each standing  
608 committee. The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the vice chair and  
609 assistant vice chair of the Ways and Means committee, the vice chair of the Post Audit and  
610 Oversight committee, the vice chair of the committee on Rules, the vice chair of the committee  
611 on Revenue, the vice chair of the committee on Financial Services, the vice chair of the  
612 committee on Health Care Financing, the vice chair of the committee on Bonding, Capital  
613 Expenditures, and State Assets, the vice chair of the committee on State Administration and  
614 Regulatory Oversight, and the vice chair of the committee on Economic Development and  
615 Emerging Technologies.

616 The majority party shall then vote to accept or reject each such appointment or  
617 recommendation for removal by a majority vote.

618 In the event that any such appointment is rejected by the caucus, the procedure of this rule  
619 shall be repeated until an appointment for the said position has been approved by the caucus. A  
620 vacancy in any position to which the provisions of this section apply shall be filled in the same  
621 manner as provided in this section for original appointment.

622 No member shall receive more than one stipend pursuant to section 9B of chapter 3 of the  
623 General Laws.

624 The Speaker and the Minority Leader may, without a majority vote of their respective parties,  
625 remove a member appointed to a leadership position from said position pursuant to this rule if  
626 the member has been criminally indicted by a court of competent jurisdiction.

627 [Amended Jan. 16, 1979; Nov. 17, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 23,  
628 2007; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan 23, 2013; Jan. 29, 2015; Feb. 19, 2015; Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 1, 2023.]

629 18A. There shall be 1 member of the minority party on all committees of conference and 1 on  
630 the committee on Bills in the Third Reading. On all other standing and joint committees, the  
631 percent of minority party membership shall be at least equal to the percent of minority party  
632 membership in the House of Representatives as of the first day of the session; provided, further,  
633 that where such percentage results in a fraction of a number, the fraction shall be rounded off to  
634 the nearest whole; provided, however, that the minority party shall under no circumstances have  
635 fewer than 4 members on the committee on Ethics, 4 on the committee on Human Resources and  
636 Employee Engagement , 3 on the committee on Rules and 7 on the committee on Ways and

637 Means. In no case shall minority party representation be fewer than 2 members on all other  
638 standing and joint committees.

639 The Speaker and the Minority Leader shall appoint the members of their respective party  
640 caucuses to be assigned to each standing committee. The Speaker shall appoint the vice chair of  
641 each standing committee. The appointments, except those to which Rule 18 applies, shall be  
642 voted upon together and shall be subject to ratification by majority vote of the appropriate party  
643 caucus.

644 No member shall be removed from a standing committee except upon the recommendation of  
645 the Speaker or Minority Leader, as the case may be, subject to the ratification by their respective  
646 caucuses; provided, however, that the Speaker and the Minority Leader may, without a majority  
647 vote of their respective parties, remove a member appointed to a standing committee pursuant to  
648 this rule if the member has been criminally indicted by a court of competent jurisdiction; and  
649 provided further, that if any vacancy occurs in a position to which Rule 18 does not apply,  
650 subsequent to the initial ratification, the Speaker or Minority Leader shall fill such vacancy.

651 The Speaker shall announce committee appointments of majority party members, and the  
652 member first named shall be chair, and the second named member shall be vice-chair. The  
653 Minority Leader shall announce committee appointments of minority party members. (13.)

654 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985; Amended Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 14, 1997; Feb. 11, 2009;  
655 Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 25, 2025.]

656 18B. All votes on ratification by the caucus required by these rules shall be by written ballot  
657 and shall require a majority of those present and voting; provided, however, that if a motion to

658 ratify the appointments by acclamation is made and seconded, no written ballot shall be required.

659 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985.]

660 18C. [Adopted, Jan. 11, 1985, Omitted Jan. 24, 2001.]

661 19. A majority and minority party caucus may be called by the Speaker or Minority Leader,  
662 respectively, or upon petition of 25 percent of the members of the respective party caucus. A  
663 caucus may entertain resolutions, motions, or other means of ascertaining the sense of the  
664 respective party members on any subject. (13B.)

665 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 29, 2015.]

666 19A. The majority party and minority party shall establish caucus rules that shall dictate the  
667 procedures of each caucus.

668 19B. Any member caucus or group of members organized around a common legislative  
669 agenda that utilizes House resources, including staff time, shall register with the House  
670 Committee on Rules as a Legislative Member Organization, unless it is a party caucus. The chair  
671 of the House Committee on Rules shall notify the Clerk of the House of any Legislative Member  
672 Organization registering with the Committee and shall maintain a list of all Legislative Member  
673 Organizations.

674 Registration shall include the name of the Legislative Member Organization, its statement of  
675 purpose, identification of its members and officers, and a certification signed by its chair that any  
676 state resources used for the purposes of the Legislative Member Organization shall be not be  
677 used for any partisan political end.

678 A Legislative Member Organization may not include a non-legislator. Senators may belong to  
679 the Legislative Member Organization, but at least one House member shall be an officer of the  
680 Legislative Member Organization in order for the organization to use House resources. A  
681 Legislative Member Organization may, without limitation, sponsor informational or educational  
682 events, may invite outside speakers and groups to make presentations to the members of the  
683 Legislative Member Organization and others, and may distribute any report, analysis, or other  
684 research material prepared by others, provided, that the identity of the person or organization  
685 authoring the work is fully disclosed.

686 A member's official stationery may list their membership in a Legislative Member  
687 Organization.

688 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Jan. 14, 1997; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

689 20. The committee on Ways and Means shall report in appropriation bills the total amount  
690 appropriated. The General Appropriation Bill shall be available to the members at least 7  
691 calendar days prior to consideration thereof by the House. [25.] (27A.)

692 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Mar. 24, 1986; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 26, 2005; Jan. 29, 2015.]

693 20A. (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 33A, amendments to the General  
694 Appropriation Bill shall be properly filed with the Clerk in an electronic format to be determined  
695 by the Clerk as directed by the Speaker; provided, that the Clerk shall notify by electronic  
696 communication the primary sponsor of each amendment of the receipt of such amendment and  
697 the number assigned by said Clerk to the amendment; provided further, that the Clerk shall print  
698 each amendment so filed electronically and such printed copy shall be considered to be the  
699 official amendment for that bill. Amendments to said General Appropriation Bill shall be filed

700 with the Clerk by 5 o'clock P.M. on the third business day subsequent to the bill being made  
701 available in a format to be determined by the Clerk as directed by the Speaker pursuant to Rule  
702 20B and release of said bill by said Clerk; provided, that if the release of said bill by said Clerk  
703 occurs before the hour of 2 o'clock P.M., then the same day in which said bill was released shall  
704 be considered the first business day. Otherwise, the day following the release shall be considered  
705 the first business day.

706 (b)(1) The Clerk, with the assistance of the committee on Ways and Means, shall categorize  
707 the subject-matter of the amendments and arrange such amendments for consideration  
708 sequentially by subject as appearing in the published version of the General Appropriation Bill,  
709 or the Clerk, with the assistance of the committee on Ways and Means, shall categorize the  
710 subject-matter of the amendments and arrange such subject matters for consideration as  
711 determined by the committee on Ways and Means. Debate on the General Appropriation Bill  
712 shall not commence until a date and time to be determined by the House which is subsequent to  
713 the designated time established for filing of amendments pursuant to subsection (a) of this rule.

714 (2) Before the main question on the General Appropriation Bill is placed before the House, an  
715 amendment may be withdrawn at the request of the primary sponsor of the amendment or  
716 postponed by the committee on Ways and Means; provided, that further consideration of any  
717 amendment so postponed shall take place immediately subsequent to consideration of the  
718 amendments within the particular subject-matter to which the postponed amendment was  
719 assigned according to the provisions of this subparagraph; provided, that if more than one  
720 amendment is so postponed, subsequent consideration of said amendments shall be in the order  
721 determined by the committee on Ways and Means; provided further, an amendment so postponed  
722 shall not be subsequently considered outside of its assigned subject-matter; and provided further,

723 that perfecting or substitute amendments, including, but not limited to an amendment  
724 consolidating more than one amendment, may be submitted by the committee on Ways and  
725 Means during consideration of the subject category to which the amendment or amendments  
726 were assigned. Any amendment may be removed from a consolidated amendment by the  
727 primary sponsor of the amendment. Any such amendment so removed from a consolidated  
728 amendment shall be offered as an amendment to the General Appropriation Bill, to be acted upon  
729 in the first degree before action is taken on the consolidated amendment, except that any  
730 amendment so removed from the consolidated amendment may be moved by the committee on  
731 Ways and Means from one subject category to another subject category not yet disposed of in the  
732 General Appropriation Bill.

733 (3) A consolidated amendment to the General Appropriation Bill, offered by the committee  
734 on Ways and Means, shall contain a fiscal note indicating its total expenditures.

735 (4) Notwithstanding Rule 74, a consolidated amendment offered by the committee on Ways  
736 and Means, may not be divided.

737 (c) Except for consolidated amendments or perfecting amendments offered by the committee  
738 on Ways and Means, no proposition on a subject different from the amendment under  
739 consideration shall be admitted under color of a further amendment to the General Appropriation  
740 Bill. A consolidated amendment to the General Appropriation Bill, offered by the committee on  
741 Ways and Means, shall be a motion offering an amendment in the second degree.

742 (d) Any amendment to the General Appropriation Bill not complying with this rule shall be  
743 considered withdrawn; provided that, any such amendments shall be published as part of the  
744 amendment list published by the committee on Ways and Means.

745 [Adopted Jan. 24, 2001; Amended Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 20, 2011;  
746 Jan. 29, 2015; Feb. 1, 2023.]

747 20B. When the General Appropriation Bill is reported by the committee on Ways and Means,  
748 it shall be made available to all members electronically and to the public via the website of the  
749 General Court in a format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with the Clerk. The  
750 committee on Ways and Means shall provide the membership with an electronic copy of its  
751 proposed text of said General Appropriation Bill, and an executive summary which shall include  
752 a list of outside sections, and a short summary of each outside section prior to full House  
753 consideration of such bill. When the House considers said General Appropriation Bill, it shall be  
754 read a second time; provided further that amendments relative to enhancing or reducing revenue  
755 shall only be considered prior to the third reading of said bill to be in order, and that all other  
756 amendments to the General Appropriations Bill shall only be considered subsequent to the third  
757 reading of said bill.

758 [Adopted Jan. 9, 2003, Amended Jan. 23, 2007; Feb. 11, 2009; Feb. 1, 2023.]

759 21. Whenever the committee on Ways and Means reports an appropriation bill or capital  
760 outlay bill, it shall make available to the members a report which includes an explanation of any  
761 increase or decrease of five percent or more which results in an increase or decrease of one  
762 million dollars or more for any item for which the Governor has made a recommendation, and an  
763 explanation for the deletion of an item recommended by the Governor, and for the addition of an  
764 item for which the Governor has made no recommendation. [25A.] (27A.)

765 22. Bills and resolves when ordered to a third reading shall be referred forthwith to the  
766 committee on Bills in the Third Reading, which shall examine and correct them, for the purpose

767 of avoiding repetitions and unconstitutional provisions, and insuring accuracy in the text and  
768 references, and consistency with the language of existing statutes; but any change in the sense or  
769 legal effect, or any material change in construction, shall be reported to the House as an  
770 amendment.

771 The committee on Bills in the Third Reading may consolidate into 1 bill any 2 or more related  
772 bills referred to it, whenever legislation may be simplified thereby.

773 Resolutions received from and adopted by the Senate or introduced or reported into the  
774 House, after they are read and before they are adopted, shall be referred to the committee on  
775 Bills in the Third Reading.

776 Amendments of bills, resolves and resolutions adopted by the Senate and sent to the House  
777 for concurrence, shall, subsequently to the procedure required by Rule 35 in respect to  
778 amendments, also be referred, in like manner, to the committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

779 When a bill, resolve or resolution has been so referred, no further action shall be taken until a  
780 report thereon has been made by the committee. Accompanying said report shall be a written  
781 explanation prepared by the committee defining any changes made in a bill, resolve or resolution  
782 so as to facilitate the proceedings of the House.

783 If a bill or resolve referred to the committee on Bills in the Third Reading requires a two-  
784 thirds vote because it contains an emergency preamble, or if it provides for the borrowing of  
785 money by the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 3 of Article LXII of  
786 the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit  
787 of the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 1 of Article LXII (as amended  
788 by Article LXXXIV) of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides, upon recommendation

789 of the Governor, for a special law relating to an individual city or town and comes within the  
790 provisions of clause (2) of Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution  
791 or provides for environmental protection within the provisions of Article XLIX as amended by  
792 Article XCVII, the committee shall plainly indicate the fact on the outside of the bill or resolve,  
793 or on a wrapper or label attached thereto. [26.] (33.)

794 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; May 5, 1993; Jan. 29, 2015; Feb. 1, 2023.]

795 23. Bills and resolves prepared for final passage shall be certified by the Clerk of the House,  
796 after comparison, to be the same as the bills or resolves passed to be engrossed; and if found to  
797 be properly prepared, the Clerk shall so endorse on the envelope thereof; and the question on  
798 enactment or final passage or adopting an emergency preamble shall be taken thereon, without  
799 further reading, unless specifically ordered.

800 When a bill prepared for final passage contains an emergency preamble or when it provides  
801 for the borrowing of money by the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 3  
802 of Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for the giving, loaning or  
803 pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 1 of  
804 Article LXII (as amended by Article LXXXIV) of the Amendments to the Constitution, or  
805 provides, upon recommendation of the Governor, for a special law relating to an individual city  
806 or town and comes within the provisions of clause (2) of Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the  
807 Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for environmental protection within the provisions  
808 of Article XLIX as amended by Article XCVII, the Clerk shall plainly indicate the fact on the  
809 envelope thereof. [27.] (34.) [See Rule 40.]

810 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 29, 2015.]

811 23A. No member of the House, except the Speaker, Speaker pro Tempore, Majority Leader,  
812 Assistant Majority Leader, Second Assistant Majority Leader, Minority Leader, Assistant  
813 Minority Leader, Second Assistant Minority Leader, Third Assistant Minority Leader, Vice-  
814 Chairperson of the Committee on Ways and Means, Assistant Vice-Chairperson of the  
815 Committee on Ways and Means and committee chairs with respect to committee business, shall  
816 receive privileges or compensation for postage which is greater than seventy-five percent of the  
817 amount allowed as standard practice during the 186th biennial session of the General Court, as  
818 determined by the House Business Manager.

819 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985; Amended Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 26, 2005; Jan. 20, 2011; Feb. 1, 2023.]

820 24. (a)(1) Petitions, recommendations and reports of state officials, departments, commissions  
821 including legislative commissions, and boards, special reports including legislation initiated by  
822 the Committee on Ethics pursuant to rule 16, and reports of special committees and commissions  
823 including legislative commissions, shall be filed with the Clerk in a format to be determined by  
824 said Clerk, who shall, unless they are subject to other provisions of these rules or the rules of the  
825 two branches, refer them, with the approval of the Speaker, to the appropriate committees,  
826 subject to such change of reference as the House may make. The reading of all such documents  
827 may be dispensed with, but they shall be entered in the Journal of the same or the next legislative  
828 day after such reference except as provided in Joint Rule 13.

829 (2) All orders, including motions or orders proposed for joint adoption, resolutions and other  
830 papers intended for presentation, except those hereinbefore mentioned, shall be filed with the  
831 Clerk in a format to be determined by said Clerk, who shall, prior to the procedure required by

832 other provisions of these rules or of the rules of the two branches, refer them to the committee on  
833 Rules.

834 (b) Resolutions for adoption by the House only or resolutions for joint adoption shall only be  
835 considered for adoption in the House if the resolution meets the criteria set forth in this rule.

836 (c) Resolutions shall consist of: (i) no more than 5 clauses beginning with the word  
837 “WHEREAS”, which shall contain statements of facts or opinions; and (ii) no more than 2  
838 clauses beginning with the word “RESOLVED”.

839 (d) Resolutions shall recognize, honor, commend, celebrate or commemorate a momentous  
840 achievement, special occasion or significant event or date; provided, however, that the following  
841 resolutions shall not be considered for adoption:

842 (i) resolutions recognizing, honoring, commending, celebrating or commemorating the  
843 birthday of a person under the age of 80;

844 (ii) resolutions recognizing, honoring, commending, celebrating or commemorating a  
845 wedding anniversary of a married couple of less than 50 years;

846 (iii) resolutions recognizing, honoring, commending, celebrating or commemorating an  
847 anniversary of an organization of less than 20 years;

848 (iv) resolutions recognizing, honoring, commending, celebrating or commemorating a class  
849 reunion;

850 (v) resolutions recognizing, honoring, commending, celebrating or commemorating a for-  
851 profit organization;

852 (iv) resolutions proclaiming certain days, weeks or months;

853 (vii) resolutions that includes a statement of policy or ideology.

854 (e) Suspension of subsections (b) through (d) of this rule shall require unanimous consent of  
855 the members present.

856 (3) Petitions and other papers so filed which are subject to the provisions of Joint Rule 7A,  
857 7B, or 9 shall be referred by the Clerk to the committee on Rules. Petitions and other papers so  
858 filed, which are subject to the provisions of the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12, shall, prior to  
859 the procedure required by said rule, be referred by the Clerk to the committee on Rules. The  
860 reading of all such papers may be dispensed with, but they shall be entered in the Journal of the  
861 same or the next legislative day after such reference.

862 (4) Matters which have been placed on file during the preceding year may be taken from the  
863 files by the Clerk upon request of any member or member-elect; and matters so taken from the  
864 files shall be referred or otherwise disposed of as provided above.

865 (5) Recommendations and special reports of state officials, departments, commissions and  
866 boards, reports of special committees and commissions, bills and resolves accompanying  
867 petitions, recommendations and reports, and resolutions shall be made available under the  
868 direction of the Clerk, who may cause to be made available, with the approval of the Speaker,  
869 any other documents filed as herein provided.

870 (6) All such legislation and reports filed with the Clerk shall be submitted in a format  
871 prescribed by said Clerk. Said documents shall contain the name or names of the primary  
872 sponsors and a list of the names of all petitioners praying for the legislation. Additional names

873 may be added to the list of the petitioners; provided, however, that, such additional names shall  
874 be submitted in a format to be determined by the Clerk.

875 (7) Any petition so submitted that is a refile of a measure submitted in a previous session shall  
876 include, in the appropriate space provided, the session year for which the measure was filed and  
877 the House or Senate bill number or docket number assigned to such measure in such previous  
878 session.

879 (8) Debate upon the suspension of this rule shall be limited to 10 minutes, 3 minutes for each  
880 member, and the Speaker shall recognize the member presenting the order, resolution or petition  
881 first; provided, however, that suspension of this rule shall require unanimous consent of the  
882 members present. Any order, except such order that would amend the Rules of the House,  
883 resolution or petition referred to the committee on Rules after the question of suspension of this  
884 rule has been negatived, or any order, resolution or petition filed after the beginning of the  
885 session and referred to the committee on Rules, shall not be discharged from said committee  
886 except by unanimous consent of the House. Motions to discharge the committee on Rules shall  
887 be subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of Rule 28. [28.] (20.) [See Rules 36 and 85.]

888 [Amended April 27, 1981; Jan. 9, 1989; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 26, 2005; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 29,  
889 2015; Jan. 30, 2019; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023.]

890 25. Every petition for legislation shall be accompanied by a bill or resolve embodying the  
891 legislation prayed for. [29.] [See Joint Rule 12.]

892 26. When the object of an application can be secured without a special act under existing  
893 laws, or, without detriment to the public interests, by a general law, the committee to which the  
894 matter is referred shall report such general law or ought not to pass, as the case may be. The

895 committee may report a special law on matters referred to it upon (1) a petition filed or approved  
896 by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council, or other legislative body, of a city,  
897 or the town meeting of a town, with respect to a law relating to that city or town; (2) a  
898 recommendation by the Governor; or (3) matters relating to erecting and constituting  
899 metropolitan or regional entities, embracing any two or more cities and towns, or established  
900 with other than existing city or town boundaries, for any general or special public purpose or  
901 purposes. [30.] (16.) [See Joint Rule 7.]

902 [Amended Feb. 11, 2009.]

903 27. With the exception of matters referred to the committee on Rules under the provisions of  
904 paragraph (3) of Rule 24, committees shall report on all matters referred to them. The committee  
905 on Ways and Means shall report the General Appropriation Bill not later than the second  
906 Wednesday of May; and provided further that said committee shall make available to the  
907 members all data compiled for justification of budgetary recommendations in all appropriation  
908 bills.

909 The House chair of each joint standing committee shall make final report on all matters  
910 referred to and heard by their committee prior to the third Wednesday of December of the first  
911 annual session of the General Court by not later than 60 calendar days after the matter is heard;  
912 provided, however, that an additional 30 calendar days may be granted on a matter by the House  
913 chair who shall notify the Clerk of said extension. After the expiration of such 90-day period, the  
914 House shall approve by unanimous consent an extension order submitted by the House members  
915 of the joint committee for any additional time for further consideration of the matter by the  
916 committee. However, a committee shall not make final report after, and the House shall not

917 approve of an extension order that extends consideration of a matter beyond, the third  
918 Wednesday in March of the second annual session of the General Court. For matters referred to a  
919 joint standing committee and heard by said committee after the third Wednesday of December of  
920 the first annual session, the committee shall make final report by not later than 60 calendar days  
921 after the matter is heard, or by the third Wednesday in March of the second annual session,  
922 whichever occurs later. For all matters referred to the committee on Health Care Financing after  
923 the third Wednesday in March of the second annual session which were initially referred to  
924 another joint standing committee, the committee shall make final report not later than the last  
925 Wednesday of May of the second annual session.

926 When the time within which joint standing committees are required to report has expired, all  
927 matters upon which no report has then been made shall forthwith be reported by the House chair  
928 with a recommendation to study the matter.

929 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 29, 2015; Feb. 25, 2025.]

930 27A. [Omitted Jan. 23, 2007.]

931 28. (1) Motions directing the committee on Ways and Means to report certain matters to the  
932 House, or motions discharging said committees from further consideration of certain matters,  
933 shall not be considered until the expiration of seven calendar days and shall require a majority  
934 vote of the members present and voting for adoption. Committees so directed to report shall file  
935 a report with the Clerk within 4 legislative days. The committee on Ways and Means may not be  
936 directed to report or be discharged from further consideration of any appropriation or capital  
937 outlay measure.

938 (2) The committee on Rules, except as provided in Rule 24, and the committee on Bills in the  
939 Third Reading shall not be discharged from consideration of any measure or be directed to report  
940 on any measure within 10 calendar days of its reference without the unanimous consent of the  
941 House, or after such 10 day period except by a vote of a majority of the members present and  
942 voting thereon.

943 (3) Matters discharged under the provisions of this rule shall be placed in the Orders of the  
944 Day for the next sitting. Petitions discharged under the provisions of this rule shall be considered  
945 as favorably reported and the bill, resolve, resolution or order accompanying such petitions shall  
946 be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next sitting.

947 (4) During the last week of the session, the provisions of paragraphs (1) and (3) of this rule  
948 shall be inoperative.

949 (5) A second motion to discharge a matter from a committee or a second motion to direct a  
950 committee to report a matter shall not be entertained until the first such motion has been disposed  
951 of.

952 (6) As an alternative procedure to that provided under the provisions of this rule, the members  
953 of the House may, by filing a petition signed by a majority of the members elected to the House,  
954 discharge the House committee on Ways and Means, the House committee on Bills in the Third  
955 Reading, and the House committee on Rules from further consideration of a legislative matter.  
956 Seven days following the filing of the petition with the House Clerk, the committee shall be  
957 discharged from further consideration of the legislative matter specified in the petition and the  
958 House Clerk shall place the matter in the Orders of the Day for the next calendar day that the  
959 House is meeting.

960 (7) For the purpose of this rule, matters not appearing on the Calendar which are not before  
961 any committee shall be deemed to be before the Rules committee. Notwithstanding the previous  
962 sentence, a bill which has been engrossed by the House and Senate shall be placed before the  
963 House for enactment. Any member may request to the House that a matter engrossed in the  
964 House and Senate, returned for final passage by the engrossing division, and reviewed and  
965 released by the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading be placed before the House for  
966 enactment. The Speaker shall, in response to such a request of a member, put the matter before  
967 the House at the conclusion of the matter then pending.

968 (8) This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.  
969 (27C, 32A.)

970 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; April 27, 1981; Jan. 12, 1983; Nov. 17, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 9,  
971 1989; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 29, 2015; Feb.  
972 25, 2025.]

973 28A. [Omitted Feb. 25, 2025.]

## 974 **REGULAR COURSE OF PROCEEDINGS.**

### 975 *Petitions.*

976 29. The member presenting a petition shall endorse their name thereon; and the reading  
977 thereof shall be dispensed with, unless specially ordered. [37.] (18.)

978 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 30, 2019.]

### 979 *Motions Contemplating Legislation, etc.*

980 30. All motions contemplating legislation shall be founded upon petition, except as follows:

981 The committee on Ways and Means may originate and report appropriation bills as provided  
982 in Rule 20. Messages from the Governor shall, unless otherwise ordered, be referred to the  
983 appropriate committee, which may report by bill or otherwise thereon. A similar disposition  
984 shall, unless otherwise ordered, be made of reports by state officers and committees authorized to  
985 report to the Legislature, and similar action may be had thereon.

986 Messages from the Governor returning appropriation bills, or parts of appropriation bills, with  
987 objections or reductions of sections or items thereof, shall be reconsidered subsequent to a report  
988 of the committee on Ways and Means. Messages or recommendations from the Governor shall  
989 be filed with the Clerk in a format to be determined by the Clerk. [40.] (19.)

990 [Amended Jan. 24, 2001.]

991 *Bills and Resolves.*

992 31. Bills shall be drafted in a format approved by the Counsel to the House and submitted in a  
993 format to be determined by the Clerk. Bills amending existing laws shall not provide for striking  
994 words from, or inserting words in, such laws, unless such course is best calculated to show  
995 clearly the subject and nature of the amendment. No repealed law, and no part of any repealed  
996 law, shall be re-enacted merely by reference. [42.] (17.)

997 [Amended Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; Jan. 29, 2015.]

998 32. If a committee to which a bill is referred reports that the same ought not to pass, the  
999 question shall be “Shall this bill be rejected?”. If the question on rejection is negatived, the bill, if  
1000 it has been read but once, shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next sitting for a

1001 second reading without question; otherwise it shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the  
1002 next sitting, pending the question on ordering to a third reading, or to engrossment, as the case  
1003 may be. [43.] (30.)

1004 [Amended Jan. 30, 2019.]

1005 32A. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

1006 33. Bills involving an expenditure of public money or grant of public property, or otherwise  
1007 affecting the state finances, unless the subject matter has been acted upon by the joint committee  
1008 on Ways and Means, shall, after their first reading, be referred to the committee on Ways and  
1009 Means, for report on their relation to the finances of the Commonwealth.

1010 New provisions shall not be added to such bills by the committee on Ways and Means, unless  
1011 directly connected with the financial features thereof.

1012 Orders reported in the House or received from the Senate involving the expenditure of public  
1013 money for special committees, shall, before the question is taken on the adoption thereof, be  
1014 referred to the committee on Ways and Means, whose duty it shall be to report on their relation  
1015 to the finances of the Commonwealth.

1016 Every such bill involving a capital expenditure for new projects, or an appropriation for  
1017 repairs, or any legislation, the cost of which, in the opinion of the committee, exceeds the sum of  
1018 one hundred thousand dollars when reported into the House by the committee on Ways and  
1019 Means, shall be accompanied by a fiscal note indicating the amount of public money which will  
1020 be required to be expended to carry out the provisions of the proposed legislation, together with

1021 an estimate of the cost of operation and maintenance for the first year if a new project is  
1022 involved. [44.] (27.)

1023 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1981; Jul. 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005.]

1024 33A. Copies of all bills shall be available, in a format to be determined by the Speaker in  
1025 consultation with the Clerk, to all members of the House and the public electronically via the  
1026 website of the General Court; provided, however, that any bill or resolve to be considered by the  
1027 House at a formal session shall be available to all members electronically and to the public via  
1028 the website of the General Court no later than 12:00 P.M. the day prior to consideration thereof  
1029 by the House in a formal session; provided further that, to the extent practicable, a summary of  
1030 any bill containing meaningful policy changes to be considered by the House in a formal session  
1031 shall be made available by the chair of the joint standing committee which had jurisdiction of the  
1032 bill, to all members of the House and the public via the website of the General Court prior to the  
1033 commencement of roll calls for the formal session in which the bill will be considered.

1034 All amendments offered by members to any matter in the House shall be submitted in a  
1035 format to be determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Speaker; provided, however, that  
1036 an amendment to any matter to be considered by the House at a formal session shall be filed by  
1037 5:00 P.M. on the day the bill or resolve is made available to the members pursuant to the first  
1038 paragraph of this rule. Amendments shall be considered by the House chronologically as  
1039 submitted to the Clerk, except for an amendment in the second degree; provided that all  
1040 amendments shall be drafted in proper form acceptable to the Clerk; and provided further that the  
1041 Clerk shall print each amendment so filed and such printed copy shall be considered to be the

1042 official amendment for that bill and there shall be available to the members a duplicate copy of  
1043 each amendment. (33A.)

1044 When the House considers any bill or resolve, other than the General Appropriations Bill, it  
1045 shall be read a second time and, subsequent to the consideration of any amendments  
1046 recommended by a committee or committees, it shall forthwith be considered by the House, the  
1047 question being on ordering it to a third reading, without any other amendments. A bill or resolve  
1048 so ordered to a third reading shall be immediately referred to the committee on Bills in the Third  
1049 Reading and, upon being released by said committee, it shall be read a third time and shall then  
1050 be open to amendments, the main question being on passing the bill or resolve to be engrossed.

1051 Except for consolidated amendments or perfecting amendments offered by the committee on  
1052 Ways and Means, no proposition on a subject different from the amendment under consideration  
1053 shall be admitted under color of a further amendment to any bill or resolve. A consolidated  
1054 amendment to any bill or resolve, offered by the committee on Ways and Means, shall be a  
1055 motion offering an amendment in the second degree.

1056 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Nov. 28, 1984; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 17,  
1057 1995]; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 29, 2015; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023; Feb.  
1058 25, 2025.]

1059 33B. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

1060 33C. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

1061 33D. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

1062 33E. No consolidated amendment offered by the committee on Ways and Means shall be  
1063 considered by the House until the expiration of at least 30 minutes after the consolidated  
1064 amendment shall have been first filed with the Clerk and made available to the members. This  
1065 rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

1066 [Added Feb. 4, 2010; Amended Jan. 29, 2015.]

1067 33F. No consolidated amendment shall be adopted except by a roll call vote.

1068 [Added Feb. 2, 2017.]

1069 34. Bills from the Senate, after their first reading, shall be referred to a committee of the  
1070 House. [45.] (26.)

1071 [Amended Jan. 26, 1999.]

1072 35. Amendments proposed by the Senate, and sent back to the House for concurrence, shall  
1073 be referred to the committee on Bills in the Third Reading, provided that the journal shall reflect  
1074 the referral; and provided further that subsequent to a report from said committee, the  
1075 amendments shall be considered forthwith. [46.] (36.)

1076 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 23, 2013; Feb. 25,  
1077 2025.]

1078 36. No bill shall be proposed or introduced unless received from the Senate, reported by a  
1079 committee, or moved as an amendment to the report of a committee. [47.] (36.)

1080 37. Bills, resolves and other papers that have been, or, under the rules or usage of the House,  
1081 are to be made available in a format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with the

1082 Clerk, shall be read by their titles only, unless the full reading is requested by vote of a majority  
1083 of those members present and voting.

1084 [Amended Jan. 9, 2003, Amended, Jan. 23, 2007.] [48.] (29.)

1085 38. When a bill, resolve, order, petition or memorial has been finally rejected or disposed of  
1086 by the House, no measure substantially the same shall be introduced by any committee or  
1087 member during the same session. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent  
1088 of the members present. [49.] (54.)

1089 39. No bill shall be passed to be engrossed without having been read on three separate  
1090 legislative days. [51.] (28.)

1091 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1092 40. No engrossed bill shall be amended, except by striking out the enacting clause. A motion  
1093 to strike out the enacting clause of a bill shall be received when the bill is before the House for  
1094 enactment. If the bill contains an emergency preamble, a motion to suspend this rule may be  
1095 received before the adoption of the emergency preamble and, if suspended, the amendment may  
1096 contain a new emergency preamble. This rule shall not apply to a bill or resolve returned by the  
1097 Governor with a recommendation of amendment in accordance with the provisions of Article  
1098 LVI of the Amendments to the Constitution; nor shall it apply to amendments of engrossed bills  
1099 proposed by the Senate and sent to the House for concurrence, which amendments shall be  
1100 subject to the provisions of Rule 35, provided, however, that an affirmative vote on a motion to  
1101 suspend this rule shall be required in order to offer an amendment to such an engrossed bill when  
1102 the question before the House is on adoption of an emergency preamble, re-enactment or  
1103 enactment, as the case may be. [53.] (49.)

1104 [Amended, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 20, 2011; Jan. 23, 2013; Jan. 29, 2015.]

1105 41. Bills received from the Senate and bills reported favorably by committees, when not  
1106 referred to another standing committee of the House, shall, prior to being placed in the Orders of  
1107 the Day, be referred to the committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling. Resolutions received  
1108 from and adopted by the Senate, or reported in the House by committees, shall, if proposed for  
1109 joint adoption, be referred to said committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling. [56.] (26.)

1110 [Amended Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 26, 1999.]

1111 42. Reports of committees, not by bill or resolve, including orders if proposed for joint  
1112 adoption, after they are received from the Senate, or made in the House, as the case may be,  
1113 shall, unless subject to the provisions of any other House or joint rules, be referred to the  
1114 committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling; provided that the report of a committee asking to  
1115 be discharged from further consideration of a subject, and recommending that it be referred or  
1116 recommitted to another committee, or a report of a committee recommending that a matter be  
1117 placed on file, shall be immediately considered. Reports of committees on proposals for  
1118 amendments to the Constitution shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Joint  
1119 Rule 23. [57.] (36.)

1120 [Amended Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 29, 2015.]

1121 42A. The Clerk shall, prior to 3 o'clock P.M., on the day preceding a session, make available  
1122 by electronic communication or other means, a list of all reports of the committee on Steering,  
1123 Policy and Scheduling, asking to be discharged from further consideration of subjects, and  
1124 recommending that the subjects be referred to other committees.

1125 [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005; Amended Jan. 29, 2015.]

1126 43. Bills ordered to a third reading shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day  
1127 for such reading. [58.] (32.)

1128 *Special Rules Affecting the Course of Proceedings.*

1129 44. The Speaker may designate when an informal session of the House shall be held provided  
1130 said Speaker gives notice of such informal session at a prior session of the House. The Speaker  
1131 may, in cases of emergency, cancel a session or declare any session of the House to be an  
1132 informal session. At an informal session the House shall only consider reports of committees,  
1133 papers from the Senate, bills for enactment or resolves for final passage, bills containing  
1134 emergency preambles and the matters in the Orders of the Day. Motions to reconsider moved at  
1135 such informal session shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the succeeding day, and no  
1136 new business shall be entertained, except by unanimous consent.

1137 Formal debate, or the taking of the sense of the House by yeas and nays shall not be  
1138 conducted during such informal session.

1139 Upon the receipt of a petition signed by at least a majority of the members elected to the  
1140 House, so requesting, the Speaker shall, when the House is meeting in informal session under the  
1141 provisions of Joint Rule 12A, designate a formal session, to be held within seven days of said  
1142 receipt, for the purpose of considering the question of passage of a bill, notwithstanding the  
1143 objections of the Governor, returned pursuant to Article 2, Section 1, Chapter 1, Part 2 of the  
1144 Massachusetts Constitution. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
1145 members present. [59.] (5A.)

1146 The House may meet in a formal session notwithstanding the provisions of Joint Rule 12A  
1147 upon the adoption of an order filed by the committee on Rules pursuant to Rule 7C.

1148 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 17, 1995; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9,  
1149 2003; Feb. 11, 2009; Feb. 25, 2025.]

1150 45. After entering upon the consideration of the Orders of the Day, the House shall proceed  
1151 with them in regular course as follows: Matters not giving rise to a motion or debate shall first be  
1152 disposed of in the order in which they stand in the Calendar; after which the matters that were  
1153 passed over shall be considered in like order and disposed. The provisions of this paragraph shall  
1154 not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

1155 Notwithstanding the provisions of this rule, during consideration of the Orders of the Day, the  
1156 committee on Ways and Means and the committee on Bills in the Third Reading may present  
1157 matters for consideration of the House after approval of two-thirds of the members present and  
1158 voting, without debate. [59.] (37.) [See Rule 47.]

1159 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 12, 1983; Feb. 11, 2009.]

1160 46. When the House does not finish the consideration of the Orders of the Day, those which  
1161 had not been acted upon shall be the Orders of the Day for the next and each succeeding day  
1162 until disposed of, and shall be entered in the Calendar, without change in their order, to precede  
1163 matters added under Rule 7A; provided, however, that all other matters shall be listed in  
1164 numerical order by Calendar item.

1165 The unfinished business in which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment shall  
1166 have the preference in the Orders of the Day for the next day. [60.] (35.)

1167 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 26, 1999.]

1168 47. No matter which has been duly placed in the Orders of the Day shall be discharged  
1169 therefrom, or considered out of the regular course. [61.] (38.) [See Rule 45.]

1170 *Voting.*

1171 48. Members desiring to be excused from voting shall make application to that effect before  
1172 the division of the House or the taking of the yeas and nays is begun. Such application may be  
1173 accompanied by a brief statement of reasons by the member. The Clerk shall, prior to the first  
1174 roll call of the sitting, announce the name of any member who has informed the Clerk to not call  
1175 their name or lock their voting station. The Clerk shall also announce prior to any subsequent roll  
1176 call of the sitting the name of any member who had informed said Clerk not to call their name or  
1177 lock their voting station since the taking of the immediately preceding roll call.

1178 A member absent from the House for a formal session period of a day or longer shall notify  
1179 the Clerk in writing of the intended absence. A member absent during a formal session for an  
1180 extended period or for the remainder of the session shall notify the Clerk in person. The Clerk  
1181 shall provide a written notice to any such absent member.

1182 The Clerk shall disable the voting station of any such member notifying the Clerk of an  
1183 absence pursuant to this Rule. The Clerk shall also disable the voting station of any member  
1184 failing to answer the first non-quorum roll call of a legislative sitting; provided, however, that the  
1185 Clerk shall reactivate the voting station upon receiving notification of the member's return to the  
1186 House Chamber. ([64.] (57.))

1187 [Amended Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019.]

1188 49. (a) If the presence of a quorum is doubted, a count of the House shall be made. When a  
1189 yea and nay vote is taken, the members, with the exception of the Speaker, shall vote only from  
1190 their seats. A member who has been appointed by the Speaker to perform the duties of the Chair,  
1191 or a person who has been elected Speaker pro Tempore, may designate some member or a court  
1192 officer to cast a vote for said member on any vote taken on the electronic voting system while  
1193 such member is presiding. Said designated member performing the duties of the Chair, or  
1194 Speaker pro Tempore, may, if the Speaker is in the State House, cast a vote for the Speaker. The  
1195 Speaker shall state the pending question before opening the system for voting.

1196 The Speaker may direct the Clerk to cast a vote for a member who is in the House Chamber,  
1197 but who is unable to vote due to a malfunction of their voting station or inability to open their  
1198 voting station.

1199 (b) Except in the case of a vote to ascertain the presence of a quorum, if a member is  
1200 prevented from voting personally using the electronic voting system because of physical  
1201 disability, said member shall, if present in the State House, be excused from so voting and the  
1202 Speaker shall assign a court officer to cast said member's vote so long as said physical disability  
1203 continues; provided that the Speaker shall announce the action of the Chair to the membership  
1204 prior to assigning a court officer to cast the member's vote and provided further that the Speaker  
1205 shall announce the action to the membership the first time a vote is cast for that member on each  
1206 successive day.

1207 (c) A member serving on active reserve military duty may participate remotely in a formal  
1208 session, subject to the requirements and limitations of federal law and regulation, including, but

1209 not limited to, United States Department of Defense Directive 1344.10. A member serving on  
1210 active reserve military shall notify the Clerk of such service as soon as practicable.

1211 (d) A member with a serious health condition may submit to Counsel appointed pursuant to  
1212 Rule 13B a request for an accommodation to participate remotely in a formal session. Said  
1213 request shall be accompanied by documentation from said member's health care provider that an  
1214 accommodation to participate remotely is necessary. For purposes of this rule, a serious health  
1215 condition shall include:

1216 (1) the member's own serious health condition, which includes illness, injury, impairment, or  
1217 physical or mental conditions requiring inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care  
1218 provider, involving more than three days of incapacity; or

1219 (2) care for the member's parent, child or spouse with a serious health condition.

1220 For purposes of this rule, a serious health condition shall not include routine, health-related  
1221 visits or examinations or temporary conditions or other short-term illnesses involving less than  
1222 three days of incapacity.

1223 (e) A member shall be entitled to participate remotely in a formal session in connection with  
1224 any condition or limitation related to a member's pregnancy, including pregnancy loss, and may  
1225 participate remotely in formal session for 20 weeks after the birth or adoption of a child by a  
1226 member or the member's partner, or placement of a child in foster care with a member or the  
1227 member's partner. A member who intends to participate remotely pursuant to this subsection  
1228 shall notify Counsel of the need for an accommodation as well as the expected length of the  
1229 accommodation.

1230 (f) Counsel shall not approve, without the prior written approval of the Chair of the  
1231 committee on Rules, any request for an accommodation to participate remotely in a formal  
1232 session that does not satisfy the requirements of this subsection.

1233 (g) Upon approval of a request for accommodation to participate remotely received pursuant  
1234 to subsection (d) or subsection (f), Counsel shall notify the Clerk that the member filing the  
1235 request has been authorized to participate remotely. Other than the notification provided to the  
1236 Clerk or to the Chair of the committee on Rules, as required, Counsel shall maintain any request  
1237 for accommodation pursuant to this rule as confidential.

1238 (h)(1) A member authorized to participate remotely in a formal session pursuant to subsection  
1239 (d) through subsection (f), inclusive, shall have the same privileges, rights and responsibilities as  
1240 if the member were physically present in the House Chamber, including without limitation, the  
1241 right, privilege and responsibility to cast votes on all questions or other matters brought to a vote  
1242 and the ability to take the oath required pursuant to Part the Second, Chapter VI, Article I of the  
1243 Constitution of the Commonwealth.

1244 (i) The Journal of the House for any formal session of the House where a member is  
1245 participating remotely in a formal session pursuant to this rule shall specify which members  
1246 participated remotely. [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan.  
1247 20, 2011; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 1, 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

1248 50. When a question is put, the sense of the House shall be taken by the voices of the  
1249 members, and the Speaker shall first announce the vote as it appears to the Speaker by the sound.  
1250 If the Speaker is unable to decide by the sound of the voices, or if the announcement made  
1251 thereupon is doubted by a member rising in their place for that purpose, the Speaker shall order a

1252 division of the number voting in the affirmative and in the negative, without further debate upon  
1253 the question. [66.] (55.)

1254 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019.]

1255 51. When a return by division of the members voting in the affirmative and in the negative is  
1256 ordered, the members for or against the question, when called on by the Speaker, shall rise in  
1257 their places, and stand until they are counted. If, upon the taking of such a vote, the presence of a  
1258 quorum is doubted, a count of the House shall be had, and if a quorum is present the vote shall  
1259 stand. [67.]

1260 52. The sense of the House shall be taken by yeas and nays whenever required by ten percent  
1261 of the members elected. The Speaker shall, after waiting up to an interval of twelve minutes,  
1262 state the pending question and, after opening the electronic voting system, instruct the members  
1263 to vote for not less than two minutes and no more than twenty-two minutes, the Speaker shall  
1264 close said system and cause totals to be displayed and a record made of how each member  
1265 present voted; provided, that if at any time during said voting period any standing, joint or  
1266 conference committee is meeting in public or executive sessions, the Speaker shall leave the  
1267 electronic voting machine open for not less than 5 minutes.

1268 Any member desiring to be recorded as being “present” when a yea and nay vote is taken on  
1269 the electronic roll call system shall so notify the Clerk in person after said vote is ordered and  
1270 before the vote is announced.

1271 In the event the electronic voting system is not in operating order, the roll of the House shall  
1272 be called in alphabetical order; provided, however, that no member shall be allowed to vote or to  
1273 answer “present” who was not on the floor before the vote is declared; provided, however, that a

1274 member, who was in the State House on a previous roll call, may be recorded by reporting to the  
1275 Clerk within five minutes after such vote is closed, unless objection is made thereto and it is  
1276 seconded; and provided further that the presiding officer shall not, for said purpose, interrupt the  
1277 member who is speaking on the floor; provided, however, that such request may be announced to  
1278 the House subsequent to the five minutes. The Speaker shall not entertain any requests beyond  
1279 said five-minute period. Once the voting has begun it shall not be interrupted except for the  
1280 purpose of questioning the validity of a member's vote before the result is announced. Except as  
1281 heretofore provided, any member who shall vote or attempt to vote for another member or any  
1282 person not a member who votes or attempts to vote for a member, or any member or other person  
1283 who willfully tampers with or attempts to impair or destroy in any manner whatsoever the voting  
1284 equipment used by the House, or change the records thereon shall be punished in such manner as  
1285 the House determines; and provided further, that such a violation shall be reported to the Ethics  
1286 Committee. [68.] (56, 57.)

1287       Upon completion of the tally by the Clerk and the announcement of the vote by the Speaker,  
1288 the results of all roll calls conducted shall be conspicuously posted on the website of the General  
1289 Court.

1290       [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9,  
1291 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan 20, 2011; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023.]

1292       53. The call for yeas and nays shall be decided without debate. If the yeas and nays have been  
1293 ordered before the question is put, the proceedings under Rules 50 and 51 relative to verification  
1294 of the vote by the voices of the members or by a return of divisions shall be omitted; if not, they  
1295 may be called for in lieu of a return by divisions when the Speaker's announcement is doubted

1296 by a member rising in their place, and, if then ordered, the proceedings under Rules 50 and 51  
1297 shall be omitted. [69.] (52.)

1298 [Amended Jan. 26, 1999; Jan. 30, 2019.]

1299 *Reconsideration.*

1300 54. No motion to reconsider a vote shall be entertained unless it is made on the same day on  
1301 which the vote was taken, or before the Orders of the Day have been taken up on the next day  
1302 thereafter on which a quorum is present. If reconsideration is moved on the same day, the motion  
1303 shall be placed first in the Orders of the Day for the succeeding day; but, if it is moved on the  
1304 succeeding day, the motion shall be considered forthwith except that if said motion is moved on  
1305 a day on which an informal session has been designated, it shall be placed in the Orders of the  
1306 Day for the succeeding day. If reconsideration is moved after July first of the second annual  
1307 session and thereafter, on any main question, it shall be considered forthwith. This rule shall not  
1308 prevent the reconsideration of a vote on a subsidiary, incidental or dependent question at any  
1309 time when the main question to which it relates is under consideration; and provided, further,  
1310 that a motion to reconsider a vote on any subsidiary, incidental or dependent question shall not  
1311 remove the main subject under consideration from before the House, but shall be considered at  
1312 the time when it is made. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
1313 members present. [70.] (53.)

1314 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981, Jan. 23, 2007.]

1315 55. When a motion for reconsideration is decided, that decision shall not be reconsidered, and  
1316 no question shall be twice reconsidered; nor shall any vote be reconsidered upon any of the  
1317 following motions:

1318 to recess,  
1319 to adjourn,  
1320 on sustaining a ruling of the Chair,  
1321 to close debate at a specified time,  
1322 to postpone if voted in the negative,  
1323 to discharge or direct a committee to report,  
1324 to commit or recommit,  
1325 for second or subsequent legislative days,  
1326 for the previous question, or  
1327 for suspension of rules.

1328 This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [71.]  
1329 (53.)

1330 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 9, 1991.]

1331 56. Debate on motions to reconsider shall be limited to fifteen minutes, and no member shall  
1332 occupy more than three minutes, but on a motion to reconsider a vote upon any subsidiary or  
1333 incidental question, debate shall be limited to ten minutes, and no member shall occupy more  
1334 than three minutes.

1335 If the House has voted to close debate on any question, a motion to reconsider said question  
1336 shall be decided without debate. [72.] (52.)

1337 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 12, 1987.]

1338 **RULES OF DEBATE.**

1339 57. Every member, when about to speak, shall rise and respectfully address the Speaker and  
1340 shall confine themselves to the question under debate. [73.] (39.)

1341 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Feb. 1, 2023.]

1342 58. Every member while speaking shall avoid personalities; and shall sit down when finished.  
1343 No member shall speak out of their place without leave of the Speaker. [73.] (39.)

1344 When two or more members rise at the same time, the Speaker shall name the member  
1345 entitled to the floor, preferring one who rises in their place to one who does not. [74.] (40.)

1346 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 30, 2019.]

1347 59. If a member repeatedly violates any of the rules of the House, or disrupts the orderly  
1348 procedure of the House, the Speaker, after warning the member of such violations, shall call the  
1349 member to order, and order that member to take their seat. A member so called to order shall lose  
1350 the right to speak on the pending subject-matter but shall not be debarred from voting. A member  
1351 so called to order shall remain seated until the House begins consideration of another subject-  
1352 matter or unless the Speaker earlier returns to the member their rights to the floor.

1353 If a member so called to order refuses to immediately take their seat, the Speaker shall  
1354 immediately name that member, who shall be escorted from the Chamber under escort of the  
1355 Sergeant-at-Arms. The matter shall thereupon, on motion, be referred to a special committee of  
1356 three to be appointed by the Speaker. Said special committee shall make a report to the House of  
1357 its recommendations, which report shall be read and accepted.

1358 Having been named, a member shall not be allowed to resume their seat until said member  
1359 has complied with the recommendations of the committee as accepted by the House.

1360 If, after a member is seated or named, the action of the Speaker is appealed, the House shall  
1361 decide the case by a majority vote of the members present and voting, but if there is no  
1362 immediate appeal, the decision of the Speaker shall be conclusive.

1363 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 11, 1985; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019.]

1364 60. No member shall interrupt another while speaking except by rising to a point of order, to a  
1365 question of personal privilege, to doubt the presence of a quorum, or to ask the person speaking  
1366 to yield.

1367 Members may rise to explain matters personal to them by leave of the presiding officer, but  
1368 shall not discuss pending questions in such explanations.

1369 Questions of personal privilege shall be limited to questions affecting the rights, reputation,  
1370 and conduct of the member in their representative capacities.

1371 Members may rise to ask questions of parliamentary inquiry concerning the pending matter  
1372 by leave of the presiding officer, but shall not debate the pending questions. [75.] (42.)

1373 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Feb. 11, 2009; Jan. 30, 2019.]

1374 61. No member shall speak more than once to the prevention of those who have not spoken  
1375 and desire to speak on the same question.

1376 This prohibition shall not apply to those members designated by the committee or committees  
1377 reporting the bill.

1378 No member shall occupy more than thirty minutes at a time while speaking on any question  
1379 where debate is unlimited.

1380 Unless the operation of another rule provides to the contrary (such as previous question,  
1381 limitation of debate, etc.), no member shall be prohibited from speaking more than once on any  
1382 question when no other member who has not spoken is seeking recognition by the Chair. [76.]  
1383 (41.)

1384 *Motions.*

1385 62. Every motion shall be reduced to writing, if the Speaker so directs. [77.] (44.)

1386 63. A motion need not be seconded, except an appeal from the decision of the Chair, and may  
1387 be withdrawn by the mover if no objection is made. [78.] (44.)

1388 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1389 *Limit of Debate.*

1390 64. A motion to recess or adjourn shall always be first in order, and shall be decided without  
1391 debate; and on the motions to close debate at a specified time, to postpone to a time certain, to  
1392 commit or recommit, not exceeding ten minutes shall be allowed for debate, and no member  
1393 shall speak more than three minutes. On the motion to discharge any committee, or on a motion  
1394 directing any committee to report matters before it, not exceeding fifteen minutes shall be  
1395 allowed for debate, and no member shall speak more than three minutes.

1396 If the main motion is undebatable, any subsidiary or incidental motion made relating to it  
1397 shall also be decided without debate. [79.] (52.) [See Rules 56 and 83.]

1398 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1399 64A. Debate on the question on adoption of orders for second and subsequent legislative days  
1400 shall be limited to ten minutes, and no member shall speak more than three minutes. After  
1401 entering into a second or subsequent legislative day, the House shall immediately proceed to  
1402 consideration of engrossed bills, reports of committees, papers from the Senate or the Orders of  
1403 the Day. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

1404 [Adopted Jan. 12, 1983.]

1405 65. When a question is before the House, until it is disposed of, the Speaker shall receive no  
1406 motion that does not relate to the same, except the motion to recess or adjourn or some other  
1407 motion that has precedence either by express rule of the House, or because it is privileged in its  
1408 nature; and the Speaker shall receive no motion relating to the same, except,—

1409 for the previous question, . . . . .

1410 to close debate at a specified time, . . . . .

1411 to postpone to a time certain, . . . . .

1412 to commit (or recommit), . . . . .

1413 to amend, . . . . . See Rules 66, 67 and 68

1414 See Rules 64, 69 and 70

1415 See Rules 64 and 70

1416 See Rules 64 and 71

1417 See Rules 72, 73, 74 and 75

1418 — which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are arranged in  
1419 this rule. [80.] (46.)

1420 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1421 *Previous Question.*

1422 66. Any member may call for the previous question on the main question.

1423 The previous question shall be put in the following form: “Shall the main question be now  
1424 put?” and all debate on the main question shall be suspended until the previous question is  
1425 decided.

1426 The adoption of the previous question shall require the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the  
1427 members present and voting and shall put an end to all debate, and bring the House to direct vote  
1428 upon pending amendments, if any, in their regular order, and then upon the main question.

1429 A motion to reconsider the vote on any of the pending amendments shall be decided without  
1430 debate. [81.]

1431 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1432 67. Any member may call for the previous question on any pending amendment.

1433 The previous question shall be put in the following form: “Shall the question on adoption of  
1434 the amendment be now put?” and all debate shall be suspended until the previous question is  
1435 decided.

1436 The adoption of the previous question on a pending amendment shall require the affirmative  
1437 vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting and shall put an end to all debate and bring  
1438 the House to a direct vote upon the pending amendment.

1439 A motion to reconsider the vote on the pending amendment shall be decided without debate.

1440 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1441 68. The previous question shall be decided without debate.

1442 *Motion to Close Debate at a Specified Time.*

1443 69. Debate may be closed at any time not less than thirty minutes from the adoption of a  
1444 motion to that effect. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
1445 members present. [85.] (47.)

1446 *Motion to Postpone to a Time Certain.*

1447 70. When a motion is made to postpone to a time certain, and different times are proposed,  
1448 the question shall first be taken on the most remote time; and the time shall be determined before  
1449 the question is put on postponement, which may then be rejected if the House sees fit. [87.] (51.)

1450 *Motion to Commit.*

1451 71. When a motion is made to commit, and different committees are proposed, the question  
1452 shall be taken in the following order:

1453 a standing committee of the House,

1454 a select committee of the House,

1455 a joint standing committee,  
1456 a joint selected committee;  
1457 and a subject may be recommitted to the same committee or to another committee at the pleasure  
1458 of the House. [88.] (48.)

1459 *Motion to Amend.*

1460 72. A motion to amend an amendment is a motion offering an amendment in the second  
1461 degree and may be received; a motion to amend an amendment in the second degree is a motion  
1462 offering an amendment in the third degree and shall not be allowed. This rule shall not be  
1463 suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [89.]

1464 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Feb. 1, 2023.]

1465 73. No motion or proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be  
1466 admitted under color of amendment. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous  
1467 consent of the members present. [90.] (50.)

1468 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987.]

1469 73A. No motion to amend a report from the committee on Ways and Means or a report from  
1470 the committee on Bills in the Third Reading, when such an amendment contains an expenditure  
1471 of public money or an increase or decrease in taxes, shall be considered unless a brief  
1472 explanation of the amendment is stated.

1473 [Adopted Jan. 17, 1995; Amended Jan. 26, 1999.]

1474 74. A question containing two or more propositions capable of division shall be divided  
1475 whenever desired by any member, if the question includes points so distinct and separate that,  
1476 one of them being taken away, the other will stand as a complete proposition. The motion to  
1477 strike out and insert shall be considered as one proposition and therefore indivisible. The  
1478 question on ordering a bill or resolve to a third reading, or to be engrossed, or to be enacted, or  
1479 similar main motions shall be considered as indivisible under this rule. This rule shall not be  
1480 suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [91.] (45.)

1481 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983.]

1482 75. In filling blanks, the largest sum and longest time shall be put first. [92.] (51.) [See Rule  
1483 70.]

1484 *Declaration of Recess.*

1485 76. The Speaker may declare a recess of 15 minutes duration, or less.

1486 [Amended Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 29, 2015.]

1487 *Appeal.*

1488 77. No appeal from the decision of the Speaker shall be entertained unless it is seconded; and  
1489 no other business shall be in order until the question on the appeal has been disposed of. Debate  
1490 shall be limited to 15 minutes on the question of sustaining a ruling by the Chair, and no member  
1491 shall occupy more than three minutes. [94.] (43A.) [See Rule 2.]

1492 [Amended Jan. 9, 1989; Jan. 29, 2015.]

1493 *Resolves.*

1494 78. Such of these rules as are applicable to bills, whether of the House or of the Senate, shall  
1495 apply likewise to such resolves as require the concurrence of the Senate and approval by the  
1496 Governor in order to become law and have force as such. [95.]

1497 *Seats.*

1498 79. (1) The desk on the right of the Speaker shall be assigned to the use of the Clerk and such  
1499 persons as they may employ to assist said Clerk, and that on the left to the use of the chair and  
1500 vice-chair of the committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

1501 (2) The Speaker shall assign members to vacant seats. The seat assigned to any member, other  
1502 than seats assigned under paragraph (1) of this rule, shall be their seat for the year and for such  
1503 additional years as said member may elect so long as service in the House remains continuous.  
1504 An exchange of seats may be made with the approval of the Speaker. [98.]

1505 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; May 5, 1993; Jan. 30, 2019.]

1506 *Privilege of the Floor.*

1507 80. The following persons shall be entitled to admission to the House of Representatives,  
1508 during the session thereof, to stand in an area designated by the Speaker in the rear of the  
1509 Chamber, unless otherwise invited by said Speaker to occupy seats not numbered:

1510 (1) The Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor, members of the Executive Council, Secretary  
1511 of the Commonwealth, Treasurer and Receiver-General, Auditor of the Commonwealth,  
1512 Attorney-General, Librarian and Assistant Librarian;

1513 (2) The members of the Senate;

1514 (3) Authorized employees of the House and persons in the exercise of an official duty directly  
1515 connected with the business of the House; or

1516 (4) Contestants for seats in the House, whose papers are in the hands of a special committee  
1517 of the House, may be admitted, while their cases are pending, to seats to be assigned by the  
1518 Speaker.

1519 No other person shall be admitted to the floor during the session, except upon the permission  
1520 of the Speaker.

1521 No legislative agent or counsel may be admitted to the floor of the House Chamber during a  
1522 session unless that part of the session is ceremonial in nature in which no other legislative  
1523 business is conducted.

1524 The legislative reporters shall be entitled to the privileges of the reporters' galleries.

1525 This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [99.]  
1526 (60, 61.)

1527 [Amended Jan. 9, 1991, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 30, 2019.]

1528 *Representatives' Chamber and Adjoining Rooms.*

1529 81. (a) Use of the Representatives' Chamber members' corridor or adjoining rooms shall be  
1530 for official business or educational purposes only and shall be subject to the approval of the  
1531 Speaker or the committee on Rules. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply if the  
1532 purpose of admittance is to attend a meeting in an adjoining room to which members of the  
1533 general public are allowed to attend.

1534 (b) No legislative agent or counsel shall be admitted to the members' corridor or adjoining  
1535 rooms. No other person shall be admitted to the members' corridor or adjoining rooms, except  
1536 persons entitled to the privileges of the floor of the House unless upon written invitation of a  
1537 member bearing the name of the member and the person the member invites. Upon entering, the  
1538 invitation shall be given to the court officer assigned to the area. The provisions of this paragraph  
1539 shall not apply if the purpose of admittance is to attend a meeting in an adjoining room to which  
1540 members of the general public are allowed to attend.

1541 (c) No person shall be admitted to the north gallery of the House except upon a card of the  
1542 Speaker.

1543 (d) Subject to the approval and direction of the committee on Rules during the session and of  
1544 the Speaker after prorogation, the use of the reporters' galleries of the House Chamber shall be  
1545 under the control of the organization of legislative reporters known as the Massachusetts State  
1546 House Press Association and the State House Broadcasters Association.

1547 (e) Every legislative reporter desiring admission to the reporters' galleries shall state in  
1548 writing that they are not the agent or representative of any person or corporation interested in  
1549 legislation before the General Court, and will not act as representative of any such person or  
1550 corporation while retaining a place in the galleries; but nothing herein contained shall prevent  
1551 such legislative reporter from engaging in other employment, provided such other employment is  
1552 specifically approved by the committee on Rules and reported to the House.

1553 (f) All formal and informal sessions of the House of Representatives shall be open to both  
1554 commercial and public radio and television, except designated times during such sessions, as  
1555 determined by the House, reserved for the consideration of non-controversial business which

1556 does not give rise to debate. The manner and conditions of such broadcasts shall be established  
1557 by the Speaker. Television, radio or web-broadcasts may be prohibited on any given day by the  
1558 Speaker.

1559 All formal and informal sessions shall be broadcast live on House television and livestreamed  
1560 on the General Court website. Audio or video recordings of prior formal and informal sessions  
1561 for the current biennial session shall be made available to the public on the official website of the  
1562 General Court.

1563 The Speaker may arrange for a limited number of remote connections at a location outside of  
1564 the House Chamber for commercial and public radio and television to obtain audio and visual  
1565 feeds of formal sessions being recorded or streamed by the House. Video or audio obtained from  
1566 such feed shall be used only for reporting purposes. Access to the connections provided shall be  
1567 on a first-come-first serve basis; provided, however, that commercial and public radio and  
1568 television acquiring access shall be required to share the audio or video feeds with other any  
1569 other commercial and public radio and television station seeking access. The manner and  
1570 conditions of access shall be established by the Speaker with the approval of the House. Access  
1571 may be prohibited by the Speaker with the approval of the House.

1572 Clauses (a) through (e) of this rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
1573 members present. [100.] (59.)

1574 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 26, 1999, Jan. 23,  
1575 2007; Jan. 30, 2019; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 25, 2025.]

1576 *Quorum.*

1577 82. Eighty-one members present shall constitute a quorum for the organization of the House  
1578 and the transaction of business. [See amendments to the Constitution, Art. XXXIII.]

1579 In the event that a quorum is not present, the presiding officer shall compel the attendance of  
1580 a quorum. During the absence of a quorum, no other business may be transacted or motions  
1581 entertained except a declaration of adjournment or a recess by the Speaker. [105.]

1582 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 14, 1997.]

1583 *Debate on Motions for Suspension of Rules.*

1584 83. The question of suspension of House Rules 45, 47, 56, 61, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 77 and 83  
1585 shall be decided without debate. Debate upon the motion for the suspension of any other House  
1586 rule, unless otherwise indicated, or any joint rule shall be limited to fifteen minutes and no  
1587 member shall occupy more than three minutes. This rule shall not be suspended unless by  
1588 unanimous consent of the members present. [102.] (52.)

1589 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 9, 1989.]

1590 84. Unless otherwise indicated, nothing in the House rules or joint rules shall be suspended,  
1591 altered or repealed unless two-thirds of the members present and voting consent thereto. This  
1592 rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [103.] (63.)

1593 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1594 84A. The Clerk may, due to technical limitations or upon exigent circumstances, elect to  
1595 waive any requirement relative to the electronic availability and posting on the website of the  
1596 General Court of any bills, resolves, summaries or other documents contained herein; provided,  
1597 however, that if the Clerk so waives any such requirement he shall make paper copies of the

1598 documents available to all members and the public within the limitation established for the  
1599 electronic availability and posting on the website of the General Court of any bills, resolves,  
1600 summaries or other documents contained herein.

1601 [Adopted Feb. 11, 2009.]

1602 *Reference to Committee on Rules.*

1603 85. All motions or orders authorizing committees of the House to travel or to employ  
1604 stenographers, all propositions involving special investigations by committees of the House, all  
1605 resolutions presented for adoption by the House only, and all motions and orders except those  
1606 which relate to the procedure of the House or are privileged in their nature or are authorized by  
1607 Rule 65, shall be referred without debate to the committee on Rules, which shall report thereon,  
1608 recommending what action should be taken. The committee shall not recommend suspension of  
1609 Joint Rule 9, unless evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that the petitioners have  
1610 previously given notice, by public advertisement or otherwise, equivalent to that required by  
1611 Chapter 3 of the General Laws. [104.] (13A.)

1612 [Amended Jan. 29, 2015; Feb. 1, 2023.]

1613 85A. (a) The committee on Operations, Facilities and Security, upon receipt of the  
1614 recommendation of the state auditor pursuant to subsection (b), shall provide that an outside,  
1615 independent financial audit of House financial accounts be conducted for each fiscal year upon  
1616 receipt of the fiscal year end appropriation activity with balance report from the comptroller of  
1617 the Commonwealth. The outside, independent financial audit shall be conducted in accordance  
1618 with the standards for audits of governmental organizations, programs, activities and functions,  
1619 commonly referred to as the “Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS)”

1620 or “Yellow Book,” published by the Comptroller General of the United States. The committee on  
1621 Operations, Facilities and Security, with the assistance of the House Business Manager, shall  
1622 provide the independent auditor with requested financial documents for such financial audit. A  
1623 copy of the completed outside, independent financial audit shall be filed with the Clerk of the  
1624 House and the state auditor and shall be posted on the website of the General Court.

1625 (b) The committee on Operations, Facilities and Security shall annually request that the state  
1626 auditor recommend a private, independent auditing firm to conduct the independent financial  
1627 audit of House financial accounts required by subsection (a). The state auditor shall, within 30  
1628 days of the committee’s request, recommend to the committee a private, independent auditing  
1629 firm from the list of private, independent auditing firms on the appropriate statewide  
1630 procurement contract established by the operational services division. The committee shall direct  
1631 the House Business Manager to execute a contract with the private, independent auditing firm  
1632 recommended by the state auditor pursuant to a statewide procurement contract established by  
1633 the operational services division. If the state auditor fails to recommend a private, independent  
1634 auditing firm to serve as the independent auditor of House financial accounts within 30 days of  
1635 receiving a request from the committee, then the committee shall direct the House Business  
1636 Manager to retain a private, independent auditing firm from the appropriate statewide  
1637 procurement contract established by the operational services division.

1638 (c) The provisions of this rule shall apply to fiscal years beginning on July 1, 2025.

1639 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985, Amended Jan. 20, 2011; Jan. 30, 2019; Nov. 14, 2024; Feb. 25,  
1640 2025.]

1641 *Parliamentary Practice.*

1642 86. The rules of parliamentary practice shall govern the House in all cases to which they are  
1643 applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with these rules or the joint rules of the two  
1644 branches. (62.)

1645 *Procurement.*

1646 87. (a) All procurements for goods or services shall be completed by the House Business  
1647 Manager under the oversight of the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security, subject to  
1648 the provisions of this rule. The committee shall provide the House Business Manager with such  
1649 guidelines, policies and procedures as the committee deems necessary and appropriate to ensure  
1650 the effective and efficient procurement of goods and services under this rule.

1651 (b) (1) All procurements for goods or services shall, to the extent practicable, be made  
1652 pursuant to a statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division.

1653 (2) Before procuring goods or services pursuant to a statewide procurement contract under  
1654 this subsection in an amount of \$10,000 or more, and before completing any joint procurement  
1655 under Joint Rule 36 on behalf of the House in an amount of \$10,000 or more, including a joint  
1656 procurement not made pursuant to a statewide procurement contract, the House Business  
1657 Manager shall transmit to all the members of the committee on Operations, Facilities and  
1658 Security the House Business Manager's recommendation for awarding the procurement and a  
1659 written summary identifying all steps taken by the House Business Manager for compliance with  
1660 this rule, or with Joint Rule 36 as applicable, and any other information the House Business  
1661 Manager deems necessary. The committee on Operations, Facilities and Security shall review the  
1662 recommendation and summary to ensure compliance with this rule or Joint Rule 36, as  
1663 applicable. Upon completion of the review by the committee on Operations, Facilities and

1664 Security, if a majority of the committee agrees with the House Business Manager's  
1665 recommendation, the committee shall approve the recommendation in writing and the House  
1666 Business Manager shall procure the goods or services.

1667 (c) (1) Upon written certification submitted to the chair of the committee on Operations,  
1668 Facilities and Security by the House Business Manager that a necessary procurement under this  
1669 rule cannot be made using a statewide procurement contract established by the operational  
1670 services division, the House Business Manager may procure the required goods or services,  
1671 subject to the provisions of this subsection.

1672 (2) For a procurement of goods or services in an amount of less than \$10,000, the House  
1673 Business Manager shall use sound business practices.

1674 (3) For a procurement of goods or services in an amount of \$10,000 or more, but less than  
1675 \$100,000, the House Business Manager shall seek written or oral quotations from no fewer than  
1676 3 persons customarily providing such goods or services. The House Business Manager shall  
1677 record the names and addresses of all persons from whom quotations were sought, the names and  
1678 addresses of all persons submitting quotations and the date and amount of each quotation. The  
1679 House Business Manager shall transmit all quotations received to the committee on Operations,  
1680 Facilities and Security, along with the House Business Manager's recommendation as to what  
1681 quotation offers the needed quality of goods or services at the best value for the House and a  
1682 written summary identifying all steps taken by the House Business Manager for compliance with  
1683 this rule and any other information the House Business Manager deems necessary. The  
1684 committee on Operations, Facilities and Security shall review the quotations, the  
1685 recommendation and the written summary to ensure compliance with this rule. Upon completion

1686 of the review by the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security, if the committee agrees  
1687 with House Business Manager's recommendation, the committee shall approve the  
1688 recommendation in writing and the House Business Manager shall award the contract to the  
1689 responsible person whose quotation offers the needed quality of goods or services and which  
1690 represents the best value for the House.

1691 (4) For a procurement of goods or services in an amount exceeding \$100,000, the House  
1692 Business Manager shall seek proposals or quotations through a competitive bid process wherein  
1693 the House Business Manager shall:

1694 (i) identify bidders capable and willing to provide the House with the best value of goods or  
1695 services by: (A) posting public notice on the Commonwealth's electronic procurement system  
1696 (COMMBUYS) of the House's request for proposals or quotations, which shall be approved by  
1697 House Counsel and the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security prior to posting; and  
1698 (B) whatever other means the House Business Manager deems appropriate;

1699 (ii) record the names of the responding bidders, the date of the response, a description of  
1700 goods or services and the amount of each quotation;

1701 (iii) have the right, for any reason, and at any time prior to the execution of a contract, and  
1702 without penalty, to notify bidders of a cancellation of procurement and the rejection of all bids  
1703 and shall include such right of cancellation on the public posting;

1704 (iv) review each bid to confirm that it satisfies the requirements of the House's request;

1705 (v) determine, in consultation with the House office requesting the goods or services, which  
1706 bid satisfying the requirements of the House's request also offers the needed quality of goods or  
1707 services and represents the best value to the House;

1708 (vi) transmit to each member of the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security: (A) all  
1709 bids submitted in response to the House's request; (B) the House Business Manager's  
1710 determination pursuant to clause (v) as to which bid satisfying the requirements of the House's  
1711 request also offers the needed quality of goods or services and represents the best value to the  
1712 House; and (C) a written summary identifying all steps taken by the House Business Manager for  
1713 compliance with this rule and any other information the House Business Manager deems  
1714 necessary; and

1715 (vii) obtain the written approval of the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security  
1716 before any bid is selected and any procurement is made pursuant to this paragraph.

1717 (d) Notwithstanding subsections (a) through (c), all procurements for legal services and legal  
1718 resources shall be handled exclusively by Counsel in compliance with the provisions of this rule  
1719 to the extent practicable.

1720 (e) The House Business Manager shall maintain a separate file on each procurement made  
1721 under this rule and Joint Rule 36 and shall include in such file a copy of all documents  
1722 constituting the agreement for goods and services and all documents evidencing compliance with  
1723 this rule, including but not limited to any written approvals by the committee on Operations,  
1724 Facilities and Security required under this rule.

1725 (f) For each contract not executed using a statewide procurement contract established by the  
1726 operational services division and in excess of \$10,000, the House Business Manager shall make

1727 the file maintained pursuant to subsection (e) available for inspection within said office by  
1728 members of the House for at least 3 years from the date of final payment under the contract;  
1729 provided, however, that the House Business Manager, in consultation with Counsel, shall redact  
1730 from said file any information which (i) is legally privileged; (ii) is proprietary; (iii) is related to  
1731 individual members or House personnel; or (iv) is otherwise protected by state or federal law.

1732 (g) No member, officer or employee of the House shall execute a contract for the procurement  
1733 of goods or services under this rule without the prior written approval of House Counsel.

1734 (h) On or before the 15th calendar day of each month, the House Business Manager shall  
1735 transmit to the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security and House Counsel a written  
1736 report identifying all procurements of goods or services, including procurements made pursuant  
1737 to Joint Rule 36, made during the previous calendar month, regardless of the amount and  
1738 whether the procurement was made pursuant to a statewide procurement contract.

1739 (i) Whenever the time required to comply with a requirement of this rule would endanger the  
1740 health, safety or convenience of the members, staff or visitors to the House of Representatives,  
1741 the House Business Manager, or House Counsel in the case of a procurement for legal consulting  
1742 services and legal resources, may make an emergency procurement without satisfying the  
1743 requirements of subsections (b), (c) and (d); provided, however, that both the House Business  
1744 Manager, or House Counsel in the case of a procurement for legal consulting services and legal  
1745 resources, and the chair of the committee on Operations, Facilities and Security certify in  
1746 writing: (i) that an emergency exists and explain the nature thereof; (ii) that said emergency  
1747 procurement is limited to only supplies or services necessary to meet the emergency; (iii) that  
1748 said emergency procurement conforms to the requirements of this rule to the extent practicable

1749 under the circumstances; (iv) each contractor’s name, the amount and the type of each contract,  
1750 the supplies or services provided under each contract, and (v) the basis for determining the need  
1751 for an emergency procurement. Such certification shall be filed with the Clerk of the House prior  
1752 to an emergency procurement.

1753 [Adopted Jan. 20, 2011, Amended Jan. 23, 2013; Jan. 29, 2015; Feb. 19, 2015; Jan. 30, 2019;  
1754 Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

1755 *Professional Standards and Conduct.*

1756 88. (a) As used in Rules 88 to 100, inclusive, the following terms shall, unless the context  
1757 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

1758 “Authorized party”, a party authorized to receive a complaint of harassment or retaliation  
1759 pursuant to Rule 93.

1760 “Counsel”, Legal Counsel to the House appointed pursuant to Rule 13B.

1761 “Director”, the Director of Human Resources appointed pursuant to Rule 90.

1762 “Discriminatory harassment”, verbal or physical conduct that:

1763 (1) demeans, stereotypes, or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because  
1764 of the individual's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, sexual orientation, age,  
1765 disability status, genetic information, gender identity, active military personnel status,  
1766 transgender status or membership in any other protected class and;

1767 (2) (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive  
1768 working environment;

1769 (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a member, officer, intern or  
1770 employee's work performance or official duties; or

1771 (iii) otherwise adversely affects a member, officer, intern or employee's employment  
1772 opportunities or ability to fulfill their official duties or conduct business before the House.

1773 "EEO Officer", the outside, independent Equal Employment Opportunity Officer contracted  
1774 by the House pursuant to Rule 89.

1775 "Harassment", discriminatory harassment or sexual harassment engaged in by a member,  
1776 officer, intern or employee of the House or by a third party.

1777 "Sexual harassment", sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and verbal or physical  
1778 conduct of a sexual nature when:

1779 (1) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or  
1780 implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions, or as a  
1781 term, condition or basis for the support of certain policy objectives, political aspirations or  
1782 business before the House; or

1783 (2) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering  
1784 with a member, officer, intern or employee's work performance or official duties by creating an  
1785 intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment.

1786 Under this definition, direct or implied requests for sexual favors in exchange for actual or  
1787 promised (i) employment benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions,  
1788 increased benefits or continued employment or (ii) support for certain policy objectives, political  
1789 aspirations or business before the House, shall constitute sexual harassment.

1790 The definition of sexual harassment is broad and may include other sexually oriented conduct,  
1791 whether or not it is intended to violate this Rule, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating  
1792 a workplace environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating or humiliating to a member,  
1793 officer, intern or employee of the same or different gender, or those who do not identify as  
1794 gender binary.

1795 “Supervisor”, a member, officer or employee having direct authority or oversight over one or  
1796 more employees.

1797 “Third party”, any person visiting the House of Representatives, or conducting official  
1798 business or work with any member, officer or employee of the House.

1799 (b) The House is committed to providing fair and equal opportunity for employment and  
1800 advancement to all employees and applicants.

1801 It is the House’s policy and practice to assign, promote and compensate employees on the  
1802 basis of qualifications, merit, and competence. Employment practices shall not be influenced nor  
1803 affected by virtue of an applicant's or employee's race, color, religion, national origin, sex,  
1804 ancestry, sexual orientation, age, disability status, genetic information, gender identity, active  
1805 military personnel status, transgender status or membership in any other protected class.

1806 This policy governs all aspects of recruiting, hiring, training, on-the-job treatment, promotion,  
1807 transfer, discharge and all other terms and conditions of employment.

1808 Without limiting the applicability of the foregoing, the House is committed to creating and  
1809 maintaining a work environment in which all members, officers, interns and employees of the  
1810 House, and all third parties, are treated with respect and free from any form of harassment,

1811 including harassment based on an individual's membership in any protected class. To that end,  
1812 the House will not tolerate harassment of any kind by any member, officer, intern, employee or  
1813 third party in the workplace or otherwise in connection with the official duties or employment  
1814 responsibilities of a member, officer, third party, intern or employee. Any individual who  
1815 believes that they may have been the object of harassment, or any individual who witnesses  
1816 something they think may be harassment, is strongly encouraged to report that information to an  
1817 authorized party.

1818 The House shall promote the safety and respectful treatment of all members, officers, interns  
1819 and employees of the House, and all third parties, by establishing uniform procedures for making  
1820 and receiving complaints of harassment and, in coordination with the EEO Officer, initiating,  
1821 conducting and concluding investigations into complaints of harassment.

1822 A violation of this policy will subject the member, officer, employee or intern to discipline  
1823 pursuant to Rule 95 and Rule 96.

1824 (c)(1) Discriminatory harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following conduct:

1825 (i) epithets, slurs, insults or negative stereotyping related to the protected classes;

1826 (ii) acts or jokes that are hostile or demeaning with regard to the protected classes;

1827 (iii) threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to the protected classes;

1828 (iv) displays of written or graphic material that demean, ridicule or show hostility toward an  
1829 individual or group because of membership in a protected class, including material circulated or  
1830 displayed in the workplace, including District Offices, such as on an employee's desk or

1831 workspace, or on House equipment or bulletin boards, including but not limited to House-issued  
1832 computers, laptops and personal device assistants;

1833 (v) verbal or non-verbal innuendo, and micro-aggressions; and

1834 (vi) other conduct that falls within the definition of discriminatory harassment set forth above.

1835 (2) Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following conduct:

1836 (i) gender-based bullying, including bullying based on transgender or non-gender binary status;

1837 (ii) attempts to coerce an unwilling person into a sexual relationship;

1838 (iii) repeatedly subjecting a person to unwelcome sexual or romantic attention;

1839 (iv) punishing a person's refusal to comply with a request for sexual conduct; and

1840 (v) conditioning a benefit on submitting to sexual advances.

1841 (3) Conduct that, if unwelcome, and depending upon the totality of the circumstances,  
1842 including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness, may constitute sexual harassment  
1843 includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1844 (i) unwelcome sexual advances, flirtations or propositions, whether they involve physical  
1845 touching or not;

1846 (ii) sexual "kidding," epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct;

1847 (iii) gossip regarding one's sex life;

1848 (iv) comment on a person's body or an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;

- 1849 (v) displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, posters or cartoons;
- 1850 (vi) unwelcome leering or staring at a person;
- 1851 (vii) sexual gestures and suggestive or insulting sounds, such as whistling or comments with  
1852 sexual content or meaning;
- 1853 (viii) uninvited physical contact, such as touching, hugging, purposely brushing against the  
1854 body, patting or pinching;
- 1855 (ix) indecent exposure;
- 1856 (x) inquiries into one’s sexual experiences;
- 1857 (xi) discussion of one’s sexual activities;
- 1858 (xii) sexual emails; and
- 1859 (xiii) sexting, or sexual messages or images posted on social media, for example, texts, instant  
1860 messages, Facebook posts, tweets, Snapchat, Instagram or blog entries.
- 1861 (d) No member, officer or employee of the House shall retaliate, including against a member,  
1862 officer, intern, or employee of the House who has complained about harassment or participated  
1863 in an investigation into an allegation of harassment or retaliation. Any person who believes that  
1864 they may have been the subject of retaliation for having complained of harassment or retaliation,  
1865 or for having participated in an investigation related to an allegation of harassment or retaliation,  
1866 is strongly encouraged to report that information to an authorized party.
- 1867 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 1, 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

1868 89. (a) The House shall contract with an EEO Officer, who shall not be an employee of the  
1869 General Court or any other Commonwealth entity or instrumentality. The committee on Human  
1870 Resources and Employee Engagement shall contract with a qualified person or entity with  
1871 expertise in conducting investigations to act as the EEO Officer pursuant to the procurement  
1872 procedures in Rule 87. The contract shall contain such terms as are, in the judgment of the  
1873 committee, necessary and appropriate to effectuate the goals of this Rule and related provisions  
1874 of Rules 93 to 100, inclusive.

1875 (b) The EEO Officer shall review and investigate complaints deemed plausible pursuant to  
1876 Rule 94 alleging a violation of Rule 88, the House Anti-Harassment Policy, or the House Equal  
1877 Employment Policy, including, but not limited to complaints alleging harassment or retaliation.  
1878 Complaints shall be received, reviewed and investigated pursuant to Rules 93 to 97, inclusive.

1879 [Adopted Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 25, 2025.]

1880 90. (a) The House shall employ a full-time Director of Human Resources. The committee on  
1881 Human Resources and Employee Engagement shall appoint a qualified person to act as the  
1882 Director at such compensation as the committee on Human Resources and Employee  
1883 Engagement shall approve.

1884 The Director shall serve a term of two years from the date of appointment, unless the Director  
1885 sooner resigns, retires or is removed; provided, however, that the Director may only be removed:  
1886 (i) for misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance, as determined by Counsel and approved by a  
1887 majority vote of the committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement ; or (ii) by a  
1888 majority roll call vote of the House.

1889 (b) The Director may employ such assistants as may be necessary in the discharge of the  
1890 Director's duties, subject to the approval of the committee on Human Resources and Employee  
1891 Engagement, and may expend with like approval such sums as may be necessary for the  
1892 discharge of their duties.

1893 (c) The Director shall develop and oversee standardized practices and procedures, which shall  
1894 apply to all applications for employment. The practices and procedures shall include, but shall  
1895 not be limited to: (i) a standard application for employment; (ii) mandatory background and  
1896 reference checks, the results of which shall be reported by the Director to the applicant's  
1897 prospective appointing authority; and (iii) a standard offer letter for each position within the  
1898 House.

1899 (d) The Director shall develop and oversee standardized practices and procedures, which shall  
1900 apply to all employees and appointed officers of the House. These practices and procedures shall  
1901 include or address, without limitation: (i) regular meetings between the Director and employees  
1902 who are supervisors, including an initial meeting within 14 days of the employee assuming such  
1903 a role; (ii) guidelines for conducting employee performance reviews; (iii) a program of  
1904 progressive discipline; and (iv) separations from employment including exit interviews for  
1905 terminated employees.

1906 (e) The Director and the Director of Employee Engagement, in consultation with Counsel,  
1907 shall develop employee classifications, which shall include written job descriptions, salary  
1908 ranges and schedules. The classifications shall be published in the employee and supervisor  
1909 handbooks. The Director may develop a seniority system on which employee salaries may be  
1910 based. A seniority system shall be published in the employee handbook.

1911 (f) The Director, in consultation with the Director of Employee Engagement and Counsel,  
1912 shall develop practices and procedures for receiving, investigating and resolving personnel  
1913 complaints unrelated to Rule 88, the House Anti-Harassment Policy, or the House Equal  
1914 Employment Policy.

1915 (g) The Director, in consultation with the Director of Employee Engagement and subject to  
1916 the approval of Counsel, shall develop and implement written policies and procedures for  
1917 receiving and maintaining records of complaints against members, officers, interns or employees  
1918 of the House, or against third parties, made in accordance with Rules 93 to 98, inclusive.

1919 (h) The Director shall annually publish: (i) an Employee Handbook; and (ii) an Intern  
1920 Handbook. Each handbook shall be developed with the advice and approval of Counsel, and  
1921 shall be submitted to the committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement for review  
1922 and approval at least 14 days prior to publication.

1923 The handbooks shall be available as follows:

1924 (i) the Director shall post both handbooks on the human resources web portal;

1925 (ii) the Director shall email an electronic copy of the Employee Handbook to each employee  
1926 within 10 days of its publication and require that each employee sign a written acknowledgement  
1927 of receipt and return such acknowledgement to the Director within 5 days;

1928 (iii) the Director shall email an electronic copy of the Employee Handbook to each new  
1929 employee within 5 days of the employee's start date and require that the employee sign a written  
1930 acknowledgement of receipt and return such acknowledgement to the Director within 5 days;

1931 (iv) the committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement shall provide an Intern  
1932 Handbook to each intern on the first day of their internship. Upon receipt of the Intern Handbook  
1933 the intern shall sign a written acknowledgement of receipt that day, which shall be maintained by  
1934 the committee, with a copy sent to the Director;

1935 (vi) hard copies of each handbook shall be available in the offices of the Director, the Director  
1936 of Employee Engagement, Counsel and the Clerk;

1937 (vi) the Director shall cause electronic copies of each handbook to be downloaded onto the  
1938 desktop of each House computer; and

1939 (vii) in formats accessible to all members, officers and employees.

1940 (i)(1) The committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement, in consultation with  
1941 the Director, shall develop policies to address individuals who provide services to the House in a  
1942 volunteer capacity or otherwise without receiving compensation

1943 (2) The committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement, in consultation with the  
1944 Director and subject to the approval of Counsel, shall develop policies to address pro-bono  
1945 service and charitable and community service activities by members, officers and employees of  
1946 the House.

1947 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jan. 30, 2019; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 25, 2025.]

1948 91. The Director shall, in consultation with the Director of Employee Engagement, create and  
1949 maintain an internal web portal for members, officers and employees. The web portal shall  
1950 provide relevant information on human resource policies and procedures, including, without  
1951 limitation, the Rules of the House, each handbook published by the Director, explanations of

1952 complaint and investigation procedures, contact information for the Director, the Director of  
1953 Employee Engagement, and Counsel, training opportunities and schedules and the directory of  
1954 committee staff required pursuant to Rule 92.

1955 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 1, 2023; Feb. 25, 2025.]

1956 92. (a) The House shall employ a full-time Director of Employee Engagement. The  
1957 committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement shall appoint a qualified person to  
1958 act as the Director of Employee Engagement at such compensation as the committee on Human  
1959 Resources and Employee Engagement shall approve.

1960 (b) The Director of Employee Engagement shall, in consultation with the Director of Human  
1961 Resources: (i) develop methods for enhancing the skills and professional development of  
1962 employees including skills for providing constituent services and engaging with, and ensuring  
1963 the privacy of, members of the public who visit the State House; (ii) explore and develop  
1964 partnerships with national trade organizations to maximize the opportunities for professional  
1965 development available to employees; and (iv) engage employees in roundtable discussions on  
1966 issues of importance or concern.

1967 (c) The Director of Employee Engagement shall assist the committee on Human Resources  
1968 and Employee Engagement with duties as may be assigned by the committee or the Director of  
1969 Human Resources.

1970 (d) The Director of Employee Engagement shall prepare and publish on the house intranet a  
1971 directory of committee staff.

1972 (e)(1) The Director of Employee Engagement, in conjunction with the committee on Human  
1973 Resources and Employee Engagement and Counsel, shall provide for training of members.  
1974 Training shall include, without limitation, instruction on: (i) House equal employment policies,  
1975 including the complaint and investigation process; (ii) workplace harassment specifically,  
1976 including techniques for bystander intervention and other best practices; (iii) prohibition on  
1977 retaliation; (iv) best management practices; (v) professionalism and respect; and (vi) practices for  
1978 monitoring the workplace for issues and identifying risk factors. Each member shall make a  
1979 signed, written acknowledgement of the member's completion of the training, which shall be  
1980 maintained in the Director's records.

1981 (2) The Director of Employee Engagement, in conjunction with the committee on Human  
1982 Resources and Employee Engagement and Counsel, shall provide for annual training for all  
1983 appointed officers and employees. Training shall include, without limitation, instruction on (i)  
1984 House equal employment policies, including the complaint and investigation process; (ii)  
1985 workplace harassment specifically, including techniques for bystander intervention and other  
1986 best practices; (iii) prohibition on retaliation; and (iv) professionalism and respect.

1987 Separate trainings shall be held for those appointed officers and employees who are  
1988 supervisors and those appointed officers and employees who are not supervisors. The content of  
1989 the training shall be tailored appropriately to the recipients. Supervisors shall be specifically  
1990 trained on best management practices.

1991 Each appointed officer and employee shall make a signed, written acknowledgement of their  
1992 completion of the training, who shall provide a copy to the Director to be maintained in their  
1993 personnel file.

1994 (3) The Director of Employee Engagement shall provide for appropriate additional training to  
1995 members, officers or employees at any time that the Director of Employee Engagement deems  
1996 necessary or appropriate, including upon the request of a member, officer or employee.

1997 (4) The Director of Employee Engagement shall provide for training for interns during the  
1998 intern orientation process. The training shall include without limitation, instruction on: (i) House  
1999 equal employment policies, including the complaint and investigation process; (ii) workplace  
2000 harassment specifically, including techniques for bystander intervention and other best practices;  
2001 (iii) prohibition on retaliation; and (iv) professionalism and respect. Each intern shall make a  
2002 signed, written acknowledgement of the intern's completion of the training, which shall be  
2003 retained by the Director to be maintained in the Director's records.

2004 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 25, 2025.]

2005 93.(a)(1) A member who believes that they have been the object of harassment or retaliation,  
2006 who witnesses harassment or retaliation, or who becomes aware of harassment or retaliation may  
2007 make a complaint, either orally or in writing with the Director, the Director of Employee  
2008 Engagement or Counsel. Upon receipt of a complaint pursuant to this subsection, a recipient  
2009 other than the Director shall forthwith provide a detailed account of the complaint to the Director  
2010 for assessment pursuant to Rule 94.

2011 (2) An appointed officer, employee or intern of the House who believes that they have been  
2012 the object of harassment or retaliation, who witnesses harassment or retaliation, or who becomes  
2013 aware of harassment or retaliation may make a complaint, either orally or in writing, to any of  
2014 the officer's, employee's or intern's supervisors, the Director, the Director of Employee  
2015 Engagement or Counsel. Upon receipt of a complaint pursuant to this subsection, a recipient

2016 other than the Director shall forthwith provide a detailed account of the complaint to the Director  
2017 for assessment pursuant to Rule 94.

2018 (3) A third party who believes that they have been the object of harassment, or who witnesses  
2019 harassment or retaliation may make a complaint, either orally or in writing, with the Director.  
2020 Upon receipt of a complaint pursuant to this subsection, the Director shall assess the complaint  
2021 pursuant to Rule 94.

2022 (b) The Director, in consultation with the Director of Employee Engagement and subject to  
2023 the approval of Counsel, shall provide guidance for authorized parties who may receive  
2024 complaints under subsection (a), both in the form of the training referenced in Rule 92 and  
2025 otherwise. The guidance shall instruct authorized parties on the proper way to receive complaints  
2026 and to advise complainants on issues including, but not limited to, confidentiality, prohibition on  
2027 retaliation and the availability of additional resources and avenues for action for the complainant,  
2028 including possible criminal action where appropriate.

2029 (c) If a complaint made pursuant to subsection (a) is against the Director or EEO Officer, the  
2030 recipient of the complaint shall notify Counsel, rather than the Director, and Counsel shall then:  
2031 (i) refer the matter to the EEO Officer for investigation if the complaint is against the Director;  
2032 or (2) investigate the complaint pursuant to Rules 94 to 96, inclusive, if the complaint is against  
2033 the EEO Officer.

2034 (d) If, based on the nature and circumstances of the complaint, the EEO Officer believes that  
2035 they cannot objectively assess or investigate a complaint referred to them pursuant to Rule 94,  
2036 the EEO Officer shall immediately notify Counsel, who shall refer the complaint to outside

2037 counsel for investigation. Counsel shall provide the EEO Officer with guidelines used to identify  
2038 matters that should be referred to Counsel or outside counsel pursuant to this subsection.

2039 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 25, 2025.]

2040 94. (a)(1) All complaints alleging harassment or retaliation by or against a member, officer,  
2041 intern or employee of the House, or by or against a third party, received by any member, officer  
2042 or employee of the House, shall be immediately referred to the Director for initial assessment.

2043 (2) Upon receiving a complaint alleging harassment or retaliation by or against a member,  
2044 officer, intern or employee of the House, or by or against a third party, the Director shall  
2045 promptly undertake an initial assessment to determine whether the complaint is plausible and  
2046 requires investigation. Such assessment shall be completed within two weeks from the date of  
2047 receiving a complaint.

2048 Upon a determination by the Director that a complaint is plausible and requires investigation,  
2049 the Director shall notify Counsel that a complaint is being referred to the EEO Officer and shall  
2050 then submit the complaint along with the Director's initial assessment to the EEO Officer so that  
2051 the EEO Officer may commence an investigation of the complaint.

2052 (3) Upon a determination by the Director that a complaint is not plausible and does not  
2053 require investigation, the Director shall submit a report to Counsel describing the complaint and  
2054 the Director's basis for determining that the complaint lacked plausibility and did not require  
2055 investigation. If Counsel objects to the Director's determination, the Director shall then submit  
2056 the complaint to the EEO Officer so that the EEO Officer may commence an investigation of the  
2057 complaint.

2058 (4) Upon receiving a complaint submitted pursuant to (2), the EEO Officer shall confirm the  
2059 Director's assessment that the Complaint is plausible. If the EEO Officer confirms that the  
2060 complaint is plausible, the EEO Officer will then commence an investigation. If the EEO Officer  
2061 assesses that the Complaint is not plausible, notwithstanding the Director's initial assessment,  
2062 then the EEO Officer shall so notify Counsel. Counsel shall then review the complaint and the  
2063 basis for both the Director's initial assessment and the EEO Officer's contrary assessment and  
2064 shall determine whether or not the EEO Officer shall proceed with an investigation.

2065 (b) The EEO Officer shall conduct investigations pursuant to written policies and procedures,  
2066 which shall be established by the EEO Officer pursuant to Rule 98, as well as established best  
2067 practices. The policies and procedures shall ensure that all investigations and reports are  
2068 confidential to the fullest extent practicable under the circumstances and shall reflect well-  
2069 established industry best practices for EEO-related investigations.

2070 (c) The EEO Officer shall complete investigations within 90 days; provided, that the EEO  
2071 Officer may extend the investigation in extraordinary circumstances. The EEO Officer shall  
2072 regularly, but no less frequently than every 2 weeks, update the complainant on the status of the  
2073 investigation. If the EEO Officer believes that interim measures are warranted to protect  
2074 complainants during the investigation, then the EEO shall recommend such measures to Counsel,  
2075 who shall work with the appropriate supervisory individual or body to implement such interim  
2076 measures as necessary and appropriate.

2077 (d) Upon the conclusion of an investigation, the EEO Officer shall prepare a report  
2078 summarizing the complaint, the EEO Officer's investigation, findings and recommendations, if  
2079 any, for disciplinary, remedial or preventative action, or any combination thereof. The EEO

2080 Officer shall submit this report to Counsel, who shall share the conclusions of the report with the  
2081 appropriate supervisory individual or body as necessary and appropriate, and in such a manner to  
2082 maintain confidentiality regarding the information in the report to the greatest extent practicable.

2083 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Feb. 25, 2025.]

2084 95. (a) (1) If after completion of an investigation pursuant to Rule 94, the EEO Officer  
2085 determines that a member has violated Rule 88, the EEO Officer shall recommend disciplinary,  
2086 remedial or preventative action, or any combination thereof, as is appropriate and proportional  
2087 under the circumstances, subject to the limitations set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3).

2088 (2) Where the EEO Officer's action recommended pursuant to paragraph (1) does not include  
2089 reprimand, censure, removal from position as a chair or other position of authority, or expulsion,  
2090 the EEO Officer shall notify Counsel and the member of the recommended action and provide  
2091 the member with a copy of the EEO Officer's report. The member may, within 10 days of  
2092 receiving notice, request in writing that the Speaker and Minority Leader appoint a special  
2093 committee pursuant to Rule 96 to review the findings and recommendations of the EEO Officer.

2094 Upon receipt of said request, the Speaker and Minority Leader shall convene a special  
2095 committee pursuant to Rule 96.

2096 If the member fails to request the appointment of a special committee pursuant to Rule 96  
2097 within 10 days, then Counsel shall determine the parties who must be informed to implement the  
2098 recommended action, including but not limited to the Speaker or the Minority Leader, and those  
2099 parties shall implement the recommended action.

2100 (3) If the action recommended pursuant to subsection (a) includes reprimand, censure,  
2101 removal from position as a chair or other position of authority, or expulsion, the EEO Officer  
2102 shall submit, through Counsel, a request that the Speaker and Minority Leader convene a special  
2103 committee pursuant to Rule 96 to review the findings and recommendations of the EEO Officer.  
2104 Upon receipt of said request from the EEO Officer, the Speaker and Minority Leader shall  
2105 appoint a special committee pursuant to Rule 96.

2106 (4) Upon the request for a special committee made by the EEO Officer or a member pursuant  
2107 to this subsection, the EEO Officer shall provide the Speaker and Minority Leader with a copy of  
2108 the EEO Officer's report.

2109 (b) (1) If after completion of an investigation pursuant to Rule 94 the EEO Officer concludes  
2110 that an appointed officer, intern or employee has violated Rule 88, the EEO Officer shall notify  
2111 Counsel, who shall then notify the appointing authority for the appointed officer, intern or  
2112 employee and recommend the implementation of remedial, preventative or disciplinary action, or  
2113 any combination thereof, as is appropriate and proportional under the circumstances, subject to  
2114 the limitations set forth in paragraph (2). Notwithstanding Rule 97, the appointing authority may  
2115 inform any other supervisors of the appointed officer, intern or employee of the remedial,  
2116 preventative or disciplinary action if the appointing authority believes that sharing such  
2117 information is necessary for maintaining proper supervision of the appointed officer, intern or  
2118 employee.

2119 (2) If after completion of an investigation pursuant to Rule 94 the EEO Officer concludes  
2120 that an appointed officer, intern or employee has violated Rule 88 and the EEO Officer's action  
2121 recommended pursuant to paragraph (1) includes termination of employment or internship, the

2122 EEO Officer shall forward the recommendation along with the report, with all supporting  
2123 documentation, to Counsel for review and approval. Counsel shall have two business days to  
2124 review the EEO Officer's recommendation. If Counsel approves the recommendation, Counsel  
2125 shall forward the recommendation and report to the chair of the committee on Human Resources  
2126 and Employee Engagement for approval. If the chair approves, Counsel shall then notify the  
2127 Speaker, the appointing authority, and the Director, and the Director shall immediately terminate  
2128 the individual's employment or internship. If Counsel rejects the EEO Officer's  
2129 recommendation, or if the chair does not approve the recommendation after Counsel has  
2130 approved, then Counsel shall notify the Speaker and the Speaker shall determine the action to be  
2131 implemented.

2132 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Feb. 25, 2025.]

2133 96. (a) Upon receipt of a request pursuant to Rule 95, the Speaker and Minority Leader shall  
2134 confidentially convene a Special Committee on Professional Conduct, which shall consist of 7  
2135 members, 5 of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker and 2 of whom shall be appointed by the  
2136 Minority Leader. To the extent practicable, membership on the special committee shall be  
2137 apportioned in a way that takes into account the nature of the complaint and the commitment of  
2138 the House to providing fair and equal opportunity in employment. The Speaker shall appoint a  
2139 member to serve as chair. No member who has declared their candidacy for any other local, state  
2140 or federal office shall be appointed to a special committee. Upon appointment of members to the  
2141 committee, the Speaker and Minority Leader shall notify Counsel, the EEO Officer, and the  
2142 member who is the subject of the complaint of the identity of the members appointed. The  
2143 existence of the committee and the identity of the members appointed to the committee shall  
2144 otherwise remain confidential.

2145 (b) The EEO Officer shall provide the members of the special committee with all records  
2146 relevant to the investigation. The special committee shall review all records provided to them  
2147 and may further investigate, to the extent that it is necessary to resolve the complaint. The special  
2148 committee may summon witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and compel the production  
2149 of books, papers, documents and other evidence in connection with its review.

2150 (c) In the case of a special committee convened under this section upon the request for a  
2151 review by a member pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of Rule 95, the committee shall  
2152 determine whether the EEO Officer's intended action is proportional and appropriate under the  
2153 circumstances. If a majority of the committee so finds, it shall order that the action recommended  
2154 by the EEO Officer be implemented, along with any additional disciplinary, remedial or  
2155 preventative action, or any combination thereof, the committee determines to be proportional and  
2156 appropriate under the circumstances, subject to the limitations set forth in subsection (d). If a  
2157 majority of the committee finds that the intended action was not proportional or appropriate  
2158 under the circumstances, it may make a new recommendation for disciplinary, remedial or  
2159 preventative action, or any combination thereof, subject to the limitations set forth in said  
2160 subsection (d). All determinations of the committee pursuant to this subsection shall be final.

2161 (d) (1) If a majority of the committee finds that a member has violated Rule 88, it may take  
2162 any disciplinary, remedial or preventative action, or any combination thereof, as it determines to  
2163 be proportional and appropriate under the circumstances; provided, however, that if the  
2164 committee determines that reprimand, censure, removal from position as a chair or other position  
2165 of authority, or expulsion is proportional and appropriate under the circumstances, it shall file a  
2166 report with the Clerk recommending that the House vote to implement the disciplinary action.

2167 (2) Upon the filing of a report pursuant to paragraph (1), the Clerk shall promptly: (i) make  
2168 the report available to all members electronically; (ii) cause the report to be posted on the  
2169 website of the General Court; and (iii) place the matter in first position in the Orders of the Day  
2170 for the next calendar day that the House is meeting; provided, however, that no business shall be  
2171 conducted on that calendar day or any day thereafter until the question of acceptance or rejection  
2172 of the special committee's recommendation for discipline is decided by a majority of the  
2173 members present and voting by a recorded roll call vote. If a majority of the members vote to  
2174 accept the recommendation for discipline, the member shall be disciplined in the manner so  
2175 recommended. Unless a majority of the members vote to accept the report, the member shall not  
2176 be disciplined.

2177 (3) All findings and determinations of the committee, including instances where the special  
2178 committee does not file a report with the Clerk pursuant to paragraph (1), shall be reported to  
2179 Counsel and the EEO Officer and shall be final. The EEO Officer shall maintain confidential  
2180 records of such findings and determinations, except that a report filed pursuant to paragraph (1)  
2181 shall be public.

2182 (e) The committee may consult with Counsel, the EEO Officer or the Director in discharging  
2183 its duties pursuant to Rules 88 to 97, inclusive.

2184 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 25, 2025.]

2185 97. (a) Any information obtained by a member or employee in their official capacity and  
2186 relating to a complaint or investigation of harassment pursuant to Rules 93 to 96, inclusive, and  
2187 any records of such information shall be confidential to the fullest extent possible.

2188 Confidentiality shall be specifically subject to subsections (b), (c), (d) and (e); provided that

2189 nothing in this Rule shall prevent the EEO Officer or Counsel from sharing information  
2190 regarding a complaint or investigation, including but not limited to the report prepared by the  
2191 EEO Officer, to effectuate the requirements of Rules 88 through 97, inclusive.

2192 (b) The EEO Officer, in reviewing a complaint and conducting an investigation, shall keep  
2193 the complaint confidential and shall not disclose the identity of the complainant or the person  
2194 against whom the complaint is made or any other details of the complaint with any member or  
2195 employee; provided, however, that the EEO Officer may share information to the extent  
2196 necessary to interview witnesses or parties to the investigation, or to consult with Counsel if the  
2197 EEO Officer determines that such consultation is necessary or appropriate in connection with the  
2198 investigation.

2199 (c) (1) The establishment of a special committee pursuant to Rule 96 shall be completely  
2200 confidential, except as set forth in Rule 96.

2201 (2) All proceedings of a special committee convened pursuant to Rule 96 shall be confidential  
2202 and members of the committee shall not share any information about the complaint and  
2203 investigation for which the committee was convened with any other member or employee,  
2204 including their own appointed staff; provided, however, that the committee may consult with  
2205 Counsel or the EEO Officer if the chair of the committee determines that such consultation is  
2206 required in connection with the investigation.

2207 (3) A special committee convened pursuant to Rule 96 shall implement all actions short of  
2208 reprimand, censure, removal from position as a chair or other position of authority, or expulsion  
2209 of a member confidentially, except that the special committee shall submit a final report to  
2210 Counsel and the EEO Officer and may consult with Counsel if the chair of the committee

2211 determines that such consultation is required in connection with their recommended action. The  
2212 committee's recommendation, if any, for reprimand, censure, removal from position as a chair or  
2213 other position of authority, or expulsion of a member, shall be a public document; provided,  
2214 however, that the committee may use pseudonyms to conceal the identity of the complainant if  
2215 the circumstances of the complaint so warrant.

2216 (d) All authorized parties shall keep complaints confidential, except to share the complaint  
2217 with the Director, Counsel and the EEO Officer as set forth in these Rules.

2218 (e) Nothing in this Rule shall limit the ability of the EEO Officer to share information with a  
2219 complainant, to the extent appropriate, in order to properly conclude the complaint or  
2220 investigation process.

2221 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jan. 30, 2019; Feb. 25, 2025.]

2222 98. The EEO Officer and the Director shall establish all policies, procedures and guidelines  
2223 required by Rules 88 to 97, inclusive, and may develop supplemental policies, procedures and  
2224 guidelines necessary to implement or enforce Rules 88 to 97, inclusive; provided, that no policy,  
2225 procedure or guideline shall take effect without the prior review and written approval of Counsel  
2226 and the committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement. Where appropriate, these  
2227 policies, procedures and guidelines shall be included in the handbooks.

2228 The EEO Officer and the Director may consult with each other, Counsel, and the committee  
2229 on Human Resources and Employee Engagement to carry out the requirements of Rules 88 to 97,  
2230 inclusive.

2231 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jul. 7, 2021.]

2232 99. [Omitted Feb. 25, 2025] [Added March 15, 2018; Amended Jul. 7, 2021.]

2233 100. (a) No member, officer, intern or employee shall execute any agreement to settle any  
2234 legal claim or potential legal claim by any current or former member, officer, intern or employee  
2235 unless said agreement is executed pursuant to this rule.

2236 (b) No member, officer, intern or employee shall execute any agreement to settle any legal  
2237 claim or potential legal claim brought by any current or former member, officer, intern or  
2238 employee without the approval of Counsel. Counsel shall independently review the claim or  
2239 potential legal claim brought by any current or former member, officer, intern or employee and  
2240 confirm that the claim or potential claim does not relate to sexual harassment or retaliation based  
2241 on a claim of sexual harassment. Counsel shall not approve any settlement of a legal claim or  
2242 potential legal claim brought by any current or former member, officer, intern or employee  
2243 pursuant to this subsection if Counsel reasonably believes such legal claim or potential legal  
2244 claim relates to sexual harassment or retaliation based on a claim of sexual harassment.

2245 (c) No member, officer, intern or employee shall execute any agreement to settle any legal  
2246 claim or potential legal claim of sexual harassment, or retaliation based on a legal claim or  
2247 potential legal claim of sexual harassment, by any current or former member, officer, intern or  
2248 employee unless said agreement is executed pursuant to this subsection.

2249 No member, officer, intern or employee shall execute any agreement to settle a legal claim or  
2250 potential legal claim of sexual harassment, or retaliation based on a legal claim or potential legal  
2251 claim of sexual harassment, by any current or former member, officer, intern or employee unless:

2252 1. the request to negotiate said agreement was initiated, in writing, by the person filing or  
2253 eligible to file the legal claim or potential legal claim or a person legally authorized to represent  
2254 that person;

2255 2. the person filing the legal claim or eligible to file the legal claim is given 15 days to review  
2256 and consider the agreement;

2257 3. the duration of any non-disclosure or non-disparagement provision of the agreement to  
2258 settle the legal claim or potential legal claim is for a finite period of time as agreed to by the  
2259 parties;

2260 4. the agreement to settle the legal claim or potential legal claim specifically provides that no  
2261 provision of the agreement, including any non-disclosure or non-disparagement provision of the  
2262 agreement, shall preclude any party from participating in an investigation by Counsel, the  
2263 Director, the EEO Officer, a Special Committee on Professional Conduct or any law  
2264 enforcement agency; and

2265 5. the agreement is approved in writing by Counsel.

2266 (d) In the case of an agreement to settle any legal claim or potential legal claim of sexual  
2267 harassment pursuant to this Rule by a member, the Speaker and Minority Leader shall appoint a  
2268 Special Committee on Professional Conduct pursuant to Rule 96 to determine if the member  
2269 shall be required to personally reimburse the House for all or part of the settlement amount.

2270 Upon a determination by the Special Committee that the member shall be required to personally  
2271 reimburse the House for all or part of the settlement amount, it shall determine the amount to be  
2272 reimbursed and immediately notify the member of that amount.

2273 (e) Upon request of the party described in paragraph numbered 1 above or the complainant,  
2274 Counsel shall waive any non-disclosure or non-disparagement provision of any agreement  
2275 executed prior to the effective date of this Rule by the House and any current or former member,  
2276 officer, intern or employee, to allow said current or former member, officer, intern or employee  
2277 to report or discuss a claim of sexual harassment or retaliation based on sexual harassment.

2278 [Added Mar. 15, 2018; Amended Jan. 30, 2019; Jul. 7, 2021; Feb. 25, 2025.]

2279 101. Notwithstanding Rule 7C, the Speaker may, upon recommendation of a majority of the  
2280 committee on Rules, activate remote rules for the operation of the House of Representatives as  
2281 provided within this rule:

2282 *Remote Rules for the Operation of the House of Representatives*

2283 *Remote Rule 1.* As used in Remote Rules 1 through 16, inclusive, the following terms shall  
2284 have the following meanings:-

2285 “Clerk”, the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

2286 “Formal session”, a formal session of the House.

2287 “House”, the House of Representatives.

2288 “House Chamber”, the House Chamber within the Massachusetts State House in Boston or  
2289 the location to which the House at its previous formal or informal session adjourned to meet.

2290 “Member”, a member of the House of Representatives.

2291 “Monitor”, one of the members appointed by the Speaker pursuant to Standing Rule 8.

2292 “Participating remotely” or “remotely present”, participating by telephone, teleconference,  
2293 video conference or other means.

2294 “Present”, a member either physically present in the House Chamber for a formal session or  
2295 remotely present, and participating in a formal session.

2296 “Quorum”, eighty-one members present for a formal session.

2297 “Speaker”, the Speaker of the House or the member presiding at the formal session of the  
2298 House after being appointed by the Speaker to perform the duties of the Chair pursuant to  
2299 Standing Rule 5.

2300 “Standing rules”, House Rules 1 through 100, inclusive.

2301 *Remote Rule 2.* (a)(1) The House may assemble in a formal session with members  
2302 participating remotely. Members participating remotely in a formal session may vote on any  
2303 question or other matter before the House. Members participating remotely in a formal session  
2304 shall be considered present and in attendance at the formal session for all purposes, including for  
2305 purposes of determining a quorum pursuant to Article XXXIII of the Amendments to the  
2306 Constitution of the Commonwealth or any standing rules and for purposes of appearing before  
2307 the Governor and council pursuant to Part the Second, Chapter VI, Article I of the Constitution  
2308 of the Commonwealth.

2309 (2) A member participating remotely in a formal session shall have the same privileges, rights  
2310 and responsibilities as if the member were physically present in the House Chamber, including  
2311 without limitation, the right, privilege and responsibility to cast votes on all questions or other

2312 matters brought to a vote and the ability to take the oath required pursuant to Part the Second,  
2313 Chapter VI, Article I of the Constitution of the Commonwealth.

2314 (3) At the commencement of a formal session, the Speaker shall take the Chair at the hour to  
2315 which the House stands adjourned, call the House to order and immediately order a quorum roll  
2316 call.

2317 (4)(i) The House shall not be called to order before the hour of 10:00 A.M. nor meet beyond  
2318 the hour of midnight unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

2319 (ii) All votes taken on the enactment of any bill or resolve during any formal session where  
2320 members are participating remotely shall be by roll call vote.

2321 (5) The Clerk shall prepare a Journal for the House for any formal session of the House held  
2322 remotely. The Journal for the House may reflect that the formal session was convened pursuant  
2323 to remote rules, but shall not deviate in any substantive manner from the Journal of the House  
2324 required to be prepared by the Clerk pursuant to Standing Rule 10. The Journal of the House for  
2325 any formal session of the House held during the state of emergency within the House shall not  
2326 specify which members participated remotely.

2327 (b)(1) The Speaker shall preside from within the House Chamber over any formal session of  
2328 the House where any member is participating remotely. The Minority Leader, Chair of the  
2329 committee on Ways and Means, Ranking Minority Member of the committee on Ways and  
2330 Means, the House Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the joint committee from which any  
2331 bill being debated at the formal session has been reported, or their designees, and the division  
2332 monitors may also be physically present. All other members are strongly encouraged to  
2333 participate remotely in a formal session.

2334 (2) Officers and employees essential to the conduct of the formal session may be present in  
2335 the House Chamber during a formal session with the express authorization of the Speaker in  
2336 consultation with the Minority Leader. The Speaker and Minority Leader may have two  
2337 employees from their office present in the House Chamber during a formal session. No other  
2338 officer or employee shall be physically present in the House Chamber unless deemed essential to  
2339 the conduct of the formal session by the Speaker. [Amended Feb. 1, 2023.]

2340 (3) All members, officers and employees physically present in the House Chamber during a  
2341 formal session shall, at the direction of the Speaker, undertake any mitigation measures ordered  
2342 by the Speaker. Court Officers shall strictly enforce mitigation measures directed by the Speaker  
2343 by and between members, officers and employees in and around the House Chamber. Any  
2344 member, officer or employee in violation of the mitigation measures ordered by the Speaker  
2345 shall be removed from the House Chamber.

2346 *Remote Rule 3.* (a) A member participating remotely may make any motion authorized  
2347 pursuant to the standing rules, raise a point of order, raise a point of personal privilege, or raise a  
2348 point of parliamentary inquiry. Members participating remotely shall notify their division  
2349 monitor of their desire to make a motion, raise a point of order, raise a point of personal privilege  
2350 or raise a point of parliamentary inquiry. The division monitor shall immediately notify the  
2351 Speaker who shall recognize the member seeking to make a motion, raise a point of order, raise a  
2352 point of personal privilege or raise a point of parliamentary inquiry. No member shall interrupt  
2353 another member while that member is speaking, including to request that the member speaking  
2354 yield, except for the reasons authorized herein.

2355 (b) A vote on any motion made pursuant to subsection (a) shall be conducted by voice vote as  
2356 prescribed by subsection (b) of Remote Rule 5, unless the Constitution or the standing rules  
2357 specifically require a roll call vote.

2358 (c) A motion made by a member participating remotely may be made and submitted by the  
2359 division monitor for the floor division of the House wherein the seat assigned to said member  
2360 pursuant to Standing Rule 79 is located.

2361 *Remote Rule 4.* (a) A member participating remotely wishing to speak on any question before  
2362 the House shall notify the monitor for the floor division of the House wherein the seat assigned  
2363 to said member pursuant to Standing Rule 79 is located as follows:

2364 (i) A member wishing to speak on a bill, resolve or the General Appropriation Bill, or an  
2365 amendment thereto, shall notify their floor division monitor no later than 10:00 A.M. on the day  
2366 that the bill, resolve, General Appropriation Bill, or amendment thereto, is scheduled to be  
2367 considered by the House. Said notification shall include: (1) the number of the bill, resolve  
2368 General Appropriation Bill, or amendment thereto, that the member wishes to speak to; and (2)  
2369 whether the member wishes to speak in favor of or in opposition to the bill, resolve, General  
2370 Appropriation Bill, or amendment thereto.

2371 (ii) A member wishing to speak on a consolidated amendment shall notify their floor division  
2372 monitor no later than 45 minutes after the consolidated amendment shall have been first filed  
2373 with the Clerk and made available electronically to the members. Said notification shall include:  
2374 (1) the number or letter of the consolidated amendment the member wishes to speak to; and (2)  
2375 whether the member wishes to speak in favor of or in opposition to the consolidated amendment.

2376 (iii) A member wishing to speak on a conference committee report filed pursuant to Joint  
2377 Rule 11B shall notify their floor division monitor no later than 10:00 A.M. on the day the  
2378 conference committee report is scheduled to be considered by the House. Said notification shall  
2379 include: (1) the bill number of the conference committee report; and (2) whether the member  
2380 wishes to speak in favor of, or in opposition to the report. The provisions of this paragraph shall  
2381 be inoperative if the conference committee report is filed later than 8:00 P.M. on the day  
2382 preceding its consideration by the House.

2383 (b) The monitor for each division shall prepare a list of members of their division notifying  
2384 the monitor of said member's desire to speak in favor of a question before the House and a list of  
2385 members of their division notifying the monitor of said member's desire to speak in opposition  
2386 to a question before the House. Each list shall be arranged in order of the time the monitor  
2387 received the notification with the notification received the earliest being first.

2388 (c) Upon completion of the lists required pursuant to subsection (b), the monitors for each  
2389 division shall transmit the lists to the Speaker and the Minority Leader. The Speaker shall  
2390 combine the lists received from each of the division monitors and, in consultation with the  
2391 Minority Leader, shall prepare a consolidated list of members notifying their monitor of the  
2392 member's desire to speak in favor of a question before the House and a consolidated list of  
2393 members of their division notifying the monitor of said member's desire to speak in opposition  
2394 to a question before the House.

2395 (d) The Speaker shall distribute the lists compiled pursuant to subsection (c) to all members  
2396 electronically prior to the commencement of the formal session. The Speaker shall distribute the  
2397 list compiled pursuant to subsection (a)(ii) as soon as practicable upon completion.

2398 (e) The consolidated lists prepared by the Speaker pursuant to subsection (c) and distributed  
2399 to the membership pursuant to subsection (d) shall be the order in which members are recognized  
2400 during the debate of the respective question. In recognizing members from said lists, the Speaker  
2401 shall, to the extent practicable, alternate between members wishing to speak in favor of the  
2402 question and members wishing to speak in opposition to the question.

2403 (f) A member participating remotely may, in lieu of speaking on a bill, resolve, amendment,  
2404 consolidated amendment or a conference committee report, submit written remarks in favor of,  
2405 or in opposition to, any bill, resolve, amendment, consolidated amendment or conference  
2406 committee report to the Clerk before the adjournment of the formal session in which said bill,  
2407 resolve, amendment, consolidated amendment or conference committee report was considered by  
2408 the House. Said remarks shall be transmitted to the Clerk electronically in a format prescribed by  
2409 the Clerk. The Clerk shall include any remarks submitted by a member participating remotely  
2410 pursuant to this section in the Journal of the House required to be kept by the Clerk pursuant to  
2411 Standing Rule 10 and Remote Rule 2.

2412 *Remote Rule 5.* (a) Notwithstanding Standing Rules 50 through 52, inclusive, during a formal  
2413 session where members are participating remotely a vote on any question shall be by either a  
2414 voice vote of the members present and voting pursuant to subsection (b) or a roll call vote of the  
2415 members present and voting pursuant to subsection (c). Any question that would require a  
2416 standing vote under the standing rules shall be decided by a voice vote of the members present  
2417 and voting pursuant to subsection (b).

2418 (b) When a question is put, the sense of the House shall be taken by the voices of the  
2419 members, and the Speaker shall first announce the vote as it appears to the Speaker by the sound.

2420 If the Speaker is unable to decide by the sound of the voices, or if the announcement made  
2421 thereupon is doubted by a member, the Speaker shall order the division monitors to ascertain the  
2422 number of members within in their division voting in the affirmative and the number of members  
2423 within in their division voting in the negative, without further debate upon the question. The  
2424 division monitors shall report the total vote of their division count to the Speaker. After receiving  
2425 the reports of the total vote counts from each of the division monitors, the Speaker shall tally said  
2426 votes and then announce the vote.

2427 (c) The sense of the House shall be taken by yeas and nays whenever required by 10 percent  
2428 of the members elected or when required pursuant to the Constitution of the Commonwealth.  
2429 The Speaker shall state the pending question and shall order the division monitors to commence  
2430 the roll call of the members. The division monitors shall call the roll of the members assigned to  
2431 said division in alphabetical order. The division monitors shall record the votes of each member  
2432 on a form prescribed by the Clerk. Upon completion of the roll call, the division monitors shall  
2433 sign the form upon which the roll call for their division was recorded and submit the completed  
2434 form to the Clerk. The Clerk shall tally the votes of the members of each division and shall enter  
2435 the votes into the electronic roll call machine. Upon completion of the tally and the entry of the  
2436 votes into the electronic roll call machine, the Clerk shall notify the Speaker that the vote has  
2437 been completed. Upon instruction from the Speaker, the Clerk shall display the tally of the vote  
2438 on the 2 monitors in the House Chamber. The Speaker shall then announce the vote.

2439 (d) If a member doubts the presence of a quorum, the Speaker shall order the division  
2440 monitors to ascertain the number of members within in their divisions who are present. Any  
2441 member confirmed by the division monitor to be participating remotely shall be considered  
2442 present. The division monitors shall report the total number of members present to the Speaker.

2443 After receiving the reports of the total number of members present from each of the division  
2444 monitors, the Speaker shall tally the numbers and then announce the number of members present.  
2445 If, after tallying the numbers from each of the division monitors a quorum is not present, the  
2446 Speaker shall order a roll call vote pursuant to subsection (c).

2447 (e) The call for yeas and nays shall be decided without debate. If the yeas and nays have been  
2448 ordered before the question is put, the proceedings under subsection (b) shall be omitted.

2449 (f) Except as heretofore provided, any member who shall vote or attempt to vote for another  
2450 member or any person not a member who votes or attempts to vote for a member, or any member  
2451 or other person who willfully tampers with or attempts to impair or destroy in any manner  
2452 whatsoever the voting equipment used by the House, or change the records thereon shall be  
2453 punished in such manner as the House determines; and provided further, that such a violation  
2454 shall be reported to the committee on Ethics.

2455 *Remote Rule 6.* No consolidated amendment to any bill offered by the committee on Ways  
2456 and Means shall be considered by the House until the expiration of at least 30 minutes after the  
2457 consolidated amendment shall have been first filed with the Clerk and made available  
2458 electronically to the members. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of  
2459 the members present.

2460 *Remote Rule 7.* No consolidated amendment to any bill offered by the committee on Ways  
2461 and Means shall be adopted except by a roll call vote.

2462 *Remote Rule 8.* Notwithstanding any standing rule to the contrary, with the approval of the  
2463 Speaker, a member, officer or employee may take photographs and videos of, and in, the House

2464 Chamber provided said photographs or videos are to facilitate the remote participation in the  
2465 formal session by a member.

2466 *Remote Rule 9.* (a) Notwithstanding any standing rule to the contrary, unless authorized  
2467 pursuant to subsection (b) or subsection (c), no member participating in a formal session shall be  
2468 recognized more than once on any question before the House without unanimous consent or on  
2469 any question before the House for more than 10 minutes without unanimous consent.

2470 (b) The following members may, notwithstanding subsection (a), be recognized more than  
2471 once on any question before the House: (1) the Minority Leader; (2) the member carrying the  
2472 report of the committee; (3) and the Ranking Minority Member of the committee reporting the  
2473 bill.

2474 (c) Notwithstanding subsection (a), after all members have been recognized pursuant to  
2475 Remote Rule 4, a member who is the primary sponsor of a bill, resolve or an amendment, or a  
2476 designee of said member, may, in addition to being recognized pursuant to Remote Rule 4, be  
2477 recognized for purposes of providing rebuttal or further explanation. If a member who is the  
2478 primary sponsor of a bill, resolve or amendment or their designee is recognized pursuant to this  
2479 subsection a member from the opposite political party designated by the member carrying the  
2480 report of the committee or the Ranking Minority Member of the committee reporting the bill  
2481 may also be recognized in addition to being recognized pursuant to Remote Rule 4. No member  
2482 shall be recognized pursuant to this subsection for more than 5 minutes without unanimous  
2483 consent.

2484 *Remote Rule 10.* Notwithstanding any standing rule to the contrary, any formal session where  
2485 members are participating remotely shall be livestreamed on the General Court website. Audio or

2486 video recordings of all such sessions shall be made available to the public on the General Court  
2487 website. All House sessions conducted by electronic means shall be broadcast on House  
2488 television.

2489 *Remote Rule 11.* Notwithstanding any standing rule to the contrary, no technical failure that  
2490 breaks the remote connection of a member or members of the House of Representatives  
2491 participating remotely in a formal session shall invalidate any action taken by the House of  
2492 Representatives.

2493 *Remote Rule 12.* Notwithstanding Standing Rule 49, members participating remotely may  
2494 vote in a quorum roll call.

2495 *Remote Rule 13.* Except as otherwise indicated, Remote Rules 1 through 16, inclusive, shall  
2496 not be suspended unless by a 2/3 vote of the members present and voting. Debate upon a motion  
2497 for the suspension of Remote Rules 1 through 16, inclusive, shall be limited to 15 minutes and  
2498 no member shall speak for more than 3 minutes.

2499 *Remote Rule 14.* The provisions of any standing or remote rules pertaining to procedures of  
2500 the House may be suspended and alternative procedures may be used if said alternative methods  
2501 are approved by a 2/3 majority of the committee on Rules and approved, in writing, by the  
2502 Speaker and the Minority Leader. The Clerk shall enter any such approvals in the House Journal  
2503 for the formal session required to be kept by the Clerk pursuant to Standing Rule 10.

2504 *Remote Rule 15.* Except to the extent that they conflict with Remote Rules 1 through 16,  
2505 inclusive, the standing rules shall remain in full force and effect.

2506 *Remote Rule 16.* Remote Rules 1 through 16, inclusive, shall remain activated for no longer  
2507 than 30 days after being activated by the Speaker; provided, that the House of Representative  
2508 shall not operate under remote rules beyond 30 days without the adoption of an Order by a  
2509 majority of the House.

2510 [Emergency remote rule historical notes: See House document numbered 4690 of the 191st  
2511 General Court; also see House documents numbered 59 and 3929 of the 192nd General Court;  
2512 [Added to Rules Jul. 7, 2021; Amended Feb. 1, 2023.]  
2513 House of Representatives, February 25, 2025.

2514 A D O P T E D



2515 , Clerk.

2516

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# SENATE . . . . . No. 19

Senate, February 13, 2025 – Text of the Senate Rules adopted as the permanent rules of the Senate for 2025-2026.

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)

### RULES OF THE SENATE

#### THE PRESIDENT.

1. The President shall take the chair at the hour to which the Senate stands adjourned, shall call the members to order, and shall proceed to business. [1831; 1888; 2025.]
  - 1A. Every formal session of the Senate shall open with a recitation of the “Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag”. At the discretion of the President, in order to mark an occasion of particular significance, a Senate session or component thereof may include a moment of silence, prayer or other expression of personal belief. [1989; 2015.]
2. The President shall preserve order and decorum, may speak to points of order in preference to other members, and shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the Senate. [1817; between 1821 and 1826; 1831; 1888; 2025.]
3. The President may vote on all questions. [1826.]
4. The President may appoint a member to perform the duties of the chair. [1831; 1862; 1865; 1888; 1971; 2025.]
  - 4A. The President shall be elected by roll call vote on the Senate floor. This rule shall not be suspended except by a vote of four-fifths of the members present and voting thereon. Rule 63 shall not apply to this case and no other rule shall supersede the requirement of four-fifths vote to suspend this rule. [1993; 2002, 2019; 2025.]
  - 4B. The President, Majority Leader and the Minority Leader shall, upon declaration of candidacy for any other state or federal elective office, relinquish said position. [2003; 2015; 2025.]
5. In case of a vacancy in the office of President, or in case the President, or the member appointed by the President to perform the duties of the chair, is absent at the hour to which the Senate stands adjourned, the longest continuously serving, and in the event that two or more members equally qualify as longest continuously serving, then the eldest among those members shall call the Senate to order, and shall preside until a President, or Acting President, is elected and such election shall be the first business in order. [1831; 1885; 1888; 1971; 1985; 2003; 2013; 2017; 2025.]

**5A.** In case of extreme emergency, the President may for a period not exceeding 2 days, in conformity with Article 6, Section II, Chapter 1 of the Constitution, cause a session of the Senate to be cancelled or declare an otherwise formal session to be informal in nature. Each member of the Senate insofar as is practicable shall be notified of such action. Notice of such action shall be printed in the Journal of the Senate by the Clerk of the Senate and the printing of a calendar shall be suspended with reference to an informal session under this rule. Matters considered in an informal session shall have either received a public hearing or other disposition by a committee of relevant subject matter jurisdiction.

In the case of an informal session, only reports of committees and matters not giving rise to formal motion or debate shall be considered. No motion or order of business shall lose its precedence but shall be carried over until the next formal session. [1971; 1973; 2025.]

**5B.** [Omitted in 2011.]

**5C.** Upon a vacancy in the Senate, with the exception of any vacancy that occurs after April 1 in an even-numbered year, a date for a special election shall be scheduled by the President within 20 days after the vacancy occurs and the proposed date of the special election shall then be put before the members of the Senate for a vote. [2011, 2019; 2025.]

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## **CLERK.**

**6.** The Clerk of the Senate shall keep a journal of the proceedings of the Senate, and shall cause the same to be presented daily. The Clerk shall, in the journal, make note of all questions of order, and enter at length the decisions thereon. Said journal of the proceedings shall be available on the general court website. The Clerk shall insert in an appendix to the journal the rules of the Senate and the joint rules of the two branches. The clerk shall post online special reports of state officials, departments, commissions, boards, and other reports as required by law, as received by the Clerk, unless otherwise ordered by the Senate Committee on Rules. [1882; 1888; 2015, 2021, 2023; 2025.]

**6A.** During sessions, except full formal sessions, each Senator shall have the opportunity to read into the journal, or cause to be printed in the journal, a ceremonial speech not to exceed 650 words; provided, however, that an electronic copy of the remarks is supplied to the Clerk.

Each Senator may offer memorial adjournments at any session upon approval by the President. If the memorial adjournment is to be read by the Senator offering such memorial adjournment during session, an electronic copy shall be provided to the Clerk prior to the said session. If the Senator offering such memorial adjournment does not plan on reading said adjournment during session, the Senator shall provide a shortened version, which shall be read by the presiding officer, along with the full-length version of the adjournment, which shall be printed in the journal. [2023; 2025.]

**7.** The Clerk, with the approval and direction of the President and the Committee on Rules, shall, upon order for a session with a calendar, prepare and cause to be presented a calendar of matters in order for consideration. The calendar for a session shall be available to the members and the public at least 2 calendar days prior to the start of that session, except when formal sessions are held on consecutive days. The calendar for any formal session on a day following a formal

session shall be available to the members and to the public as soon as practicable and, in any event, no later than 2 hours prior to the start of that session. The agenda for sessions shall be available to the members and the public at least 1 calendar day prior to the start of that session, except when sessions are held on consecutive days. The calendar shall consist of at least 4 separate sections. One section shall contain those matters for third reading and engrossment. No matters shall be considered for third reading that do not appear on this section of the calendar without unanimous consent. One section shall contain those matters held by the Senate committee on Bills in the Third Reading. One section shall contain those matters appearing on the Senate Calendar for the first time. No matters shall be considered for second reading that do not appear on this section of the calendar without unanimous consent. One section shall contain those matters which shall be on the Senate Calendar for the first time at the following formal session. No matters shall be considered for a second reading at a formal session that were not on the Calendar for the previous formal session. It shall be mandatory, however, that a bill or resolve ordered to third reading on one calendar day shall appear on the calendar at the following formal session. The Clerk, with the approval and direction of the President and the Committee on Rules, may prepare the calendar, with such memoranda as the Clerk may deem necessary, in a form designed to provide complete information and to properly facilitate the business of the Senate. When the presentation of the calendar required under this rule is suspended under Rule 5A, a session shall be considered informal and no matter shall be considered if a member at said session objects to its consideration.

Upon conclusion of all formal business pursuant to Joint Rule 12A, the Clerk shall not be required to print a calendar pursuant to this rule. [1882; 1888; 1945; 1971; 1974; 1985; 1991; 1993; 2015; 2017; 2025.]

**7A.** To better facilitate the business of the Senate, the chair shall ask for passes on the second reading matters. Second reading matters with amendments pending shall automatically be considered separately. The chair shall direct the Clerk to dispense with the reading of each title, but the journal for that day shall show that the bills have been read a second time. The question shall then come on ordering those second reading matters which have not been passed for debate to a third reading. Matters passed for debate shall be considered on the second call.

The same procedure shall be followed with relation to adverse reports appearing in groups on the calendar. Adverse reports passed for debate shall be considered on the second call. The question shall be put by the chair on the acceptance of all remaining adverse reports not passed for debate. [1975; 2025.]

**7B.** The Clerk of the Senate shall be the official parliamentarian of the Senate. [1973.]

**8.** [Omitted in 1969.]

**8A.** The Clerk shall make available on the official website of the General Court the results of all roll call votes not later than 48 hours after such vote is taken, not including quorum calls, in a manner easily identifiable, searchable, and conspicuously located. The Clerk shall include the title and number of the matter subject to debate, the number of the roll call and the title of the matter voted upon. The Clerk shall as soon as practicable make available links to the roll calls, which include the text of the amendment or matter voted on. [2007; 2011; 2013; 2015; 2017, 2021.]

9. When a bill or resolve coming from the other branch does not appear in the form in which it was passed in that branch, the Clerk shall indicate the amendments on the Orders of the Day. [1882.]

### **COUNSEL TO THE SENATE.**

**9A.** The Counsel to the Senate and members of the staff of said Counsel shall not engage in the private practice of law during ordinary business hours or while the Senate is in session. The Counsel to the Senate and the staff of said Counsel shall be available for consultation with the President and members of the Senate in relation to matters pending before the Senate and must at all times act in accordance with the conflict of interest law and the Rules of Professional Conduct for Lawyers. The Counsel to the Senate shall be the exclusive legal agent of the Senate, including with respect to receiving service of a summons, complaint, charge, or subpoena upon the Senate and its members, officers, and employees in their official capacities. The Counsel to the Senate and the Counsel's legal staff shall not simultaneously serve as staff in any Senator's office. [1976; 2015; 2025.]

**9B.** The President, or a designee thereof, Counsel to the Senate, and Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall be the exclusive, authorized representatives for the purpose of signing or executing any agreement, contract, or memorandum on behalf of the Senate. [2025.]

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### **MEMBERS OF THE SENATE.**

**10.** No member, officer, or employee shall use or attempt to use improper means to influence an agency, board, authority, commission of the Commonwealth, any political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or any other entity. No member, officer, or employee of the Senate shall receive compensation or permit compensation to accrue to the member, officer or employee's beneficial interest by virtue of influence improperly exerted from the member, officer or employee's position in the Senate. Every reasonable effort shall be made to avoid situations where it might appear that the member, officer or employee is making such use of the member, officer or employee's official position. Members, officers, and employees should avoid accepting or retaining an economic interest or opportunity which represents a threat to their independence of judgment.

No member, officer, or employee shall use confidential information gained in the course of or by reason of the member, officer or employee's official position or activities to further the member, officer or employee's financial interest or those of any other person. [1977; 2015.]

**10A.** No member, officer, or employee shall employ anyone from state funds who does not perform tasks which contribute to the work of the Senate and which are commensurate with the compensation received; and no officer or full time employee of the Senate shall engage in any outside business activity during regular business hours, whether the Senate is in session or not. No member of the Senate shall act on a matter before a committee or vote on any question in which the member's private right is immediately concerned, distinct from the public interest. All employees of the Senate are assumed to be full time unless their personnel record indicates otherwise. [1977.]

**10B.** Interns and temporary employees of the Senate, who are students at an accredited educational institution and who are employed by the Senate for not more than 6 months, may receive compensation from an educational institution or other non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, according to that organization's regular program of providing such compensation for temporary governmental or public service employment. A temporary employee's Senate supervisor shall establish the employee's total compensation, shall verify that the sum of the employee's state compensation, if any, and any outside compensation that the employee is to receive under this rule would not exceed this total compensation, and shall file the written terms of the employee's compensation with the Senate Office of Human Resources.

Each intern or temporary employee shall complete and have on file a form documenting the internship or temporary employment, in a format approved by the Senate Committee on Rules, to be signed by the intern's or temporary employee's Senate supervisor. [2003; 2013, 2019, 2023.]

**10C.** There shall be within the Senate Office of Human Resources a Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion who shall promote the Senate's policies concerning equal employment opportunities, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination as well as the Senate Code of Conduct and direct and guide offices to recruit, hire, train, develop, advance, promote and retain a diverse workforce, consistent with Senate Rules, applicable laws, and the Senate Employee Handbook. The Senate Office of Human Resources shall provide or otherwise make available implicit bias training to all members, officers and staff and such training shall be mandatory. [2019, 2021; 2025.]

**10D.** The Senate Office of Human Resources, in consultation with the Counsel to the Senate, as appropriate, shall be responsible for developing and overseeing standardized policies, procedures, and practices for all staff, including, but not limited to, the following: applying for Senate employment, job classifications and salary ranges, conducting staff performance management, separations from employment, and receiving, investigating, and resolving personnel complaints. The Senate Office of Human Resources shall maintain the privacy of medical, personnel, and other personal data or information of Senate employees to the extent permitted by law. [2025.]

**11.** Unless a member of the Senate doubts the presence of a quorum, the Senate shall not be affected by the absence of a Senator. [1817; 2015; 2021.]

**11A.** Each member of the Senate shall be assigned an office in the State House and may employ staff consistent with policies established by the Senate. Senate staff shall follow the policies and procedures outlined in the Senate Employee Handbook, which shall be developed and published by the Senate Office of Human Resources with the advice of the Counsel to the Senate. . [1983; 1985; 1993; 2003; 2015; 2021; 2025.]

**11B.** [Omitted in 2023.]

**11C.** The Committee on Rules shall ensure that each member of the Senate is able to receive electronic mail from members of the public. [2001; 2003; 2015; 2025.]

**11D.** The Committee on Ethics shall sponsor ethics training for members and staff within 90 days of the opening of the biennial session. Ethics training shall be mandatory for all members and staff and Counsel to the Senate shall be responsible for ensuring completion of the ethics training required under this rule by all members and staff. [2009; 2015, 2019; 2025.]

**11E.** Members of the Senate may be compensated for service in no more than 2 positions, whether as a member of leadership or as a chair, vice-chair or ranking member of a committee. [2017, 2019.]

**11F.** No member, officer, or staff shall violate the Senate’s anti-harassment policy. Members, officers, and staff shall receive anti-harassment and bystander intervention training within 90 days of the opening of the biennial session. All members, officers, and staff beginning employment after the anti-harassment and bystander intervention training held within 90 days of the opening of the biennial session shall complete anti-harassment and bystander intervention training as part of the employment onboarding process. Anti-harassment and bystander intervention training shall be mandatory for all members, officers, and staff and all members, officers, and staff. The Senate Office of Human Resources, in coordination with the Counsel to the Senate, shall be responsible for ensuring completion of the training required under this rule by all members and staff. This rule shall not be suspended. [2019, 2021; 2025.]

**11G.** The Senate shall not include or permit a nondisclosure, non-disparagement or other similar clause in an agreement or contract between the Senate and a member, officer or employee. The Senate shall not seek to enforce a nondisclosure, non-disparagement or other similar clause in an existing agreement or contract between the Senate and a member, officer or employee. This rule shall not be suspended. [2019.]

**11H.** The Senate, in coordination with Legislative Information Services, shall host a training on cybersecurity awareness on an annual basis, which shall be mandatory for all members and staff. The Senate Office of Human Resources, in coordination with the Counsel to the Senate, shall be responsible for ensuring completion of the training required under this rule by all members and staff. [2025.]

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## COMMITTEES.

**12.** The following standing committees shall be appointed by the President, to wit:  
A Committee on the Census;  
To consist of 7 members, 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Minority Leader.  
A Committee on Bills in the Third Reading;  
To consist of 5 members, 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Minority Leader.  
A Committee on Post Audit and Oversight;  
To consist of 8 members, 2 of whom shall be appointed by the Minority Leader.  
A Committee on Ethics;  
To consist of 7 members, including 2 members appointed by the Minority Leader.  
A Committee on Rules;  
To consist of 7 members, including 2 members appointed by the Minority Leader.  
A Committee on Climate Change and Global Warming ;  
To consist of 6 members, 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Minority Leader.  
A Committee on Steering and Policy;  
To consist of 6 members, 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Minority Leader.  
A Committee on Ways and Means;  
To consist of 18 members, including 3 members appointed by the Minority Leader.

A Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs;

To consist of 6 members, including 1 member appointed by the Minority Leader.

A Committee on Juvenile and Emerging Adult Justice;

To consist of 7 members, including 1 member to appointed by the Minority Leader.

A Committee on Personnel and Administration;

To consist of 7 members, including 2 members appointed by the Minority Leader.

Committees shall notify the clerk of the time, place and agenda of a public hearing or executive session not less than 5 days prior to the time of such meeting and the clerk shall inform all senate members electronically and publish such information on the official website of the General Court as soon as practicable. The 5-day notice requirement shall be suspended only in an emergency or for extenuating circumstances. If public testimony is being solicited by the committee, agendas shall include an electronic mail address or other mechanism for the submission of testimony and shall inform the public that electronic testimony received may be made publicly available. Any such public testimony received by the committee that is readily capable of being reproduced shall be made available on the general court website; provided, however, that the committee chair or testifier may redact such public testimony that includes sensitive personal information or information that may jeopardize health, wellness or safety; provided further, the committee on rules shall promulgate guidance for committees to ensure the disclosure of relevant information and the non-disclosure of inappropriate material. If expert testimony is being solicited by the committee, the committee shall make reasonable efforts to promote the diversity of expert witness panels. Committees shall provide to members of the committee the text and comprehensive summaries of the bills or other forms of legislative matters prior to a vote. All recorded votes of each member and by the committees shall be posted on the website of the General Court as soon as practicable, alongside a summary of each bill or other legislative matter upon which the vote was taken.

Hearings shall be made available on a platform that permits remote public participation from outside the hearing room through audio and video technology; provided, however, that, the chair may waive this requirement for technological, operational or logistical reasons. Members of the committee may participate remotely and shall have the same privileges, rights and responsibilities as if the member were physically present at the hearing location, and other members may offer remote testimony before committees of which they are not a member. Chairs shall schedule hearings that offer remote participation through Legislative Information Services and the Sergeant-at-Arms. The agenda for such a hearing shall specify how members of the public may access, monitor and participate in the remote aspect of the meeting. Nothing contained herein shall limit the committee's ability to meet in executive session, prevent disruption or maintain decorum during the hearing. Committees may adopt rules to govern the orderly and efficient operation of such hearings.

Committees may at a hearing receive testimony from public officials out of the regular order of participation; provided, however, that if a committee follows such a practice public officials of Indigenous communities shall be treated accordingly.

Senate members serving on a joint committee under Joint Rule 1 shall, individually or through the Senate Chair, provide their recorded votes on legislation in the committee to the Clerk of the Senate who shall post said votes on the website of the General Court as soon as practicable. The Senate Chair of a joint committee shall, together with the clerk of the Senate, make public

testimony received by the committee that is readily capable of being reproduced available on the general court website; provided, however, that the chair or testifier may redact such public testimony that includes sensitive personal information or information that may jeopardize health, wellness or safety; provided further, the committee on rules shall promulgate guidance to ensure the disclosure of relevant information and the non-disclosure of inappropriate material. [1831; 1836; 1840; 1844; 1847; 1863; 1864; 1870; 1876; 1882; 1885; 1886; 1888; 1891; 1896; 1897; 1920; 1937; 1939; 1941; 1945; 1946; 1957; 1960; 1963; 1965; 1969; 1971; 1972; 1982; 1989; 1991; 1993; 1995; 1997; 2003, 2005; 2007; 2009; 2011; 2015; 2017, 2019; 2021, 2023; 2025.]

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**12A.** All violations of Rules and all questions of conduct of members, officers and employees of the Senate shall be referred by order of the Senate to the committee on Ethics. Any finding or decision by a court of law or administrative agency, including the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, which indicates sufficient facts to believe that the member, officer, or employee engaged in behavior which would constitute a violation of a Rule or other misconduct, including, but not limited to, a violation of the Senate’s anti-harassment policy, the prohibition of retaliation against an individual who has complained about discriminatory harassment or retaliation against an individual for cooperating with an investigation of a discriminatory harassment complaint shall be referred to the Ethics Committee. However, no such finding or decision is required before referral to the Ethics Committee. Such orders shall be as specific as circumstances allow. The committee shall also be empowered to receive sworn written complaints or evidence regarding violations of Rules 10 and 10A. Until a hearing, if any, is held, the contents of such complaints or evidence shall be considered confidential information, unless the contents are already a matter of public record. If no hearing is held, such contents may be made public by the committee in a final report. Breach of confidentiality may itself be grounds for disciplinary action.

Upon receipt of an order, a sworn written complaint filed under penalties of perjury, or upon receipt of evidence, the committee may investigate and take written or oral testimony on any matters specified in the order or covered by Rules 10 and 10A. A majority of committee members shall be present to receive sworn testimony. Upon majority vote of the full Senate, the committee may require by summons the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books and papers and such other records as said committee may deem relevant. All testimony before the committee shall be recorded or transcribed and such recordings and transcriptions must be made available to all members of the committee.

Said committee shall consider and may report to the Senate any recommendations regarding any infringement of the rules and all questions of conduct of members, officers and employees referred to it. If after investigation a majority of the committee determines that there has been a violation of the rules, or other misconduct, which shall include, but not be limited to, a violation of the Senate’s anti-harassment policy including the prohibition of retaliation against an individual who has complained about discriminatory harassment or retaliation against an individual for cooperating with an investigation of a discriminatory harassment complaint, the committee shall file a report with the Clerk of the Senate, including a recommendation for disciplinary action, including but not limited to: in the case of a member, reprimand, censure, temporary or permanent removal from the position of committee chair or other position of

authority, suspension with or without pay, or expulsion; in the case of an officer or employee, reprimand, suspension or removal. Said report shall not prevent the Senate from taking any other action as it shall deem advisable and appropriate.

Nothing in this rule shall be construed to require the disclosure of any allegation that the committee deems frivolous or without merit, if such determination is made by a majority of members on the committee.

If the committee receives a sworn written complaint, evidence, order of the Senate, or request for an opinion involving a member of the committee, such member shall not participate in the committee's deliberations on that matter.

The committee may, upon written request from a member, officer, or employee of the Senate, issue written advisory opinions on matters concerning Rules 10 and 10A. Such advisory opinions may be published, provided that the name of the person requesting the opinion, and any other identifying information shall not be included in the publication. The Senate may not penalize a member, officer or employee of the Senate for conduct satisfying the guidelines of an advisory opinion based on factually indistinguishable conduct.

A majority of members shall sign all recommendations, advisory opinions, and reports of the committee. All voting members must certify that they have heard or read all relevant testimony prior to voting.

The committee shall on or before December 31 of the second year of the biennial session, file a report with the Clerk summarizing its activities for the session. In addition, the committee may at any time recommend changes in the rules of conduct for the Senate or legislation relating to the conduct of the Senate, and a majority vote of the Senate shall be required to approve any such recommended changes. [1977; 1978; 1983; 1991; 2003; 2015; 2017, 2019.]

**12B.** The committee on Steering and Policy shall meet from time to time at the call of the chair for the purpose of assisting the President and the Senate in identifying the major matters which require consideration by the General Court during the pending session and to advise the President and the Senate on the relative priority of such matters, the relative urgency for consideration by the General Court of such matters, and alternative methods of responding to such matters by the General Court, and to assist on scheduling legislative matters for their even distribution throughout the legislative year. The committee may initiate legislation consistent with Senate Rule 19, but no bill shall be initiated over the objection of the Senate Chair of the appropriate committee. The committee on Steering and Policy, together with the Senate members of the Joint Committee of relevant jurisdiction, shall hold a duly noticed public hearing prior to initiating said legislation. Any matters reported favorably by said committee shall be referred as appropriate to the senate committee on rules or ways and means. [2009; 2025.]

**12B ½ .** The Committee on Rules may initiate legislation consistent with Senate Rule 19, but no bill shall be initiated over the objection of the Senate Chair of the appropriate committee. The Committee on Rules shall report on what date prior to adjournment of the last formal session the matter shall be considered by the Senate. In the case of bills removed from study and referred to the Committee on Rules, the bills may be subject to amendments by the committee as well as reports by the committee that the bills ought to pass or ought not to pass. This rule shall apply only to bills that have no state fiscal impact. [1983; 1985; 1986; 1991; 1993; 1999; 2003; 2005; 2015; 2025.]

**12C.** [Omitted in 1995.]

**12D.** The President, in consultation with the Majority leader or the Minority leader, as appropriate, shall review and allocate office space based on each member's staff and operating requirements. [1993; 2003, 2023; 2025.]

**12F.** The Committee on Post Audit and Oversight shall have all rules as agreed to by the committee and may examine issues to improve state government; provided, however, said committee may not summon witnesses or compel the production of books, papers, documents or evidence without approval of the Counsel to the Senate. [2025.]

**13. (a)** Unless the Senate shall otherwise specially order, the President shall nominate a candidate for chair of each standing committee, joint standing committee or special committee and the vice-chair and the assistant vice-chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. The President may also nominate the majority floor leader, assistant majority floor leaders, majority whip, the assistant majority whip and a President *pro tempore*. The President *pro tempore* shall assist the President in the coordination of policy development and the ceremonial functions of the Senate and shall perform such duties as assigned by the President. The minority party floor leader may nominate to minority party floor leadership positions. Such nominations shall require ratification by a majority vote by the respective party caucus. The vote shall be by voice vote, roll call or secret ballot, as the majority vote of the caucus shall determine. In the event a nomination is rejected by such caucus another nomination may be made by the person designated in this rule to make the initial nomination which shall be subject to ratification in the same manner. In the case of the election by the Senate of a committee by ballot, the member having the highest number of votes shall act as chair. The second named member shall be vice-chair.

(b) Except as provided above or unless the Senate shall otherwise specially order, committees shall be appointed by the President, with exception of the chair whose nomination and ratification shall be governed by paragraph (a). The President shall in making such appointments give consideration to representation of both the majority and minority parties relative to their respective representation in the Senate and in any event shall reserve at least 3 positions on the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and at least 1 position upon each standing or special committee for a Senate member of the minority party and appointments to such positions shall be made by the Senate minority party leader. For the purposes of this rule and rule 56, the term "minority party" shall mean the political party of those members of the Senate who, in the aggregate, constitute the second largest group of members of the Senate affiliated with a political party.

(c) A vacancy in any position which is regulated by this rule shall be filled in the same manner as provided in this rule for the original appointment; provided however that in case of a vacancy of a chair of a committee, the vice-chair shall perform all duties of said prior chair until said vacancy is filled. Any person in a position which is regulated by this rule shall be subject to removal only by a majority vote of the respective party caucus by voice vote, roll call or secret ballot as the majority vote of the caucus shall determine. [1817; between 1821 and 1826; 1831; 1888; 1973; 1983; 1985; 1991; 2003; 2015, 2017, 2019; 2025.]

**13A.** All motions or orders authorizing committees of the Senate to travel or to employ stenographers, all propositions involving special investigations by committees of the Senate and all motions or orders providing that information be transmitted to the Senate shall be referred

without debate to the Committee on Rules, who shall report thereon, recommending what action should be taken. All other motions that create main questions, except those that relate to privilege, to procedure and subject kindred matters, or to the subjects referred to in Joint Rules 29 and 30, shall also be referred without debate to the Committee on Rules and be treated in like manner.

The Chair of the Committee on Rules may originate and report special orders for the scheduling and consideration of matters on the floor of the Senate. When reported, such orders may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting and approved by a majority of the members of the Senate present and voting. Debate on the question on adoption of such orders shall be limited to 30 minutes. Such orders shall not be subject to reconsideration. [1904; 1913; 1921; 1953; 2003; 2015.]

**13B.** The President of the Senate may call a caucus at any time at which either the President or a designated member of the majority leadership shall preside unless otherwise voted by a majority of the caucus. The President shall honor the request of the Minority Leader or a member designated by the Minority Leader after notifying the presiding officer and the clerk that the Minority Leader is unable to participate due to illness or otherwise at any time while the Senate is in session, to call a minority caucus at which the Minority Leader shall preside or a designated member of the minority leadership, unless otherwise voted by a majority of the caucus.

A caucus shall also be called if 25 per cent or more of a party's membership requests the calling of a caucus. Such request shall be made to the Senate President or Minority Leader. In the instance of such a caucus being called, said caucus may consider any subject matter, including but not limited to resolutions, motions or other means of ascertaining the sense of party members on any subject. When the Senate recesses to allow a caucus, the Senate President or presiding officer shall inform the members from the rostrum of a time certain for reconvention. [1985; 1993; 2025.]

**13C.** The Senate Committee on Rules shall provide for an annual fiscal year audit of all Senate financial accounts to be conducted by a certified public accountant experienced in auditing governmental entities. A copy of the audit shall be filed with the Clerk of the Senate who shall conspicuously post the audit on the General Court website, and notify the members, the Comptroller, the Inspector General, and the State Auditor when the audit is posted. [1985; 2003; 2015; 2017; 2021; 2025.]

**14.** No committee shall be allowed to occupy the Senate Chamber without a vote of the Senate. [1836; 1863; 1888.]

**15.** No legislation affecting the rights of individuals or the rights of a private or municipal corporation, otherwise than as it affects generally the people of the whole Commonwealth or the people of the city or town to which it specifically applies, shall be proposed or introduced except by a petition, nor shall any bill or resolve embodying such legislation be reported by a committee, except upon a petition duly referred, nor shall such a bill or resolve be reported by a committee, whether on an original reference or on a recommittal with instructions to hear the parties, until it is made to appear to the satisfaction of the committee that proper notice of the proposed legislation has been given by public advertisement or otherwise to all parties interested, without expense to the Commonwealth, or until evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that all parties interested have in writing waived notice. A committee reporting adversely for want of proper notice or of a waiver thereof shall set forth this fact in its report, and

no bill or resolve shall be in order as a substitute for, or amendment of, such report. Objection to the violation of this rule may be taken at any stage prior to that of third reading. [1870; 1871; 1885; 1890; 1921; 1939; 1945; 1971.]

**16.** A committee may report a special law on matters referred to it upon (1) a petition filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council, or other legislative body, of a city, or the town meeting of a town, with respect to a law relating to that city or town; (2) a recommendation by the Governor; and (3) matters relating to erecting and constituting metropolitan or regional entities, embracing any 2 or more cities and towns, or establishing with other than existing city or town boundaries, for any general or special public purpose or purposes. [1882; 1885; 1888; 1891; 1893; 1967; 1971; 1973; 2025.]

**16A.** Reports of committees recommending that a matter be placed in a study shall be reported to the Senate if the matter being reported into a study was originally filed in the Senate. Matters which have been recommitted to a committee in session shall be reported to the branch originating the recommitment. [2002.]

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## **FORMS OF BILLS AND RESOLVES.**

**17.** Bills, resolves, resolutions and orders shall be prepared under supervision of the Counsel to the Senate. Bills, resolves, resolutions and orders founded upon petition shall be presented in an electronic format as prescribed by the Clerk, who shall then prepare such electronically filed documents for printing on official paper. Any petition which presents a bill, resolve, resolution or order that was before the General Court in the legislative session preceding that for which it is presented shall be designated as a “refiled petition” by the presenting member, together with reference to the number assigned such matter in the preceding legislative session. No repealed law and no law which has expired by limitation, and no part of any such law, shall be re-enacted by reference merely.

A bill sponsor shall provide a joint committee under Joint Rule 1 a comprehensive summary of said bill prior to the hearing on said bill. Said summary shall be made available along with the text of the bill on the website of the general court; provided said summary shall disclose that the summary was created by the sponsor of the bill and the committee does not certify the accuracy of its contents; provided further nothing in this rule shall prevent a joint standing committee from completing its own summary and making said summary publicly available. [1844; 1857; 1880; 1882; 1885; 1888; 1889; 1947; 1972; 1985, 2001, 2006; 2015; 2025.]

**17A.** To facilitate compliance with Joint Rule 6A, the clerk shall implement and maintain a digital method for filing joint petitions by a member of the Senate and a member of the House in the Senate. [2025.]

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## **INTRODUCTION OF BUSINESS.**

**18.** Every petition (excepting as otherwise provided for in the Constitution, or laws of the Commonwealth), shall be presented by a member, whose name shall be endorsed on the petition. [1831; 1888; 1972; 1973; 2025.]

**18A.** [Omitted in 2025.]

**19.** All motions contemplating legislation shall be founded upon petition, except as provided in Joint Rule 3A and except that the committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on Rules and the Committee on Steering and Policy may report a bill or other form of legislation that is not founded upon petition. Committees to whom messages from the Governor, reports of state officers, boards, commissions, and others authorized to report to the legislature shall be referred, may report by bill or otherwise such legislation as may be germane to the subject-matter referred to them. [1858; 1888; 1891; 1893; 1973; 1999; 2003; 2005; 2015; 2025.]

**20.** All petitions for legislation accompanied by bills or resolves embodying the subject-matter prayed for, which are intended for presentation or introduction to the Senate, reports of state officials, departments, commissions and boards, and reports of special committees and commissions shall be filed with the Clerk, who shall, unless they are subject to other rules or of the rules of the 2 branches, refer them, with the approval and direction of the President, to the appropriate committees, subject to such change of reference as the Senate may make.

Provided, that petitions and other papers so filed, or papers received from the House, which are subject to Joint Rules 7A, 7B or 9, shall be referred by the Clerk to the Committee on Rules. Petitions and other papers so filed which are subject to the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12 shall be referred by the Clerk to the Committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently. The reading of all such documents may be dispensed with, but they shall be entered in the journal of the same or the next legislative day after such reference, except as provided in Joint Rule 13.

All orders intended for adoption shall be deposited with the Clerk. If the orders relate to questions of privilege or to procedure and kindred matters, they shall be laid before the Senate by the President as soon as practicable. If they relate to other subjects, except as provided in rule 13A or in Joint Rules 29 and 30, they shall be referred to the Committee on Rules.

All resolutions intended for adoption shall be filed with the Clerk. Resolutions, which are not reported by committee or received from the House, shall be considered forthwith after having been reported by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading, under [Senate Rule 33](#).

Special reports of state officials, departments, commissions and boards, reports of special committees and commissions, bills and resolves accompanying petitions and reports, and resolutions, shall be printed on order of the President, and under the direction of the Clerk. They shall retain, during all subsequent stages, their original numbers and shall also bear such new numbers as may be necessary.

Matters which have been placed on file may be taken from the files by the Clerk upon request of any Senator; and matters so taken from the files shall be referred or otherwise disposed of as provided for above.

The Senate may at any time by order make any other disposition of petitions in the hands of the Clerk. [1891; 1893; 1894; 1916; 1921; 1925; 1927; 1933; 1939; 1945; 1953; 1963; 1967; 1971; 1973; 1985; 1999; 2003; 2005; 2015; 2025.]

**20A.** The Clerk shall make available on the website of the general court the text of all bills introduced in the Senate and all late file petitions accompanied by legislation. The bill text for any bill for which there was a vote on the Senate floor shall be made available to the public on the general court website as soon as practicable. [2001; 2015; 2025.]

**21.** [Omitted in 1943.]

**22.** [Omitted in 1949.]

**23.** No bill or resolve shall be proposed or introduced unless received from the House of Representatives, reported by a committee, or moved as an amendment to the report of a committee. [1881; 1882; 1888.]

**24.** The consideration of any order proposed for adoption, or of any motion to suspend Senate Rule 15, or Joint Rules 8, 9 or 12, shall be postponed without question to the day after that on which the order is proposed or request made, if any member asks such postponement. The consideration of any motion to lay a matter on the table or to take a matter from the table shall be postponed without question to the day after that on which the motion is made, except during the last 14 calendar days of formal business under Joint Rule 12A or of the 2-year legislative session. [1885; 1891; 1971; 1973; 1983; 1997; 1999; 2021; 2025.]

**25.** [Omitted in 1929, the provisions thereof being covered by Joint Rule 9.]

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### **COURSE OF PROCEEDINGS.**

**26.** Bills and resolves from the House, after they are read a first time, shall be referred to a committee of the Senate, unless they have been reported by a joint committee or substituted for the report of a joint committee. Bills and resolves reported in the Senate and bills and resolves from the House reported by joint committees or substituted for the reports of joint committees shall, after they have been read once, be referred to the Committee on Rules, except as otherwise provided by Senate Rule 27. Any matter reported in the Senate or received from the House concerning or restricted to a particular city or town which has received the approval of the voters of the city or town or of the town meeting shall appear on the calendar for the next session for a second reading notwithstanding any other provisions of this rule. Bills introduced by initiative petition, when reported in the Senate or received from the House, shall be referred to the Committee on Rules. Resolutions received from the House, or reported in the Senate, shall be referred to the Committee on Rules. Bills and Resolves under Senate Rule 27, when reported, shall be referred to the Committee on Rules. All reports of the Committee on Rules shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next session unless such matter is assigned for special consideration by said committee as provided for under Senate Rule 12B.

A report from a committee of conference filed in accordance with Joint Rule 11B may be taken up forthwith. [1825; 1885; 1888; 1890; 1891; 1897; 1945; 1985; 1993; 1999; 2005; 2015; 2025.]

**26A.** [Omitted in 2005].

**26B.** [Omitted in 2005].

**26C.** [Omitted in 2021].

**26D.** [Omitted in 2021].

**27.** Bills and resolves involving public money, or a grant of public property, unless the subject-matter has been acted upon by the joint Committee on Ways and Means, shall, after the first reading, be referred in course to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, whose duty it shall be to review their relation to the finances of the Commonwealth.

Orders reported in the Senate or received from the House involving the expenditure of public money for special committees shall, before the question is taken on the adoption of the order, be referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, whose duty it shall be to review the order's relation to the finances of the Commonwealth.

Every such bill involving a capital expenditure for new projects, or an appropriation for repairs, or any legislation, the cost of which, in the opinion of the committee, exceeds \$100,000, when reported into the Senate by the Committee on Ways and Means, shall be accompanied by a fiscal note.

When requested by any member, prior to the engrossment of any such bill involving a capital expenditure for new projects, or an appropriation for repairs, or any legislation, the cost of which, in the opinion of the committee, can be ascertained in a timely manner, and which exceeds \$100,000, the chair of the Committee on Ways and Means, or a member of said committee, shall verbally disclose during session the amount of public money which will be required to be expended to carry out the proposed legislation.

The committee on Ways and Means shall provide a copy of its proposed text of any bills or resolves involving public money, or a grant of public property, and a summary of said text, to committee members before such bill or resolve is reported to the Senate for consideration. Said summary and text shall be posted on the general court website prior to consideration by the Senate. No amendment to the proposed text shall be in order if (i) filed after the start of session on the day of consideration, aside from amendments by the committee or the sponsor of the bill, or (ii) the amendment proposes a revenue reduction or increase in spending in excess of \$50,000,000 unless offsetting revenue increases or spending reductions are included in the amendment to ensure that the balance of spending and revenue in the bill is maintained.

For any bill or resolve reported by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means before noon on Thursday and scheduled to be debated on the following Thursday, amendments shall be filed not later than 2:30 p.m. on the Monday preceding the debate, unless agreed to otherwise by order in consultation with the Minority Leader. [1871; 1882; 1887; 1888; 1889; 1896; 1921; 1941; 1946; 1947; 1953; 1963; 1967; 1968; 1971; 1995; 1999; 2015, 2023; 2025.]

**27A.** When the general appropriations bill is reported by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means the following information shall be made available:- (a) a prior year's appropriation, (b) the recommendation, if any, of the Governor, (c) the amount approved by the House, and (d) the amount recommended by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. The committee shall identify with its recommendations for the general appropriations bill all of the tax and non-tax revenues on which its spending recommendations are premised. The committee shall present these revenues by type and by the department or agency responsible for collecting them.

The committee on Ways and Means shall provide the membership with a copy of its proposed text of the general appropriations bill, and an executive summary which shall include a list of outside sections, and a short summary of each outside section not later than the seventh business day prior to full Senate consideration of such bill. When the Senate considers the general appropriation bill, the bill shall appear in the Orders of the Day for its second-reading. All amendments to the Ways and Means proposed text shall be second-reading amendments, but further amendments in the third-degree to such amendments shall be in order. No amendment to a general appropriation bill shall be in order which proposes a revenue reduction or increase in spending in excess of \$50,000,000 unless offsetting revenue increases or spending reductions are included in the amendment to ensure that the balance of spending and revenue in the bill is maintained. After the bill as amended is ordered to a third reading, it shall be read a third time and the question shall then immediately be on passing it to be engrossed. No amendments shall be in order at the third reading of the bill unless recommended by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading. Each member shall file any proposed amendments, including those relating to outside sections, electronically in a form determined by the Clerk, by the time established for that purpose by order of the Senate provided, however, that a reasonable amount of time, and not less than 48 hours, shall be provided to file amendments. Each amendment shall contain a descriptive title. The Clerk shall make a list of amendments available to the membership at least 48 hours prior to consideration of such bill. Such list shall identify the member sponsoring the amendment and include the descriptive title. The sponsoring member of an amendment, including further amendments in the third-degree, shall make available at such member's office a copy and a detailed summary of the amendment. The Clerk shall make available on the website of the general court the text of all amendments, including further amendments in the third-degree to such amendments.

The committee on Ways and Means shall provide the membership with a copy of its proposed text of any other appropriations bill and a summary thereof. Said bill text and summary shall be posted on the general court website prior to consideration by the Senate. When the Senate considers such an appropriation bill, the Ways and Means proposed text shall be adopted and the bill shall be ordered to a third reading without other amendments. The bill shall be immediately read a third time and then be open to other amendments; provided, however, that a reasonable amount of time shall be provided to file amendments and the order is approved by a majority of the members. Any order regarding said amendments, including amendments relating to outside sections, shall be adopted by vote of the Senate before consideration of the bill by the Senate. Each amendment shall contain a descriptive title. The Clerk shall make a list of amendments available to the membership as soon as practicable and prior to the consideration of such bill. Such list shall identify the member sponsoring the amendment and include the title of the amendment.

The Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means may file a technical or perfecting amendment to any bill reported out by the committee. The text of any such amendment shall be available publicly and members shall be given a reasonable amount of time for review prior to taking action on such a technical or perfecting amendment. No further amendment to such a technical or perfecting amendment shall be in order.

A member may withdraw an amendment to a bill after filing it or may replace a seasonably filed amendment with a reasonably related redrafted amendment, which shall be clearly designated as such.

Further amendments and redrafted amendments shall upon request be distributed by the member offering the amendment to each member. Members shall be given a reasonable amount of time for review prior to taking action on any further or redrafted amendments.

This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended, unless four-fifths of the members present consent thereto. [1974; 1993; 1997; 1999, 2001; 2013; 2015; 2017, 2019; 2021, 2023; 2025.]

**27B.** [Omitted in 1999.]

**27C.** With the exception of appropriation bills and capital outlay bills, the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Rules may be discharged from the further consideration of matters referred to them under the following procedure. The consideration of a motion to discharge such committees from further consideration of a certain matter shall be postponed without question to the day after that on which the motion is made. Such motion shall require a majority vote of the members present and voting for adoption, if made after the expiration of 45 calendar days after referral to said committees, but shall require a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting, if made prior to the expiration of said 45 calendar days after referral to said committees. On the motion to discharge such committees, not more than 15 minutes shall be allowed for debate, and no member shall speak more than 3 minutes.

In addition to the above procedure, the Committee on Ways and Means shall be discharged from further consideration of a certain matter upon the written petition of a majority of the members of such committee presented to the chair after 45 calendar days following referral of the matter to said committee. When directed to discharge a certain matter under this rule said committees shall either report or be discharged of said matter within 5 legislative days of the vote or petition calling for such discharge. A petition discharged under this rule shall be considered as favorably reported and the matter accompanying said petition shall be designated as “discharged”, and shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day for a second reading or question on adoption, as the case may be, unless subject to Senate Rule 27. [1983; 1985; 2003; 2015.]

**27D.** A Senate bill may be co-sponsored, electronically, at any time during the 2-year legislative session until the bill is reported from a joint committee. [2015; 2025.]

**28.** No bill or resolve shall pass to be engrossed without 3 readings on 3 several days unless said matter was properly noticed on the agenda or calendar. [1817; 1836; 1841; 1859; 1878; 1881; 1882; 1885; 2025.]

**29.** Bills and resolves, in their several readings, and resolutions, shall be read by their titles, unless objection is made. [1817; 1836; 1841; 1859; 1878; 1881; 1882; 1885; 1890.]

**30.** If a committee to whom a bill or resolve is referred reports that the same ought not to pass, the question shall be “Shall this bill (or resolve) be rejected?” If the rejection is negatived, the bill or resolve, if it has been read but once, shall go to its second reading without a question; and if it has been read more than once it shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day, pending the question on ordering to a third reading, or engrossment, as the case may be. [1817; 1836; 1841; 1859; 1878; 1881; 1882; 1885; 1897; 1921; 1939; 1945; 1971.]

**31.** If an amendment is offered by any member at the second or third reading of a bill or resolve, substantially changing the greater part of the bill or resolve, the question shall not be put forthwith on adopting the amendment to the bill or resolve if formally requested by 2 members, but the bill or resolve shall be laid over and placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day after

that on which the amendment is offered, with the amendment pending. The proposed amendment shall be printed in the calendar and in the journal. If an amendment is made at the second or third reading of a bill or resolve substantially changing the greater part of the bill or resolve, the question shall not be put forthwith on ordering the bill or resolve to a third reading or to be engrossed, as the case may be, but the bill or resolve, as amended, shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day after that on which the amendment is made, and shall then be open to further amendment before such question is put. In like manner, when an amendment is made in any proposition of such a nature as to change its character, as from a bill to an order, or the like, the proposition as amended shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day after that on which the amendment was made. [1882; 1888; 1971.]

**31A.** Upon recommendation of the Chair of the committee on Rules, the Senate may by order require that all amendments to a designated bill be filed with the Clerk not later than 1 day before consideration of the bill by the Senate. Such amendments shall be presented in the calendar and shall not be subject to Rule 31. [1997; 2003; 2015; 2025.]

**31B.** A member may withdraw an amendment after filing it or may replace a seasonably filed amendment with a reasonably related redrafted amendment, which shall be clearly designated as such. The text of a withdrawn amendment placed on the website of the General Court shall continue to be available publicly, on said website, notwithstanding the amendment having been withdrawn.

Further amendments and redrafted amendments shall, upon request, be distributed by the member offering the amendment to each member. Members shall be given a reasonable amount of time for review prior to taking action on further or redrafted amendments. [2019, 2021; 2025.]

**32.** Bills or resolves ordered to a third reading shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day for such reading. [1817; 1836; 1841; 1859; 1878; 1881; 1882; 1885.]

**32A.** (1) The Senate Committee on Bills in the Third Reading may be discharged from the further consideration of matters referred to it pursuant to the following procedure:

(a) The consideration of a motion to discharge said committee from further consideration of a certain matter shall be postponed without question to the day after that on which the motion is made.

(b) The adoption of such motion shall require a simple majority vote of the members present and voting.

(2) The Senate Committee on Rules may be discharged from the further consideration of matters referred to it under Rule 26, pursuant to the following procedure:

(a) The consideration of a motion to discharge said committee from further consideration of a certain matter shall be postponed without question to the day after that on which the motion is made.

(b) Such motion shall require a majority vote of the members present and voting for adoption if made after the expiration of 30 calendar days after referral to said committee, but shall require a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting if made prior to the expiration of said 30 calendar days after referral to said committee.

(3) When either committee is directed to discharge a certain matter pursuant to this rule, such committee shall either report or be discharged of said matter within 5 legislative days of the vote calling for such discharge. A matter discharged under this rule shall be designated as “discharged” and the matter shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next sitting. On the motion to discharge such committee, not more than 15 minutes shall be allowed for debate and no member shall speak more than 3 minutes. [1985; 1987; 1989; 1993; 1995; 2005; 2015.]

**32B.** [Omitted in 1995.]

**33.** Bills and resolves when ordered to a third reading, and bills and resolves amended subsequently to their third reading unless the amendment was reported by the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading, shall be referred forthwith to that committee, which shall in consultation with the Counsel to the Senate examine and correct them, to avoid repetitions and unconstitutional provisions, and to ensure accuracy in the text and references, and consistency with the language of existing statutes, and to give effect to section 52 of chapter 3 of the General Laws; but any change in the sense of legal effect, or any material change in construction shall be reported to the Senate as an amendment. The committee may consolidate into 1 bill any 2 or more related bills referred to it, whenever legislation may be simplified by such consolidation. Resolutions received from and adopted by the House or introduced or reported into the Senate, after they are read and before they are adopted, and amendments of bills, resolves and resolutions adopted by the House and sent to the Senate for concurrence, shall also be referred, in like manner, to the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading. When a bill, resolve or resolution has been so referred, no further action shall be taken until the committee has reported on the bill, resolve or resolution. If a bill or resolve referred to the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading contains an emergency preamble, changes the compensation paid to the members of the General Court, provides for the borrowing of money by the Commonwealth and comes within Section 3 of [Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution](#), provides for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth and comes within Section 1 of [Article LXII](#) (as amended by [Article LXXXIV](#)) of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides, upon recommendation of the Governor, for a special law relating to an individual city or town and comes within clause (2) of Section 8 of [Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution](#), the committee shall plainly indicate the fact. [1817; 1836; 1882; 1888; 1890; 1891; 1914; 1919; 1925; 1927; 1929; 1945; 1965; 1967; 1983; 2025.]

**33A.** All legislative matters receiving a Senate number shall be presented and made available to all the members of the Senate and to the public at least 24 hours in advance of consideration by the Senate.

All other amendments recommended by any committee, other than the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading, shall be subject to this rule.

This rule shall be suspended only upon a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting. [1985.]

**33B.** (a) A ceremonial resolution shall not be adopted by the Senate if it:

1. includes a statement of policy or ideology;
2. proclaims a day, week or month; provided, however, that a resolution may recognize the celebration of a day, week or month by a group, organization or other entity;

3. recognizes a for-profit corporation; provided, however, that a resolution may honor or congratulate a for-profit corporation on its anniversary or other achievement if it has participated in a specific service or action that is of value to a local community or the commonwealth;
4. recognizes a person's retirement unless the person is retiring from a position with the commonwealth, a political subdivision thereof, or a non-profit organization and the person has been in public service for not less than 20 years;
5. recognizes a person's birthday unless the person is not less than 80 years old;
6. recognizes a married couple's wedding anniversary unless the married couple has been married for not less than 50 years;
7. recognizes a non-profit organization's anniversary unless the anniversary is for not less than 20 years;
8. recognizes a class reunion; or
9. recognizes a religious holiday.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), a resolution otherwise prohibited under said subsection (a) may be adopted by the Senate by unanimous consent of the members present. [2021; 2025.]

**34.** Bills and resolves prepared for final passage shall be certified by the Senate Clerk and Parliamentarian, after comparison, to be the same as the bills or resolves passed to be engrossed; and if found to be properly prepared, the Clerk shall so endorse on the envelope of the bill or resolve; and the question on enactment or final passage or adopting an emergency preamble shall be taken on the bill or resolve, without further reading, unless specifically ordered. When a bill or resolve prepared for final passage contains an emergency preamble, changes the compensation paid to members of the General Court, provides for the borrowing of money by the Commonwealth and comes within Section 3 of [Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution](#), provides for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth and comes within Section 1 of [Article LXII](#) (as amended by [Article LXXXIV](#)) of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides, upon recommendation of the Governor, for a special law relating to an individual city or town and comes within clause (2) of Section 8 of [Article LXXXIX](#) of the Amendments to the Constitution, the Clerk shall plainly indicate the fact. [1817; 1831; 1882; 1888; 1914; 1919; 1965; 1967; 1971; 1983.]

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### **ORDERS OF THE DAY.**

**35.** The unfinished business in which the Senate was engaged at the time of the last adjournment shall have preference in the Orders of the Day next after motions to reconsider. [1830; 1870.]

**36.** Reports of committees not by bill or resolve shall be referred to the Committee on Rules; except that the report of a committee asking to be discharged from the further consideration of a subject and recommending that it be referred to another committee, or a report of a committee recommending that a matter be placed on file, shall be immediately considered. All reports of the Committee on Rules shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next session unless such matter is assigned for special consideration by said Committee on some future date.

Amendments to a measure which have been made by the House and sent back to the Senate for concurrence shall be placed in the Orders of the next day after that on which they are received;

provided that amendments involving state money shall be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

Reports of committees on proposals for amendment of the Constitution shall be dealt with in accordance with Joint Rule 23. [1845; 1853; 1888; 1891; 1919; 1947; 1953; 1965; 1968; 1971; 1985; 1995; 2005; 2015.]

**37.** After entering upon the consideration of the Orders of the Day, the Senate shall proceed with them in regular course, as follows: Matters not giving rise to a motion or debate shall first be disposed of in the order in which they stand in the calendar; then the matters that were passed over shall be considered and disposed of in like order. [1817; 1836; 1841; 1859; 1878; 1882; 1885.]

**38.** No matter which has been duly placed in the Orders of the Day shall be discharged from the Orders of the Day or considered out of its regular course. [1885.]

**38A.** The Senate shall not continue in session beyond the hour of 8 p.m. This rule shall not be suspended unless two-thirds of the members present and voting consent to such suspension on a recorded ye and nay vote. [1983; 2005.]

**38A 1/2.** The Senate shall not continue in session beyond midnight. This rule shall not be suspended unless two-thirds of the members present and voting consent to such suspension on a recorded ye and nay vote. [2005.]

**38B.** Debate and consideration on the general appropriation bill shall begin at 10 a.m. and shall be the only matter placed on the calendar for that day. [1985.]

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## RULES OF DEBATE.

**39.** When speaking, each member shall stand as able in such member's place and address the President. When recognized, the member shall confine such member's remarks to the measure and question under debate and shall at all times avoid personalities. [1817; 1831; 1871; 1973; 2017.]

**40.** When 2 or more members rise to speak at the same time, the President shall designate the member who is entitled to the floor. [1831; 1888.]

**41.** No member shall speak more than once to the prevention of any other member who has not spoken and desires to speak on the same question. [1817; 1886.]

**42.** No member shall interrupt another while speaking, except by rising to call to order or to rise to a question of personal privilege or parliamentary inquiry. [1817; 1831; 1971.]

**42A.** A member referencing a report or study in debate must make said report or study readily available either during or within a reasonable time after the debate if requested by another member. [2015.]

**43.** After a question is put to vote no member shall speak to it. [1817.]

**43A.** No appeal from a decision of the President shall be entertained unless it is seconded; and the question on the appeal shall be disposed of forthwith. [1973.]

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## MOTIONS.

**44.** Any motion shall be reduced to writing if the President so directs. A motion need not be seconded and may be withdrawn by the mover if no objection is made. [1817; 1844; 1871; 1888.]

**44A.** [Omitted in 2011.]

**45.** An amendment to any measure filed for debate with the Clerk containing 2 or more propositions, capable of division, shall be divided whenever desired by any member. When a motion to strike out and insert is thus divided, the failure of the motion to strike out shall not preclude amendment; or, if the motion to strike out prevails, the matter proposed to be inserted shall be open to amendment before the question is taken on inserting it. [1817; 1841; 1888.]

**45A.** [Omitted in 2019].

**46.** When a question is under debate the President shall receive no motion that does not relate to the same, except a motion to adjourn or some other motion which has precedence by express rule of the Senate, or because it is privileged in its nature; and the President shall receive no motion relating to the same except:

- (1) To *lay on the table* (or take from the table);
- (2) To *close debate at a specified time*;
- (3) To *postpone to a day certain*;
- (4) To *commit* (or recommit);
- (5) To *amend*;
- (6) To *postpone indefinitely*.

These motions shall have preference in the order in which they stand. [Between 1821 and 1826; 1831; 1844; 1870; 1882; 1885; 1888; 1921; 1939; 1945; 1971.]

**47.** Debate may be closed at any time not less than 1 hour from the adoption of a motion to that effect. On this motion not more than 10 minutes shall be allowed for debate, and no member shall speak more than 3 minutes. [1882.]

**48.** When motions are made to refer a subject to different committees, the committees proposed shall be considered in the following order:

- (1) A standing committee of the Senate;
- (2) A special committee of the Senate;
- (3) A joint standing committee of the two branches;
- (4) A joint special committee of the two branches. [1884; 1888; 2017.]

**49.** No engrossed bill or resolve shall be amended; but this rule shall not apply to a bill or resolve returned by the Governor with a recommendation of amendment under Article LVI of the Amendments of the Constitution; nor shall it apply to amendments of engrossed bills proposed by the House and sent to the Senate for concurrence. [1837; 1919; 1931.]

**50.** No motion or proposition of a subject different from that under consideration and no measure which has been finally rejected or disposed of by the Senate shall be admitted under the color of an amendment. [1882; 1971.]

**51.** [Omitted in 2011.]

**52.** The motion to adjourn and the call for yeas and nays shall be decided without debate.

On the motions to lay on the table and take from the table, to postpone to a time certain, to commit or recommit (except with instructions), not exceeding 10 minutes shall be allowed for debate, and no member shall speak more than 3 minutes.

On a motion to reconsider, not more than 30 minutes shall be allowed for debate, and no member shall speak more than 5 minutes; but on a motion to reconsider a vote upon any subsidiary, incidental or dependent question debate shall be limited to 10 minutes, and no member shall speak more than 3 minutes.

On a motion to suspend any of the joint rules or Senate rules debate shall be limited to 15 minutes, and no member shall speak more than 3 minutes. [1817; 1859; 1870; 1874; 1882; 1885; 1937; 1941.]

**52A.** The Senate President or presiding officer of the Senate may not declare that the Senate is in recess for more than 30 minutes, without informing the members from the rostrum of a time certain for reconvention. [1993.]

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### **RECONSIDERATION.**

**53.** No motion to reconsider a vote shall be entertained unless it is made on the same day on which the vote has passed, or on the next day thereafter on which a quorum is present and before the Orders of the Day for that day have been taken up. If reconsideration is moved on the same day, the motion shall, except during the last 14 calendar days of formal business under Joint Rule 12A or of the 2-year legislative session, be placed first in the Orders of the Day for the succeeding day; but if it is moved on the succeeding day, the motion shall be considered forthwith; provided, however, that this rule shall not prevent the reconsideration of a vote on a subsidiary, incidental or dependent question at any time when the main question to which it relates is under consideration; and provided, further, that a motion to reconsider a vote on any incidental, subsidiary or dependent question shall not remove the main subject under consideration from before the Senate, but shall be considered at the time when it is made.

There shall be no reconsideration of the vote on the question on adjourning, for the yeas and nays, on laying on the table or on taking from the table; and when a motion for reconsideration has been decided, that decision shall not be reconsidered. [1817; between 1821 and 1826; 1858; 1885; 1888; 1891; 1902; 1946; 1999, 2021; 2025.]

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### **REJECTED MEASURES.**

**54.** When any measure has been finally rejected or finally disposed of by the Senate, no measure substantially the same shall be introduced by any committee or member during the session, or moved as an amendment to another measure. [1817; dispensed with in 1831; revived in 1838; amended in 1841; 1844; 1877; 1882; 1971.]

## VOTING.

**55.** The President shall declare all votes; but if a member doubts a vote, the President shall order a return of the number voting in the affirmative, and in the negative, without further debate. [1831; 1888.]

**56.** Regardless of the party affiliation of the person requesting or supporting a call of the yeas and nays, the sense of the Senate shall be taken by yeas and nays whenever required by one-fifth of the members present or by a number of members equal to the total number of members of the minority party, whichever is less. The President may wait a period not exceeding 10 minutes before ordering the Clerk to start the yeas and nays, during which time the members shall be summoned to the Senate Chamber as the President may direct.

Other business of the Senate may be taken up during the 10 minute period. At the end of the 10 minute interval, the President shall state the question to be roll called and then direct the Clerk to begin the call. If, after the yeas and nays have been ordered, an advanced notice of at least 60 minutes is given by the President, the President may set a time certain for the vote to be taken and the 10 minute waiting period above prescribed may be waived. [1817; 1852; 1888; 1971; 1972, 1997; 2017, 2021.]

**57.** Whenever a question is taken by yeas and nays, the Clerk shall call the names of all members, except the President, and every member present shall answer to such member's name, unless excused before the vote was taken. No member shall be permitted to vote after the decision is announced from the Chair. [1837; 1844; 2008; 2015; 2017, 2023.]

**57A.** [Omitted in 2011.]

**57B.** [Omitted in 2023]

**57C.** (a) Notwithstanding Senate Rule 57, a member may authorize the presiding officer to announce the member's vote by submitting a letter to the Clerk that specifies the member's exact instruction to the presiding officer on how to answer the question for which the roll call is ordered and states that the presiding officer is authorized to announce the member's vote; provided, however, that a member may alter or revoke this authorization by submitting a letter to the Clerk; provided further, that if a member who has so authorized the presiding officer announces the member's own vote, the member shall be considered to have revoked the authorization to announce the member's vote. Upon receipt of a member's letter authorizing the presiding officer or altering or revoking the authorization of the presiding officer, the Clerk shall notify the President and the minority leader of the authorization, alteration or revocation. The Clerk shall maintain an updated list of the authorizations, alterations and revocations submitted or in effect under this order and shall make the list publicly available in electronic form and available after any vote subject to this order.

The presiding officer shall answer the roll call on behalf of each member who has authorized the presiding officer to announce the vote under this section; provided, however, that the presiding officer shall announce the vote in accordance with the member's exact instruction.

A letter under this section may be submitted to the Clerk electronically. [2023.]

**57D.** Notwithstanding Senate Rule 57 or any other rule to the contrary, a member may participate remotely. A member who participates remotely may record the member's vote on a

question for which a roll call has been ordered, record the member's presence, be counted on any procedural question and deliver remarks, remotely.

The President shall, in consultation with Legislative Information Services, provide members access to electronic means to allow them to participate remotely.

A court officer, in consultation with a member of the Clerk's staff, if necessary, shall monitor the electronic means of participation and shall ascertain and announce a member's vote, a member's presence or a member's answer to a procedural question.

The President, in consultation with Legislative Information Services, shall designate an appropriate staff member to coordinate participation in debate by any member who would like to deliver remarks from outside the chamber. The presiding officer shall endeavor to ensure that the Senate's proceedings account for any delay or lag time that occurs due to the remote participation of members in the session. The session shall be conducted at a pace that provides adequate timing and intervals to allow for effective spontaneous responses by the members.

A member who participates remotely pursuant to this section shall be counted for the purpose of establishing a quorum as required pursuant to Senate Rule 64 and Article XXXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth. [2023; 2025.]

## **ELECTIONS BY BALLOT.**

**58.** In all elections by ballot a time shall be assigned for such election, at least 1 day prior to such election, except in case of an election of President or President *pro tempore*, under Rule 5. [1831; 1891.]

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## **REPORTERS' GALLERY.**

**59.** The use of the reporters' gallery of the Senate Chamber shall be subject to the approval and direction of the Committee on Rules during the session. Except in the reporter's official capacity as a reporter, no reporter who is entitled to the privileges of the reporters' gallery shall seek to influence the action of the Senate or any member, nor shall such person approach a member to seek to influence such member in any place from which legislative agents are excluded by Rule 61. Every legislative reporter desiring admission to the reporters' gallery of the Senate Chamber shall state in writing that such reporter is not the agent or representative of any person or corporation interested in legislation before the General Court and will not act as representative of any such person or corporation while such reporter retains a place in the gallery; but nothing in this rule shall prevent such legislative reporter from engaging in other employment, provided such other employment is specifically approved by the Committee on Rules and reported to the Senate. [1847; 1911; 1914; 1925; 1989; 2003; 2015; 2025.]

**59A.** Sessions of the Senate shall be made accessible to electronic media, including television, radio and the Internet. The manner, conditions and extent of such access shall be established by the Committee on Rules.

The President and the Clerk shall endeavor to provide that all sessions of the Senate are broadcast live. If it is not feasible for such a session to be broadcast live they shall endeavor to

provide for its delayed broadcast. The Committee on Rules may provide for the audio or video transmission via the Internet of Senate sessions. The committee on Rules may enter into agreements with nonprofit entities, including public and private educational facilities, to provide for audio or video transmission via the Internet of the Senate sessions.

This rule shall not be suspended unless by majority vote of the members present and voting.

If, for any reason, the Senate convenes in a session and such session is not televised live, then the party under the contractual duty to provide the broadcast shall provide to the Senate President and Minority Leader within 24 hours of the adjournment of such session a report including, but not limited to an explanation for why the broadcast was not received.

Prior to permanent arrangements being entered into for the broadcast of Senate sessions, any television carrier, who wishes to broadcast any Senate session shall make application to the committee on Rules to do so, approval of which shall not be unreasonably withheld. Any carrier may make arrangements to utilize a pool feed to be provided under guidelines and conditions set forth by the committee on Rules. [1989, 2001; 2003; 2007; 2015; 2021.]

**59B.** The Clerk of the Senate shall keep a copy of every broadcast Senate session for reference purposes. Upon request, these copies or any images easily reproducible thereof shall be made available to members and the public in a timely manner. [1993, 2019, 2023.]

**59C.** The electronic feed that provides the broadcast coverage of the Senate sessions shall be available to any media outlet. [2002.]

**59D.** (1) The President shall make available to each member of the Senate a copy of the contract for the broadcast of the Senate sessions.

(2) Any contracts executed after January 1, 2003 concerning television broadcast of the sessions of the Senate shall require the following information to be reported to the members of the Senate:

- (a) a list of all cities and towns to receive live television broadcasts of the sessions of the Senate;
- (b) a list of each city and town to receive Senate coverage including the date and time of the live and pre-recorded broadcasts of each session of the Senate;
- (c) a list of cities and towns that do not receive live televised broadcasts of the sessions of the Senate and an explanation for the lack of coverage.

The President shall make available said copy of the contract to each member of the Senate on the first day of the annual session. [2003; 2021.]

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## THE SENATE CHAMBER AND ADJOINING ROOMS

**60.** No person not a member shall be allowed to sit at the Senate table while the Senate is in session. [1853; 1888.]

**61.** No person, except members of the legislature and the executive departments of state government, persons in the exercise of an official duty directly connected with the business of the Senate, and reporters who are afforded press privileges by the Senate President, shall, unless invited by the President, be admitted to the floor of the Senate Chamber or to the Senate Reading

room or to the corridor between the Senate Reading room and the Senate Chamber during the sessions of the Senate, or during the half hour preceding or succeeding said sessions, nor to the Senate reading room, cloak room or anterooms on any day when a session of the Senate is held, except upon written invitation bearing the name of the person it is desired to invite and the name of the Senator extending the invitation, which invitation shall be surrendered when the person enters one of the otherwise restricted areas.

Reporters desiring access to the Senate Chamber shall make written application to the President stating the purposes for which the privileges are required, and such privileges shall be granted only upon written approval by the President.

No legislative agent shall be admitted to the floor of the Senate Chamber. On any day when a session of the Senate is held, no legislative agent shall be admitted to the Senate Reading room, the cloak room, the Senate corridor or anterooms and no person, except members of the legislature and the executive departments of state government and persons in the exercise of an official duty directly connected with the business of the Senate shall be permitted to loiter in the Reading room, the cloak room, the Senate corridor or anterooms at any time. Smoking shall not be permitted in the Senate Reading room, the cloak room or the anterooms. [1870; 1875; 1886; 1891; 1895; 1896; 1897; 1898; 1907; 1909; 1914; 1916; 1925; 1989, 2023.]

**61A.** No person shall be allowed to smoke on the floor of the Senate. [1985.]

**61B.** The Senate President shall preserve decorum and order in the Senate Chamber. The Senate President shall require that, while in the Senate Chamber, members, staff and guests dress in appropriate attire and be courteous and professional when using electronic devices. Members, staff and guests shall not take photographs or videos while the Senate is in session unless permitted to do so by the Senate President. No person shall talk on a cellular telephone or other mobile electronic device in the Senate Chamber while the Senate is in session. [2003; 2013, 2019.]

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## PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE.

**62.** The rules of parliamentary practice shall govern the Senate in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with these rules or the joint rules of the 2 branches. [1847; 1858; 1882; 1895; 1963.]

**62A.** [Renumbered in 2013 as Senate Rule 61B.]

## PROCUREMENTS.

**62B.** (a) The Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall complete the procurement of all goods and services for the Senate. Procurements for goods or services shall be made from the statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division, to the extent practicable, as determined by the Chief Financial Officer. If the Chief Financial Officer determines that a procurement cannot be made using the statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division, the Chief Financial Officer may procure the required goods or services under subsections (b), (c) or (d).

(b) Procurement of a supply or service from a vendor not on the statewide procurement contract reasonably estimated by the Chief Financial Officer to be valued at less than \$10,000 shall be made at the discretion of the Chief Financial Officer.

(c) If the Chief Financial Officer seeks to procure a supply or service from a vendor not on the statewide procurement contract that the Chief Financial Officer reasonably estimates to be valued at \$10,000 or more, but less than \$100,000, the Chief Financial Officer shall seek quotations from not fewer than 3 persons providing such supply or service. The Chief Financial Officer shall record the names and addresses of all persons from whom quotations were received, the names of the persons submitting quotations and the date and amount of each quotation. The Chief Financial Officer shall award the contract to the respondent whose quotation offers the needed quality of supply or service and which represents the best value for the Senate.

(d) If the Chief Financial Officer seeks to procure a supply or service from a vendor not on the statewide procurement contract that the Chief Financial Officer reasonably estimates to be valued at \$100,000 or more, the Chief Financial Officer shall seek proposals through a competitive bid process, which shall be established by the Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer shall include diversity and inclusion plan requirements in all requests for proposals and shall consider those plans alongside traditional criteria when evaluating bids.

(e) The Chief Financial Officer shall maintain a file on each procurement not executed using the statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division and in excess of \$10,000 and shall include in such file all documents constituting the agreement for goods and services and all documents required by subsection (c) or (d). The files maintained shall be available for inspection by members of the Senate during regular business hours unless the information is otherwise protected by state or federal law.

(f) All procurements for legal services shall follow a process established by the Counsel to the Senate and the Chief Financial Officer and shall be approved by the Counsel to the Senate.

(g) If, in the determination of the Chief Financial Officer, an emergency procurement of greater than \$10,000 is necessary, the Chief Financial Officer may procure the goods or services immediately and create and maintain a file explaining the nature of the emergency and the goods or services that were procured as a result. The Chief Financial Officer shall document the goods or services that were procured, the process used to procure the goods or services, the vendors that were contacted and any other information relevant to the procurement, and make that information available to members of the Senate during regular business hours, unless the information is otherwise protected by state or federal law. [2013, 2019; 2021, 2023; 2025.]

#### **ALTERATIONS, SUSPENSION OR REPEAL OF RULES.**

**63.** This rule and rules 24, 31, 33, 34 and 53 shall not be suspended if objection is made; and no other rule shall be altered, suspended or repealed, except by vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting. The Committee on Rules may consider and suggest measures that shall, in its judgment, tend to facilitate the business of the Senate, and a majority vote of the Senate shall be required to approve such recommendations.

Additionally, a measure to repeal, change, add or otherwise modify a rule or rules of the Senate may be proposed at any time by either 1/5 of the members or the number of minority members,

provided that such measure is presented to the clerk in the form of an order. Such order shall be referred immediately to the Committee on Rules, which shall report to the Senate on such order within 10 days of its referral to the committee. Such report shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next formal session for consideration by the Senate. [1817; 1841; 1848; 1882; 1888; 1891; 1893; 1899; 1953; 1973; 2003; 2015.]

**64.** Twenty-one members shall constitute a quorum for the organization of the Senate and the transaction of business. [See [Amendments to the Constitution, Art. XXXIII.](#)] [1973.]

**65.** [Omitted in 2025.]

**66.** [Omitted in 1997.]

**67.** The resignation of a Senator shall become effective within 14 days from submission of a letter of resignation or a letter of intent to resign to the Senate President's Office. [2007.]

**68.** [Omitted in 2025.]

**69.** Meetings of any special commissions, special legislative commissions, task forces or other groups authorized or required by statute, resolve, rule or order to make or conduct an investigation or study of any issue, and which are chaired by a Senator, shall be conducted openly and transparently, and shall conform both to Senate rules and to statutes. [2017.]

**SENATE . . . . . No. 2545**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

SENATE, June 23, 2025

Report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two branches with reference to the House amendment to the Senate report recommending proposed Joint Rules adopted by the Senate to be adopted as the Joint Rules governing the 2025-2026 legislative session (Senate, No. 18) (amended by the House by striking out the striking out the text in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the text of House document numbered 2026),-- reports, "Joint Rules governing the 2025-2026 legislative session (Senate, No. 2545).

For the Committee:

Cynthia Stone Creem  
Joan B. Lovely

Michael J. Moran  
William C. Galvin

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**

*Ordered*, That the joint rules of the Senate and House of Representatives for the 194th General Court for the 2025-2026 legislative session be adopted, as follows:

***Committees.***

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

A committee on Advanced Information Technology, the Internet and Cybersecurity;

A committee on Aging and Independence;

A committee on Agriculture and Fisheries;

A committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets;

A committee on Cannabis Policy;

A committee on Children, Families and Persons With Disabilities;

A committee on Community Development and Small Businesses;

A committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure;

A committee on Emergency Preparedness and Management;

A committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies;

A committee on Education;

A committee on Election Laws;

A committee on Environment and Natural Resources;

A committee on Financial Services;

A committee on Health Care Financing;

A committee on Higher Education;

A committee on Housing;

A committee on the Judiciary;

A committee on Labor and Workforce Development;  
A committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery;  
A committee on Municipalities and Regional Government;  
A committee on Public Health;  
A committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security;  
A committee on Public Service;  
A committee on Racial Equity, Civil Rights and Inclusion;  
A committee on Revenue;  
A committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight;  
A committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy;  
A committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development;  
A committee on Transportation; and  
A committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs.

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

Within 4 weeks of the appointment of joint standing committees in the first annual session of the General Court, each joint standing committee shall adopt rules of procedure regarding its conduct that are not inconsistent with the joint rules of the two branches or the rules of the Senate or House of Representatives. Said rules of procedure, together with any amendments, shall be filed with the Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House and shall be available to the public and members of the General Court on the official website of the General Court.

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

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

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

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

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

(ii) in carrying out these review and study activities, each committee shall determine whether such laws, administrative regulations and programs under those laws are being implemented in accordance with the intent of the General Court and whether such laws, administrative regulations and programs should be continued, curtailed or eliminated;

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

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

Each committee may, upon completion of its oversight hearings, report to the General Court the results of its findings and recommendations together with accompanying corrective legislation, if any, by filing the same with the Clerk of the House of Representatives or the Clerk of the Senate. Copies of such reports shall be made available to all members electronically and to the public via the official website of the General Court. The disposition of said reports shall be determined by the Clerks with the approval of the Speaker and the President.

The Senate or House chair of a joint committee may appoint subcommittees of members from their respective branch and appoint a chair to investigate and study any matter referred to said subcommittee that originated in their branch. Not less than 10 per cent of a Senate or House subcommittee's members shall be from the minority party. Chairs of subcommittees shall not be considered chairs under section 9B of chapter 3 of the General Laws. A subcommittee may, upon completion of an investigation and study, report the results of the investigation and study together with legislation, if any, by filing the same with the appointing chair of the joint committee.

Temporary employees of the general court assigned to a joint committee who are students at an accredited education institution or employees or grantees of other non-profit organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code may receive compensation from such organization, according to that organization's regular program of providing such compensation for temporary governmental or public service employment. A temporary employee's Senate or House supervisor shall establish the employee's total compensation, shall verify that the sum of the employee's state compensation, if any, and that any outside compensation the employee is to receive under this rule would not exceed this total compensation, and shall file the written terms of the employee's compensation with the Senate or House Human Resources Office, where it

shall be available for public inspection. The temporary employee shall sign an ethics agreement provided by the Senate or House Human Resources Office.

Joint employees shall complete any training required by either branch of the General Court, as may be agreed upon by the Senate and House Offices of Human Resources and the responsibilities associated with the supervision of joint employees, including payroll, shall be divided as may be agreed upon by the Senate and House Offices of Human Resources.

[Amended Jan. 6, 1882; Jan. 5, 18 83; Jan. 7, 18 84; Jan. 8 and 26, 1885; Jan. 8, 18 86; Jan. 12, 18 87; Jan. 9, 18 88; Jan. 28, 18 89; Jan. 8, 18 90; Feb. 2, 18 91; Jan. 11 and Feb. 10, 18 92; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan. 8. 1894; Jan. 7, 18 95; Jan. 7, 18 96; Jan. 11, 18 97; Jan. 10, 18 98; Jan. 9, 18 99; Jan. 22 and 29, 1901; Jan. 6, 19 02; Jan. 9, 19 03; Jan. 8, 19 04; Jan. 6, 19 05; Jan. 4, 19 07; Jan. 5, 19 10; Jan. 4, 19 11; Jan. 1, 19 13; Jan. 12, 19 14; Jan. 2, 19 18; Jan. 1 and 8 and Feb. 21, 1919; Jan. 7, 19 20; Jan. 5, 19 21; April 17 and 30, 1925; Jan. 5, 19 27; Jan. 7, 19 31; Jan. 6, 19 37; Jan. 4, 19 39; Jan. 1, 19 41; Jan. 3, 19 45; Jan. 2, 19 46; Jan. 6, 19 47; Feb. 1, 19 49; Jan. 7, 19 53; Jan. 7, 19 59; Jan. 30, 19 61; Jan. 7, 19 63; Jan. 12, 19 65; Feb. 24, 19 65; Mar. 10, 19 66; Jan. 30, 19 67; Jan. 7, 1971 ; July 23, 1974 ; Sept. 30 and Oct. 12, 1976 ; Nov. 3, 1981 ; Dec. 21, 1981 ; Mar. 15, 1982 ; Oct. 3, 1983 ; June 3, 1985 ; Jan. 25 and Mar. 14, 1988 ; Mar. 27, 1995 , June 12, 1995 ; July 17, 2003 ; Jan. 26, 2005; July 21 and September 20, 2005; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb 12, 2009; Feb. 15, 2017; Mar 7, 2019; Mar. 25, 2021; Feb. 16, 2023.]

1A. All meetings of joint committees acting concurrently, Senate and House standing committees, special committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, and joint special committees and committees of conference on the disagreeing votes of the 2 branches shall be open to the public, unless a majority shall vote otherwise; provided, however, that no such vote shall be in order at the first duly noticed public meeting of a committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the 2 branches. [Adopted July 17, 1973. Amended July 18, 1974; Feb. 12, 2009.]

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

1C (1). All joint standing committees shall schedule committee hearings and executive sessions upon agreement of the chairs and so as not to conflict, to the extent feasible, with the schedules of other committees and, to the extent feasible, the day of the week and times during that day set aside for formal sessions by the respective branches.

Beginning October 1, 2025, and after the posting of a schedule of hearing dates, agreed upon by the chairs, for the remainder of the full legislative session, the chair of each branch shall record the attendance of their respective members during committee hearings as “Present”, “Not Present”, or “Hearing conflicts with a legislative session, hearing, conference committee or commission meeting under joint rule 29A”. A member who is not present due to military service, a medical emergency, or other specified reason as agreed to by the rules of the joint committee, shall have such reason noted on the recorded attendance. The chair of each branch shall maintain the records of the committee attendance of their respective members for the duration of the legislative session and shall make such records available to the public alongside the livestream of the hearing archived on said website pursuant to paragraph (3). Attendance shall be defined as having been present either in person or remotely at a portion of the hearing. Attendance shall not be taken if the date, time and location of the hearing were not shared with all committee

members at least 10 days prior to the hearing or if the schedule of hearing dates has not been posted pursuant to rule 1D.

(2) The schedule of committee hearings shall designate which branch will preside over each hearing, and the chairs shall ensure, to the extent practicable, that each branch presides over an equal number of hearings. The committee staff of the branch presiding over the hearing shall, unless otherwise agreed to by the chairs, be responsible for the administrative work necessary to conduct the hearing, including, but not limited to, securing a hearing location, arranging for the publication of the agenda and instructions for public participation, and processing the individuals seeking to testify at the hearing either physically or remotely. Prior to the hearing, the staff of each branch shall ensure that a plain-language summary of each bill to be heard by their respective branches is available on the official website of the General Court.

(3) All hearings of joint standing committees shall be conducted in-person with the option of remote participation available to the public and to members of the General Court, unless not allowed by the rules of the branch to which the member belongs. All joint standing committees, in the conduct of their hearings, shall utilize, to the extent practicable, online platforms or systems that allow for synchronous, audio-visual communication between the members of the committee and individuals offering testimony remotely. All hearings of joint standing committees shall be publicly livestreamed on the official website of the General Court which shall display and transmit, in real-time, the audio-visual attributes of public testimony offered remotely; provided further, that said livestream shall be archived on the official website of the General Court for the duration of the legislative session. Any member of the General Court may offer remote testimony before joint standing committees. The chairs of the joint standing committees may prioritize the testimony of those physically present at the hearing location and may allow individuals participating in-person a greater amount of time to testify than those participating remotely. All notices of hearings of joint standing committees issued pursuant to Joint Rule 1D at which public testimony is being solicited shall include instructions on how to offer testimony both in-person and remotely.

1D. All meetings of joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, and joint special committees shall be open to the public, and any person shall be permitted to attend any such meeting unless such committee convenes in executive session, as provided herein.

All joint standing committees shall, not later than 3 weeks from appointment, determine a schedule for committee hearings to be held from the beginning of the first annual session through the first Wednesday in December in said session. These committee schedules shall be submitted to the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives who shall cause them to be published on the official website of the General Court. Establishment of such schedules shall not preclude joint standing committees from scheduling additional hearings or meetings as needed.

No executive session shall be held until after the committee has first convened in an open session for which notice has been given, the presiding officer has stated the purpose of the executive session, a majority of the committee members present has voted to go into executive session, the vote of each member has been recorded on a roll call vote, and the presiding officer has stated before the executive session if the committee will reconvene after the executive session. The records of all such roll calls shall be kept in the offices of the committee for the duration of the General Court during which said vote was recorded, and the committee shall cause the record of

such roll call to be available on the official website of the General Court within 48 hours of such roll call.

All joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, shall notify the Sergeant-at-Arms of the time, place and agenda of all public hearings and executive sessions. Notification to the Sergeant-at-Arms for public hearings conducted shall not be less than 10 days prior to the time of such meetings.

Said agenda and docket of bills to be heard may only be amended upon agreement of the chairs and upon posting notice of such amendment more than 72 hours from the time of such hearing.

The 10 day requirement shall be suspended in an emergency only after all reasonable efforts have been made to contact all committee members and upon a recorded vote of at least a majority of the members of each branch appointed to the committee, but not less than two-thirds of the members of each branch voting.

If public testimony is being solicited, agendas shall include: (i) an electronic mail address and physical mail address for the submission of testimony, (ii) instructions on how the public may participate remotely, and (iii) the committee reporting deadline under Joint Rule 10 for the matters being heard. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall notify the Clerks, who shall inform all members electronically and publish such information on the official website of the General Court whenever practicable.

Committees shall make written testimony received by the committee publicly available; provided, however, that the committee shall adopt rules relative to the public availability of written testimony received by the committee and such rules shall contain limitations on the sharing of testimony that is obscene or that includes sensitive personal information or information that may jeopardize the health, wellness or safety of the testifier or others. The rules relative to the public availability of written testimony adopted by the committee shall be disclosed in the hearing agendas and shall inform testifiers that their written testimony may be made publicly available by the committee.

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

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

The chairs of each committee shall preserve decorum and order during each committee hearing. Persons attending hearings shall be required to maintain electronic and communication devices on silent mode. The use of visual aids including, without limitation, posters, displays, or charts shall be permitted only upon approval of the chairs.

At any time after a matter has had a hearing, a chair of a committee may initiate a vote thereon if the matter is filed in the branch of said chair; provided, however, a co-chair shall notify their co-chair that a vote shall be taken as a courtesy prior to the vote. Said vote shall be taken from each member of the branch of said chair, and if a majority of the members of said branch voting on the matter vote in support of the matter, then the matter shall be reported favorably and referred to the branch of origination. The Senate chair and the Senate members of the committee shall have no authority or ability to impede the vote on a bill in the committee that was filed in the House, and the House chair and the House members shall have no authority or ability to impede the vote on a bill in the committee that was filed in the Senate

Notwithstanding the previous paragraph, money bills filed in the Senate, constitutional amendments filed in the House, and any matters not filed by a member of the General Court, including, but not limited to, matters filed by the Governor and other constitutional officers, shall have a hearing and a vote scheduled upon agreement of the co-chairs of the committee. Said vote shall be taken from each member of the committee and if a majority of the members of the committee voting on the matter vote in support of the matter, then the bill shall be reported favorably and, unless otherwise agreed to by the chairs, referred to the branch in which the matter was originally introduced except that reports on money bills shall be made to the House and reports on constitutional amendments shall be made to the Senate. Bills engrossed by one branch, after being read in the opposite branch and subsequently referred to a joint committee, shall be voted on by members of the branch that made the referral, notwithstanding the branch where the matter was originally filed.

A chair of the committee shall provide to the members of their branch on the committee a comprehensive summary and redrafted text, if any, of each matter prior to a vote thereon. Any vote of a committee on a matter shall be taken by roll call or electronic poll of each member of the branch calling the vote; provided, however, that the committee shall cause the record of such roll call or electronic poll to be available on the official website of the General Court within 48 hours of such roll call [Adopted June 3, 1985. Amended June 12, 1995; Feb. 20, 2007; Mar. 14, 2013; Mar. 7, 2019.]

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

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

2007; Feb. 12, 2009.]

1F. The joint committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall review all legislation providing for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth (see Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution, as amended by Article LXXXIV). Said committee shall be responsible for evaluating such legislation and determining the appropriateness of enacting legislation containing increased bond authorizations for the Commonwealth. The committee shall periodically review and hold open public hearings, accepting oral and written testimony on the status of the bonds and notes of the Commonwealth, including (1) general obligation debt; (2) dedicated income tax debt; and (3) special obligation debt. The committee shall also, in its continuing study of the state's bonding practices, review the Commonwealth's liabilities relative to (a) state-supported debt; (b) state-guaranteed debt; and (c) indirect obligations.

Any bill providing for borrowing for new projects and requiring the Commonwealth to issue bonds for such purpose shall, prior to its reference to the committee on Ways and Means, be referred to the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets for report on its relationship to the finances of the Commonwealth. A measure may initially be referred to another joint committee with jurisdiction over the subject matter before being referred to the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets; provided, however, that notwithstanding any rule to the contrary, any such matter so reported shall not be read a first time in the branch in which the report was received. The next favorable report on any such matter by the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be considered the first reading. The branch of origin for any such bill so reported shall be the branch receiving such favorable report.

The provisions of Joint Rule 4 shall apply to all matters referred to the joint committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets, except that where constitutionally prohibited. The joint committee shall consult with the various agencies of the Executive branch and the office of the Treasurer and Receiver-General relative to project expenditures, availability of funds, the sale of new bonds and the resultant debt obligations, federal reimbursements and other related funding and bonding issues.

The joint committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be authorized to conduct hearings relative to the statutory authority of the Executive branch and the Treasurer and Receiver-General in the issuance and sale of bonds and notes and the expenditure of capital funds by the various agencies and authorities of the Commonwealth. The committee shall determine whether such laws, administrative regulations and programs are being implemented in accordance with the intent of the General Court.

The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be authorized to report to the General Court from time to time on the results of its hearings and to file drafts of legislation necessary to carry its recommendations into effect. Messages from the Governor setting terms of bonds and notes, or for the de-authorization or authorization of bonds and notes, shall be referred to the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets. [Adopted Mar. 25, 2021 -- previously omitted ]

1G. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Minority Leader of the Senate, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Senate and House chairs and the Senate and House ranking minority members of the joint committee on Public Safety and

Homeland Security may receive security clearance from federal and state homeland security officials in order to be granted access to confidential homeland security briefings, information and materials. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate and House committee chairs and the Senate and House ranking minority members may designate 1 or more members of their staff who may receive such security clearance.

Any person who receives security clearance under this rule shall sign all confidentiality agreements required by homeland security officials. The breach of any such confidentiality agreement shall constitute a violation of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives. Any alleged violation of a confidentiality agreement shall be referred for investigation to the Senate committee on Ethics and Rules or the House committee on Ethics, respectively, and, if appropriate, to law enforcement authorities for potential criminal prosecution. [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005; Amended Feb. 12, 2009; Mar. 7, 2019.]

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

2A. No member of either branch shall purchase, directly or indirectly, the stock or other securities of any corporation or association knowing that there is pending before the General Court any measure specially granting to such corporation or association any immunity, exemption, privilege or benefit or any measure providing for the creation of, or directly affecting any, contractual relations between such corporation or association and the Commonwealth. This rule shall not apply to the purchase of securities issued by the Commonwealth or any political subdivision of the Commonwealth. [See G.L. chapter 268, section 10.] [Adopted Jan. 16, 1922.]

3. When the General Court is in session, authorization for any joint standing committee to travel during the session of the General Court shall be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890; Amended Feb. 2, 1891 ; Jan. 20, 1904 ; April 17, 1925 ; March 2, 1943 ; July 27, 1950 ; Oct. 18, 1971 ; March 28, 1972 ; Jan. 15, 1973; Feb. 12, 2009.]

3A. A joint standing committee may, upon the written and signed report of two-thirds of the members of the Senate and two-thirds of the members of the House appointed to said committee, report a bill or other form of legislation without said legislation being founded upon petition; provided, however, that matters so reported shall be germane to the subject matters regularly referred to the committee. The committee shall hold a public hearing on such bill or other form of legislation before it is reported. A bill or other form of legislation so reported shall be placed in the Orders of the Day by the Clerk of the respective branch to which it is reported or referred to a standing committee of said branch under the rules. All reports of committees not founded upon petition shall bear the designation 'committee bill', 'resolve', 'order' or 'resolution', as the case may be, in the Orders of the Day. Committees to which messages from the Governor, reports of state officers, boards, committees, commissions and others authorized to report to the General Court, may report by bill or otherwise such legislation as may be germane to the subject matter referred to them. [Adopted June 3, 1985.]

4. Favorable reports, and adverse reports on subjects of legislation other than petitions, by joint committees shall be made to the branch in which the matter was originally introduced, except that reports on money bills shall be made to the House and if adverse reports on matters other than petitions which are accompanied by money bills are accepted by the House, this shall constitute final rejection. Adverse reports by joint committees on petitions shall be made to the

branch in which the petition was originally introduced, except that such adverse reports on petitions accompanied by proposed money bills shall be made to the House; and, if accepted by the branch in which they are made, shall be considered as a final rejection. When a report is made from any committee to either branch, and the subject-matter of the report is subsequently referred to a joint committee, such committee, shall report its action to the branch in which the reference originated. [See also Joint Rule 5.]

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

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

5. Matters reported adversely by joint committees and the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, may be recommitted to the same committees at the pleasure of the branch acting on the report, and bills or resolves may be recommitted in either branch. If a bill or resolve is laid aside in either branch for the reason that it is declared to be broader in its scope than the subject-matter upon which it is based, the subject-matter shall be recommitted to the committee. A concurrent vote shall, however, be necessary for re-committal, with instructions. After recommitment, report shall, in all cases, be made to the branch originating the recommitment. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; April 11, 1935; Jan. 6, 1947; May 7, 1953; March 26, 1963; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; March 11, 1974.]

6. Bills and resolves reported by joint committees shall be presented with spaces between the several sections and shall be made available to all members electronically and to the public on the official website of the General Court. [Amended Jan. 28, 1889; Jan. 9, 1941; Feb. 8, 1949; Feb. 12, 2009.]

### ***Joint Petitions.***

6A. A member of the Senate and a member of the House of Representatives may file a joint petition in either branch and shall endorse their name on the petition and a brief statement of the nature and object of the instrument and the reading of the instrument shall be dispensed with, unless specially ordered. The petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of either the Senate or House of Representatives, depending on whether it is a 'Joint Senate/House Petition' or a 'Joint House/Senate Petition' but the Journal records in the Senate and House of Representatives shall carry both members' names as presenters of the petition. If filed in the Senate, the petition shall be voted upon by Senate members, and if filed in the House of Representatives the matter shall be voted upon by House members, both in accordance with Joint Rule 1D. [Adopted Jan. 15, 1973.]

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

7A. A petition for legislation to authorize a county to reinstate in its service a person formerly employed by it, or to retire or pension or grant an annuity to any person, or to increase any retirement allowance, pension or annuity, or to pay any sum of money in the nature of a pension or retirement allowance, or to pay any salary which would have accrued to a deceased official or employee but for their death, or to pay any claim for damages or otherwise, or to alter the benefits or change the restrictions of any county retirement or pension law, shall, subsequently to the procedure required by Senate Rule No. 20 and by House Rule No. 24, be reported adversely, unless, when filed it be the petition of, or be approved by, a majority of the county commissioners. [Adopted April 29, 1915. Amended Jan. 13, Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; May 24, 1926; April 11, 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Feb. 20, 1951; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; Jan. 15, 1973; Mar. 7, 2019.]

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

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

7C. The local approval vote required to file a petition, the operation of which is restricted to a particular city or town under Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth, shall expire at the conclusion of the final day of the next immediate biennial session following the local approval vote by the city or town and in such circumstances no additional vote shall be required to file a petition unless a vote to rescind such approval is passed by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council or other legislative body of a city, or the select board and the town meeting or other legislative body of the town. [Adopted, Mar. 14, 2013; Amended Feb. 15, 2017.]

7D. The approval of a substantive amendment to a petition restricted to a single city or town and requiring a vote of the city of town before enactment of the petition shall be provided to the

General Court before the enactment of the petition and shall be reviewed by House Counsel and Senate Counsel prior to the enactment of the petition in either branch. [Adopted , Feb. 15, 2017.]

*Notice to Parties Interested.*

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

9. A petition for the incorporation of a city or town, for the annexation of 1 municipality to another, for the consolidation of 2 or more municipalities or for the division of an existing municipality, or for the incorporation or revival of a railroad, street railway, elevated railroad, canal, telephone, telegraph, water, gas, electric light, power or other public service corporation, for the amendment, alteration or extension of the charter or corporate powers or privileges, or for the change of name, of any such company, whether specially incorporated or organized under the General Laws, or for authority to take water for a water supply, or relative to building structures in or over navigable or tide waters, shall be placed on file, and not referred to a committee, unless the petitioner has given the notice and followed the procedure required by section 5 of chapter 3 of the General Laws. But, if no objection being raised, any such petition is referred to a committee without such required notice or procedure, the committee shall forthwith report adversely, setting forth as the reason for such report failure to comply with the law, unless evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that all parties interested have in writing waived notice. In case a bill or resolve is reported upon such a petition, after proof of such waiver of notice, this fact shall be set forth in the report of the committee. When an adverse report is made by a committee, on account of failure to give the required notice, no bill or resolve shall be substituted for such report, nor shall such report be recommitted or referred to another committee.

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

Any petition placed on file for want of proper notice or procedure under this rule shall not affect action upon any other measure involving the same subject matter. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890. Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 3, 1898; Jan. 16, 1903; Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; May 24, 1926; Feb. 27, 1929; April 11, 1935; Jan. 6, 1938; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 9, 1941; Jan. 15, 1945; April 8, 1959; Jan. 7, 1963; Jan. 7, 1971 ; Jan. 15, 1973 , June 12, 1995; Feb. 12, 2009; Mar. 7, 2019.]

***Limit of Time allowed for Reports of Committees.***

10 All joint committees and the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall make final report on all matters referred to and heard by them by the deadline determined by rule of the branch where the matter was filed.

In the absence of final report deadline determined by rule of the branch where the matter was filed, all joint committees and the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall make final report not later than the first Wednesday in December of the first annual session of the General Court on all matters referred to them before the first day of October of the first annual session and within 60 days on all matters referred to them on and after the first day of October of the first annual session of the General Court except that the committee on Health Care Financing shall make final report not later than the last Wednesday of January of the second annual session on all matters referred to them on or before the fourth Wednesday of December of the first annual session and within 60 days on all matters referred to it after the fourth Wednesday in December of the first annual session of the General Court.

When the time within which said committees are required to report has expired, all matters upon which no report has then been made shall forthwith be reported by the chair of the committee on the part of the branch in which they were respectively introduced, with a recommendation to study under this rule.

Matters which have been referred under Joint Rule 29, upon which the chairs of the committees on Rules fail to make a report, shall be placed by the respective Clerks in the Orders of the Day of the branch in which the subject matter was referred to said committees.

Committees to whom are referred subjects of legislation may combine petitions of similar subject matter, or other forms of legislation of similar subject matter, into 1 adverse report, and the report on the petition shall be that said petitions or other forms of legislation 'ought NOT to pass,' and if the report is accepted, all the matters contained in the report shall be disposed of. However, petitions upon which an adverse report is accepted in only 1 branch may not be combined with other subjects of legislation upon which adverse reports must be accepted, in concurrence. This rule shall not apply to petitions referred to the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, under the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12.

This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended, except by a concurrent vote of four-fifths of the members of each branch present and voting thereon. Notwithstanding Joint Rule 30, this rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended more than 3 times except by unanimous consent. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Jan. 25, 1894; Jan. 16, 1903; Jan. 20, 1904; Dec. 22, 1920; April 17, 1925; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Jan. 6, 1947; May 7, 1953; Jan. 27, 1955; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; Feb. 4, 1974, June 12, 1995; July 17, 2003; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 15, 2017; Mar. 7, 2019.]

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

### *Committees of Conference.*

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

Committees of conference to whom are referred matters of difference in respect to bills or resolves, shall, after filing their reports, but before consideration by either branch, have the same approved or discharged by each committee on Bills in the Third Reading. [Amended April 22, 1937; Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3, 2011; Feb. 15, 2017; Mar. 7, 2019.]

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

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

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

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

11B. A report from a committee of conference filed by 8:00 p.m. shall not be considered or acted upon by either branch until 24 hours has passed following the time on which said report was filed and made available to the public and to the members of the General Court. Any report from a committee of conference filed after 8:00 p.m. shall not be considered or acted upon by either branch until the 2nd calendar day following the day on which said report was filed and made available to the public and members of the general court.

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

11D. Upon the filing of a report by a committee of conference the clerk of the branch in which the committee of conference filed its report shall make the report and the summary of the report available to all members electronically and to the public on the official website of the General Court. [Adopted Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3, 2011.]

11E. Subsequent to the filing of a report of a committee of conference, an addendum may be submitted to the clerk of the branch in which the report had been filed. The addendum shall indicate that it contains only matters inadvertently omitted from or included in the report, and shall be signed by all of members of the House and Senate who had signed the conference committee report. The addendum shall be approved by both the Counsel to the House and the Counsel to the Senate. The addendum, having been approved by both the Counsel to the House and the Counsel to the Senate, shall be posted to the official website of the General Court immediately upon receipt by the clerk of the branch to which it was submitted. [Adopted Mar.14, 2013.]

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

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

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

At any special session called under Rule 26A, however, matters relating to the facts constituting the necessity for convening such session shall, if otherwise admissible, be admitted as though filed seasonably under the first sentence of this rule. Any recommendations from the Governor shall be similarly considered. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended, except by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting thereon. [Amended Feb. 7, 18 90; Feb. 2, 18 91; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan. 10, 18 98; Jan. 9, 18 99; Feb. 15, 19 01; May 4, 19 04; Jan. 31, 19 10; Feb. 2, 19 17; Dec. 22, 19 20; March 30, 19 21; Jan. 30, 19 23; Feb. 15, 19 33; Jan. 12 and Aug. 7, 19 39; Jan. 15, 19 45; Jan. 6, 19 47; May 27, 19 48; Jan. 30, 19 67; March 26, 19 69; Jan. 7, 1971 ; Jan. 15 and Oct. 2, 1973 ; Oct 3, 1983 , June 12, 1995; Jan. 26, 2005; July 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; July 21, 2005; Sept. 20, 2005; Feb. 12, 2009.]

12A. All formal business of the first annual session of the General Court shall be concluded not later than the third Wednesday in November of that calendar year and all formal business of the second annual session shall be concluded not later than the last day of July of that calendar year; provided, however, that the Senate and House of Representatives may convene for formal

business solely for the purposes of considering: (i) reports of committees of conference formed on or before the last day of July of the second annual session, (ii) appropriation bills filed after the last day of July of said second annual session, (iii) passage of legislation, notwithstanding the objections of the Governor, that was returned by the Governor with the Governor's objections pursuant to Article II of Section I of Chapter I of Part the Second of the Constitution of the Commonwealth; or (iv) re-enactment of legislation that was returned by the Governor with a recommendation to amend pursuant to Article LVI of the Amendments to the Constitution.

#### ***Unfinished Business of the Session.***

12B. Any matter pending before the General Court at the end of the first annual session and any special session held in the same year shall carry over into the second annual session of the same General Court in the same legislative status as it was at the conclusion of the first annual session or any special session held during that year; provided, however, that any measure making or supplementing an appropriation for a fiscal year submitted to or returned to the General Court by the Governor, under Article LXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution, in the first annual session or in a special session held during that year shall cease to exist upon the termination of the first annual session. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

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

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

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

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

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

#### ***Duties of the Clerk.***

15. If any part of the report of a committee over the signature of the chair or members of the committee is amended in either branch, the Clerk of that branch shall endorse upon the report such amendment. [Amended Mar. 7, 2019.]

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

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

18. [Omitted in 1971.]

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

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

### ***Presentation and Distribution of Documents.***

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

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

### ***Emergency Measures.***

22. The vote on the preamble of an emergency law, which under the requirements of Article XLVIII, as amended by Article LXVII of the Amendments of the Constitution shall, upon request of 2 members of the Senate or of 5 members of the House of Representatives, be taken by call of the yeas and nays, shall be had after the proposed law has been prepared for final passage; and neither branch shall vote on the enactment of a bill or on the passage of a resolve

containing an emergency preamble until it has been determined whether the preamble shall remain or be eliminated. If the bill contains an emergency preamble, a motion to amend the bill may be received in either branch before the adoption of the emergency preamble, and the amendment may contain a new emergency preamble. If the 2 branches concur in adopting the preamble, the bill or resolve shall first be put upon its final passage in the House of Representatives. If either branch fails to adopt the preamble, notice of its action shall be sent to the other branch; and the bill or resolve, duly endorsed, shall again be prepared for final passage without the preamble and without any provision that the bill or the resolve shall take effect earlier than 90 days after it has become law. Procedure shall be otherwise under the joint rules and the rules of the Senate and the House of Representatives. [Adopted Feb. 21, 1919. Amended Jan. 30, 1923; Jan. 7, 1971; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 12, 2009.]

22A. Bills and resolves passed to be engrossed by both branches and before being transmitted by the clerks to the Legislative Engrossing Division shall be made available to the committees on Bills in the Third Reading of the two branches, acting jointly, who shall examine them to ensure accuracy in the text; that the legislation is correct as to form; that references to previous amendments to any particular law are correct and to ensure proper consistency with the language of existing statutes. These committees, with the approval of the majority and minority leadership of both branches may make corrections which are not substantive in nature. The clerks of both branches shall be immediately notified, in writing, of any such changes. Errors discovered by the committees of a substantive nature shall be reported to the General Court, which in turn shall take appropriate action under its rules. Upon completion of examination and possible correction of any such bills and resolves, the bills and resolves shall be returned to the clerks, who in turn, shall transmit them to the Legislative Engrossing Division to be prepared for final passage. [Adopted Sept. 16, 1971.]

### ***Legislative Amendments to the Constitution.***

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

amendment, which shall be deemed to have been introduced by the member of the Senate who reports for the committee; and the procedure as regards reporting, filing and subsequent action shall be that provided for legislative amendments by this rule. Or the joint committee may report ought not to pass for the reason that no legislation is necessary or that the recommendation ought not to pass; and in such cases the usual procedure as regards similar reports by joint committees shall be followed. If such an adverse report is amended in the Senate by substituting a proposal for a legislative amendment, notice of the Senate's action shall be sent to the House and said proposal, together with the official papers relating to the subject, shall be in the custody of the Clerk of the Senate; and if said report is so amended in the House, the proposal, duly endorsed, together with the other papers, shall be sent to the Senate for its information and shall be kept in the custody of its Clerk. No further legislative action shall be taken in either branch on a proposal so substituted unless consideration in joint session is called for under the Constitution. If either branch calls for the consideration of any proposal in joint session, notice of its action shall be sent to the other branch; and it shall then be the duty of the Senate and the House of Representatives to arrange for the holding of the joint session not later than the second Wednesday in May. Subject to the requirements of the Constitution, joint sessions or continuances of joint sessions of the 2 branches to consider proposals for specific amendments to the Constitution, and all rules or procedures, shall be determined only by concurrent votes of the 2 branches. The rules relative to joint conventions shall apply to the joint sessions of the 2 houses. [Adopted Feb. 21, 1919. Amended March 30, 1921; April 11, 1935; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Nov. 9, 1951; Jan. 15, 1973; July 1, 1974; Feb. 12, 2009.]

### ***Executive Reorganization Plans.***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Within 7 days of the expiration of the 60 days from the date of presentation of said plan by the Governor, unless the question has already been decided, the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives shall place the plan in the Orders of the Day; and no motions except the motions to take a recess, to adjourn, and previous question, or to close debate at a specified time, shall be in order.

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

### ***Joint Conventions.***

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

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

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

### ***Special Sessions.***

26A. If written statements of 21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House of Representatives, that in their opinion it is necessary that the General Court assemble in special session on a particular date and time specified in their statements during a recess of the General Court, are filed with their respective Clerks, such Clerks shall forthwith notify all the members of their respective branches to assemble at the State House in Boston, on said date at the time so specified. When so assembled, the first business to be taken up shall be the question of the necessity of so assembling, under Article I of Section I of Chapter I of Part the Second of the Constitution of the Commonwealth. If 21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House of Representatives judge by vote taken by call of the yeas and nays that such assembling of the General Court is necessary, specifying in such vote the facts constituting such necessity, the General Court shall then complete its organization as a special session, proceed to the consideration of the suspension of Joint Rule 12A which if suspended by the required two-thirds of the members of both branches shall permit the General Court to proceed to the consideration of matters properly before it. Nothing in this rule shall prevent the General Court from assembling in any other constitutional manner when it judges necessary. [Adopted Aug. 7, 1939. Amended March 2, 1943; March 27, 19 69; May 5, 1979; July 17, 2003; July 21 and September 20, 2005.]

### ***Joint Elections.***

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

27A. In all cases of elections by ballot a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for a choice, and where there shall be no such a majority on the first ballot the ballots shall be repeated until a majority is obtained; and in balloting, blanks shall be rejected and not taken into the count in the enumeration of votes, excepting that when the number of blanks shall be more than the number of votes received by the candidate having the highest number of votes, then the election shall be declared void and the balloting shall be repeated as provided herein. [Adopted March 27, 1969 .]

28. [Omitted March 28, 1972 .]

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

29. All motions and orders authorizing joint committees to travel or to employ stenographers, or authorizing joint committees or special commissions composed as a whole or in part of members of the General Court to make investigations or to file special reports, all propositions reported by joint committees which authorize investigations or special reports by joint committees or by special commissions composed as a whole or in part of members of the General Court, all motions or orders proposed for joint adoption which provide that information be transmitted to the General Court, and all matters referred under the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12, shall be referred without debate to the committees on Rules of the two branches acting concurrently, who shall report on the matter, under Joint Rule 10. All matters which have been referred under this rule shall, in each instance, be reported back into the branch making such reference. [Adopted

Jan. 10, 1898. Amended Jan. 20, 1904; Jan. 28, 1913; Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; April 11, 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 27, 1955; Jan. 30, 1967; Oct. 18, 1971.]

29A. Meetings of any special commission, special legislative commission, task force or other group authorized or required by a statute, resolve, rule, or order to make or conduct an investigation or study of any issue shall be conducted openly and transparently. Meetings of any special commission, special legislative commission, task force or other group authorized or required by a statute, resolve, rule, or order to make or conduct an investigation or study of any issue and which are chaired by members of the general court shall be posted and conducted pursuant to the rules of the senate and house of representatives and shall be conducted according to the following requirements:

- a.) Meetings shall be open to the public;
- b.) Meetings shall be announced by appropriate notice at least 10 days in advance;
- c.) Any documents used in a meeting be provided to the public upon request in a manner to be determined by the chair;
- d.) Public testimony shall be accepted in a manner to be determined by the chair;
- e.) The chair shall maintain a summary of the subjects discussed at each meeting, a list of documents and other exhibits used at the meetings, and shall maintain a record of proceedings, including a record of all votes. For the purposes of this rule a video or audio recording made available to the public shall be considered an adequate record of the proceedings. [Adopted, Feb. 15, 2017; Amended Mar. 7, 2019.]

30. All motions, orders or notifications extending the time within which joint committees and the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, are required to report shall be determined by rule of the branch where the matter is filed. In the absence of such a rule, all such motions or orders shall be referred without debate to the committee on Rules of the branch of origination, who shall report recommending what action should be taken on the motion or order. Such extension shall be granted by a majority vote of the branch of origination... [Adopted Jan. 16, 1903. Amended Feb. 6, 1912; Feb. 19, 1920; Jan. 6, 1947; Jan. 27, 1955; June 7, 1965].

#### *Members.*

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

#### *Accommodations for Reporters.*

32. Subject to the approval and direction of the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, during the session, and of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives after prorogation, the use of the rooms and facilities assigned to reporters in the State House shall be under the control of the organizations of legislative reporters known as the Massachusetts State House Press Association and the State House Broadcasters Association.

No person shall be permitted to use such rooms or facilities who is not entitled to the privileges of the reporters' galleries of the Senate or of the House. Within 10 days after the General Court convenes the Massachusetts State House Press Association and the State House Broadcasters Association shall each transmit to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Sergeant-at-Arms a list of the legislative reporters with the principal publication or news service which each represents. [Adopted Jan. 27, 1911. Amended Feb. 24, 1914; Feb. 19, 1920; April 17, 1925; May 23, 1979; Feb. 12, 2009.]

#### ***Suspension of Rules.***

33. Any joint rule except Rule 10 and Rule 30 may be altered, suspended or rescinded by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting thereon. Notwithstanding Rule 12A, a motion to alter, suspend, or rescind said Rule 12A may be taken by a call of the yeas and nays. [Amended Feb. 7, 1893. Adopted in revised form Jan. 9, 1899. Amended Jan. 16, 1903; Jan. 26, 2005.]

#### ***Audit of Accounts.***

34. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall provide that an outside independent audit of joint financial accounts be conducted by a certified public accountant at the end of each fiscal year. A copy of such audit shall be filed with the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives and made available on the general court website. [Adopted May 30, 1985.]

35. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall conduct a comprehensive review of the joint rules adopted by the Senate and the House of Representatives after the first day of August of the second annual session. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall conduct a public hearing and solicit testimony from the public and other interested parties. The chair of the committees on Rules of their respective branch may submit a report to their respective branch at the conclusion of their review by no later than the last day of December of the second annual session. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

#### ***Procurement.***

36. (a) The House Business Manager and Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall complete the procurement of all goods and services from the joint legislative account. Procurements for goods or services shall be made pursuant to a statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division, to the extent practicable, as determined by the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate. If the Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer determine that a procurement cannot be made using a statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division, they may procure the required goods or services under subsections (b), (c) or (d).

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

(c) If the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate seek to procure a supply or service from a vendor not on a statewide procurement contract valued at \$10,000 or

more, but less than \$100,000, they shall seek quotations from not fewer than 3 persons providing such supply or service. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall record the names and addresses of all persons from whom quotations were received, the names of the persons submitting quotations and the date and amount of each quotation. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall award the contract to the respondent whose quotation offers the needed quality of supply or service and which represents the best value for the General Court in the informed opinion of the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate.

(d) If the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate seek to procure a supply or service from a vendor not on a statewide procurement contract valued at \$100,000 or more, the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall seek proposals through a competitive bid process, which shall be established by the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall include diversity and inclusion plan requirements in all requests for proposals; provided, however, that such process shall adhere to the terms of any relevant statewide contract, where possible, and other provisions of this rule.

(e) The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall maintain a file on each procurement not executed using a statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division and in excess of \$10,000 and shall include in such file all documents constituting the agreement for goods and services and all documents required by subsection (c) or (d). The files maintained shall be available for inspection by members of the General Court during regular business hours unless the information is otherwise protected by state or federal law.

(f) Whenever the time required to comply with a requirement of this rule would endanger the health, safety or convenience of the members, staff or visitors to the House of Representatives or Senate the House Business Manager and the Senate Chief Financial Officer may make an emergency procurement without satisfying the requirement of this rule; provided, however, that both the House Business Manager and the Senate Chief Financial Officer certify in writing that: (i) an emergency exists and explain the nature thereof; (ii) the emergency procurement is limited to only supplies or services necessary to meet the emergency; and (iii) the emergency procurement conforms to the requirements of this rule to the extent practicable under the circumstances; provided further the House Business Manager and Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall keep a record of: (a) each contractor's name, (b) the amount and the type of each contract; (c) the supplies or services provided under each contract; (d) and basis for determining the need for an emergency procurement.

(g) All procurements for legal services shall follow a process established by House and Senate Counsel and the House Business Manager and Chief Financial Officer of the Senate, and shall be approved by the House and Senate Counsel.

(h) If, in the determination of the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate, an emergency procurement of greater than \$10,000 is necessary, the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate may procure the goods or services immediately and create and maintain a file explaining the nature of the emergency and the goods or services that were procured as a result. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial

Officer of the Senate shall document the goods or services that were procured, the process used to procure the goods or services, the vendors that were contacted and any other information relevant to the procurement, and make that information available to members of the General Court during regular business hours, unless the information is otherwise protected by state or federal law.

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power to determine the rules of its own house of the legislature has the power to determine how it will handle conference committee reports and a minority report.

When a house of the legislature acted in violation of its own rules or in violation of parliamentary procedure clearly within its power does not make its action subject to review by the judiciary.

Rules of rules limiting outside income and gifts, requiring reimbursement of expenses connected with duties from private sources and requiring members to file disclosure statements of these transactions, empowering, through enactment of law, the censure of members who knowingly and willfully failed to file statements required by the rules, indicates that the legislature not to be the exclusive interpreter of the particular rules.

### Sources of Rules of Procedure

11. *Joint Rules; Ch. 5, Secs. 35-39, Parliamentary Law; and Dispensable Requirements for Making Valid Decisions.*

Rules of procedure passed by one legislature or statutory provisions governing the legislative process are binding on a subsequent legislature.

12. *Opinion of the Justices (Ala., 1975).*

13. *Connecticut v. Sav. Bank of New London (Conn., 1975).*

14. *U.S. v. Jefferson, (E.D. Va., 2009).*

15. *Manigault v. Springs (U.S., 1905); U. S. v. Smith (U.S., 1905); Baker v. Carr (U.S., 1962); Consumers Union of U.S., v. Federal Communications Commission (D.C. Cir., 1975); Sierra Club v. U.S. Dept. of Interior (5th Cir., Texas, 1987); Peterson v. U.S. Dept. of Interior (9th Cir., Calif., 1990); Malone v. Meekins (Alaska, 1982); Abood v. Detroit Board of Education (U.S., 1977); League of Women Voters of Alaska (Alaska, 1987); People's Advocate, Inc. v. Superior Court (Calif., 1986); Moffitt v. Willis (Fla., 1984); Coggin v. Davey (Ga., 1975); Des Moines Register v. Dwyer (Iowa, 1996); Opinion of the Justices (Maine, 1951); MSHA v. Depositors Trust Co. (Maine, 1971); Edgerly v. Honeywell (Maine, 1977); Wisconsin ex rel. La Follette v. Witt (Wis., 1983).*

2. Rules of legislative procedure are derived from several sources and take precedence in the order listed below. The principal sources are as follows:

(a) Constitutional provisions and judicial decisions thereon.

(b) Adopted rules.

(c) Custom, usage and precedents.

(d) Statutory provisions.

(e) Adopted parliamentary authority.

(f) Parliamentary law.

*See also Sec. 560, Each House of a Legislature Is the Judge of the Election and Qualification of Its Members, particularly Par. 8.*

3. Judicial decisions, to the extent they are interpretations of rules from one of the sources, take the same precedence as the source interpreted. Thus, for example, an interpretation of a constitutional provision takes precedence over a statute.

4. Whenever there is conflict between rules from these sources, the rule from the source listed earlier prevails over the rule from the source listed later. For example, where the constitution requires three readings of bills,

(9th Cir., Calif., 1990); *Malone v. Meekins* (Alaska, 1982); *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* (U.S., 1977); *League of Women Voters of Alaska* (Alaska, 1987); *People's Advocate, Inc. v. Superior Court* (Calif., 1986); *Moffitt v. Willis* (Fla., 1984); *Coggin v. Davey* (Ga., 1975); *Des Moines Register v. Dwyer* (Iowa, 1996); *Opinion of the Justices* (Maine, 1951); *MSHA v. Depositors Trust Co.* (Maine, 1971); *Edgerly v. Honeywell* (Maine, 1977); *Wisconsin ex rel. La Follette v. Witt* (Wis., 1983).

*Sec. 4, Par. 2: Cushing's Legislative Assemblies, Sec. 614; Des Moines Register v. Dwyer (Iowa, 1996).*

this provision controls over any provision of adopted rules, statutes, adopted manual or parliamentary law.

5. The term "parliamentary law" is sometimes used in two different senses. It applies to rules having two different priorities. Certain indispensable basic principles, such as the requirement of a meeting, a quorum or a majority vote, apply to all groups, in all instances and without adoption, superseding adopted rules and statutes, while other rules, sometimes also called parliamentary law, are mere custom and give way to adopted rules and apply only when the house has not adopted any contrary rule or practice. It is often necessary to determine in which sense the term is used.

6. There is a reason for every form of parliamentary procedure that has been long sanctioned by general usage. These procedures have been approved by experience, have been found useful and expedient in practice, and have grown into general acceptance.

*Sec. 4, Par. 4: Starr v. Governor (N.H., 2006).*

*Sec. 4, Par. 5: Waples, Sec. 201.*

## CHAPTER 2

### CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS GOVERNING PROCEDURE

*See also Sec. 281, Right of Legislative Bodies to Suspend*

#### Sec. 6. Legislative Procedure Is Controlled by Constitutional Provisions

*See also Sec. 3, Each House Determines the Rules of Its*

1. Provisions in the constitutions of the states provide, among other things, that each legislature shall determine the rules of its house; that each house shall judge the qualifications and returns of members; that each house shall elect its officers; that a majority of the house shall constitute a quorum; that each house may discipline its members; and that each house shall keep

2. A constitutional provision regulating legislative procedure controls over all other rules of procedure.

#### Sec. 7. Constitutional Mandates Concerning Procedure Must Be Complied With

*See also Ch. 64, Secs. 694-703, Journals and Records.*

1. Being organic in character, constitutional provisions stand on a higher plane than statutes and regulations. Constitutional provisions prescribe exclusive time or methods for certain a

*Sec. 6, Par. 1: Commission on Ethics v. Hardy (N.H., 2018).*  
*Sec. 6, Par. 2: Bevin v. Beshear (Ky., 2018).*

amentary law is the rule of action for all bodies governing the introduction, modification and decision of proposals.

### Parliamentary Law Not Determined by Any One Legislative Body

Parliamentary law is not determined by the process of any single legislative body.

Parliamentary law, as it is applied in this country differs greatly from the practice of Parliament. Legislative bodies were established in the States and also from the present practices of the Senate and of Congress.

Parliamentary law, as it applies to legislative bodies in this country, is not determined by the rules or practices of any one house of Congress.

The procedure of the two houses of Congress differs. The procedure of each house is largely determined by its own rules, which are designed to meet its peculiar needs. The rules are suited to very large bodies of professional legislators, meeting practically every day, dealing with large volumes of legislation and acting largely through committees. The procedure in this country is ill-adapted to other legislative bodies.

*Par. 4:* Waples, Sec. 200.

*Par. 3:* People *ex rel.* McMahon v. Davis (Ill., 1918).

*Par. 4:* Cannon, Clarence, Rules of Order: Encyclopedia of the House of Representatives (1964), Vol. 19, pp. 632B-634.

### Sec. 37. Parliamentary Law Governs When Other Rules Are Not in Effect

1. All matters of procedure not governed by constitutional provisions, adopted rules including joint rules, or an adopted manual are governed by the rules of the general parliamentary law. The rules constituting parliamentary law that have their foundation in convenience and necessity have been uniformly received and acted upon in this country as the governing authority. Parliamentary law has been universally acknowledged as controlling the procedure of legislative bodies.

2. Under parliamentary law, a legislative body becomes vested with all the powers and privileges necessary to a free and unrestricted exercise of its appropriate functions, except so far as it may be restrained by express constitutional provisions.

3. When special rules of procedure have been adopted by a legislative body, its procedure is controlled by such rules only insofar as those rules apply; otherwise, the body is governed by general parliamentary law.

4. The common parliamentary principles and rules may be resorted to in the absence of rules made by the legislative body itself in regulating its proceedings.

*Sec. 37, Par. 1:* Briggs v. MacKellar (N.Y., 1855).

*Sec. 37, Par. 2:* Cushing's Legislative Assemblies, Sec. 542; *Ex parte* McCarthy (Calif., 1866).

*Sec. 37, Par. 3:* Witherspoon v. Mississippi *ex rel.* West (Miss., 1925).

*Sec. 37, Par. 4:* Mixed Local of Hotel and Rest. Employees Union Local No. 458 v. Hotel and Rest. Employees Int'l Alliance and Bartenders Int'l League of America (Minn., 1942).

5. Where matters of procedure are not covered by rules, the procedure should follow parliamentary law. Gaps in the rules of procedure should be filled by the adoption of fair methods, according to accepted parliamentary law.

### Sec. 38. Source of Parliamentary Law

*See also Sec. 43, Parliamentary Law Is a Branch of the Common Law; Sec. 44, Parliamentary Law Is Based on Principles; and Sec. 45, Limitations on Powers.*

Parliamentary law gets its name and basic principles from the Parliament of Great Britain. It was brought to the colonies with the common law and other political institutions of England. Jefferson, as presiding officer of the Senate, looked to the procedure of Parliament as his guide and prepared his manual from English precedents. The state legislatures copied from Congress. However, the procedure of the state legislatures now differs greatly from the procedure of Parliament and Congress. While Congress is governed largely by rules adopted by the houses of Congress to meet their special needs, state legislatures are governed by a branch of the common law based upon judicial decisions and upon precedents and customs of legislative bodies.

*Sec. 37, Par. 5: Mixed Local of Hotel and Rest. Employees Union Local No. 458 v. Hotel and Rest. Employees Int'l Alliance and Bar-tenders Int'l League of America (Minn., 1942).*

*Sec. 38: Cannon, Clarence, Rules of Order: Encyclopedia Britannica (1964), Vol. 19, pp. 632B-634.*

### Sec. 39. Precedents and Usages

1. When in a legislative body a certain procedure has been adopted in any case, it is a precedent for its governance in every case of a similar character. Thus, in time, as a system of precedents is accumulated, forming together a system of procedure known as parliamentary law, once established, is binding upon the body.

2. If precedents were not followed, the legislative procedure, instead of being known and certain, would be involved in uncertainty and lead to endless confusion of justice, a rule, when settled in an adjacent case, is binding thereafter upon the same court and all inferior tribunals so that the law may instead of being left to the uncertain determination of every judge. Likewise, in a legislative body once a procedure has been decided upon as a proper course of procedure is thereafter a guide in similar cases to be understood, however, with some qualification has been the usage for legislative bodies to follow for their own government. Adopted rules, custom and precedents.

3. Precedents, as distinguished from usages, are decisions made by the presiding officer, or upon appeal, when a question concerning a point of procedure has been raised, as in the following order.

*Sec. 39, Par. 2: Briggs v. MacKellar (N.Y., 1855).*

*Sec. 39, Par. 3: Cushing's Legislative Assemblies, S*

March 2026

## Public Markup Sessions & Floor Amendments

Multiple state legislatures include “markup” or “work” sessions within their legislative process where legislation referred to its respective oversight committee is further considered, and proposed changes are discussed and/or adopted. While not comprehensive, the following memo provides examples of states where these sessions are held and whether further amendment to the legislation is permitted on the chamber floor.

\* \* \*

### Maine

According to the [Joint Rules](#), the legislative process in Maine allows for “work sessions,” for which the rules are established and made publicly available upon request at the beginning of each legislative biennium by the presiding officers. The presiding officers must also schedule agreed upon days for work sessions to be held throughout the session, which must be posted prior to the convening of the work session, though there is no defined minimum notice requirement.

[Work sessions](#) occur after a bill has received a public hearing and are an opportunity for committee members to discuss the details of the legislation and any recommended amendments. This is typically where formal changes are made to the bill, and it is voted on to advance it to the full chamber as amended. If the committee unanimously chooses to not advance the bill, an “Ought Not to Pass” recommendation is made to stop it from moving any further. These sessions are open to the public and often include input from executive branch members, lobbyists, or interested members of the public. If the legislation is reported favorably out of the committee, the bill can be amended again by the full chamber on the chamber floor during Second Reading.

### Oregon

[Public work sessions](#) held in Oregon allow legislative committees to debate, amend, and vote on proposed bills. These sessions, governed by public meetings law ([ORS 192.660](#)), allow public viewing but generally do not allow for public testimony. Following a work



session, a committee can decide to advance the bill as written or amended or not to pass the bill.

[Senate Rule 8.20](#) (Committee Action Required)

*(1) Upon written request of a majority of committee members filed with the committee chair and the Secretary of the Senate, the chair shall order a hearing or work session on any measure in the possession of the committee. The hearing or work session shall be held only after notice as required by SR 8.15(1) or SR 8.16, if applicable, but shall be held within a reasonable time.*

[House Rule 8.20](#) (Committee Action Required)

*(1) The Chair shall schedule a hearing or work session on a measure in possession of the committee upon receipt of a written request signed by a majority of committee members. The request must be filed with the Chair, the Speaker and the Chief Clerk. The hearing or work session shall be held only after notice as required by Rule 8.15 (5) but shall be held within five business days after the date of the request.*

According to [Senate Rule 5.40](#) (Amendments from the Floor), no measure shall be amended on the floor unless unanimous consent is given and a written statement of the proposed amendment is filed with the Secretary of the Senate.

According to [House Rule 5.40](#) (Amendments on the Floor), no measure shall be amended on the floor of the House.

## **Washington**

While Washington does hold committee meetings titled “work sessions,” these meetings are used to explore issues and develop and propose legislative solutions. Introduced legislation is not considered or amended in these sessions.