

# 2009 -- H 5529 SUBSTITUTE A AS AMENDED

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## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2009

### HOUSE RESOLUTION

ADOPTING RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS 2009-2010

Introduced By: Representative Eileen S. Naughton

Date Introduced: February 24, 2009

Referred To: House Rules

RESOLVED, That the following rules be adopted for the government of the House of Representatives for the years 2009 and 2010:

#### Firstly - Of the Speaker

(1) The Speaker shall: take the chair each legislative day, call the members to order, and, if a quorum be present, proceed to business; refer bills and resolutions upon introduction; preserve order and decorum; speak as other members on general questions, calling some other member to the chair; decide all questions without debate subject to appeal to the House; and have on every appeal the right to assign reasons for any decision, and to put the question without further debate.

(2) The Speaker shall propound all questions in the order in which they are moved, unless the subsequent motion be previous in its nature. On a voice vote, if the Speaker doubts, or a division be called for, the Clerk of the House shall call the roll. The Speaker shall declare all votes.

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

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

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

(6) There shall be a Speaker pro tempore who shall preside over the sessions of the House during the absence of the Speaker from the chair; and a Deputy Speaker who, in case of a vacancy in the office of the Speaker and Speaker pro tempore, or in case these officers are absent at the hour to which the House stands adjourned, shall call the House to order and shall preside until the Speaker pro tempore or a Speaker, as the case may require, is elected by ballot. In case of a vacancy in the office of Speaker, Speaker pro tempore and Deputy Speaker or in case these officers are absent at the hour to which the House stands adjourned, the senior member present from Newport, or in the absence of any such member, a member chosen in such manner as the House shall provide shall call the House to order and shall preside until a Speaker pro tempore or a Speaker, as the case may require, is elected by ballot.

11 Secondly - Of the Order of Business

(7)(a) At the commencement of each day's session the roll shall be called; or taken by use of the electronic voting system and if a quorum be present the Speaker shall proceed to the order of business. After the approval of the journalthe order of business, unless the Speaker shall determine otherwise, shall be as follows:

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

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

(c) Except as provided in Rule 17, all bills and resolutions shall be filed no later than February 12, 2009 (for the 2009 session) and February 11, 2010 (for the 2010 session). The provisions of this section shall not apply to city or town bills, to bills for the reinstatement of corporate charters, or to bills relating to the solemnization of marriages.

(d) Any bill or resolution introduced on or before April 9, 2009 (for the 2009 session) and on or before April 8, 2010 (for the 2010 session).

34 (i) if filed prior to the convening of the session, shall be in order for the first reading and,

1 where appropriate, assignment to committee, on that day, and

2 (ii) if filed after the convening of the session, shall be in order for the first reading and,  
3 where appropriate, assignment to committee, on the next legislative day and shall be considered a  
4 part of that day's business, provided that the Speaker may direct that a given measure may be  
5 treated in accord with subparagraph (i) above.

6 All bills or resolutions introduced after April 9, 2009 (for the 2009 session) and after  
7 April 8, 2010 (for the 2010 session) shall be in order for the first reading and, where appropriate,  
8 assignment to committee, on the day of introduction.

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

12 (8) The Speaker or his or her designee shall prepare the calendar for each legislative  
13 day. The calendar shall be printed and distributed or made available electronically to the members  
14 daily.

15 (9) There shall be a consent calendar on each Thursday on which shall be entered such  
16 bills and resolutions as the Speaker, the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader or their  
17 designees shall agree upon, and shall be proposed to the House by the Majority Leader or the  
18 designee of the Majority Leader in the form of a motion to move the consent calendar. The  
19 consent calendar shall contain bills for the restoration of corporate charters (which shall be  
20 assigned to the consent calendar immediately upon introduction), and other bills and resolutions  
21 which are of a routine or non-controversial nature, whether originating in the House or Senate,  
22 and in no event shall the consent calendar be considered as a substitute for the regular calendar.  
23 Matters of substance shall be placed on the regular calendar and be fully debated and considered  
24 by the membership according to these rules. No bill or resolution shall be included on the consent  
25 calendar on the date the consent calendar is moved unless copies of the consent calendar in the  
26 form as it is intended to move and the same have been made available to the membership no later  
27 than two (2) legislative days prior to the day on which the consent calendar shall be proposed to  
28 be moved. All bills and resolutions included on the consent calendar shall be made available in  
29 printed form and/or electronically to the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader, the State House  
30 library and the Clerk of the House at the same time that copies of the consent calendar are made  
31 available under this rule. At the request of a member any bill or resolution shall be removed from  
32 those included in the motion. All bills and resolutions designated for action on the consent  
33 calendar shall be passed on motion without discussion unless, at any time prior to the motion for  
34 passage, a member requests removal of a bill or resolution from the consent calendar in which

1 case such bill or resolution shall be so removed and placed on the regular calendar. Any bill or  
2 resolution so removed shall be considered as having appeared on the regular calendar for a period  
3 of time equivalent to that during which it appeared on the consent calendar.

4 (10) At the end of legislative business on any day, upon request to the Speaker by a  
5 representative, the Speaker shall declare the House in informal session, i.e., no motion shall be in  
6 order, except that to adjourn, at the close of five-minute speeches, then proceed to entertain five-  
7 minute speeches. Each member so recognized shall be allotted five (5) minutes in which to  
8 address the House on any matter subject to these rules. No member can yield his or her time to  
9 another.

10 (11) Sessions of the House during the legislative session shall convene at 4 p.m.;  
11 provided, that the Speaker with adequate notice to the members may convene the House at  
12 another hour and/or another place.

### 13 Thirdly - Of Committees

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

16 A committee on constituent services

17 A committee on corporations

18 A committee on environment and natural resources

19 A committee on finance

20 A committee on health, education and welfare

21 A committee on judiciary

22 A committee on labor

23 A committee on municipal government

24 A committee on rules

25 A committee on separation of powers and oversight

26 A committee on veterans' affairs.

27 (b) The Speaker shall appoint all standing committees and create such other  
28 subcommittees and committees as may be required from time to time and appoint thereto. All  
29 subcommittees and committees shall have proportionate minority membership when feasible.  
30 The Speaker, in consultation with the Minority Leader, shall be the appointing authority for  
31 minority membership on standing committees and subcommittees thereof, joint committees,  
32 boards and commissions. All vacancies occurring in any committee and subcommittee after they  
33 have once been named shall be filled in like manner by the Speaker. The Speaker, Majority  
34 Leader and Minority Leader shall be ex officio members with voting rights of all House

1 committees but shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. The Speaker shall  
2 appoint the chair, vice chair and secretary of each committee. In the event that the chair of a  
3 committee is unable to serve due to incapacity for medical or other reasons, the Speaker may  
4 appoint an acting chair for the period of such incapacity, which acting chair shall have all of the  
5 powers and duties of the chair. The chair shall determine all questions of procedure before the  
6 committee in cases not provided for in these rules.

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

9 (d) All committee meetings shall be open to the public, but public participation shall be  
10 limited to testimony on the matters before the committee. The chair of any committee may limit  
11 the length of a witness' testimony in order to afford all witnesses the opportunity to be heard.

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

16 (f) Upon introduction of the annual state budget to the House on behalf of the Governor,  
17 the budget shall be referred to the finance committee. Within two (2) weeks following receipt  
18 thereof, the finance committee's fiscal advisor shall provide to each member of the House a brief  
19 but thorough summary of budget issues. Within three (3) weeks following the receipt of the  
20 budget, the committee shall schedule such meetings as it deems necessary to receive comment on  
21 the budget as a whole from all House members who wish to appear before it for that purpose.

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

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

34 (b) A committee shall not consider any public bill or resolution not previously distributed

1 in print or electronically to its members except by a vote of the majority of the members of the  
2 committee.

3 (c) The Chair of every committee shall post, in print and electronically, at least forty-  
4 eight (48) hours prior to any committee meeting, a list by number and title of the bills  
5 and resolutions to be heard at that meeting. Such postings shall be made electronically and on the  
6 Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The electronic posting shall be considered the official date of the  
7 posting. In the event that the electronic posting system is inoperable then the official posting shall  
8 be the printed posting on the Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The Chair shall limit such listings  
9 to the number of bills or resolutions he or she reasonably expects can be taken up by the  
10 committee at that meeting. Any bill or resolution so posted which the committee is not able to  
11 take up at the stated meeting must be re-posted as stated above. Such postings shall be made  
12 electronically, and on the House bulletin board or on the Legislative Data bulletin board. Copies  
13 of all posted bills or resolutions shall be provided in print or electronically to all committee  
14 members and principal sponsors. A committee shall not hear any said bill or resolution without  
15 such notice except by the consent of a majority of its members and with at least one (1) day's  
16 notification to the principal sponsor. The sponsor may, however, waive such one-day notification.  
17 The time requirements of this section shall not apply to House bills returned from the Senate with  
18 amendment, or, after the 50<sup>th</sup> legislative day, to any bill originating in the Senate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 (f) Once a committee has considered a bill or resolution the principal House sponsor shall  
14 be notified in writing or electronically prior to the report being made to the full House, provided  
15 that this provision shall not apply to the budget bill, or to any bill or resolution after the budget  
16 bill shall have passed the House. Committee Chairs shall bring reports of committee actions to  
17 the floor no later than two (2) weeks following the committee votes thereon, provided that this  
18 shall not apply to the Committee on Finance, nor shall it apply to bills being held for further study  
19 under subdivision (e)(v). A committee member may move reconsideration of any vote taken so  
20 long as the bill or resolution which was the subject of the vote remains in the possession of the  
21 committee. Any reconsideration shall be consistent with the provisions of Rule 40.

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

24 (g) In the event a committee shall fail to afford consideration to any bill or resolution  
25 within the prescribed time, the principal sponsor may report such failure in writing to the Speaker  
26 of the House and the Speaker thereupon may order the immediate discharge of the bill or  
27 resolution from a committee to the House floor.

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

1 order to be placed upon the appropriate calendar, on the next legislative day and shall be  
2 considered a part of that day's business.

3 House Rule 13(e) through (h) shall not apply to any bill or resolution which shall  
4 have originated in the Senate.

5 (i) No public bill or resolution which originated in the House shall be considered by a  
6 House committee unless the committee has held a hearing on that bill or resolution by April 9,  
7 2009 (or April 8, 2010, in the case of 2010), and thereafter the committees of the House shall not  
8 consider public bills or resolutions except those which have been acted upon by the Senate and  
9 transmitted by the Senate to the House of Representatives, provided however, that the committee  
10 on finance may hear and consider such House bills, acts or resolutions as it deems to have a fiscal  
11 impact after April 9, 2009 (or April 8, 2010, in the case of 2010), except as provided in section (j)  
12 hereof, and provided further, that each other House committee may complete consideration of not  
13 more than three (3) House bills or resolutions after said date, on which such committee had not  
14 been able to complete action, upon approval by the Speaker of a written request from the Chair.  
15 All such requests must be filed with the Clerk of the House no later than April 9, 2009 (or April  
16 8, 2010, in the case of 2010). The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to House bills of  
17 which Senate duplicates have passed the House.

18 (j) No House bill which relates to an individual's pension or retirement shall be accepted  
19 as a committee report from the committee on finance unless it shall have been considered by the  
20 committee on or before April 9, 2009 (or April 8, 2010, in the case of 2010), and shall have  
21 been heard in the committee no later than one (1) week prior to that date.

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

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

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

#### 31 Fourthly - Of Bills and Petitions

32 (15)(a) No bill or resolution shall be considered or acted upon by the House if objection  
33 is made unless the same has been considered by, reported, or recalled from a committee thereof,  
34 from a joint committee, or by two-thirds (2/3) of members present. This rule shall not apply to a



1 House Bill of which the Senate duplicate has passed the House, and provided further that the  
2 Speaker may at any time order a duplicate bill received from the Senate or a Senate bill after the  
3 budget bill shall have passed the House, onto the calendar.

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

6 (c) No bill or resolution shall be passed or concurred in without two (2) readings. The  
7 first reading shall take place by acceptance of the bill or resolution and publication in the House  
8 Journal and the second after it has been placed upon the calendar. No bill or resolution upon the  
9 calendar shall be taken up for consideration unless copies thereof, in the form in which it was  
10 reported from committee, shall have been made available in print or electronically to the  
11 members no later than the rise of the House on the legislative day preceding the day on which it  
12 shall be in order for consideration. No matter of business on the calendar shall be considered  
13 upon its merits prior to the legislative day after it shall have been placed on the calendar except  
14 by vote of the majority of the members present and voting. The provisions of this paragraph shall  
15 not apply to Senate bills received by the House which are duplicates of House bills.

16 (d) No more than fifty (50) public bills shall be considered upon their merits during any  
17 one (1) legislative day, provided, however, that House bills returned from the Senate, Senate bills  
18 which are duplicates of and identical to House bills, and bills removed from the consent calendar  
19 pursuant to the provisions of Rule 9 may be considered notwithstanding this limit and provided  
20 further, that Senate bills which are duplicates of and identical to House bills, and House bills  
21 returned from the Senate, may without objection be bundled and passed by one vote provided that  
22 they are provided to members electronically prior to consideration.

23 (e) The budget bill shall be prepared by the Legislative Council. The budget bill shall not  
24 be considered by the House unless copies thereof as approved by the finance committee have  
25 been available to the members for seven (7) calendar days. No amendment which is intended to  
26 make a substantive change in the budget bill may be offered other than by the Chair of the finance  
27 committee, except with the agreement of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present, unless the text  
28 thereof shall have been submitted to the Legislative Council and made available to the  
29 members two (2) calendar days prior to the day on which the budget bill shall be in order for  
30 consideration.

31 (f) An amendment which was germane when prepared, and which was offered in a timely  
32 fashion, but is no longer germane because of an intervening amendment, may, with the agreement  
33 of the majority leader and minority leader, be revised orally or in writing by the sponsor without  
34 renewed compliance with the requirements hereof.

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

4 (16)(a) There shall be attached to every public bill or resolution when first introduced an  
5 explanation of such bill or resolution indicating the proposed changes, and/or the statute or  
6 existing law which such bill or resolution purports to amend. Each original bill or resolution  
7 introduced shall be accompanied by at least four (4) copies which may be typewritten  
8 or reproduced by any legible mechanical process, and the Clerk of the House may decline to  
9 receive and process bills and resolutions not accompanied by such copies.

10 (b) When any bill or resolution is offered which is intended to amend any part or parts of  
11 an existing statute, or the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island, or the House Rules, any part  
12 or parts intended to be stricken shall be contained in the bill or resolution and by  
13 appropriate mechanical mark, shall be crossed out. All new matter contained in the bill or  
14 resolution shall be underlined, so that the new matter may be easily discerned. Existing language  
15 not intended to be amended shall be reproduced without change.

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

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

(e) All bills and resolutions which have been introduced at the request of one of the general officers shall bear a stamp indicating such request.

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

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

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

(ii) A co-sponsor of a bill or resolution may remove his or her name from a bill or resolution at any time prior to its passage upon written notice to the clerk.

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

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

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

(17) A member may introduce a public bill or resolution after the third Thursday in February only if, one (1) day previous to such introduction, the member shall have notified the House of his or her intention to introduce said bill or resolution by reading the title and giving a brief explanation of the contents thereof. A member may avail himself or herself of the opportunity afforded by this rule three (3) times only in each calendar year, and in no event after the fortieth (40<sup>th</sup>) legislative day, provided that these limitations shall not apply to municipal bills, bills to create or extend the reporting dates of study commissions, appropriations and budget bills (regular or supplemental) or to bills which under these rules are eligible for placement on the

1 consent calendar, and provided further that this rule shall not apply to any matter submitted with  
2 the approval of the Speaker.

3 House committees may, but shall not be obliged to, hear and consider public bills or  
4 resolutions approved for introduction pursuant to this rule notwithstanding the provisions of Rule  
5 13(i).

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

10 (19)(a) No amendment to a pending bill or resolution may be considered by the House,  
11 except by unanimous consent, unless copies of the same shall be on the desks of the members in  
12 typed form or accessible electronically.

13 (b) When an amendment proposed to any pending measure is laid on the table, it shall not  
14 carry with it or prejudice such measure.

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

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

21 (21) Except with respect to present and former members of the General Assembly,  
22 general officers, members of the judiciary, and elected state and federal officials, all expressions  
23 in the nature of condolences and in the nature of congratulations shall be presented in omnibus  
24 resolutions which shall not require concurrent action and which, upon passage, shall be forthwith  
25 transmitted to the Secretary of State.

26 (22) On any day the prime sponsor of a bill or resolution may present a petition in  
27 writing to discharge a committee from further consideration of a public bill or resolution which  
28 has been referred to a committee, and by no other procedure, but only one petition may be  
29 presented for a public bill or resolution during the course of a session. The petition shall be placed  
30 in the custody of the recording clerk of the House who shall arrange some convenient place for  
31 the signatures of the members to be placed thereon in the presence of said clerk. A signature may  
32 be withdrawn by a member at any time before the petition receives sufficient signatures to  
33 become effective, and such petitions shall become effective, and shall serve to discharge  
34 a committee from further consideration of the public bill or resolution and shall cause said public

1 bill or resolution to be placed upon the calendar for action, when any thirty-eight (38)  
2 representatives shall have affixed their signatures thereto, provided, however, that if, after the bill  
3 or resolution is calendared but before it is taken up, enough signatures are withdrawn so that the  
4 number of effective signatures falls below thirty-eight (38), the bill or resolution shall pass off the  
5 calendar. No such petition shall be presented for signatures to discharge a public bill or resolution  
6 unless the same shall have been in the possession of the committee for no less than sixteen (16)  
7 legislative days, and in no event until after the fiftieth (50<sup>th</sup>) legislative day. During  
8 House consideration of any discharged public bill or resolution, no motion to recommit or lay on  
9 the table shall be entertained by the Speaker until every member desiring to be heard has been  
10 recognized.

11 (23) No vote or act which has been passed by the House shall be sent by the clerk to the  
12 Senate or to the Governor before the expiration of the time limit for its reconsideration under rule  
13 40, except those passed on the last day and those which shall have been reconsidered.

14 (24) Any bill or resolution which has been introduced in one (1) session need not be  
15 reintroduced in the succeeding session unless the same shall have been defeated in committee or  
16 on the floor of either house; provided, however, that no general election shall have intervened.

17 The concurrence of both houses in the same session shall be necessary for the enactment  
18 of all laws.

19 [Fifthly - Of Decorum and Debates](#)

20 (25) When any member is about to speak in debate, or to deliver any matter to the House,  
21 he or she shall activate his or her recognition button, and when recognized rise and proceed  
22 by respectfully addressing the Speaker. Debate shall be confined to the matter before the House.  
23 No member shall be permitted to ask, nor shall the Speaker entertain, any question not directly  
24 related to the matter before the House.

25 (26) When two (2) or more members seek to be recognized, the Speaker shall select the  
26 member who is to speak first.

27 (27) No member shall speak more than twice to the same question without the leave of  
28 the House, nor more than once until every member choosing to speak shall have spoken, nor for  
29 longer than five (5) minutes without the leave of the House. The first two (2) clauses of this rule  
30 shall not apply to the Majority and Minority Leaders, nor to the principal sponsor or floor  
31 manager of any bill, resolution or amendment on the floor, nor to the chair of the committee from  
32 which the bill or resolution was reported.

33 (28) If any member, in speaking or otherwise, transgresses any rule of the House, the  
34 Speaker shall, or any member may, call him or her to order, in which case the member called to

1 order shall immediately sit down, unless permitted by the Speaker to explain and the House shall,  
2 if appealed to, decide on the case but without debate. If the reading of any printed or written  
3 paper be objected to, it shall be determined by a vote of the House without debate.

4 (29) While the Speaker is putting any question, or addressing the House, or when a  
5 member is speaking, none shall entertain private discourse in person or by phone, nor  
6 walk between the member who is addressing the Speaker and the chair. At no time while the  
7 House is in session shall any person use cell phones or audible pagers in the House Chamber.  
8 During legislative sessions, video or photographic equipment shall not be used by members of the  
9 House on the floor of the House or in committee hearing rooms when committee meetings are in  
10 session unless he or she has the permission of the Speaker. This section shall not apply to  
11 properly credentialed representatives of the news media.

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

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

19 (32) After a motion is stated by the Speaker, or read by the clerk, it shall be deemed to be  
20 in possession of the House, but any motion may be withdrawn by the mover at any time before a  
21 decision or amendment, except a motion to reconsider, which shall not be withdrawn after the  
22 time has elapsed within which it might originally have been made.

23 (33) When a question is under debate no motion shall be received, except to adjourn, for  
24 the previous question, to take a recess, to lay on the table, to fix a time for closing debate, to  
25 postpone indefinitely, to postpone to a day certain, to commit, or to amend, which several  
26 questions shall have precedence in the order in which they are here arranged.

27 (34) Motions to commit shall have precedence in the following order: to a standing  
28 committee of the House, to a select committee of the House, to a joint standing committee, to a  
29 joint select committee.

30 (35) When a time for a meeting of the House shall have been previously fixed upon, a  
31 motion to adjourn shall be always in order, except as provided in Rule 39. The motions to lay on  
32 the table, to take from the table, to reconsider, for the previous question, to take a recess, to  
33 adjourn, and for the vote, shall be decided without debate (except, with regard to the motion to  
34 lay on the table, to the extent specified in Rule 19(c)).

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

3           (37)(a) No member shall speak or vote, unless within the bar of the House and at his or  
4 her seat, except as hereinafter provided. Every member (except as provided in Rule 3) who shall  
5 be in his or her seat in the House Chamber when the question is put, shall give his or her vote,  
6 unless prior thereto the Speaker shall have excused him or her in accordance with the provisions  
7 of the Code of Ethics statute (RIGL 36-14-6). No member may vote for another member, nor  
8 activate another member's voting machine except by the express direction of that member who is  
9 present in the House chamber. No one may occupy the vacant seat of a member.

10          (b) When a violation of Rule 37(a) is alleged in writing by a member, the Speaker may  
11 refer said written allegation to the House Rules Committee to investigate, hold hearings, ascertain  
12 the facts and report its findings and recommendation to the House, which may then take  
13 appropriate action including but not limited to expulsion as authorized by Article 6, Section 7 of  
14 the Constitution of the State.

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

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

22          (38)(a) The electronic voting system may be used to record attendance and quorums, and  
23 shall be used to record all votes on public bills (as defined in rule 16(c)) and votes on rule  
24 changes and suspensions. It shall be used for other votes by request of a member, and, at the  
25 discretion of the Speaker, for recording the seconds to any motion.

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

33          (c) The electronic voting system shall be under the control of the presiding officer and  
34 shall be operated by such personnel as the Speaker of the House so designates. At a reasonable

1 time, prior to any vote being taken, the presiding officer shall announce that a vote is about to  
2 be taken. When any member other than the Speaker of the House is presiding, he or she shall  
3 direct the voting clerk to record his or her vote as if cast at his or her voting station. Until the  
4 completion of the voting, no member shall be recognized, and no other business shall be  
5 transacted.

6 (d) When sufficient time has elapsed for each member to vote, the presiding officer shall  
7 order the machine locked and activate the recording process. When the vote is completely  
8 recorded, the clerk shall advise the presiding officer of the result; and the presiding officer shall  
9 announce the result to the House and the result shall be recorded in the journal. No vote may be  
10 changed after the system has been locked and the vote recorded.

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

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

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

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

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



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

8 (40) When any vote is passed, any member voting in the majority may move  
9 to reconsider on the same or the next legislative day, except as provided in Rule 39: and when a  
10 motion for reconsideration has been decided, it shall not be reconsidered. A motion to reconsider  
11 shall not be debated.

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

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

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

22 (b) A point of order is the parliamentary device used to require a deliberative body to  
23 observe its own rules and to follow established parliamentary practice. A point of order is proper  
24 during a floor debate when a member questions whether there has been a breach of order or of the  
25 rules. The Speaker shall not entertain one point of order while another is pending. A point of  
26 order must be raised at the time the particular question is pending. No member shall be permitted  
27 to present argument under the guise of a point of order, a point of parliamentary inquiry, or a  
28 question. No member shall resort to persistent irrelevance or persistent repetition.

29 [Sixthly -- Of Admission to the Floor](#)

30 (43)(a) No person or persons, except currently elected members of the general assembly,  
31 legislative staff and authorized representatives of the public press, as provided in the rule next  
32 following, shall be admitted to the floor of the house during the session thereof, except by the  
33 approval of the speaker for a designated purpose. The speaker may make special provision for  
34 admission to the floor of the House during the session thereof for persons, who by reason of

1 disability, are unable to gain access to the House galleries. All persons so admitted by the Speaker  
2 to the floor of the House during the session thereof shall be present for the sole purpose of  
3 observing the proceedings of the House and shall remain seated, refrain from conversation,  
4 maintain the decorum of the House. No person so admitted shall contact, address, speak or  
5 gesture to, or communicate in any way with any House member while present on the floor of the  
6 House. No person on the floor of the chamber shall dress in a manner offensive to the decorum of  
7 the House. Any House member who observes conduct in violation of the House Rules  
8 shall immediately notify the Speaker thereof and the Speaker shall forthwith take appropriate  
9 corrective action and may order the removal of the offending person.

10 (b) During House sessions, admission to the House lounge is limited to currently serving  
11 members and staff of the General Assembly and authorized representatives of the public press.

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

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

#### 18 Seventhly – Miscellaneous

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

30 (46) The procedure to be followed in consideration by the House of a motion to override  
31 the Governor's veto of a bill or resolution (whether at an extraordinary or reconvened session as  
32 contemplated in Rule 45 or at a regular session of the House) shall be as follows: The Governor's  
33 objections to the bill or resolution shall be entered into upon the House Journal as required by the  
34 Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9, Section 14. The Governor's objections shall be made

1 available to the members in written form or electronically, and upon the request of any member  
2 shall be read aloud by the Clerk of the House. Each of the following: the prime sponsor of the bill  
3 (in the case of a House bill), the Minority Leader and the Majority Leader may, if he or she  
4 wishes, and in the order specified, speak for no more than five (5) minutes. Thereupon the House  
5 shall immediately proceed to a vote as prescribed in the Rhode Island Constitution, Article 9,  
6 Section 14, and such vote once taken shall not be the subject of a motion to reconsider. If the bill  
7 or resolution shall have passed notwithstanding the veto of the Governor, the same shall be  
8 immediately transmitted to the Senate or to the Secretary of State as may be appropriate.

9 (47)(a) No rule shall be repealed or amended, except by two-thirds (2/3) of the members  
10 voting; nor shall the operation of any rule be temporarily suspended except by two-thirds (2/3) of  
11 the members voting, and such action may be taken with reference to any rule, except that Rule 38  
12 (a) may not be suspended. The application of this rule as it pertains to the temporary suspension  
13 of the rules shall not be subject to amendment or repeal. Any motion to repeal, amend or suspend  
14 any rule shall be a debatable motion under these rules.

15 (b) At the beginning of a legislative session, the rules of the previous legislative session  
16 shall remain in full force and effect until the permanent rules of the House for the current session  
17 have been prepared, presented, debated and adopted by a majority vote of the House.

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