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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

HOUSE RESOLUTION

ADOPTING RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS 2015
AND 2016

Introduced By: Representative Jared R. Nunes

Date Introduced: January 30, 2017

Referred To: House Rules

1 SECTION 1.

2 RESOLVED, That Section 11 of the rules for the House of Representatives adopted by
3 the House of Representatives at its January session, A.D. 2015, entitled "House Resolution
4 Adopting Rules of the House of Representatives for the Years 2015 ---2016," be and the same is
5 hereby amended to read as follows:

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

8 A committee on corporations

9 A committee on environment and natural resources

10 A committee on finance

11 A committee on health, education and welfare

12 A committee on judiciary

13 A committee on labor

14 A committee on municipal government

15 A committee on rules

16 A committee on oversight

17 A committee on small business

18 A committee on veterans' affairs.

19 (b) The Speaker shall appoint all standing committees and create such other

1 subcommittees and committees as may be required from time to time and appoint thereto. All
2 subcommittees and committees shall have proportionate minority membership when feasible.
3 The Speaker, in consultation with the Minority Leader, shall be the appointing authority for
4 minority membership on standing committees and subcommittees thereof, joint committees,
5 boards and commissions. All vacancies occurring in any committee and subcommittee after they
6 have once been named shall be filled in like manner by the Speaker. No member may be removed
7 from any committee without a majority vote of the entire House of Representatives. The Speaker,
8 Majority Leader and Minority Leader shall be ex officio members with voting rights of all House
9 committees but shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. The Speaker shall
10 have the authority to appoint the chair, vice chair and secretary of each committee. In the event
11 that the chair of a committee is unable to serve due to incapacity for medical or other reasons, the
12 Speaker may appoint an acting chair for the period of such incapacity, which acting chair shall
13 have all of the powers and duties of the chair. The chair shall determine all questions of procedure
14 before the committee in cases not provided for in these rules.

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

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

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

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

31 (g) The Speaker may appoint from time to time subcommittees of a given standing
32 committee, which shall consist only of members of the committee from which it was appointed.
33 The chair of each standing committee shall be considered a member of each subcommittee of
34 such committee. Each subcommittee may hear testimony on bills and resolutions falling within

1 the subject matter of its charge and shall report to the committee from which it was appointed.
2 Subcommittees will otherwise conduct themselves in conformity with these rules. The Speaker
3 shall appoint the chair of each subcommittee.

4 SECTION 2.

5 RESOLVED, That Section 12 of the rules for the House of Representatives adopted by
6 the House of Representatives at its January session, A.D. 2015, entitled "House Resolution
7 Adopting Rules of the House of Representatives for the Years 2015 ---2016," be and the same is
8 hereby amended to read as follows:

9 (12)(a) Committees shall take into consideration all such petitions, resolves, bills, matters
10 or things as may be referred to them by the House with power to report by bill or otherwise;
11 provided, however, that committees shall, whenever possible, consider all bills of substantially
12 the same or of a similar nature at the same time in a manner that is otherwise in conformity with
13 these rules. Any bill filed after the 40th legislative day and subsequent to the hearing of a grouping
14 of bills on the same subject matter may or may not be assigned for hearing if it appears from the
15 subject matter that the issues presented would be substantially similar to those matters already
16 heard, even if a bill hearing request is filed pursuant to Rule 12(e).

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

20 (c) The Chair of every committee shall post, in print and electronically, at least forty-
21 eight (48) hours prior to any committee meeting, a list by number and title of the bills
22 and resolutions to be heard at that meeting. Such postings shall be made electronically and on the
23 Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The electronic posting shall be considered the official date of the
24 posting. In the event that the electronic posting system is inoperable then the official posting shall
25 be posted on the Legislative Data Bulletin Board. The Chair shall limit such listings to the
26 number of bills or resolutions he or she reasonably expects can be taken up by the committee at
27 that meeting. Any bill or resolution so posted which the committee is not able to take up at the
28 stated meeting must be re-posted as stated above. Such postings shall be made electronically, and
29 on the Legislative Data bulletin board. Copies of all posted bills or resolutions shall be provided
30 in print or electronically to all committee members and principal sponsors. A committee shall not
31 hear any said bill or resolution without such notice except by the consent of a majority of its
32 members and with at least one (1) day's notification to the principal House sponsor. The sponsor
33 may, however, waive such one-day notification. The time requirements of this section shall not
34 apply to House bills returned from the Senate with amendment, or, after the 50th legislative day

1 (May 20, 2015 (for the 2015 session) and May 11, 2016 (for the 2016 session), to any bill
2 originating in the Senate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (v) a motion to report the bill or resolution to the House with a recommendation that it be
29 held for further study. However, any bill reported under this section (v), at the request of the
30 prime sponsor, shall be reconsidered and acted upon as described in sections (i)-(iv). Under no
31 circumstances shall "held for further study" be construed to constitute final action on a bill
32 without permission from the prime sponsor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 (i) No public bill or resolution which originated in the House shall be considered by a
31 House committee unless the committee has held a hearing on that bill or resolution by April 28,
32 2015 (for the 2015 session) and on or before April 12, 2016 (for the 2016 session), and thereafter
33 the committees of the House shall not consider public bills or resolutions except those which have
34 been acted upon by the Senate and transmitted by the Senate to the House of Representatives,

1 provided however, that the committee on finance may hear and consider such House bills, acts or
2 resolutions as it deems to have a fiscal impact after April 28, 2015 (for the 2015 session) and on
3 or before April 12, 2016 (for the 2016 session), except as provided in section (j) hereof, and
4 provided further, that each other House committee may complete consideration of not more than
5 three (3) House bills or resolutions after said date, on which such committee had not been able to
6 complete action, upon approval by the Speaker of a written request from the Chair. All
7 such requests must be filed with the Clerk of the House no later than April 28, 2015 (for the 2015
8 session) and on or before April 12, 2016 (for the 2016 session). The provisions of this paragraph
9 shall not apply to House bills of which Senate duplicates have passed the House.

10 (j) No House bill which relates to an individual's pension or retirement shall be accepted
11 as a committee report from the committee on finance unless it shall have been considered by the
12 committee on or before April 28, 2015 (for the 2015 session) and on or before April 12, 2016 (for
13 the 2016 session), and shall have been heard in the committee no later than one (1) week prior to
14 that date.

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

18 SECTION 3.

19 RESOLVED, That Section 14 of the rules for the House of Representatives adopted by
20 the House of Representatives at its January session, A.D. 2015, entitled "House Resolution
21 Adopting Rules of the House of Representatives for the Years 2015 ---2016," be and the same is
22 hereby amended to read as follows:

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

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

31 (c) No bill or resolution shall be passed or concurred in without two (2) readings. The
32 first reading shall take place by acceptance of the bill or resolution and publication in the House
33 Journal and the second after it has been placed upon the calendar. No bill or resolution upon the
34 calendar shall be taken up for consideration unless copies thereof, in the form in which it was

1 reported from committee, shall have been made available in print or electronically to the
2 members no later than the rise of the House on the legislative day before the day on which it shall
3 be in order for consideration. No matter of business on the calendar shall be considered upon its
4 merits prior to the legislative day after it shall have been placed on the calendar except by vote of
5 the majority of the members present and voting. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply
6 to Senate bills received by the House which are duplicates of House bills. Those bills passing out
7 of committee on the last legislative day of the week shall be in order for placement on the
8 calendar or consent calendar as early as the first legislative day of the next week.

9 (d) No more than fifty (50) public bills shall be considered upon their merits during any
10 one (1) legislative day and no bill shall be brought before the body after ~~10:30~~ 9:30 p.m.,
11 provided, however, that House bills returned from the Senate, Senate bills which are duplicates of
12 and identical to House bills, corporate charter revocation bills, and solemnization of marriage
13 bills and bills removed from the consent calendar may be considered notwithstanding this limit.
14 Under no circumstances shall debate extend beyond 11:59 p.m. on any legislative day. Provided
15 further, that Senate bills which are duplicates of and identical to House bills, and House bills
16 returned from the Senate, may without objection be bundled and passed by one vote provided that
17 they are provided to members electronically prior to consideration. In the case of bundled bills
18 that contain identical and duplicate Senate bills, at the request of the Majority and Minority
19 Leaders the House journal will reflect that the vote of the members on the bill is consistent with
20 his or her vote on the duplicate House bill previously passed. Prior to the vote on a duplicate bill,
21 it should be stated for the record and be made known to the body that the bill is identical.

22 (e) The budget bill shall be prepared by Legislative Council. The budget bill shall not be
23 considered by the finance committee unless the version to be acted on has been posted by the
24 committee for at least seventy-two (72) hours. The budget bill shall not be considered by the
25 House unless copies thereof as approved by the finance committee have been available to the
26 members for seven (7) calendar days. For the purposes of calculating the seven (7) day
27 requirement, the day of passage by the Finance Committee shall not be counted but the scheduled
28 day for floor action shall be included in the calculation. No amendment which is intended to
29 make a substantive change in the budget bill may be offered other than by the Chair of the finance
30 committee, except with the agreement of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present, unless the text
31 thereof shall have been submitted to the Legislative Council and made available to the
32 members two (2) calendar days prior to the day on which the budget bill shall be in order for
33 consideration.

34 (f) An amendment which was germane when prepared, and which was offered in a timely

1 fashion, but is no longer germane because of an intervening amendment, may, with the agreement
2 of the Majority Leader and Minority Leader, be revised orally or in writing by the sponsor
3 without renewed compliance with the requirements hereof.

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

8 SECTION 4.

9 RESOLVED, That Section 34 of the rules for the House of Representatives adopted by
10 the House of Representatives at its January session, A.D. 2015, entitled "House Resolution
11 Adopting Rules of the House of Representatives for the Years 2015 ---2016," be and the same is
12 hereby amended to read as follows:

13 (34)(a) The electronic voting system may be used to record attendance and quorums, and
14 shall be used to record all votes on public bills and votes on rule changes and suspensions. It shall
15 be used for other votes by request of a member at the discretion of the Speaker. The results of all
16 votes recorded electronically shall be reported in both the House journal and, as it pertains to
17 votes on bills, reflected in a prominent and conspicuous place on the General Assembly website.
18 The procedure for the recording of such votes online shall be determined by the Speaker and
19 reported to the body. All effort shall be made to create an easily searchable database of committee
20 and floor votes. This shall include the ability to be searched by subject matter, bill number,
21 sponsors, dates of passage, and any other method deemed appropriate.

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

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

1 transacted.

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

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

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

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

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

19 SECTION 5.

20 RESOLVED, That Section 42 of the rules for the House of Representatives adopted by
21 the House of Representatives at its January session, A.D. 2015, entitled "House Resolution
22 Adopting Rules of the House of Representatives for the Years 2015 ---2016," be and the same is
23 hereby amended to read as follows:

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

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

33 (c) At the beginning of a legislative session, the rules of the previous legislative session
34 shall remain in full force and effect until the permanent rules of the House for the current session

1 have been prepared, presented, debated and adopted by a majority vote of the House. Any
2 member at the beginning of a legislative session who was not a member at the time of the
3 adoption of the rules shall be provided with a copy of the rules.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
HOUSE RESOLUTION
ADOPTING RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS 2015
AND 2016

- 1 This resolution would amend the rules of the House of Representatives for the years 2015
- 2 – 2016.

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