

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 2012**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**



*House of Representatives,*

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**In the Year Two Thousand Eleven**  
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1           *Ordered,* That the rules of the House of Representatives for the years 2011-2012 be  
2 adopted, as follows:

3

4 SPEAKER.

5       1. The Speaker shall take the Chair at the hour to which the House stands adjourned, call the  
6 members to order, and, on the appearance of a quorum, proceed to business. [1.] (Senate Rule 1.)

7       1A. The House shall not be called to order before the hour of ten o'clock A.M. nor meet  
8 beyond the hour of nine o'clock P.M. At the hour of nine o'clock P.M., if the House is in  
9 session, the Speaker shall interrupt the business then pending and shall, without debate, place  
10 before the House the question on suspension of this rule which shall be decided by a majority of  
11 members present and voting by a recorded yea and nay vote. If the vote is in the affirmative, said

12 vote shall permit the House to remain in session until the hour of midnight; provided that the  
13 session shall not continue beyond the hour of midnight, unless by unanimous consent of the  
14 members present. The House shall then return to the pending business; and if no matter was  
15 pending, to the next order of business. However, if the vote is in the negative, the Speaker shall  
16 forthwith, and without further debate, adjourn or recess the House to a time not earlier than ten  
17 o'clock A.M. on the next succeeding calendar day.

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

19 2. The Speaker shall preserve decorum and order in the House Chamber. While in the House  
20 Chamber, members and staff shall be required to dress in proper and appropriate attire and to  
21 refrain from the use of cellular telephones, beepers and pagers. The use of visual aids including,  
22 without limitation, posters, displays, or charts shall be permitted only upon approval of the  
23 Speaker. The Speaker also may speak to points of order in preference to other members; and  
24 shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the House. [2.] (2.) [With regard to  
25 appeals, see Rule 77.]

26 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 20, 2011.]

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

29 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

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

31 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

32 4A. The Speaker may appoint a Speaker pro tempore. The Speaker pro tempore shall assist  
33 the Speaker in the coordination of policy development and the ceremonial functions of the House  
34 and shall perform such duties assigned to him by the Speaker. Upon a vacancy in the office of  
35 Speaker, the office of Speaker pro tempore shall be considered vacant.

36 [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005, Amended, Jan. 23, 2007.]

37 5. The Speaker may appoint a member to perform the duties of the Chair. In the event the  
38 Speaker fails to appoint a member to perform the duties of the Chair, the Speaker pro tempore  
39 shall be the Acting Speaker until the Speaker otherwise provides or until a vacancy in the office  
40 of Speaker occurs. In the event that the Speaker pro tempore is absent or is unable to perform the  
41 duties of Acting Speaker, the Majority Leader, the Assistant Majority Leader, the Second  
42 Assistant Majority Leader or other designee shall be the Acting Speaker. [7.] (4.)

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

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

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

49 7. At the beginning of the first year of the two year General Court the Speaker shall, unless the  
50 House otherwise directs, appoint a Chaplain; and the Speaker shall promptly fill any vacancy in  
51 the office of Chaplain. [7A.] (4.)

52 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

53 SCHEDULING.

54 7A. There shall be appointed a standing committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling  
55 consisting of eleven members. The committee shall not be subject to the provisions of Rule 17A,  
56 but shall be authorized to meet from time to time at the call of the Chair for the purpose of  
57 assisting the members of the House of Representatives in identifying the major matters pending  
58 before the General Court, the relative urgency and priority for consideration of such matters, and  
59 alternative methods of responding to such matters by the General Court. Said committee shall  
60 schedule legislative matters in a manner that will provide for an even distribution and orderly  
61 consideration of reports of legislative committees on the daily Calendar.

62 The committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling shall not be authorized to recommend  
63 changes or amendments to legislation or recommend that a matter ought to pass or ought not to  
64 pass, but shall only report asking to be discharged from further consideration of a bill, and  
65 recommending that it be referred or recommitted to another committee, provided, however, that  
66 it shall not recommend that a matter be referred or recommitted to the committee on Rules or the  
67 committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, or what date a matter shall be  
68 scheduled for consideration by the House and placed in the Orders of the Day. All reports by the  
69 committee on petitions filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or by the mayor and city  
70 council, or other legislative body of a city or the town meeting of a town with respect to a law  
71 relating to that city or town shall be read and considered by the House at a formal or informal  
72 session before being accepted, rejected or otherwise acted upon.

73 All matters received from the Senate or reported from standing committees of the House and  
74 joint standing committees of the General Court shall, unless subject to provisions of any other

75 House or joint rules, be referred to the committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling. All  
76 matters reported by said committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling recommending that a  
77 matter shall be scheduled for consideration by the House shall be placed in the Orders of the Day  
78 for the next sitting. Said committee may report on a legislative matter within thirty days  
79 following the day the matter was referred. If the committee fails to report a matter within thirty  
80 days following the date of its reference, the Clerk shall place the matter on the Calendar of the  
81 House as if it had been scheduled for consideration by said committee on Steering, Policy and  
82 Scheduling.

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

84 7B. The committee on Rules shall be authorized to originate and report special orders for  
85 the scheduling and consideration of legislation on the floor of the House. Said committee shall  
86 not be subject to the notification provisions contained in Rule 17A but may hold public hearings  
87 and shall accept testimony only from the members of the House. A majority of the members  
88 appointed to the committee shall constitute a quorum. When reported, such orders may be  
89 amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, and shall be subject to  
90 approval by a majority of the members of the House present and voting. Debate on the question  
91 on adoption of such orders shall be limited to one hour. No orders adopted pursuant to this  
92 paragraph shall limit the powers of the Speaker as provided in Rules 1 to 6, inclusive. Such  
93 orders shall not be subject to reconsideration.

94 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997; Amended Jan. 24, 2001, Feb. 11, 2009.]

95 7C. The committee on Rules may consider and make recommendations designed to improve  
96 and expedite the business and procedures of the House and its committees, and to recommend to

97 the House any amendments to the Rules deemed necessary; provided that a majority of the  
98 members of the House present and voting shall be required to approve such recommendations.

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

100 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997.]

101 7D. The Speaker shall, in consultation with the committee on Rules and the committee on  
102 Steering, Policy and Scheduling, establish a committee scheduling system that would minimize  
103 to the greatest extent possible scheduling conflicts for members of committees.

104 The Speaker shall determine a schedule for the House for each week relative to formal and  
105 informal sessions and shall make such schedule available to the members by Thursday of the  
106 preceding week; provided, however, that the Speaker may make, notwithstanding the provisions  
107 of Rule 7A, changes in the schedules to facilitate the business of the House in an efficient and  
108 timely fashion. The Speaker shall communicate notice of any such scheduling change to the  
109 members in writing or by way of electronic mail as soon as practicable, and whenever possible,  
110 the Speaker shall provide such notice not less than twenty-four hours before the event so  
111 rescheduled is set to commence.

112 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997; January 9, 2003.]

113 MONITORS.

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

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

119 It shall be the duty of a monitor to report his or her knowledge of the occurrence of a member  
120 voting for another member, in his or her division of the House, to the Speaker of the House and  
121 to the Minority Leader. [10.] [See Rules 16 and 16A.]

122 [Amended Jan. 9, 1991; May 5, 1993.]

123 9A. There shall be established a Floor Division Committee for each of the four divisions of the  
124 House. The Speaker shall appoint a Floor Division chairperson for each of the four divisions.  
125 Said committee shall consist of the members assigned to the respective divisions.

126 In order to create a continuous flow of debate, each chairperson shall be responsible for  
127 reviewing the daily Calendar and providing advance notice to committee members in the  
128 respective divisions of all matters scheduled for consideration in the Orders of the Day. Said  
129 committee chairpersons shall provide information to members of their committees on pending  
130 legislation and other matters of business before the House.

131 In addition to the legislative duties, chairpersons shall oversee the physical appearance of the  
132 Chamber and the various areas under the jurisdiction of the House of Representatives. Said  
133 chairpersons shall be authorized to act as a committee and may meet at any time at the request of  
134 at least two chairpersons. Said chairpersons, as a committee, shall be authorized to meet with the  
135 appropriate agencies and historical commissions of the Commonwealth for the purpose of  
136 requesting expeditious appraisals and necessary repairs and renovations to the interior and  
137 exterior of the State House. The committee of chairpersons shall report directly to the Speaker  
138 the results of all consultations.

139 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997.]

140 CLERK.

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

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

148 10A. The Clerk shall be the official parliamentarian of the House of Representatives.

149 [Adopted Jan. 9, 1991.]

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

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

158 When, in the determination of the Clerk, a volume of matters exists for the next legislative  
159 day, the Clerk shall be authorized to prepare and cause to be made available an advance calendar



160 of the matters in order of consideration for the next legislative day and such other memoranda as  
161 the House or Speaker may direct. The Clerk may indicate on the advance calendar that the  
162 matters contained therein are subject to change.

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

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

170 As soon as practicable whenever the Clerk prepares a Calendar or advance Calendar under this  
171 rule, he also shall cause a true copy thereof to be posted on the Legislative Web Page that is  
172 generally available to all members and their staff, and reasonably promptly thereafter he shall  
173 cause the members and their staff to be notified of the same by way of electronic mail. [13.] (7.)  
174 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Jan. 17, 1995; Jan. 24,  
175 2001; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007.]

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

178 13A. The clerk shall make available to all members electronically and, to the public via the  
179 Internet, the text of all bills introduced and admitted for consideration in the House.

180 MEMBERS.

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

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

187 14A. No member shall hold, for more than eight consecutive years, the office of Speaker of the  
188 House. For purposes of this rule, the counting of consecutive years shall commence on January  
189 7, 2009.

190 15. When it appears to the presiding officer that the presence of a quorum is endangered, the  
191 Chair shall order the doors closed. If a quorum is doubted the Chair shall order the doors closed  
192 and thereafter no member shall enter or leave the House until an initial determination has been  
193 made as to the presence of a quorum or lack thereof; and thereafter, provided that no quorum is  
194 present, no member shall leave the House unless by permission of the presiding officer, but  
195 members shall be admitted, at any time.

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

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

199 Members answering a quorum call shall vote "YES" on the roll call system. [17.] (11.)

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

201 ETHICS.

202 16. There shall be appointed a committee on Ethics as authorized by Rule 17. The committee  
203 shall consist of eleven members, seven of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker, four of  
204 whom shall be appointed by the Minority Leader.

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

207 The committee shall investigate and evaluate, at the direction of the Speaker, by a sworn written  
208 complaint filed and delivered by a member, officer or employee to the chairman, or by a majority  
209 vote of the members appointed to the Ethics committee, any matters relative to alleged violations  
210 of Rule 16A by a member, officer or employee.

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

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

218 All proceedings including the filing of the initial complaint shall be considered confidential  
219 information.

220 If the alleged violation received in the manner described above is deemed to have merit by a  
221 majority vote of the members appointed to the committee, the committee shall file a report with

222 the Clerk of the House. Said report shall be a public document. The committee shall not disclose  
223 any allegation deemed to be frivolous or without merit.

224 If a majority appointed finds that any member of the House, officer, or employee has violated  
225 any provision of Rule 16A, a majority appointed may, in the case of a member, recommend a  
226 reprimand, censure, removal from a chairmanship or other position of authority, or expulsion;  
227 and in the case of an officer or employee, a majority appointed may recommend a reprimand,  
228 suspension, or removal from employment.

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

232 Any member, officer, or employee of the House may request in writing from the House  
233 committee on Ethics an advisory opinion concerning any contemplated personal action or  
234 potential personal conflict. The committee on Ethics shall issue written advisory opinions and  
235 clarification in response to said written request. The committee shall respond within sixty days of  
236 receipt of such a request, unless the General Court has prorogued. In that event, the committee  
237 shall respond within thirty days following the opening of the new session.

238 No member, officer, or employee of the House shall be penalized in any manner for having  
239 acted within the guidelines of an advisory opinion, provided that all pertinent facts are stated in  
240 the original request for an advisory opinion. Any advisory opinion issued by the committee on  
241 Ethics shall be valid only for biennial session in which it was issued.

242 The chairman of the Ethics committee may convene the committee at any time.

243 The chairman shall also convene the committee at the written request of at least five members  
244 of the committee.

245 The Committee may, upon the written and signed report of two-thirds of the members of the  
246 committee, file a special report containing legislation without said legislation being founded  
247 upon petition which shall be referred under the provisions of Rule 24 and consistent with the  
248 provisions of Joint Rule 13, to the appropriate joint standing committee. Any special report  
249 containing legislation filed pursuant to this paragraph shall be germane to subject matters  
250 regularly considered by the committee. The committee shall not include in any such special  
251 report a bill that would have a fiscal impact as described in Rule 33.

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

255 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Jan. 17, 1995; Mar. 6, 1995; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 20,  
256 2011.]

257 CODE OF ETHICS.

258 16A. (1.) While members, officers and employees should not be denied those opportunities  
259 available to all other citizens to acquire and retain private, economic and other interests,  
260 members, officers, and employees should exercise prudence in any and all such endeavors and  
261 make every reasonable effort to avoid transactions, activities, or obligations, which are in  
262 substantial conflict with or will substantially impair their independence of judgment.

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

265 (3.) No member, officer or employee shall serve as a legislative agent as defined in Chapter 3  
266 of the General Laws regarding any legislation before the General Court.

267 (4.) No member, officer or employee shall receive any compensation or permit any  
268 compensation to accrue to his or her beneficial interest by virtue of influence improperly exerted  
269 from his or her official position in the House.

270 (5.) No member, officer or employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or  
271 professional activity, which will require the disclosure of confidential information gained in the  
272 course of, and by reason of, his or her official position.

273 (6.) No member, officer or employee shall willfully and knowingly disclose or use  
274 confidential information gained in the course of his or her official position to further his or her  
275 own economic interest or that of any other person.

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

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

283 (9.) No member, officer or employee shall employ anyone from public funds who does not  
284 perform tasks which contribute substantially to the work of the House and which are  
285 commensurate with the compensation received; and no officer or full time employee of the  
286 House shall engage in any outside business activity during regular business hours, whether the  
287 House is in session or not. All employees of the House are assumed to be full time unless their  
288 personnel record indicates otherwise.

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

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

295 (12.) No member, officer or employee shall knowingly accept any gifts from any legislative or  
296 executive agent. No member, officer or employee shall accept any gift from any person or entity  
297 having a direct interest in legislation before the General Court (For the purpose of this paragraph,  
298 the definitions of “gift” and “person” are defined in chapter 268B, section 1(g) and 1(m).).

299 (13.) No member shall convert campaign funds to personal use in excess of reimbursements  
300 for legitimate and verifiable campaign expenditures. Members shall consider all proceeds from  
301 testimonial dinners and other fund raising activities as campaign funds.

302 (14.) No member shall serve on any committee or vote on any question in which his/her  
303 private right is immediately concerned, distinct from the public interest. [19.]

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

306 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; May 5, 1993; Jan. 24, 2001.]

307 16B. The Committee on Personnel and Administration shall develop and conduct an ethics  
308 law training program for every member, officer and employee of the House; provided further,  
309 that said training program shall include, without limitation, a detailed review of the requirements  
310 and prohibitions of chapter 268A and chapter 268B of the General Laws; and provided further,  
311 that said training program shall be offered no later than July 1 of the first biennial session of the  
312 General Court and shall be mandatory for all members, officers and employees.

313 [Adopted Jan. 9, 2003, Amended Jan 20, 2011.]

314 16C. Bills involving lobbyists' reporting laws, and laws pertaining to the ethical conduct of  
315 public officials shall, after their first reading, be referred to the committee on Ethics, for report  
316 on their relation to the ethics laws of the Commonwealth. No new provisions shall be added to  
317 such measures by the committee, unless directly pertaining to ethics.

318 COMMITTEES.

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

321 A committee on Rules;

322 (to consist of fifteen members).

323 A committee on Ways and Means;



324 (to consist of thirty-two members).

325 A committee on Bills in the Third Reading;

326 (to consist of three members).

327 A committee of each Floor Division;

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

329 A committee on Ethics;

330 (to consist of eleven members).

331 A committee on Personnel and Administration;

332 (to consist of thirteen members).

333 A committee on Post Audit and Oversight;

334 (to consist of eleven members).

335 A committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling;

336 (to consist of eleven members).

337 A committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets;

338 (to consist of eleven members).

339 A committee on Global Warming and Climate Change;

340 (to consist of eleven members).

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

343 [Amended March 6, 1979; Sept. 16, 1981; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Oct. 6,  
344 1993; May 23, 1996; Jan. 14, 1997; Jul. 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005.]

345 17A. (a) For the purposes of this rule, the following terms shall, unless the context clearly  
346 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

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

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

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

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

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

360 “Quorum”, a simple majority of a committee unless otherwise defined by constitution, rule or  
361 law applicable to such committee; provided further, that a quorum shall be presumed to be  
362 present unless otherwise doubted.

363 (b) All meetings, except executive conferences, of House standing and special committees,  
364 shall be open to the public and any person shall be permitted to attend any meeting except as  
365 otherwise provided pursuant to this rule or Rule 7A.

366 No quorum of a committee shall meet in private for the purpose of deliberation except as  
367 provided pursuant to this rule.

368 No executive session shall be held until: (i) the committee has first convened in an open  
369 session for which notice has been given; (ii) the presiding officer has stated the authorized  
370 purpose of the executive session; (iii) a majority of the members of the committee present have  
371 voted to go into executive session and the vote of each member has been recorded on a roll call  
372 vote and entered into the minutes: and (iv) the presiding officer has stated before the executive  
373 session if the committee will reconvene after the executive session.

374 (c) Executive conferences shall be held only for the following purposes: (i) to discuss the  
375 reputation, character, physical condition or mental health rather than the professional  
376 competence of a member, officer or employee;

377 (ii) to consider the discipline or dismissal of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against,  
378 a member, officer or employee; (iii) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an executive  
379 session or other open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the  
380 committee; or (iv) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, if such

381 discussions may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Commonwealth or a  
382 person, firm or corporation.

383 A member, officer or employee subject to an executive conference pursuant to clause (i) or  
384 clause (ii) shall be notified in writing no less than 48 hours prior to the proposed executive  
385 conference; provided, however, that upon agreement of the parties involved, the notification  
386 requirements of clause (i) and clause (ii) may be waived. Upon request of the member, officer or  
387 employee subject to an executive conference pursuant to clause (i) or clause (ii) the executive  
388 conference shall be open to the public.

389 A member, officer or employee subject to an executive conference pursuant to clause (i) or  
390 clause (ii) shall have the right to: (a) be present at such executive conference during discussions  
391 or considerations which involve that member, officer or employee; (b) have counsel or a  
392 representative of his/her own choosing present and attending for the purpose of advising said  
393 member, officer or employee; provided, however, that said counsel or representative shall not  
394 actively participate in the executive conference; and (c) to speak on his/her own behalf to the  
395 committee assembled in executive conference.

396 (d) This rule shall not apply to any chance meeting or social meeting at which matters relating  
397 to official business are discussed so long as no final agreement is reached. No chance meeting or  
398 social meeting shall be used in circumvention of the spirit or requirements of this section to  
399 discuss or act upon a matter over which the committee has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or  
400 advisory power.

401 (e) Except pursuant to an emergency, a notice and agenda of every meeting of a committee  
402 subject to this rule shall be filed with the Clerk of the House, publicly posted by the Clerk on the

403 bulletin board outside the Clerk's Office and in such other places as are designated in advance  
404 for such purpose by said Clerk, made available to all members electronically and made available  
405 to the public via the Internet at least forty-eight hours, including Saturdays, but not Sundays and  
406 legal holidays, prior to the time of such meeting and a list of the bills, petitions, and resolutions  
407 to be considered for a vote or other action by the committee. The notice shall include the date,  
408 time and place of such meeting. Such filing and posting shall be the responsibility of the  
409 committee scheduling such meeting. The notice and posting requirements shall not apply to  
410 executive conferences held pursuant to clause (i) or clause (ii) of part (c) of this rule unless the  
411 member, officer or employee subject to the executive conference requests that the executive  
412 conference be open to the public,

413 (f) A committee shall maintain accurate records of its meetings and hearings setting forth the  
414 date, time and place thereof, and recording any action taken at each meeting, hearing, executive  
415 conference or executive session. All votes requested to be taken in executive sessions shall be  
416 recorded roll call votes and shall become a part of the record of said executive sessions. The  
417 record of each meeting shall become a public record and be available to the public; provided,  
418 however, that the records of any executive conference shall remain secret as long as publication  
419 may defeat the lawful purposes of the executive conference.

420 (g) Upon prior notification and approval of the chair, a meeting of a committee may be  
421 recorded by a person in attendance by means of a recorder or any other means of audio/visual  
422 reproduction; provided, however, that said recording shall not interfere with the conduct of the  
423 meeting. Executive conferences conducted pursuant to clause (i) or clause (11) of part (c) of this  
424 rule shall not be recorded unless upon the request of the member, officer or employee who is

425 subject to said executive conference. Executive conferences conducted pursuant to clause (iii) or  
426 (iv) of part (c) of this rule may be recorded at the discretion of the chair.

427 (h) Copies of all redrafted bills that are to be voted on at an executive session by the House  
428 Ways and Means Committee shall be available to all members of the committee electronically in  
429 the form they will be considered no less than twenty-four hours prior to their consideration;  
430 provided, however, that said committee may vote on a bill that has not been available for said  
431 period of time by vote of a majority of the committee members present.

432 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; May 5, 1993; Jan. 17, 1995;  
433 Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 9, 2003, Jan. 23, 2007, Feb. 11, 2009.]

434 17B. Whenever any member of a House committee present at the committee meeting so  
435 requests, the vote to give any legislation a favorable or adverse report shall be a recorded vote of  
436 the full committee. Such votes shall be recorded on appropriate forms that show all votes for and  
437 against the particular committee action. The record of all such roll calls shall be kept in the  
438 offices of the committee and shall be available for public inspection.

439 No report of a House committee on any legislation shall be final until those members of the  
440 committee present and voting with the majority have been given the opportunity to sign such  
441 appropriate forms before the report is made to the House. No signature shall be valid unless the  
442 forms to which the signatures are affixed include the substantially complete text of the legislation  
443 being reported.

444 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Jan. 12, 1987.]

445 17C. There shall be a committee on Personnel and Administration on the part of the House  
446 consisting of thirteen members. Said committee shall be responsible for the allocation of office  
447 space as equitably as possible among the various members and joint and standing committees on  
448 the part of the House and their respective staff.

449 The committee shall allocate space among the various committees on the part of the House  
450 taking into account the work load, duties and responsibilities and size of staff of each.

451 The Speaker may make temporary office assignments in accordance with the foregoing  
452 principles.

453 The committee on Personnel and Administration may from time to time make changes in the  
454 assignment of office space for committees and the various staffs in accordance with the  
455 established standards.

456 Said committee shall establish the staffing levels and positions for each joint and standing  
457 committee of the House together with a classification plan for all employees of the House of  
458 Representatives.

459 For each person who is employed or is to be employed by a joint or standing committee on the  
460 part of the House, each committee chairman shall nominate each such person and the House  
461 members of the committee by a majority vote shall vote on whether to approve each said  
462 nominee. The House members of the committee shall approve such persons whose character and  
463 qualifications are acceptable to the majority of the House members of the committee and are in  
464 accordance with the qualifications established by the Personnel and Administration committee.

465 The chairman of each standing committee shall have the authority to discharge an employee.

466 The House staff members of each committee shall be appointed solely on the basis of fitness  
467 to perform the duties of their respective positions and consistent with section four of chapter one  
468 hundred fifty-one B of the General Laws. The committee staff shall not:

469 (1) engage in any work other than committee business during business hours; and

470 (2) be assigned any duties other than those pertaining to committee business.

471 The committee shall meet on request of the chairman or any three members of the committee.  
472 Any such meeting requested shall be convened on or within the fifth business day following such  
473 request. All such requests shall be in writing and forwarded to the chairman and each member of  
474 the committee.

475 Funds shall be allocated from the budget to carry out the determination of the committee.

476 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985; Amended Jan. 16, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991.]

477 17D. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

478 17E. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

479 17F. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

480 17G. The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall review all  
481 legislation providing for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth (see  
482 Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution, as amended by Article LXXXIV). Said  
483 committee shall be responsible for evaluating such legislation and determining the  
484 appropriateness of enacting legislation containing increased bond authorizations for the  
485 Commonwealth. The committee shall periodically review and hold open public hearings,



486 accepting oral and written testimony on the status of the bonds and notes of the Commonwealth,  
487 including (1) general obligation debt; (2) dedicated income tax debt; and (3) special obligation  
488 debt. The committee shall also, in its continuing study of the state's bonding practices, review  
489 the Commonwealth's liabilities relative to (a) state-supported debt; (b) state-guaranteed debt; and  
490 (3) indirect obligations.

491 Any bill providing for borrowing for new projects, and requiring the Commonwealth to issue  
492 bonds for such purpose, shall, prior to its reference to the committee on Ways and Means, be  
493 referred to the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets for report on its  
494 relationship to the finances of the Commonwealth. A measure may initially be referred to a joint  
495 committee with jurisdiction over the subject matter before being referred to the committee on  
496 Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets.

497 The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall consult with the various  
498 agencies of the executive branch and the office of the Treasurer and Receiver-General relative to  
499 project expenditures, availability of funds, the sale of new bonds and the resultant debt  
500 obligations, federal reimbursements and other related funding and bonding issues.

501 The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be authorized to conduct  
502 hearings relative to the statutory authority of the executive branch and the Treasurer and  
503 Receiver-General in the issuance and sale of bonds and notes and the expenditure of capital  
504 funds by the various agencies and authorities of the Commonwealth. The committee shall  
505 determine whether such laws, administrative regulations and programs are being implemented in  
506 accordance with the intent of the General Court. The committee shall be authorized to make  
507 recommendations for statutory changes and changes in the Constitution which would grant

508 discretion to the General Court over the allotment and expenditure of fund authorized by capital  
509 appropriations.

510 The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be authorized to report  
511 to the General Court from time to time on the results of its hearings and to file drafts of  
512 legislation and proposals for amendments to the Constitution necessary to carry its  
513 recommendations into effect.

514 Messages from the Governor setting terms of bonds and notes, or for the de-authorization or  
515 authorization of bonds and notes shall be referred to the committee on Bonding, Capital  
516 Expenditures and State Assets.

517 18. The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the Speaker pro  
518 Tempore, the Majority Floor Leader, Assistant Majority Floor Leader, and Second Assistant  
519 Majority Floor Leader. The Minority Leader shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of,  
520 the Assistant Minority Floor Leader, Second Assistant Minority Floor Leader, and Third  
521 Assistant Minority Floor Leader. The Minority Leader shall be that member of the minority party  
522 who is selected for that position by the members of his/her party.

523 Each of the foregoing appointments and/or removals shall be ratified by a majority vote of the  
524 respective party caucus. In the event that an appointment is rejected by such caucus another  
525 appointment shall be made by the person designated to make the initial appointment, which shall  
526 also be subject to ratification in the same manner.

527 The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the chair of each standing  
528 committee. The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the vice chair and

529 assistant vice chair of the Ways and Means committee and the vice chair of the Post Audit and  
530 Oversight committee.

531 The majority party shall then vote to accept or reject each such appointment and/or  
532 recommendation for removal by a majority vote.

533 In the event that any such appointment is rejected by the caucus, the procedure of this rule  
534 shall be repeated until an appointment for the said position has been approved by the caucus. A  
535 vacancy in any position to which the provisions of this section apply shall be filled in the same  
536 manner as provided in this section for original appointment.

537 The Speaker and the Minority Leader may, without a majority vote of their respective  
538 parties, remove a member appointed to pursuant to this rule who has been criminally indicted by  
539 a court of competent jurisdiction.

540 [Amended Jan. 16, 1979; Nov. 17, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 14, 1997, Jan. 23,  
541 2007.]

542 18A. There shall be one member of the minority party on all committees of conference and  
543 one on the committee on Bills in the Third Reading. On all other standing and joint committees,  
544 the percent of minority party membership shall be at least equal to the percent of minority party  
545 membership in the House of Representatives as of the first day of the session; provided, further,  
546 that where such percentage results in a fraction of a number, the fraction shall be rounded off to  
547 the nearest whole; provided, however, that the minority party shall under no circumstances have  
548 less than four members on the committee on Ethics, four on the committee on Personnel and  
549 Administration, three on the committee on Rules and six on the committee on Ways and Means.

550 In no case shall minority party representation be less than two members on all other standing and  
551 joint committees.

552 The Speaker and the Minority Leader shall appoint the members of their respective party  
553 caucuses to be assigned to each standing committee. The Speaker shall appoint the vice chair of  
554 each standing committee. The appointments, except those to which Rule 18 applies, shall be  
555 voted upon together and shall be subject to ratification by majority vote of the appropriate party  
556 caucus.

557 No member shall be removed from a standing committee except upon the recommendation of  
558 the Speaker or Minority Leader, as the case may be, subject to the ratification by their respective  
559 caucuses; provided, however, that the Speaker and the Minority Leader may, without a majority  
560 vote of their respective parties, remove a member appointed to pursuant to this rule who has been  
561 criminally indicted by a court of competent jurisdiction; and provided further, that if any vacancy  
562 occurs in a position to which Rule 18 does not apply, subsequent to the initial ratification, the  
563 Speaker or Minority Leader shall fill such vacancy.

564 The Speaker shall announce committee appointments of majority party members, and the  
565 member first named shall be chairman, and the second named member shall be vice-chairman.  
566 The Minority Leader shall announce committee appointments of minority party members. (13.)

567 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985; Amended Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 14, 1997.]

568 18B. All votes on ratification by the caucus required by these rules shall be by written ballot  
569 and shall require a majority of those present and voting.

570 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985.]

571 19. A majority and minority party caucus may be called by the Speaker or Minority Leader,  
572 respectively, or upon petition of twenty-five percent of the members of the respective party  
573 caucus. A caucus may entertain resolutions, motions, or other means of ascertaining the sense of  
574 the respective party members on any subject. (13B.)

575 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

576 19A. The majority party and minority party shall establish caucus rules that shall dictate the  
577 procedures of each caucus.

578 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Jan. 14, 1997.]

579 20. The committee on Ways and Means shall report in appropriation bills the total amount  
580 appropriated. The General Appropriation Bill shall be available to the members at least seven  
581 calendar days prior to consideration thereof by the House. [25.] (27A.)

582 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Mar. 24, 1986; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 26, 2005.]

583 20A. Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 33A, amendments to the General Appropriation  
584 Bill shall be filed with the Clerk of the House in a format to be determined by the Clerk by five  
585 o'clock P.M. within the close of three business days of said General Appropriation bill being  
586 made available in a format to be determined by the Clerk and release of said document by said  
587 Clerk if the release of said document occurs by two o'clock P.M. Otherwise, the day following  
588 the release shall be considered the first business day. The Clerk, with the assistance of the  
589 committee on Ways and Means, shall categorize the subject-matter of the amendments and  
590 arrange such amendments for consideration sequentially by subject as appearing in the published  
591 version of the General Appropriation Bill, or the Clerk, with the assistance of the committee on

592 Ways and Means, shall categorize the subject-matter of the amendments and arrange such  
593 subject matters for consideration as determined by the committee on Ways and Means. Debate  
594 on the General Appropriation Bill shall not commence until a date and time to be determined by  
595 the House which is subsequent to the designated time established for filing of amendments.

596 Before the main question on the General Appropriation Bill is placed before the House, an  
597 amendment may be postponed or withdrawn at the request of the primary sponsor of the  
598 amendment or postponed by the committee on Ways and Means; provided that further  
599 consideration of any amendment so postponed shall take place immediately subsequent to  
600 consideration of the amendments within the particular subject-matter to which the postponed  
601 amendment was assigned according to the provisions of paragraph one of said rule; provided that  
602 if more than one amendment is so postponed, subsequent consideration of said amendments shall  
603 be in the order determined by the committee on Ways and Means; provided further, an  
604 amendment so postponed shall not be subsequently considered outside of its assigned subject-  
605 matter; and provided further, that notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 33A, amendments  
606 submitted to the Clerk shall be in a format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with  
607 said Clerk and shall include an original copy only; and provided further that perfecting or  
608 substitute amendments, including, but not limited to an amendment consolidating more than one  
609 amendment, may be submitted by the committee on Ways and Means during consideration of the  
610 subject category to which the amendment or amendments were assigned; provided, however, that  
611 an amendment may be removed from the consolidated amendment at the request of the sponsor  
612 of said amendment for the purpose of it being offered as a further amendment to the consolidated  
613 amendment.

614 [Adopted Jan. 24, 2001; Amended Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan 20, 2011.]

615 20B. When the General Appropriation Bill is reported by the committee on Ways and Means it  
616 shall be made available to all members electronically and to the public via the Internet in a  
617 format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with the Clerk. The committee on Ways  
618 and Means shall provide the membership with a copy of its proposed text of said General  
619 Appropriation Bill, and an executive summary which shall include a list of outside sections, and  
620 a short summary of each outside section prior to full House consideration of such bill. When the  
621 House considers said General Appropriation Bill, it shall be read a second time and forthwith  
622 ordered to a third reading without any amendments. The bill shall be immediately read a third  
623 time and then be open to amendments as previously determined by the House.

624 [Adopted Jan. 9, 2003, Jan. 23, 2007.]

625 21. Whenever the committee on Ways and Means reports an appropriation bill or capital  
626 outlay bill, it shall make available to the members a report which includes an explanation of any  
627 increase or decrease of five percent or more which results in an increase or decrease of one  
628 million dollars or more for any item for which the Governor has made a recommendation, and an  
629 explanation for the deletion of an item recommended by the Governor, and for the addition of an  
630 item for which the Governor has made no recommendation. [25A.] (27A.)

631 22. Bills and resolves when ordered to a third reading shall be referred forthwith to the  
632 committee on Bills in the Third Reading, which shall examine and correct them, for the purpose  
633 of avoiding repetitions and unconstitutional provisions, and insuring accuracy in the text and  
634 references, and consistency with the language of existing statutes; but any change in the sense or  
635 legal effect, or any material change in construction, shall be reported to the House as an  
636 amendment.

637 The committee may consolidate into one bill any two or more related bills referred to it,  
638 whenever legislation may be simplified thereby.

639 Resolutions received from and adopted by the Senate or introduced or reported into the House,  
640 after they are read and before they are adopted, shall be referred to the committee on Bills in the  
641 Third Reading.

642 Amendments of bills, resolves and resolutions adopted by the Senate and sent to the House for  
643 concurrence, shall, subsequently to the procedure required by rule thirty-five in respect to  
644 amendments, also be referred, in like manner, to the committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

645 When a bill, resolve or resolution has been so referred, no further action shall be taken until  
646 report thereon has been made by the committee. Accompanying said report shall be a written  
647 explanation prepared by the committee defining any changes made in a bill, resolve or resolution  
648 so as to facilitate the proceedings of the House.

649 If a bill or resolve referred to the committee on Bills in the Third Reading requires a two-  
650 thirds vote because it contains an emergency preamble, or if it provides for the borrowing of  
651 money by the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 3 of Article LXII of  
652 the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit  
653 of the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 1 of Article LXII (as amended  
654 by Article LXXXIV) of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides, upon recommendation  
655 of the Governor, for a special law relating to an individual city or town and comes within the  
656 provisions of clause (2) of Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution  
657 or provides for environmental protection within the provisions of Article XLIX as amended by



658 Article XCVII, the committee shall plainly indicate the fact on the outside of the bill or resolve,  
659 or on a wrapper or label attached thereto. [26.] (33.)

660 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; May 5, 1993.]

661 23. Bills and resolves prepared for final passage shall be certified by the Clerk of the House,  
662 after comparison, to be the same as the bills or resolves passed to be engrossed; and if found to  
663 be properly prepared, the Clerk shall so endorse on the envelope thereof; and the question on  
664 enactment or final passage or adopting an emergency preamble shall be taken thereon, without  
665 further reading, unless specifically ordered.

666 When a bill or resolve prepared for final passage contains an emergency preamble or when it  
667 provides for the borrowing of money by the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of  
668 Section 3 of Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for the giving,  
669 loaning or pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of  
670 Section 1 of Article LXII (as amended by Article LXXXIV) of the Amendments to the  
671 Constitution, or provides, upon recommendation of the Governor, for a special law relating to an  
672 individual city or town and comes within the provisions of clause (2) of Section 8 of Article  
673 LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for environmental protection  
674 within the provisions of Article XLIX as amended by Article XCVII, the Clerk shall plainly  
675 indicate the fact on the envelope thereof. [27.] (34.) [See Rule 40.]

676 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983.]

677 23A. No member of the House, except the Speaker, Speaker pro tempore, Majority Leader,  
678 Assistant Majority Leader, Second Assistant Majority Leader, Minority Leader, Assistant  
679 Minority Leader, Second Assistant Minority Leader, Third Assistant Minority Leader, Vice-

680 Chairperson of the Committee on Ways and Means, Assistant Vice-Chairperson of the  
681 Committee on Ways and Means and committee chairmen with respect to committee business,  
682 shall receive privileges or compensation for postage which is greater than seventy-five percent of  
683 the amount allowed as standard practice during the 186th biennial session of the General Court,  
684 as determined by the House Business Manager. [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985; Amended Jan. 24,  
685 2001; Jan. 26, 2005; Jan. 20, 2011.]

686 24. (1) Petitions, recommendations and reports of state officials, departments, commissions  
687 and boards, special reports including legislation initiated by the Committee on Ethics Pursuant to  
688 Rule 16, legislation initiated by the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State  
689 Assets pursuant to Rule 17G and reports of special committees and commissions, shall be filed  
690 with the Clerk in a format to be determined by said Clerk, who shall, unless they are subject to  
691 other provisions of these rules or the rules of the two branches, refer them, with the approval of  
692 the Speaker, to the appropriate committees, subject to such change of reference as the House  
693 may make. The reading of all such documents may be dispensed with, but they shall be entered  
694 in the Journal of the same or the next legislative day after such reference except as provided in  
695 joint rule thirteen.

696 (2) All orders, including motions or orders proposed for joint adoption, resolutions and other  
697 papers intended for presentation, except those hereinbefore mentioned, shall be filed with the  
698 Clerk in a format to be determined by said Clerk, who shall, prior to the procedure required by  
699 other provisions of these rules or of the rules of the two branches, refer them to the committee on  
700 Rules.

701 (3) Petitions and other papers so filed which are subject to the provisions of joint rule seven A,  
702 seven B, or nine, shall be referred by the Clerk to the committee on Rules. Petitions and other  
703 papers so filed, which are subject to the provisions of the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12,  
704 shall, prior to the procedure required by said rule, be referred by the Clerk to the committee on  
705 Rules. The reading of all such papers may be dispensed with, but they shall be entered in the  
706 Journal of the same or the next legislative day after such reference.

707 (4) Matters which have been placed on file during the preceding year may be taken from the  
708 files by the Clerk upon request of any member or member-elect; and matters so taken from the  
709 files shall be referred or otherwise disposed of as provided above.

710 (5) Recommendations and special reports of state officials, departments, commissions and  
711 boards, reports of special committees and commissions, bills and resolves accompanying  
712 petitions, recommendations and reports, and resolutions shall be made available under the  
713 direction of the Clerk, who may cause to be made available, with the approval of the Speaker,  
714 any other documents filed as herein provided.

715 (6) All such legislation and reports filed with the Clerk shall be submitted in a format  
716 prescribed by said Clerk. Said documents shall contain the name or names of the primary  
717 sponsors and a list of the names of all petitioners praying for the legislation. Additional names  
718 may be added to the list of the petitioners; provided, however, that, such additional names shall  
719 be submitted in a format to be determined by the Clerk.

720 (7) Any petition so submitted that is a refile of a measure submitted in a previous session shall  
721 include, in the appropriate space provided, the session year for which the measure was filed and

722 the House or Senate bill number or docket number assigned to such measure in such previous  
723 session.

724 (8) Debate upon the suspension of this rule shall be limited to ten minutes, three minutes for  
725 each member, and the Speaker shall recognize the member presenting the order, resolution or  
726 petition first; provided, however, that suspension of this rule shall require unanimous consent of  
727 the members present. Any order, except such order that would amend the Rules of the House,  
728 resolution or petition referred to the committee on Rules after the question of suspension of this  
729 rule has been negatived, or any order, resolution or petition filed after the beginning of the  
730 session and referred to the committee on Rules, shall not be discharged from said committee  
731 except by unanimous consent of the House. Motions to discharge the committee on Rules shall  
732 be subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of Rule 28. [28.] (20.) [See Rules 36 and 85.]

733 [Amended April 27, 1981; Jan. 9, 1989; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 26, 2005.]

734 25. Every petition for legislation shall be accompanied by a bill or resolve embodying the  
735 legislation prayed for. [29.] [See Joint Rule 12.]

736 26. When the object of an application can be secured without a special act under existing laws,  
737 or, without detriment to the public interests, by a general law, the committee to which the matter  
738 is referred shall report such general law or ought not to pass, as the case may be. The committee  
739 may report a special law on matters referred to it upon (1) a petition filed or approved by the  
740 voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council, or other legislative body, of a city, or the  
741 town meeting of a town, with respect to a law relating to that city or town; (2) a recommendation  
742 by the Governor; or (3) matters relating to erecting and constituting metropolitan or regional  
743 entities, embracing any two or more cities and towns, or established with other than existing city

744 or town boundaries, for any general or special public purpose or purposes. [30.] (16.) [See Joint  
745 Rule 7.]

746 27. With the exception of matters referred to the committee on Rules under the provisions of  
747 paragraph (3) of rule twenty-four, committees shall report on all matters referred to them. The  
748 committee on Ways and Means shall report the General Appropriation Bill not later than the  
749 second Wednesday of May; and provided further that said committee shall make available to the  
750 members all data compiled for justification of budgetary recommendations in all appropriation  
751 bills. [33.]

752 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 14, 1997.]

753 27A. [Omitted Jan. 23, 2007.]

754 28. (1) Motions directing the committee on Ways and Means to report certain matters to the  
755 House, or motions discharging said committees from further consideration of certain matters,  
756 shall not be considered until the expiration of seven calendar days and shall require a majority  
757 vote of the members present and voting for adoption. Committees so directed to report shall file  
758 a report with the Clerk within four legislative days. The committee on Ways and Means may not  
759 be directed to report or be discharged from further consideration of any appropriation or capital  
760 outlay measure.

761 (2) The committee on Rules, except as provided in Rule 24, and the committee on Bills in the  
762 Third Reading shall not be discharged from consideration of any measure or be directed to report  
763 on any measure within ten calendar days of its reference without the unanimous consent of the  
764 House, or after such ten day period except by a vote of a majority of the members present and  
765 voting thereon.

766 (3) Matters discharged under the provisions of this rule shall be placed in the Orders of the Day  
767 for the next sitting. Petitions discharged under the provisions of this rule shall be considered as  
768 favorably reported and the bill, resolve, resolution or order accompanying such petitions shall be  
769 placed in the Orders of the Day for the next sitting.

770 (4) During the last week of the session the provisions of paragraphs (1) and (3) of this rule  
771 shall be inoperative.

772 (5) A second motion to discharge a matter from a committee or a second motion to direct a  
773 committee to report a matter shall not be entertained until the first such motion has been disposed  
774 of.

775 (6) As an alternative procedure to that provided under the provisions of this rule, the members  
776 of the House may, by filing a petition signed by a majority of the members elected to the House,  
777 discharge the House committee on Ways and Means, the House committee on Bills in the Third  
778 Reading, and the House committee on Rules from further consideration of a legislative matter.  
779 Seven days following the filing of the petition with the House Clerk, the committee shall be  
780 discharged from further consideration of the legislative matter specified in the petition and the  
781 House Clerk shall place the matter in the Orders of the Day for the next calendar day that the  
782 House is meeting.

783 (7) For the purpose of this rule, matters not appearing on the Calendar which are not before  
784 any committee shall be deemed to be before the Rules committee. Notwithstanding the previous  
785 sentence, a bill which has been engrossed by the House and Senate, shall be placed before the  
786 House for enactment. Any member may request to the House that a matter, engrossed in the  
787 House and Senate, returned for final passage by the engrossing division and reviewed and

788 released by the Committee on Bills in Third Reading be placed before the House for enactment.  
789 The Speaker shall, in response to such a request of a member, put the matter before the House at  
790 the conclusion of the matter then pending.

791 (8) This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.  
792 (27C, 32A.)

793 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; April 27, 1981; Jan. 12, 1983; Nov. 17, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 9,  
794 1989; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007.]

795 28A. The committee on Bills in the Third Reading shall report on a legislative matter not later  
796 than forty-five days following the day the matter was referred to it. The Clerk shall indicate on  
797 the Calendar entry of every matter before the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading the date  
798 that said matter was referred to said committee.

799 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985; Amended Jan. 9, 2003.]

800 REGULAR COURSE OF PROCEEDINGS.

801 Petitions.

802 29. The member presenting a petition shall endorse his/her name thereon; and the reading  
803 thereof shall be dispensed with, unless specially ordered. [37.] (18.)

804 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

805 Motions Contemplating Legislation, etc.

806 30. All motions contemplating legislation shall be founded upon petition, except as follows:

807 The committee on Ways and Means may originate and report appropriation bills as provided  
808 in rule twenty. Messages from the Governor shall, unless otherwise ordered, be referred to the  
809 appropriate committee, which may report by bill or otherwise thereon. A similar disposition  
810 shall, unless otherwise ordered, be made of reports by state officers and committees authorized to  
811 report to the Legislature, and similar action may be had thereon.

812 Messages from the Governor returning appropriation bills, or parts of appropriation bills, with  
813 objections or reductions of sections or items thereof, shall be reconsidered subsequent to a report  
814 of the committee on Ways and Means. [40.] (19.)

815 [Amended Jan. 24, 2001.]

816 Bills and Resolves.

817 31. Bills shall be drafted in a format approved by the Counsel to the House and submitted in a  
818 format to be determined by the Clerk. Bills amending existing laws shall not provide for striking  
819 words from, or inserting words in, such laws, unless such course is best calculated to show  
820 clearly the subject and nature of the amendment. No repealed law, and no part of any repealed  
821 law, shall be re-enacted by reference merely. [42.] (17.)

822 [Amended Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005.]

823 32. If a committee to which a bill is referred reports that the same ought not to pass, the  
824 question shall be "Shall this bill be rejected?". If the question on rejection is negatived, the bill, if  
825 it has been read but once, shall go to a second reading without question; otherwise it shall be  
826 placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day, pending the question on ordering to a third  
827 reading, or to engrossment, as the case may be. [43.] (30.)



828 32A. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

829 33. Bills involving an expenditure of public money or grant of public property, or otherwise  
830 affecting the state finances, unless the subject matter has been acted upon by the joint committee  
831 on Ways and Means, shall, after their first reading, be referred to the committee on Ways and  
832 Means, for report on their relation to the finances of the Commonwealth.

833 New provisions shall not be added to such bills by the committee on Ways and Means, unless  
834 directly connected with the financial features thereof.

835 Orders reported in the House or received from the Senate involving the expenditure of public  
836 money for special committees, shall, before the question is taken on the adoption thereof, be  
837 referred to the committee on Ways and Means, whose duty it shall be to report on their relation  
838 to the finances of the Commonwealth.

839 Every such bill involving a capital expenditure for new projects, or an appropriation for  
840 repairs, or any legislation, the cost of which, in the opinion of the committee, exceeds the sum of  
841 one hundred thousand dollars when reported into the House by the committee on Ways and  
842 Means, shall be accompanied by a fiscal note indicating the amount of public money which will  
843 be required to be expended to carry out the provisions of the proposed legislation, together with  
844 an estimate of the cost of operation and maintenance for the first year if a new project is  
845 involved. [44.] (27.)

846 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1981; Jul. 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005.]

847 33A. Copies of all bills shall be available, in a format to be determined by the Speaker in  
848 consultation with the Clerk, to all members of the House and the public at least twenty-four  
849 hours in advance of consideration by the House.

850 All amendments offered by members to any legislative matter in the House shall be submitted  
851 in a format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with the Clerk; and shall be  
852 considered chronologically as submitted to the Clerk, except for an amendment in the second  
853 degree; provided that all of said amendments shall be double spaced and drafted in proper form;  
854 and provided further that there shall be available to the members a duplicate copy of each  
855 amendment. (33A.)

856 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Nov. 28, 1984; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 17, 1995];  
857 Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007.]

858 33B. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

859 33C. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

860 33D. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

861 33E. No consolidated amendment offered by the committee on ways and means shall be  
862 considered by the House until the expiration of at least thirty minutes after the consolidated  
863 amendment shall have been first filed with the Clerk and made available to the members. This  
864 rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

865 [Added Feb. 4, 2010.]

866 34. Bills from the Senate, after their first reading, shall be referred to a committee of the House.  
867 [45.] (26.)

868 [Amended Jan. 26, 1999.]

869 35. Amendments proposed by the Senate, and sent back to the House for concurrence, shall  
870 be referred to the committee on Bills in Third Reading, provided that amendments affecting state  
871 finances shall be referred to the committee on Ways and Means on the part of the House. [46.]  
872 (36.)

873 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007.]

874 36. No bill shall be proposed or introduced unless received from the Senate, reported by a  
875 committee, or moved as an amendment to the report of a committee. [47.] (36.)

876 37. Bills, resolves and other papers that have been, or, under the rules or usage of the House,  
877 are to be made available in a format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with the  
878 Clerk, shall be read by their titles only, unless the full reading is requested by vote of a majority  
879 of those members present and voting.

880 [Amended Jan. 9, 2003, Amended, Jan. 23, 2007.] [48.] (29.)

881 38. When a bill, resolve, order, petition or memorial has been finally rejected or disposed of  
882 by the House, no measure substantially the same shall be introduced by any committee or  
883 member during the same session. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent  
884 of the members present. [49.] (54.)

885 39. No bill shall be passed to be engrossed without having been read on three separate  
886 legislative days. [51.] (28.)

887 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

888 40. No engrossed bill shall be amended, except by striking out the enacting clause. A motion  
889 to strike out the enacting clause of a bill shall be received when the bill is before the House for  
890 enactment. If the bill contains an emergency preamble, a motion to suspend this rule may be  
891 received before the adoption of the emergency preamble and, if suspended, the amendment may  
892 contain a new emergency preamble. This rule shall not apply to a bill or resolve returned by the  
893 Governor with a recommendation of amendment in accordance with the provisions of Article  
894 LVI of the Amendments to the Constitution; nor shall it apply to amendments of engrossed bills  
895 proposed by the Senate and sent to the House for concurrence, which amendments shall be  
896 subject to the provisions of rule thirty-five, provided, however, that a motion to suspend this rule  
897 shall be required in order to amend such an engrossed bill when the question before the House is  
898 on adoption of an emergency preamble, re-enactment or enactment, as the case may be.. [53.]  
899 (49.) [Amended, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 20, 2011.]

900 41. Bills received from the Senate and bills reported favorably by committees, when not referred  
901 to another standing committee of the House, shall, prior to being placed in the Orders of the Day,  
902 be referred to the committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling. Resolutions received from and  
903 adopted by the Senate, or reported in the House by committees, shall, if proposed for joint  
904 adoption, be referred to said committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling. [56.] (26.)

905 [Amended Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 26, 1999.]

906 42. Reports of committees, not by bill or resolve, including orders if proposed for joint  
907 adoption, after they are received from the Senate, or made in the House, as the case may be,  
908 shall, unless subject to the provisions of any other House or joint rules, be referred to the  
909 committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling; provided that the report of a committee asking to

910 be discharged from further consideration of a subject, and recommending that it be referred or  
911 recommitted to another committee, or a report of a committee recommending that a matter be  
912 placed on file, shall be immediately considered. Reports of committees on proposals for  
913 amendments to the Constitution shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of joint rule  
914 twenty-three. [57.] (36.)

915 [Amended Jan. 14, 1997.]

916 42A. The Clerk shall, prior to three o'clock P.M., on the day preceding a session, make  
917 available by electronic communication or other means, a list of all reports of the committee on  
918 Steering, Policy and Scheduling, asking to be discharged from further consideration of subjects,  
919 and recommending that the subjects be referred to other committees.

920 [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005.]

921 43. Bills ordered to a third reading shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day for  
922 such reading. [58.] (32.)

923 Special Rules Affecting the Course of Proceedings.

924 44. The Speaker may designate when an informal session of the House shall be held provided  
925 said Speaker gives notice of such informal session at a prior session of the House. The Speaker  
926 may, in cases of emergency, cancel a session or declare any session of the House to be an  
927 informal session. At an informal session the House shall only consider reports of committees,  
928 papers from the Senate, bills for enactment or resolves for final passage, bills containing  
929 emergency preambles and the matters in the Orders of the Day. Motions to reconsider moved at

930 such informal session shall be placed in the Orders of the Day for the succeeding day, and no  
931 new business shall be entertained, except by unanimous consent.

932 Formal debate, or the taking of the sense of the House by yeas and nays shall not be conducted  
933 during such informal session.

934 Upon the receipt of a petition signed by at least a majority of the members elected to the  
935 House, so requesting, the Speaker shall, when the House is meeting in informal session under the  
936 provisions of Joint Rule 12A, designate a formal session, to be held within seven days of said  
937 receipt, for the purpose of considering the question of passage of a bill, notwithstanding the  
938 objections of the Governor, returned pursuant to Article 2, Section 1, Clause 1, Part 2 of the  
939 Massachusetts Constitution. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
940 members present. [59.] (5A.)

941 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 17, 1995; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9,  
942 2003.]

943 45. After entering upon the consideration of the Orders of the Day, the House shall proceed  
944 with them in regular course as follows: Matters not giving rise to a motion or debate shall first be  
945 disposed of in the order in which they stand in the Calendar; after which the matters that were  
946 passed over shall be considered in like order and disposed. The provisions of this paragraph shall  
947 not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

948 Notwithstanding the provisions of this rule, during consideration of the Orders of the Day, the  
949 committee on Ways and Means and the committee on Bills in the Third Reading may present  
950 matters for consideration of the House after approval of two-thirds of the members present and  
951 voting, without debate. [59.] (37.) [See Rule 47.]

952 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 12, 1983.]

953 46. When the House does not finish the consideration of the Orders of the Day, those which  
954 had not been acted upon shall be the Orders of the Day for the next and each succeeding day  
955 until disposed of, and shall be entered in the Calendar, without change in their order, to precede  
956 matters added under Rule seven A; provided, however, that all other matters shall be listed in  
957 numerical order by Calendar item.

958 The unfinished business in which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment shall have  
959 the preference in the Orders of the Day for the next day. [60.] (35.)

960 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 26, 1999.]

961 47. No matter which has been duly placed in the Orders of the Day shall be discharged  
962 therefrom, or considered out of the regular course. [61.] (38.) [See Rule 45.]

963 Voting.

964 48. Members desiring to be excused from voting shall make application to that effect before  
965 the division of the House or the taking of the yeas and nays is begun. Such application may be  
966 accompanied by a brief statement of reasons by the member. A member absent from the House  
967 for a formal session period of a day or longer shall notify the Clerk in writing of the intended  
968 absence. A member absent during a formal session for an extended period or for the remainder of  
969 the session shall notify the Clerk in person. The Clerk shall provide a written notice to any such  
970 absent member.

971 The Clerk shall disable the voting station of any such member notifying the Clerk of an absence  
972 pursuant to this Rule. The Clerk shall also disable the voting station of any member failing to

973 answer the first non-quorum roll call of a legislative sitting; provided, however, that the Clerk  
974 shall reactivate the voting station upon receiving notification of the member's return to the  
975 House Chamber. ([64.] (57.)

976 49. If the presence of a quorum is doubted, a count of the House shall be made. When a yea  
977 and nay vote is taken, the members, with the exception of the Speaker, shall vote only from their  
978 seats. A member who has been appointed by the Speaker to perform the duties of the Chair, or a  
979 person who has been elected Speaker pro tempore, may designate some member or a court  
980 officer to cast a vote for him/her on any vote taken on the electronic voting system while such  
981 member is presiding. Said designated member performing the duties of the Chair, or Speaker pro  
982 tempore, may, if the Speaker is in the State House, cast a vote for the Speaker. The Speaker  
983 shall state the pending question before opening the system for voting.

984 The Speaker may direct the Clerk to cast a vote for a member who is in the House Chamber, but  
985 who is unable to vote due to a malfunction of his/her voting station or inability to open his/her  
986 voting station.

987 Except in the case of a vote to ascertain the presence of a quorum, if a member is prevented  
988 from voting personally using the electronic voting system because of physical disability, said  
989 member shall, if present in the State House, be excused from so voting and the Speaker shall  
990 assign a court officer to cast said member's vote so long as said physical disability continues;  
991 provided that the Speaker shall announce the action of the Chair to the membership prior to  
992 assigning a court officer to cast the member's vote and provided further that the Speaker shall  
993 announce the action to the membership the first time a vote is cast for that member on each  
994 successive day. [65.]



995 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 20, 2011.]

996 50. When a question is put, the sense of the House shall be taken by the voices of the  
997 members, and the Speaker shall first announce the vote as it appears to the Speaker by the sound.  
998 If the Speaker is unable to decide by the sound of the voices, or if the announcement made  
999 thereupon is doubted by a member rising in his/her place for that purpose, the Speaker shall  
1000 order a division of the number voting in the affirmative and in the negative, without further  
1001 debate upon the question. [66.] (55.)

1002 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1003 51. When a return by division of the members voting in the affirmative and in the negative is  
1004 ordered, the members for or against the question, when called on by the Speaker, shall rise in  
1005 their places, and stand until they are counted. If, upon the taking of such a vote, the presence of a  
1006 quorum is doubted, a count of the House shall be had, and if a quorum is present the vote shall  
1007 stand. [67.]

1008 52. The sense of the House shall be taken by yeas and nays whenever required by ten percent  
1009 of the members elected. The Speaker shall, after waiting up to an interval of twelve minutes,  
1010 state the pending question and, after opening the electronic voting system, instruct the members  
1011 to vote for not less than two minutes and no more than twenty-two minutes, the Speaker shall  
1012 close said system and cause totals to be displayed and a record made of how each member  
1013 present voted; provided, that if at any time during said voting period any standing, joint or  
1014 conference committee is meeting in public or executive sessions, the Speaker shall leave the  
1015 electronic voting machine open for not less than 5 minutes.

1016 Any member desiring to be recorded as being “present” when a yea and nay vote is taken on  
1017 the electronic roll call system shall so notify the Clerk in person after said vote is ordered and  
1018 before the vote is announced.

1019 In the event the electronic voting system is not in operating order, the roll of the House shall  
1020 be called in alphabetical order; provided, however, that no member shall be allowed to vote or to  
1021 answer “present” who was not on the floor before the vote is declared; provided, however, that a  
1022 member, who was in the State House on a previous roll call, may be recorded by reporting to the  
1023 Clerk within five minutes after such vote is closed, unless objection is made thereto and it is  
1024 seconded; and provided further that the presiding officer shall not, for said purpose, interrupt the  
1025 member who is speaking on the floor; provided, however, that such request may be announced to  
1026 the House subsequent to the five minutes. The Speaker shall not entertain any requests beyond  
1027 said five minute period. Once the voting has begun it shall not be interrupted except for the  
1028 purpose of questioning the validity of a member’s vote before the result is announced. Except as  
1029 heretofore provided, any member who shall vote or attempt to vote for another member or any  
1030 person not a member who votes or attempts to vote for a member, or any member or other person  
1031 who willfully tampers with or attempts to impair or destroy in any manner whatsoever the voting  
1032 equipment used by the House, or change the records thereon shall be punished in such manner as  
1033 the House determines; and provided further, that such a violation shall be reported to the Ethics  
1034 Committee. [68.] (56, 57.)

1035 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9,  
1036 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; Jan 20, 2011.]

1037 53. The call for yeas and nays shall be decided without debate. If the yeas and nays have been  
1038 ordered before the question is put, the proceedings under rules fifty and fifty-one relative to  
1039 verification of the vote by the voices of the members or by a return of divisions shall be omitted;  
1040 if not, they may be called for in lieu of a return by divisions when the Speaker's announcement is  
1041 doubted by a member rising in his/her place, and, if then ordered, the proceedings under rules  
1042 fifty and fifty-one shall be omitted. [69.] (52.)

1043 [Amended Jan. 26, 1999.]

1044 Reconsideration.

1045 54. No motion to reconsider a vote shall be entertained unless it is made on the same day on  
1046 which the vote was taken, or before the Orders of the Day have been taken up on the next day  
1047 thereafter on which a quorum is present. If reconsideration is moved on the same day, the motion  
1048 shall be placed first in the Orders of the Day for the succeeding day; but, if it is moved on the  
1049 succeeding day, the motion shall be considered forthwith except that if said motion is moved on  
1050 a day on which an informal session has been designated, it shall be placed in the Orders of the  
1051 Day for the succeeding day. If reconsideration is moved after July first of the second annual  
1052 session and thereafter, on any main question, it shall be considered forthwith. This rule shall not  
1053 prevent the reconsideration of a vote on a subsidiary, incidental or dependent question at any  
1054 time when the main question to which it relates is under consideration; and provided, further,  
1055 that a motion to reconsider a vote on any subsidiary, incidental or dependent question shall not  
1056 remove the main subject under consideration from before the House, but shall be considered at  
1057 the time when it is made. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
1058 members present. [70.] (53.)

1059 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981, Jan. 23, 2007.]

1060 55. When a motion for reconsideration is decided, that decision shall not be reconsidered, and  
1061 no question shall be twice reconsidered; nor shall any vote be reconsidered upon any of the  
1062 following motions:

1063 to recess,

1064 to adjourn,

1065 on sustaining a ruling of the Chair,

1066 to close debate at a specified time,

1067 to postpone if voted in the negative,

1068 to discharge or direct a committee to report,

1069 to commit or recommit,

1070 for second or subsequent legislative days,

1071 for the previous question, or

1072 for suspension of rules.

1073 This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [71.]

1074 (53.)

1075 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 9, 1991.]

1076 56. Debate on motions to reconsider shall be limited to fifteen minutes, and no member shall  
1077 occupy more than three minutes, but on a motion to reconsider a vote upon any subsidiary or  
1078 incidental question, debate shall be limited to ten minutes, and no member shall occupy more  
1079 than three minutes.

1080 If the House has voted to close debate on any question, a motion to reconsider said question  
1081 shall be decided without debate. [72.] (52.)

1082 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 12, 1987.]

1083 RULES OF DEBATE.

1084 57. Every member, when about to speak, shall rise and respectfully address the Speaker and  
1085 shall confine himself/herself to the question under debate. [73.] (39.)

1086 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1087 58. Every member while speaking shall avoid personalities; and shall sit down when finished. No  
1088 member shall speak out of his/her place without leave of the Speaker. [73.] (39.)

1089 When two or more members rise at the same time, the Speaker shall name the member entitled  
1090 to the floor, preferring one who rises in his/her place to one who does not. [74.] (40.)

1091 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1092 59. If a member repeatedly violates any of the rules of the House, or disrupts the orderly  
1093 procedure of the House, the Speaker, after warning the member of such violations, shall call the  
1094 member to order, and order that member to take his/her seat. A member so called to order shall  
1095 lose the right to speak on the pending subject-matter but shall not be debarred from voting. A

1096 member so called to order shall remain seated until the House begins consideration of another  
1097 subject-matter or unless the Speaker earlier returns to the member his/her rights to the floor.

1098 If a member so called to order refuses to immediately take his/her seat, the Speaker shall  
1099 immediately name that member, who shall be escorted from the Chamber under escort of the  
1100 Sergeant-at-Arms. The matter shall thereupon, on motion, be referred to a special committee of  
1101 three to be appointed by the Speaker. Said special committee shall make a report to the House of  
1102 its recommendations, which report shall be read and accepted.

1103 Having been named, a member shall not be allowed to resume his/her seat until said member  
1104 has complied with the recommendations of the committee as accepted by the House.

1105 If, after a member is seated or named, the action of the Speaker is appealed, the House shall  
1106 decide the case by a majority vote of the members present and voting, but if there is no  
1107 immediate appeal, the decision of the Speaker shall be conclusive.

1108 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 11, 1985.]

1109 60. No member shall interrupt another while speaking except by rising to a point of order, to a  
1110 question of personal privilege, to doubt the presence of a quorum, or to ask the person speaking  
1111 to yield.

1112 Members may rise to explain matters personal to them by leave of the presiding officer, but  
1113 shall not discuss pending questions in such explanations.

1114 Questions of personal privilege shall be limited to questions affecting the rights, reputation, and  
1115 conduct of the member in his/her representative capacities.

1116 Members may rise to ask questions of parliamentary inquiry concerning the pending matter by  
1117 leave of the presiding officer, but shall not debate the pending questions. [75.] (42.)

1118 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1119 61. No member shall speak more than once to the prevention of those who have not spoken  
1120 and desire to speak on the same question.

1121 This prohibition shall not apply to those members designated by the committee or committees  
1122 reporting the bill.

1123 No member shall occupy more than thirty minutes at a time while speaking on any question  
1124 where debate is unlimited.

1125 Unless the operation of another rule provides to the contrary (such as previous question,  
1126 limitation of debate, etc.), no member shall be prohibited from speaking more than once on any  
1127 question when no other member who has not spoken is seeking recognition by the Chair. [76.]  
1128 (41.)

1129 Motions.

1130 62. Every motion shall be reduced to writing, if the Speaker so directs. [77.] (44.)

1131 63. A motion need not be seconded, except an appeal from the decision of the Chair, and may  
1132 be withdrawn by the mover if no objection is made. [78.] (44.)

1133 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1134 Limit of Debate.

1135 64. A motion to recess or adjourn shall always be first in order, and shall be decided without  
1136 debate; and on the motions to close debate at a specified time, to postpone to a time certain, to  
1137 commit or recommit, not exceeding ten minutes shall be allowed for debate, and no member  
1138 shall speak more than three minutes. On the motion to discharge any committee, or on a motion  
1139 directing any committee to report matters before it, not exceeding fifteen minutes shall be  
1140 allowed for debate, and no member shall speak more than three minutes.

1141 If the main motion is undebatable, any subsidiary or incidental motion made relating to it shall  
1142 also be decided without debate. [79.] (52.) [See Rules 56 and 83.]

1143 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1144 64A. Debate on the question on adoption of orders for second and subsequent legislative days  
1145 shall be limited to ten minutes, and no member shall speak more than three minutes. After  
1146 entering into a second or subsequent legislative day, the House shall immediately proceed to  
1147 consideration of engrossed bills, reports of committees, papers from the Senate or the Orders of  
1148 the Day. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

1149 [Adopted Jan. 12, 1983.]

1150 65. When a question is before the House, until it is disposed of, the Speaker shall receive no  
1151 motion that does not relate to the same, except the motion to recess or adjourn or some other  
1152 motion that has precedence either by express rule of the House, or because it is privileged in its  
1153 nature; and the Speaker shall receive no motion relating to the same, except,—

1154 for the previous question, . . . . .

1155 to close debate at a specified time, . . . . .



1156 to postpone to a time certain, . . . . .

1157 to commit (or recommit), . . . . .

1158 to amend, . . . . . See Rules 66, 67 and 68

1159 See Rules 64, 69 and 70

1160 See Rules 64 and 70

1161 See Rules 64 and 71

1162 See Rules 72, 73, 74 and 75

1163 — which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are arranged in this

1164 rule. [80.] (46.)

1165 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1166 Previous Question.

1167 66. Any member may call for the previous question on the main question.

1168 The previous question shall be put in the following form: “Shall the main question be now

1169 put?” and all debate on the main question shall be suspended until the previous question is

1170 decided.

1171 The adoption of the previous question shall require the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the

1172 members present and voting and shall put an end to all debate, and bring the House to direct vote

1173 upon pending amendments, if any, in their regular order, and then upon the main question.

1174 A motion to reconsider the vote on any of the pending amendments shall be decided without  
1175 debate. [81.]

1176 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1177 67. Any member may call for the previous question on any pending amendment.

1178 The previous question shall be put in the following form: “Shall the question on adoption of  
1179 the amendment be now put?” and all debate shall be suspended until the previous question is  
1180 decided.

1181 The adoption of the previous question on a pending amendment shall require the affirmative  
1182 vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting and shall put an end to all debate and bring  
1183 the House to a direct vote upon the pending amendment.

1184 A motion to reconsider the vote on the pending amendment shall be decided without debate.

1185 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1186 68. The previous question shall be decided without debate.

1187 Motion to Close Debate at a Specified Time.

1188 69. Debate may be closed at any time not less than thirty minutes from the adoption of a  
1189 motion to that effect. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
1190 members present. [85.] (47.)

1191 Motion to Postpone to a Time Certain.

1192 70. When a motion is made to postpone to a time certain, and different times are proposed, the  
1193 question shall first be taken on the most remote time; and the time shall be determined before the  
1194 question is put on postponement, which may then be rejected if the House sees fit. [87.] (51.)

1195 Motion to Commit.

1196 71. When a motion is made to commit, and different committees are proposed, the question  
1197 shall be taken in the following order:

1198 a standing committee of the House,

1199 a select committee of the House,

1200 a joint standing committee,

1201 a joint selected committee;

1202 and a subject may be recommitted to the same committee or to another committee at the pleasure  
1203 of the House. [88.] (48.)

1204 Motion to Amend.

1205 72. A motion to amend an amendment may be received; but no amendment in the third degree  
1206 shall be allowed. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members  
1207 present. [89.]

1208 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983.]

1209 73. No motion or proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be  
1210 admitted under color of amendment. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous  
1211 consent of the members present. [90.] (50.)

1212 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987.]

1213 73A. No motion to amend a report from the committee on Ways and Means or a report from  
1214 the committee on Bills in the Third Reading, when such an amendment contains an expenditure  
1215 of public money or an increase or decrease in taxes, shall be considered unless a brief  
1216 explanation of the amendment is stated.

1217 [Adopted Jan. 17, 1995; Amended Jan. 26, 1999.]

1218 74. A question containing two or more propositions capable of division shall be divided  
1219 whenever desired by any member, if the question includes points so distinct and separate that,  
1220 one of them being taken away, the other will stand as a complete proposition. The motion to  
1221 strike out and insert shall be considered as one proposition and therefore indivisible. The  
1222 question on ordering a bill or resolve to a third reading, or to be engrossed, or to be enacted, or  
1223 similar main motions shall be considered as indivisible under this rule. This rule shall not be  
1224 suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [91.] (45.)

1225 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983.]

1226 75. In filling blanks, the largest sum and longest time shall be put first. [92.] (51.) [See Rule  
1227 70.]

1228 Declaration of Recess.

1229 76. The Speaker may declare a recess of fifteen minutes duration, or less.

1230 [Amended Jan. 9, 1991.]

1231 APPEAL.

1232 77. No appeal from the decision of the Speaker shall be entertained unless it is seconded; and  
1233 no other business shall be in order until the question on the appeal has been disposed of. Debate  
1234 shall be limited to fifteen minutes on the question of sustaining a ruling by the Chair, and no  
1235 member shall occupy more than three minutes. [94.] (43A.) [See Rule 2.]

1236 [Amended Jan. 9, 1989.]

1237 RESOLVES.

1238 78. Such of these rules as are applicable to bills, whether of the House or of the Senate, shall  
1239 apply likewise to such resolves as require the concurrence of the Senate and approval by the  
1240 Governor in order to become law and have force as such. [95.]

1241 SEATS.

1242 79. (1) The desk on the right of the Speaker shall be assigned to the use of the Clerk and such  
1243 persons as he/she may employ to assist said Clerk, and that on the left to the use of the chairman  
1244 and vice-chairman of the committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

1245 (2) The Speaker shall assign members to vacant seats. The seat assigned to any member, other  
1246 than seats assigned under paragraph (1) of this rule, shall be his/her seat for the year and for such  
1247 additional years as said member may elect so long as service in the House remains continuous.  
1248 An exchange of seats may be made with the approval of the Speaker. [98.]

1249 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; May 5, 1993.]

1250 PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR.

1251 80. The following persons shall be entitled to admission to the House of Representatives,  
1252 during the session thereof, to stand in an area designated by the Speaker in the rear of the  
1253 Chamber, unless otherwise invited by said Speaker to occupy seats not numbered:

1254 (1) The Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor, members of the Executive Council, Secretary  
1255 of the Commonwealth, Treasurer and Receiver-General, Auditor of the Commonwealth,  
1256 Attorney-General, Librarian and Assistant Librarian.

1257 (2) The members of the Senate.

1258 (3) Persons in the exercise of an official duty directly connected with the business of the  
1259 House.

1260 (4) Contestants for seats in the House, whose papers are in the hands of a special committee  
1261 of the House, may be admitted, while their cases are pending, to seats to be assigned by the  
1262 Speaker.

1263 No other person shall be admitted to the floor during the session, except upon the permission  
1264 of the Speaker.

1265 No legislative agent or counsel may be admitted to the floor of the House Chamber during a  
1266 session unless that part of the session is ceremonial in nature in which no other legislative  
1267 business is conducted.

1268 The legislative reporters shall be entitled to the privileges of the reporters' galleries.

1269 This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [99.] (60,  
1270 61.)

1271 [Amended Jan. 9, 1991, Jan. 23, 2007.]

## 1272 REPRESENTATIVES' CHAMBER AND ADJOINING ROOMS.

1273 81. Use of the Representatives' Chamber shall be subject to the approval of the Speaker or the  
1274 committee on Rules.

1275 No legislative agent or counsel shall be admitted to the members' corridor or adjoining rooms.  
1276 No other person shall be admitted to the members' corridor or adjoining rooms, except persons  
1277 entitled to the privileges of the floor of the House unless upon written invitation of a member  
1278 bearing the name of the member and the person the member invites. Upon entering, the  
1279 invitation shall be given to the court officer assigned to the area. The provisions of this paragraph  
1280 shall not apply if the purpose of admittance is to attend a meeting in an adjoining room to which  
1281 members of the general public are allowed to attend.

1282 No person shall be admitted to the north gallery of the House except upon a card of the  
1283 Speaker.

1284 Subject to the approval and direction of the committee on Rules during the session and of the  
1285 Speaker after prorogation, the use of the reporters' galleries of the House Chamber shall be under  
1286 the control of the organization of legislative reporters known as the Massachusetts State House  
1287 Press Association and the State House Broadcasters Association.

1288 Every legislative reporter desiring admission to the reporters' galleries shall state in writing  
1289 that he/she is not the agent or representative of any person or corporation interested in legislation

1290 before the General Court, and will not act as representative of any such person or corporation  
1291 while retaining a place in the galleries; but nothing herein contained shall prevent such  
1292 legislative reporter from engaging in other employment, provided such other employment is  
1293 specifically approved by the committee on Rules and reported to the House.

1294 All formal sessions of the House of Representatives shall be open to both commercial and  
1295 public radio and television, except designated times during such sessions, as determined by the  
1296 House, reserved for the consideration of non-controversial business which does not give rise to  
1297 debate. The manner and conditions of such broadcasts shall be established by the Speaker.  
1298 Television, radio or web-broadcasts may be prohibited on any given day by the Speaker with the  
1299 approval of the House.

1300 This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [100.]  
1301 (59.)

1302 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 26, 1999, Jan. 23,  
1303 2007.]

1304 QUORUM.

1305 82. Eighty-one members shall constitute a quorum for the organization of the House and the  
1306 transaction of business. [See amendments to the Constitution, Art. XXXIII.]

1307 In the event that a quorum is not present, the presiding officer shall compel the attendance of a  
1308 quorum. During the absence of a quorum, no other business may be transacted or motions  
1309 entertained except a declaration of adjournment or a recess by the Speaker. [105.]

1310 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 14, 1997.]



1311 DEBATE ON MOTIONS FOR SUSPENSION OF RULES.

1312 83. The question of suspension of House rules 45, 47, 56, 61, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 77 and 83  
1313 shall be decided without debate. Debate upon the motion for the suspension of any other House  
1314 rule, unless otherwise indicated, or any joint rule shall be limited to fifteen minutes and no  
1315 member shall occupy more than three minutes. This rule shall not be suspended unless by  
1316 unanimous consent of the members present. [102.] (52.)

1317 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 9, 1989.]

1318 84. Unless otherwise indicated, nothing in the House rules or joint rules shall be suspended,  
1319 altered or repealed unless two-thirds of the members present and voting consent thereto. This  
1320 rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [103.] (63.)

1321 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1322 84A. The clerk may, due to technical limitations or upon exigent circumstances, elect to waive  
1323 any requirement relative to the electronic availability and posting on the internet of any bills,  
1324 resolves, summaries or other documents contained herein; provided, however, that if the clerk so  
1325 waives any such requirement he shall make paper copies of the documents available to all  
1326 members and the public within the limitation established for the electronic availability and  
1327 posting on the internet of any bills, resolves, summaries or other documents contained herein.

1328 REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE ON RULES.

1329 85. All motions or orders authorizing committees of the House to travel or to employ  
1330 stenographers, all propositions involving special investigations by committees of the House, all  
1331 resolutions presented for adoption by the House only, and all motions and orders except those

1332 which relate to the procedure of the House or are privileged in their nature or are authorized by  
1333 rule sixty-five, shall be referred without debate to the committee on Rules, which shall report  
1334 thereon, recommending what action should be taken. The committee shall not recommend  
1335 suspension of joint rule nine, unless evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that the  
1336 petitioners have previously given notice, by public advertisement or otherwise, equivalent to that  
1337 required by Chapter 3 of the General Laws. [104.] (13A.)

1338 85A. The House Business Manager, with the approval of House Counsel, shall provide that  
1339 outside, independent audits of House financial accounts be conducted for each fiscal year upon  
1340 receipt of the fiscal year end appropriation activity with balance report from the comptroller of  
1341 the Commonwealth. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with auditing standards  
1342 generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial  
1343 audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the  
1344 United States. The House Business Manager shall provide the independent auditor with  
1345 requested documents for such audit. A copy of such audit shall be filed with the Clerk of the  
1346 House and copies shall be made available to the members and the general public.

1347 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985, Amended Jan. 20, 2011.]

1348 PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE.

1349 86. The rules of parliamentary practice shall govern the House in all cases to which they are  
1350 applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with these rules or the joint rules of the two  
1351 branches. (62.)

1352 PROCUREMENT.

1353 87. (a) All procurement for goods or services shall be completed by the House Business  
1354 Manager with the approval of House Counsel.

1355 (b) All procurements for goods or services shall, to the extent practicable, be made from the  
1356 statewide procurement list established by the operational services division.

1357 (c) Upon certification by the House Business Manager that a necessary procurement cannot be  
1358 made using the statewide procurement list established by the operational services division, the  
1359 House Business Manager may procure the required goods or services pursuant to the following:

1360 (i) for a procurement of a supply or service in an amount of less than \$5,000, the House Business  
1361 Manager shall use sound business practices;

1362 (ii) for a procurement of a supply or service in an amount of \$5,000, but less than \$50,000, the  
1363 House Business Manager shall seek written or oral quotations from no fewer than 3 persons  
1364 customarily providing such supply or service. The House Business Manager shall record the  
1365 names and addresses of all persons from whom quotations were sought, the names of the persons  
1366 submitting quotations and the date and amount of each quotation. The House Business Manager  
1367 shall award the contract to the responsible person whose quotation offers the needed quality of  
1368 supply or service and which represents the best value for the Commonwealth;

1369 (iii) for a procurement of a supply or service in an amount exceeding \$50,000 the business  
1370 manager shall seek proposals through a competitive bid process established by the office of  
1371 House Counsel; provided, however, that the Office of House Counsel shall file the competitive  
1372 bid process with the House Clerk no later than March 31 of the first year of the session.

1373 (d) All procurements for legal and consulting services shall be handled exclusively by the Office  
1374 of House Counsel in compliance with the provisions of this rule. Prior to executing a contract for  
1375 legal or consulting services, said office shall certify, in writing, to the Clerk of the House of  
1376 Representatives that no employee of the House of Representatives possesses the required skills  
1377 to complete the service which is the subject of the contract.

1378 (e) The House Business Manager shall maintain a file on each contract not executed using the  
1379 statewide procurement list established by the operational services division and in excess of  
1380 \$5,000 and shall include in such file a copy of all documents related to the contract. Upon  
1381 execution of the contract, the House Business Manager shall transmit the file to the Office of  
1382 House Counsel which shall make the file available for inspection within said office by members  
1383 of the House for at least 3 years from the date of final payment under the contract; provided,  
1384 however, that the Office of House Counsel shall redact from said file any information it which (i)  
1385 is legally privileged; (ii) is proprietary; or (iii) related to individual members or House personnel.

1386 (f) Whenever the time required to comply with a requirement of this rule would endanger the  
1387 health, safety or convenience of the members, staff or visitors to the House of Representatives  
1388 the House Business Manager may make an emergency procurement without satisfying the  
1389 requirement of this rule; provided, however, that both the House Business Manager and the  
1390 House Counsel certify in writing that: (i) an emergency exists and explain the nature thereof; (ii)  
1391 be limited to only supplies or services necessary to meet the emergency; (iii) shall conform to the  
1392 requirements of rule to the extent practicable under the circumstances; (iv) each contractor's  
1393 name, (v) the amount and the type of each contract; (vi) the supplies or services provided under  
1394 each contract; (vii) and basis for determining the need for an emergency procurement. Such  
1395 certification shall be filed with the Clerk of the House prior to an emergency procurement.

1396 [Adopted Jan. 20, 2011.]

1397 House of Representatives, January 20, 2011.