

HOUSENo. 4910

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, July 29, 2020.

The committee on Rules, reports, under the provisions of House Rules 7C, that the accompanying order relative to suspending Joint Rule 12A (House, No. 4910) ought to be adopted.

For the committee,

William C. Galvin

HOUSE No. 4910

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



House of Representatives, July 29, 2020.

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

1 *Ordered*, Whereas, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization designated the
2 Coronavirus Disease 2019, hereinafter COVID-19, outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of
3 International Concern; and

4 Whereas, COVID-19 is a highly contagious, and at times fatal, respiratory disease;

5 Whereas, on March 10, 2020, pursuant to Executive Order No. 591, the Governor declared a
6 state of emergency in the Commonwealth to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak; and

7 Whereas, on March 11, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the
8 World Health Organization; and

9 Whereas, on March 27, 2020 the President of the United States declared that beginning on
10 January 20, 2020 and continuing a major disaster exists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

11 and ordered Federal assistance to supplement Commonwealth, tribal, and local recovery efforts
12 in areas of the Commonwealth affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

13 Whereas, the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 and the effects of its extreme risk of person-to-
14 person transmission significantly affect the health, security, safety, economic well-being and
15 convenience of the public; and

16 Whereas, the House of Representatives and the Senate concur with the Governor’s declaration of
17 a state of emergency and a public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

18 Whereas, pursuant to Article VII of Section II of Chapter I of Part the Second of the Constitution
19 of the Commonwealth, the Senate has the exclusive constitutional authority to determine its own
20 rules of proceedings in the Senate; and

21 Whereas, pursuant to Article X of Section III of Chapter 1 of Part the Second of the Constitution
22 of the Commonwealth, the House of Representatives has the exclusive constitutional authority to
23 settle the rules and orders of proceeding in the House of Representatives; and

24 Whereas, the House of Representatives and the Senate exercised their exclusive constitutional
25 authority to settle the joint rules and orders of proceeding for the 191st General Court on March
26 7, 2019;

27 Whereas, Joint Rule 12A requires that all formal business of the second annual session be
28 concluded no later than the last day of July 2020;

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

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

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

38 Whereas, it is critical for the House of Representatives and the Senate to continue to convene in
39 formal sessions to take additional steps to respond to, and mitigate the spread of, COVID-19 to
40 protect the health, security, safety, economic well-being and convenience of the people of the
41 Commonwealth; now therefore be it

42 Ordered, That, the House of Representatives and the Senate hereby declares that a state of
43 emergency exists within the General Court; and be it further

44 Ordered, That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 12A the House and Senate may meet in formal
45 sessions and conduct formal business subsequent to the last day of July 2020.