

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 68**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts***House of Representatives,*

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court  
(2021-2022)**

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1        *Ordered*, the joint rules of the Senate and House of Representatives for the 192nd  
2        General Court for the 2021-2022 legislative sessions be adopted, as follows:  
3        Committees.

4        1. Joint standing committees shall be appointed at the beginning of the biennial session as  
5        follows:-

6        A committee on Advanced Information Technology, the Internet and Cybersecurity;

7        A committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets

8        A committee on Cannabis Policy;

9        A committee on Children, Families and Persons With Disabilities;

10       A committee on Community Development and Small Businesses;

- 11 A committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure;
- 12 A committee on Covid-19 and Emergency Preparedness and Management;
- 13 A committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies;
- 14 A committee on Education;
- 15 A committee on Elder Affairs;
- 16 A committee on Election Laws;
- 17 A committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture;
- 18 A committee on Export Development;
- 19 A committee on Financial Services;
- 20 A committee on Health Care Financing;
- 21 A committee on Higher Education;
- 22 A committee on Housing;
- 23 A committee on the Judiciary;
- 24 A committee on Labor and Workforce Development;
- 25 A committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery;
- 26 A committee on Municipalities and Regional Government;
- 27 A committee on Public Health;

28 A committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security;

29 A committee on Public Service;

30 A committee on Racial Equity, Civil Rights and Inclusion;

31 A committee on Revenue;

32 A committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight;

33 A committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy;

34 A committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development;

35 A committee on Transportation; and

36 A committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs.

37 Each to consist of 6 members of the Senate, and 11 on the part of the House except the

38 committees on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets, Economic Development and

39 Emerging Technologies, Public Safety and Homeland Security, Mental Health, Substance Use

40 and Recovery, Health Care Financing and Transportation which shall consist of 7 members of

41 the Senate and 13 of the House.

42 Within 4 weeks of the appointment of joint standing committees in the first annual session of the

43 General Court, each joint standing committee shall adopt rules of procedure regarding its

44 conduct. Said rules of procedure, together with any amendments, shall be filed with the Clerk of

45 the Senate and the Clerk of the House and shall be available to the public and members of the

46 General Court on the official website for the General Court.

47 Except as provided by Joint Rule 1E or 1F, each matter shall be referred only to 1 joint  
48 committee for consideration and all reports of matters by joint committees shall be made to the  
49 House or the Senate, under Joint Rule 4, not to another joint committee. The committee to which  
50 a matter is initially referred may discharge the matter to another committee with jurisdiction over  
51 the matter.

52 Matters referred by either the Senate or the House to its committee on Ways and Means shall be  
53 considered by the respective committees of the 2 branches, acting as a joint committee, when, in  
54 the judgment of the chairs of the respective committees of the 2 branches, the interests of  
55 legislation or the expedition of business will be better served by such joint consideration. Matters  
56 may also be referred to the committees on Ways and Means, of the 2 branches, as a joint  
57 committee.

58 The committees on Rules, together with the presiding officers of the 2 branches, acting  
59 concurrently, may consider and suggest such measures as shall, in their judgment, tend to  
60 facilitate the business of the session and a majority vote of the 2 branches shall be required to  
61 approve such recommendations.

62 In order to assist the House and the Senate in their: (1) consideration and enactment of new  
63 legislation and modifications of existing laws, when either are deemed to be appropriate; (2)  
64 evaluation of the effectiveness and administration of laws and programs previously enacted; and  
65 (3) appraisal of the conditions and circumstances which may indicate the desirability of enacting  
66 new legislation, the various joint committees shall have the following oversight responsibilities:

67 (i) each joint committee shall review and study, on a continuing basis, the implementation,  
68 administration, execution and effectiveness of those laws, or parts of law, the subject matter of

which is within the jurisdiction of that committee, the administrative regulations adopted to implement those laws, and those state agencies or entities having responsibilities for the administration and execution of such laws;

(ii) in carrying out these review and study activities, each committee shall determine whether such laws, administrative regulations and programs under those laws are being implemented in accordance with the intent of the General Court and whether such laws, administrative regulations and programs should be continued, curtailed or eliminated;

(iii) each committee shall also review and study any conditions and circumstances which may indicate the necessity or desirability of enacting new legislation within the jurisdiction of that committee, regardless of whether any matter has been introduced on that subject, and shall, on a continuing basis, undertake research on matters within the jurisdiction of that committee.

Committees shall coordinate oversight activities, under the direction of the presiding officers of both branches, to achieve the maximum objectives of clauses (i), (ii) and (iii).

Each committee may, upon completion of its oversight hearings, report to the General Court the results of its findings and recommendations together with accompanying corrective legislation, if any, by filing the same with the Clerk of the House of Representatives or the Clerk of the Senate.

Copies of such reports shall be, whenever practicable, made available to all members electronically and to the public via the Internet. The disposition of said reports shall be determined by the Clerks with the approval of the Speaker and the President.

The Senate and House chairs of a joint committee may appoint subcommittees to investigate and study any matter referred to said subcommittee. Any subcommittee so established shall be co-chaired by a majority member of the Senate and a majority member of the House who are

91 members of the joint standing committee appointing the subcommittee. The composition of the  
92 subcommittee shall be proportional to the composition of the appointing joint committee;  
93 provided, however, that not less than 10 per cent of the subcommittee's members shall be from  
94 the minority party. Chairs of subcommittees shall not be considered chairs under section 9B of  
95 chapter 3 of the General Laws. A subcommittee may, upon completion of an investigation and  
96 study, report the results of the investigation and study together with legislation, if any, by filing  
97 the same with the Senate and House chairs of the appointing joint committee.

98 Temporary employees of the general court assigned to a joint committee who are students at an  
99 accredited education institution or employees or grantees of other non-profit organizations under  
100 section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code may receive compensation from such  
101 organization, according to that organization's regular program of providing such compensation  
102 for temporary governmental or public service employment. A temporary employee's Senate or  
103 House supervisor shall establish the employee's total compensation, shall verify that the sum of  
104 the employee's state compensation, if any, and that any outside compensation the employee is to  
105 receive under this rule would not exceed this total compensation, and shall file the written terms  
106 of the employee's compensation with the Senate or House Human Resources Office, where it  
107 shall be available for public inspection. The temporary employee shall sign a confidentiality and  
108 ethics agreement provided by the Senate or House Human Resources Office.

109 The Senate and House Offices of Human Resources shall publish an employee handbook for  
110 joint employees of both branches of the general court. The handbook shall be developed with  
111 the advice and approval of both the Counsel to the Senate and the Counsel to the House. The  
112 handbook shall address access by joint employees to the human resource related services and  
113 programs of each branch of the general court. Joint employees shall complete any training

114 required by either branch of the general court, as may be agreed upon by the Senate and House  
115 Offices of Human Resources. [Amended Jan. 6, 18 82; Jan. 5, 18 83; Jan. 7, 18 84; Jan. 8 and 26,  
116 1885; Jan. 8, 18 86; Jan. 12, 18 87; Jan. 9, 18 88; Jan. 28, 18 89; Jan. 8, 18 90; Feb. 2, 18 91; Jan.  
117 11 and Feb. 10, 18 92; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan. 8. 1894; Jan. 7, 18 95; Jan. 7, 18 96; Jan. 11, 18 97;  
118 Jan. 10, 18 98; Jan. 9, 18 99; Jan. 22 and 29, 1901; Jan. 6, 19 02; Jan. 9, 19 03; Jan. 8, 19 04; Jan.  
119 6, 19 05; Jan. 4, 19 07; Jan. 5, 19 10; Jan. 4, 19 11; Jan. 1, 19 13; Jan. 12, 19 14; Jan. 2, 19 18;  
120 Jan. 1 and 8 and Feb. 21, 1919; Jan. 7, 19 20; Jan. 5, 19 21; April 17 and 30, 1925; Jan. 5, 19 27;  
121 Jan. 7, 19 31; Jan. 6, 19 37; Jan. 4, 19 39; Jan. 1, 19 41; Jan. 3, 19 45; Jan. 2, 19 46; Jan. 6, 19  
122 47; Feb. 1, 19 49; Jan. 7, 19 53; Jan. 7, 19 59; Jan. 30, 19 61; Jan. 7, 19 63; Jan. 12, 19 65; Feb.  
123 24, 19 65; Mar. 10, 19 66; Jan. 30, 19 67; Jan. 7, 1971 ; July 23, 1974 ; Sept. 30 and Oct. 12,  
124 1976 ; Nov. 3, 1981 ; Dec. 21, 1981 ; Mar. 15, 1982 ; Oct. 3, 1983 ; June 3, 1985 ; Jan. 25 and  
125 Mar. 14, 1988 ; Mar. 27, 1995 , June 12, 1995 ; July 17, 2003 ; Jan. 26, 2005; July 21 and  
126 September 20, 2005; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb 12, 2009; Feb. 15, 2017; Mar 7, 2019.]

127 1A. All meetings of joint committees acting concurrently, Senate and House standing  
128 committees, special committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, and joint special  
129 committees and committees of conference on the disagreeing votes of the 2 branches shall be  
130 open to the public, unless a majority shall vote otherwise. [Adopted July 17, 1973. Amended  
131 July 18, 1974; Feb. 12, 2009.]

132 1B. A joint standing committee shall hold a public hearing on each matter referred to it in each  
133 legislative session. [Adopted June 3, 1985; Amended Feb. 12, 2009.]

134 1C. All joint standing committees shall schedule committee hearings, and executive sessions  
135 upon agreement of the chairs and so as not to conflict, to the extent feasible, with the schedules

of other committees and, to the extent feasible, the day of the week and times during that day set aside for formal sessions by the respective branches from the first Wednesday in January through the fourth Wednesday in June in the first annual session. [Adopted June 3, 1985; Amended June 12, 1995; Mar. 7, 2019.]

1D. All meetings of joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of Representative shall be open to the public, pursuant to Joint Rule 1A, and any person shall be permitted to attend any such meeting unless such committee convenes in executive session, as provided herein. All joint standing committees shall determine a schedule for committee hearings to be held from the beginning of the first annual session through the fourth Wednesday in June in said session. These committee schedules shall be submitted to the Clerk of the House who shall cause them to be published on the official website for the General Court. Establishment of such schedules shall not preclude joint standing committees from scheduling additional hearings or meetings as needed. No executive session shall be held except upon extraordinary circumstances and only after the committee has first convened in an open session for which notice has been given, the presiding officer has stated the purpose of the executive session, a majority of the committee members present has voted to go into executive session, the vote of each member has been recorded on a roll call vote, and the presiding officer has stated before the executive session if the committee will reconvene after the executive session. The records of all such roll calls shall be kept in the offices of the committee for the duration of the General Court during which said vote was recorded, and shall be available for public inspection upon reasonable notice and during regular office hours.

Committees shall provide to members of the committee either the text or comprehensive summaries of the bills or other forms of legislative matters prior to the beginning of an executive



159 session or poll. The aggregate tally of members voting in the affirmative, members not voting  
160 and members reserving their rights on an individual petition at an executive session or poll of a  
161 committee shall be posted on the website of the General Court and the names of members voting  
162 in the negative on an individual petition at an executive session or poll of a committee shall be  
163 posted on the website of the General Court.

164 All joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of  
165 Representatives, shall notify the Sergeant-at-Arms of the time, place and agenda of all public  
166 hearings and executive sessions not less than 72 hours prior to the time of such meetings. If  
167 public testimony is being solicited, agendas shall include an electronic mail address and physical  
168 mail address for the submission of testimony and the committee shall make reasonable efforts to  
169 ensure diversity among those from whom testimony is solicited.

170 The Sergeant-at-Arms shall notify the clerk, who shall inform all members electronically and  
171 publish such information on the official website of the General Court whenever practicable.

172 Nothing contained in this rule shall prohibit a joint standing committee or special joint  
173 committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives from taking appropriate action  
174 including, but not limited to, the exclusion of a person from a committee meeting in order to  
175 prevent the disruption of or interference with committee proceedings. All meetings of joint  
176 standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of Representatives,  
177 shall be limited to no more than 50 bills to be discussed in a hearing, unless it can be determined  
178 that all of the bills being considered are of the same subject matter.

179 The 72 hour requirement shall be suspended in an emergency only after all reasonable efforts  
180 have been made to contact all committee members and upon a recorded vote of at least a

181 majority of the members of each branch appointed to the committee, but not less than two-thirds  
182 of the members of each branch voting.

183 A meeting of a committee may be recorded by a person in attendance by means of a recorder or  
184 any other means of audio/visual reproduction except when a meeting is held in executive session;  
185 provided, that a person seeking to record a meeting of a committee notifies the Chairs of the  
186 committee prior to commencing such recording; and provided further that during such recording  
187 there is no interference with the conduct of the meeting.

188 The Chairs of each committee shall preserve decorum and order during each committee hearing.  
189 Persons attending hearings shall be required to refrain from the use of cellular telephones,  
190 beepers and pagers. The use of visual aids including, without limitation, posters, displays, or  
191 charts shall be permitted only upon approval of the Chairs. [Adopted June 3, 1985. Amended  
192 June 12, 1995; Feb. 20, 2007; Mar. 14, 2013; Mar. 7, 2019.]

193 1E. The joint standing committee on Health Care Financing shall review all legislation relating  
194 to health care to evaluate the appropriateness and fiscal effect of such legislation. A matter  
195 within the jurisdiction of said committee may, if appropriate, initially be referred to another joint  
196 standing committee sharing jurisdiction of the subject-matter. Any matter reported favorably by  
197 such joint standing committee shall be referred to the joint committee on Health Care Financing;  
198 provided, however, that notwithstanding any rule to the contrary, any such matter so reported  
199 shall not be read a first time in the branch in which the report was received. The next favorable  
200 report on any such matter, if made by a joint committee, may be made to either branch. Such  
201 next favorable report shall be considered the first reading. The branch of origin for any such bill  
202 so reported shall be the branch receiving such favorable report.

203 For all matters initially referred to the joint committee on Health Care Financing and not  
204 previously referred to another joint committee, the joint committee on Health Care Financing  
205 may make favorable reports to either branch, at the discretion of the committee, except that  
206 reports on money bills shall be made to the House.

207 In compliance with section 38A of chapter 3 of the General Laws, the joint committee on Health  
208 Care Financing when reporting on bills shall include a fiscal note prepared under section 3A of  
209 chapter 29 of the General Laws, showing the estimated cost or the fiscal effect of the proposed  
210 legislation, if, in the opinion of said committee, such cost or fiscal effect exceeds the sum of  
211 \$100,000; provided, however, that any matter reported by the committee on Health Care  
212 Financing with a fiscal effect of less than \$100,000 shall not be referred, under the rules, to the  
213 committee on Ways and Means. [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005; Amended May 19, 2005; Feb. 20,  
214 2007; Feb. 12, 2009.]

215 1F. The joint committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall review all  
216 legislation providing for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth (see  
217 Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution, as amended by Article LXXXIV). Said  
218 committee shall be responsible for evaluating such legislation and determining the  
219 appropriateness of enacting legislation containing increased bond authorizations for the  
220 Commonwealth. The committee shall periodically review and hold open public hearings,  
221 accepting oral and written testimony on the status of the bonds and notes of the Commonwealth,  
222 including (1) general obligation debt; (2) dedicated income tax debt; and (3) special obligation  
223 debt. The committee shall also, in its continuing study of the state's bonding practices, review  
224 the Commonwealth's liabilities relative to (a) state-supported debt; (b) state-guaranteed debt; and  
225 (3) indirect obligations.

226 Any bill providing for borrowing for new projects, and requiring the Commonwealth to issue  
227 bonds for such purpose, shall, prior to its reference to the committee on Ways and Means, be  
228 referred to the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets for report on its  
229 relationship to the finances of the Commonwealth. A measure may initially be referred to  
230 another joint committee with jurisdiction over the subject matter before being referred to the  
231 committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets; provided, however, that  
232 notwithstanding any rule to the contrary, any such matter so reported shall not be read a first time  
233 in the branch in which the report was received. The next favorable report on any such matter by  
234 the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be considered the first  
235 reading. The branch of origin for any such bill so reported shall be the branch receiving such  
236 favorable report.

237 The provisions of Joint Rule 4 shall apply to all matters referred to the joint committee on  
238 Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets, except that where constitutionally prohibited.

239 The joint committee shall consult with the various agencies of the Executive branch and the  
240 office of the Treasurer and Receiver-General relative to project expenditures, availability of  
241 funds, the sale of new bonds and the resultant debt obligations, federal reimbursements and other  
242 related funding and bonding issues.

243 The joint committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be authorized to  
244 conduct hearings relative to the statutory authority of the Executive branch and the Treasurer and  
245 Receiver-General in the issuance and sale of bonds and notes and the expenditure of capital  
246 funds by the various agencies and authorities of the Commonwealth. The committee shall

247 determine whether such laws, administrative regulations and programs are being implemented in  
248 accordance with the intent of the General Court.

249 The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be authorized to report  
250 to the General Court from time to time on the results of its hearings and to file drafts of  
251 legislation necessary to carry its recommendations into effect.

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

255 1G. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Minority Leader  
256 of the Senate, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Senate and House chairs and  
257 the Senate and House ranking minority members of the joint committee on Public Safety and  
258 Homeland Security may receive security clearance from federal and state homeland security  
259 officials in order to be granted access to confidential homeland security briefings, information  
260 and materials. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the  
261 Senate and House committee chairs and the Senate and House ranking minority members may  
262 designate 1 or more members of their staff who may receive such security clearance.

263 Any person who receives security clearance under this rule shall sign all confidentiality  
264 agreements required by homeland security officials. The breach of any such confidentiality  
265 agreement shall constitute a violation of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of  
266 Representatives. Any alleged violation of a confidentiality agreement shall be referred for  
267 investigation to the Senate committee on Ethics and Rules or the House committee on Ethics,

268 respectively, and, if appropriate, to law enforcement authorities for potential criminal  
269 prosecution. [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005; Amended Feb. 12, 2009; Mar. 7, 2019.]

270 2. No member of either branch shall act as counsel for any party before any committee of the  
271 Legislature.

272 2A. No member of either branch shall purchase, directly or indirectly, the stock or other  
273 securities of any corporation or association knowing that there is pending before the General  
274 Court any measure specially granting to such corporation or association any immunity,  
275 exemption, privilege or benefit or any measure providing for the creation of, or directly affecting  
276 any, contractual relations between such corporation or association and the Commonwealth. This  
277 rule shall not apply to the purchase of securities issued by the Commonwealth or any political  
278 subdivision of the Commonwealth. [See G.L. chapter 268, section 10.] [Adopted Jan. 16, 1922.]

279 3. When the General Court is in session, authorization for any committee of the Senate or House  
280 of Representatives to travel during the session of the General Court shall be approved by a vote  
281 of two-thirds of the members of its branch present and voting. When the General Court is in  
282 session, authorization for any committee of the Senate or House of Representatives to sit and  
283 travel during the recess of the General Court shall be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the  
284 members of each branch present and voting. During the recess of the General Court, the  
285 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives may, by written consent,  
286 allow standing committees of their respective branches or appoint special committees to sit,  
287 travel and incur expenses not exceeding sums authorized in writing by said presiding officers and  
288 appropriated for such purposes. When the General Court is in session, authorization for any joint  
289 committee to travel during the session, or to sit or travel during the recess, of the General Court

290 shall be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting.  
291 During the recess of the General Court, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House  
292 of Representatives, acting jointly, may, by written consent, allow joint committees or appoint  
293 joint special committees to sit, travel and incur expenses not exceeding sums authorized in  
294 writing by said presiding officers and appropriated for such purposes. The Clerks of the Senate  
295 and House of Representatives shall be notified of any appointments made and authorizations  
296 granted during the recess for said committees to sit, travel and incur expenses during the recess  
297 and the Clerks shall enter such information in the journals for the next year, as soon as may be  
298 practicable. Committees authorized by the presiding officers to sit during the recess in the odd  
299 numbered year shall report not later than the fourth Wednesday of January during the following  
300 year and committees authorized by the presiding officers to sit during the recess in the even  
301 numbered year shall report not later than the fourth Wednesday of December during the same  
302 year.

303 No committee shall travel except at the expense of the Commonwealth. In any case when a  
304 committee is authorized to travel, the Sergeant-at-Arms shall provide transportation only for  
305 members of the committee and the officer accompanying them, and the reasonable traveling  
306 expenses of such members and officers only shall be charged to or paid by the Commonwealth.  
307 Neither the Sergeant-at-Arms nor the officer detailed by the Sergeant-at-Arms shall permit any  
308 person to accompany such committee while in the discharge of its official duties unless invited  
309 by vote of the committee.

310 All bills for the traveling expenses of committees shall be submitted by the Sergeant-at-Arms to  
311 the committee by whom they have been incurred and shall be approved by a majority of said  
312 committee before being presented to the Comptroller for payment. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890;

313 Amended Feb. 2, 1891 ; Jan. 20, 1904 ; April 17, 1925 ; March 2, 1943 ; July 27, 1950 ; Oct. 18,  
314 1971 ; March 28, 1972 ; Jan. 15, 1973; Feb. 12, 2009.]

315 3A. A joint standing committee may, upon the written and signed report of two-thirds of the  
316 members of the Senate and two-thirds of the members of the House appointed to said committee,  
317 report a bill or other form of legislation without said legislation being founded upon petition;  
318 provided, however, that matters so reported shall be germane to the subject matters regularly  
319 referred to the committee. The committee shall hold a public hearing on such bill or other form  
320 of legislation before it is reported. A bill or other form of legislation so reported shall be placed  
321 in the Orders of the Day by the Clerk of the respective branch to which it is reported or referred  
322 to a standing committee of said branch under the rules. All reports of committees not founded  
323 upon petition shall bear the designation ‘committee bill’, ‘resolve’, ‘order’ or ‘resolution’, as the  
324 case may be, in the Orders of the Day. Committees to which messages from the Governor,  
325 reports of state officers, boards, committees, commissions and others authorized to report to the  
326 General Court, may report by bill or otherwise such legislation as may be germane to the subject  
327 matter referred to them. [Adopted June 3, 1985.]

328 4. Favorable reports, and adverse reports on subjects of legislation other than petitions, by joint  
329 committees shall be made to the branch in which the matter was originally introduced, unless the  
330 committee decides otherwise under its own rules and, except that reports on money bills shall be  
331 made to the House and if adverse reports on matters other than petitions which are accompanied  
332 by money bills are accepted by the House, this shall constitute final rejection, provided that  
333 measures accompanying a favorable report shall not be considered as being reported favorably  
334 and that accompanying measures may contain both House and Senate numbers. Adverse reports  
335 by joint committees on petitions shall be made to the branch in which the petition was originally



336 introduced, except that such adverse reports on petitions accompanied by proposed money bills  
337 shall be made to the House; and, if accepted by the branch in which they are made, shall be  
338 considered as a final rejection. When a report is made from any committee to either branch, and  
339 the subject-matter of the report is subsequently referred to a joint committee, such committee,  
340 except for the committee on Health Care Financing and the committee on Bonding, Capital  
341 Expenditures and State Assets shall report its action to the branch in which the reference  
342 originated. [See also Joint Rule 5.]

343 A vote of a joint standing committee to give legislation a favorable or adverse report shall be  
344 conducted by a roll call upon request of 2 committee members present at the committee meeting.  
345 Such votes shall be recorded on appropriate forms that show all votes for and against the  
346 particular committee action. The records of all such roll calls shall be kept in the offices of the  
347 committee for the duration of the General Court during which said vote was recorded, and shall  
348 be available for public inspection upon reasonable notice and during regular office hours and  
349 shall be posted on the website of the General Court.

350 A committee to whom is referred a bill passed to be engrossed by the other branch, shall not  
351 report in full or in part a substitute bill; but shall report only that such bill ought to pass, ought to  
352 pass with an amendment, ought to pass with amendments, or ought not to pass. The provisions  
353 of this paragraph shall not apply to reports made by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading  
354 of the House or Senate and committees of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two  
355 branches.

356 All committee members shall have an opportunity to sign a form accompanying a report of the  
357 committee signifying approval of, dissent or abstention from a report of a joint standing

358 committee before the report is final or filed. No signature shall be valid unless the report to  
359 which the signature is affixed includes the substantially complete text of the legislation being  
360 reported. [Amended Jan. 3, 1952; April 8, 1959; June 7, 1965; Jan. 7, 1971; March 11, 1974;  
361 June 3, 1985; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 15, 2017.]

362 4A. In compliance with section 38A of chapter 3 of the General Laws, all joint committees of the  
363 General Court when reporting on bills referred to them shall include a fiscal note prepared under  
364 section 3A of chapter 29 of the General Laws, showing the estimated cost or the fiscal effect of  
365 the proposed legislation, if, in the opinion of said committee, such cost exceeds \$100,000. Such  
366 fiscal note shall be filed electronically in the office of the clerk to which the report is being  
367 made, and shall be promptly made available on the official website of the General Court.  
368 [Adopted Jan. 15, 1973.]

369 5. Matters reported adversely by joint committees and the committees on Rules of the two  
370 branches, acting concurrently, may be recommitted to the same committees at the pleasure of the  
371 branch acting on the report, and bills or resolves may be recommitted in either branch. If a bill or  
372 resolve is laid aside in either branch for the reason that it is declared to be broader in its scope  
373 than the subject-matter upon which it is based, the subject-matter shall be recommitted to the  
374 committee. A concurrent vote shall, however, be necessary for re-committal, with instructions.  
375 After recommitment, report shall, in all cases, be made to the branch originating the  
376 recommitment. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; April 11, 1935; Jan. 6, 1947; May 7, 19 53; March 26,  
377 1963; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; March 11, 1974.]

378 6. Bills and resolves reported by joint committees shall be presented with spaces between the  
379 several sections and shall be made available to all members electronically and to the public via  
380 the Internet. [Amended Jan. 28, 1889; Jan. 9, 1941; Feb. 8, 1949; Feb. 12, 2009.]

381 Joint Petitions.

382 6A. A member of the Senate and a member of the House of Representatives may file a joint  
383 petition in either branch and shall endorse their name on the petition and a brief statement of the  
384 nature and object of the instrument and the reading of the instrument shall be dispensed with,  
385 unless specially ordered. The petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of either the Senate  
386 or House of Representatives, depending on whether it is a 'Joint Senate/House Petition' or a  
387 'Joint House/Senate Petition' but the Journal records in the Senate and House of Representatives  
388 shall carry both members' names as presenters of the petition. [Adopted Jan. 15, 1973.]

389 7. Whenever, upon any application for an act of incorporation or other legislation, the purpose  
390 for which such legislation is sought can be secured without detriment to the public interests by a  
391 general law or under existing laws, the committee to which the matter is referred shall report  
392 such general law, or 'ought not to pass'. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan. 7, 1971.]

393 7A. A petition for legislation to authorize a county to reinstate in its service a person formerly  
394 employed by it, or to retire or pension or grant an annuity to any person, or to increase any  
395 retirement allowance, pension or annuity, or to pay any sum of money in the nature of a pension  
396 or retirement allowance, or to pay any salary which would have accrued to a deceased official or  
397 employee but for their death, or to pay any claim for damages or otherwise, or to alter the  
398 benefits or change the restrictions of any county retirement or pension law, shall, subsequently to  
399 the procedure required by Senate Rule No. 20 and by House Rule No. 24, be reported adversely,

400 unless, when filed it be the petition of, or be approved by, a majority of the county  
401 commissioners. [Adopted April 29, 1915. Amended Jan. 13, Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; May 24,  
402 1926; April 11, 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Feb. 20, 1951; Jan. 30, 1967;  
403 Jan. 7, 1971; Jan. 15, 1973; Mar. 7, 2019.]

404 7B. A petition, the operation of which is restricted to a particular city or town (and which does  
405 not affect the powers, duties, etc., of state departments, boards, commissions, etc., or which does  
406 not affect generally the laws of the Commonwealth) and which is not filed in conformity with  
407 Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution shall, subsequent to the  
408 procedure required by Senate Rule 20 and House Rule 24, be reported adversely, unless it be on  
409 petition filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council, or other  
410 legislative body, of a city, or the town meeting of a town. A joint committee to which is  
411 inadvertently referred a petition or other subject of legislation the operation of which is restricted  
412 to a particular city or town and which is not in conformity with Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of  
413 the Amendments to the Constitution shall report a general law which applies alike to all cities, or  
414 to all towns, or to all cities and towns, or to a class of not fewer than 2; or shall report ‘ought not  
415 to pass’, with the further endorsement that it ‘would be unconstitutional to enact such special  
416 law’.

417 Any petition that subsequently conforms to Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to  
418 the Constitution after filing, which have followed the procedures set forth in Senate Rule 20 or  
419 House Rule 24, shall be forthwith reported from the committee on Rules and be referred by the  
420 Clerk to an appropriate committee. [Adopted Jan. 13, 1920. Amended Feb. 19 and Dec. 22,  
421 1920; May 24, 1926; April 11, 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 9, 1941; Jan. 15, 1945;  
422 Feb. 20, 1951; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7 and Mar. 22, 1971 ; Jan. 15, 1973; March 14, 2013.]

7C. The approval vote required to file a petition, the operation of which is restricted to a particular city or town under Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth, shall not expire prior to the final day of the next immediate biennial session in which the petition was filed and no additional vote shall be required to file a petition unless a vote to rescind such approval is passed by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council or other legislative body of a city, or the board of selectmen and the town meeting or other legislative body of the town. [Adopted, Mar. 14, 2013; Amended Feb. 15, 2017.]

7D. The approval of a substantive amendment to a petition restricted to a single city or town and requiring a vote of the city or town before enactment of the petition shall be provided to the General Court before the enactment of the petition and shall be reviewed by House Counsel and Senate Counsel prior to the enactment of the petition in either branch. [Adopted , Feb. 15, 2017.]

Notice to Parties Interested.

8. No legislation affecting the rights of individuals or the rights of a private or municipal corporation, otherwise than as it affects generally the people of the Commonwealth or the people of the city or town to which it specifically applies, shall be proposed or introduced except by a petition, nor shall any bill or resolve embodying such legislation be reported by a committee except upon a petition duly referred, nor shall such a bill or resolve be reported by a committee, whether on an original reference or on a re-committal with instructions to hear the parties, until it is made to appear to the satisfaction of the committee that proper notice of the proposed legislation has been given by public advertisement or otherwise to all parties interested, without expense to the Commonwealth, or until evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that

445 all parties interested have in writing waived notice. A committee reporting adversely due to lack  
446 proper notice or of a waiver of proper notice shall so state in its report and no bill or resolve shall  
447 be in order as a substitute for, or amendment of, such report. Objection to the violation of this  
448 rule may be taken at any stage prior to that of the third reading. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890. Amended  
449 Dec. 22, 1920 ; Jan. 12, 1939 ; Jan. 15, 1945; Jan. 7, 1971.]

450 9. A petition for the incorporation of a city or town, for the annexation of 1 municipality to  
451 another, for the consolidation of 2 or more municipalities or for the division of an existing  
452 municipality, or for the incorporation or revival of a railroad, street railway, elevated railroad,  
453 canal, telephone, telegraph, water, gas, electric light, power or other public service corporation,  
454 for the amendment, alteration or extension of the charter or corporate powers or privileges, or for  
455 the change of name, of any such company, whether specially incorporated or organized under the  
456 General Laws, or for authority to take water for a water supply, or relative to building structures  
457 in or over navigable or tide waters, shall be placed on file, and not referred to a committee ,  
458 unless the petitioner has given the notice and followed the procedure required by section 5 of  
459 chapter 3 of the General Laws. But if, no objection being raised, any such petition is referred to a  
460 committee without such required notice or procedure, the committee shall forthwith report  
461 adversely, setting forth as the reason for such report failure to comply with the law, unless  
462 evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that all parties interested have in writing  
463 waived notice. In case a bill or resolve is reported upon such a petition, after proof of such  
464 waiver of notice, this fact shall be set forth in the report of the committee. When an adverse  
465 report is made by a committee, on account of failure to give the required notice, no bill or resolve  
466 shall be substituted for such report, nor shall such report be recommitted or referred to another  
467 committee.

468 A petition for the establishment or revival, or for the amendment, alteration or extension of the  
469 charter or corporate powers or privileges, or for the change of name, of any corporation, except a  
470 petition subject to the preceding paragraph, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the branch in  
471 which it is filed to the office of the State Secretary. If such a petition is returned by said  
472 Secretary with a statement that the petitioner has failed to comply with the requirements of  
473 section 7 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, said petition shall be placed on file, and shall not be  
474 referred to a committee.

475 Any petition placed on file for want of proper notice or procedure under this rule shall not affect  
476 action upon any other measure involving the same subject matter. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890.  
477 Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 3, 1898; Jan. 16, 1903; Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; May 24, 1926;  
478 Feb. 27, 1929; April 11, 1935; Jan. 6, 1938; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 9, 1941; Jan. 15, 1945; April 8,  
479 1959; Jan. 7, 1963; Jan. 7, 1971 ; Jan. 15, 1973 , June 12, 1995; Feb. 12, 2009; Mar. 7, 2019.]

480 Limit of Time allowed for Reports of Committees.

481 10. All joint committees and the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently,  
482 shall make final report not later than the first Wednesday in February of the second annual  
483 session of the General Court on all matters referred to them before the first day of the second  
484 annual session and within 30 days on all matters referred to them on and after the first day of the  
485 second annual session of the General Court except that the committee on Health Care Financing  
486 shall make final report not later than the last Wednesday of March of the second annual session  
487 on all matters referred to them on or before the fourth Wednesday of February and within 30  
488 days on all matters referred to it after the fourth Wednesday in February of the second annual  
489 session of the General Court. When the time within which said committees are required to report

490 has expired, all matters upon which no report has then been made shall forthwith be reported by  
491 the chair of the committee on the part of the branch in which they were respectively introduced,  
492 with an adverse recommendation under this rule. If the chair fails to make such report by the end  
493 of the legislative day next following the expiration date, all matters remaining unreported shall  
494 be placed in the Orders of the Day by the Clerk of the branch in which the matter was originally  
495 filed with an adverse report under this rule. Matters which have been referred under Joint Rule  
496 29, upon which the chairs of the committees on Rules fail to make a report, shall be placed by  
497 the respective Clerks in the Orders of the Day of the branch in which the subject matter was  
498 referred to said committees. Committees to whom are referred subjects of legislation may  
499 combine petitions of similar subject matter, or other forms of legislation of similar subject  
500 matter, into 1 adverse report, and the report on the petition shall be that said petitions or other  
501 forms of legislation 'ought NOT to pass,' and if the report is accepted, all the matters contained  
502 in the report shall be disposed of. However, petitions upon which an adverse report is accepted in  
503 only 1 branch may not be combined with other subjects of legislation upon which adverse reports  
504 must be accepted, in concurrence. This rule shall not apply to petitions referred to the  
505 committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, under the second paragraph of  
506 Joint Rule 12. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended, except by a concurrent  
507 vote of four-fifths of the members of each branch present and voting thereon. Notwithstanding  
508 Joint Rule 30, this rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended more than 3 times except  
509 by unanimous consent. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Jan. 25, 1894; Jan. 16, 1903; Jan. 20, 1904; Dec.  
510 22, 1920; April 17, 1925; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Jan. 6, 1947; May 7, 1953; Jan. 27, 1955;  
511 Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; Feb. 4, 1974, June 12, 1995; July 17, 2003; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 12,  
512 2009; Feb. 15, 2017; Mar. 7, 2019.]



513 10A. The form for all subjects of legislation receiving a favorable report shall be ‘ought to pass.’  
514 The form for all subjects of legislation receiving an adverse report shall be ‘ought NOT to pass.’  
515 A committee to whom is referred any other matter may report recommending that the same be  
516 placed on file. [Adopted Jan. 7, 1971.]

517 Committees of Conference.

518 11. Committees of conference shall consist of 3 members on the part of each branch, one  
519 member of each branch being a member of the minority party representing its vote; and their  
520 report, if agreed to by a majority of each committee, shall be made to the branch asking for the  
521 conference, and may be either accepted or rejected, but no other action shall be had, except  
522 through a new committee of conference.

523 Committees of conference to whom are referred matters of difference in respect to bills or  
524 resolves, shall, after filing their reports, but before consideration by either branch, have the same  
525 approved or discharged by each committee on Bills in the Third Reading. [Amended April 22,  
526 1937; Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3, 2011; Feb. 15, 2017; Mar. 7, 2019.]

527 11A. Committees of conference to whom are referred matters of difference in respect to  
528 appropriation bills, including capital outlay programs, shall, after filing their reports but before  
529 consideration by either branch have the same approved or discharged by each committee on Bills  
530 in the Third Reading.

531 Upon the appointment of a committee of conference to whom matters of difference in respect to  
532 any appropriation bill or in respect to any bill providing for capital outlay programs and projects  
533 are referred, the clerk of the branch requesting said committee of conference shall make  
534 available to members of the General Court a list of the matters in disagreement identified by item

535 number and item purpose and showing the amount made available by each branch of the General  
536 Court, and any other matters in disagreement and the position of each of the said branches.

537 The report of said committee of conference shall consist of the matters of difference so referred  
538 and so identified, showing the amounts appropriated by each of the said branches and other  
539 matters in disagreement and the position of each branch with respect to those matters, and shall  
540 state said committee's recommendations with respect to the matters so referred. Matters on which  
541 there exists no disagreement between the branches shall not be disturbed by the committee on  
542 conference.

543 The committees on ways and means of each branch of the General Court shall assist such  
544 committee of conference in any and all matters necessary to the preparation and completion of its  
545 report. [Adopted July 30, 1974; Amended Oct. 3, 1983; Feb. 3, 2011.]

546 11B. No report from a committee of conference shall be considered or acted upon by either  
547 branch until the calendar day following the day on which said report shall have been available to  
548 the public and to the members of the General Court. The committee shall file its report no later  
549 than 8 p.m. on the day preceding its consideration and the General Court shall not consider said  
550 report before 1 p.m. on the following day, except that a report from such committee of  
551 conference that it is unable to agree may be considered and acted upon at the time that such  
552 report is filed. [Adopted Oct. 3, 1983. Amended July 17, 2003; July 21 and September 20, 2005;  
553 Feb. 3, 2011.]

554 11C. Reports, other than those filed under Rule 11A, from a committee of conference shall,  
555 whenever practicable, be accompanied by a summary which shall be filed with the clerk.  
556 [Adopted Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3, 2011.]

11D. Upon the filing of a report by a committee of conference the clerk of the branch in which the committee of conference filed its report shall make the report and the summary of the report available to all members electronically and to the public on the official website of the General Court by 9 p.m. on the day preceding its consideration. [Adopted Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3, 2011.]

11E. Subsequent to the filing of a report of a committee of conference, an addendum may be submitted to the clerk of the branch in which the report had been filed. The addendum shall indicate that it contains only matters inadvertently omitted from or included in the report, and shall be signed by all of members of the House and Senate who had signed the conference committee report. The addendum shall be approved by both the Counsel to the House and the Counsel to the Senate. The addendum, having been approved by both the Counsel to the House and the Counsel to the Senate, shall be posted to the official website of the General Court immediately upon receipt by the clerk of the branch to which it was submitted. [Adopted Mar. 14, 2013.]

Limit of Time allowed for New Business.

12. Resolutions intended for adoption by both branches of the General Court, petitions, and all other subjects of legislation, shall be deposited with the Clerk of either branch prior to 5 p.m. on the third Friday in January of the first annual session of the General Court.

All such matters except messages from the Governor, reports required or authorized to be made to the General Court and petitions filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council, or other legislative body of a city, or the town meeting of a town, for the enactment of a special law under Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution and which do not affect the powers, duties, etc., of state departments, boards,

579 commissions, etc., or which do not affect generally the laws of the Commonwealth deposited  
580 with the respective clerks subsequent to 5 p.m. on the third Friday of January of the first annual  
581 session of the General Court shall be referred by the Clerks to the committees on the Rules of the  
582 two branches, acting concurrently. No such matter shall be admitted for consideration except on  
583 report of the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, and then upon  
584 approval of two-thirds of the members of each branch voting thereon. Matters upon which  
585 suspension of Joint Rule 12 has been negated shall be placed on file.

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

591 [Amended Feb. 7, 18 90; Feb. 2, 18 91; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan. 10, 18 98; Jan. 9, 18 99; Feb. 15, 19  
592 01; May 4, 19 04; Jan. 31, 19 10; Feb. 2, 19 17; Dec. 22, 19 20; March 30, 19 21; Jan. 30, 19 23;  
593 Feb. 15, 19 33; Jan. 12 and Aug. 7, 19 39; Jan. 15, 19 45; Jan. 6, 19 47; May 27, 19 48; Jan. 30,  
594 19 67; March 26, 19 69; Jan. 7, 1971 ; Jan. 15 and Oct. 2, 1973 ; Oct 3, 1983 , June 12, 1995 ;  
595 Jan. 26, 2005; July 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; July 21, 2005; Sept. 20, 2005; Feb. 12, 2009.]

596 12A. All formal business of the first annual session of the General Court shall be concluded not  
597 later than the third Wednesday in November of that calendar year and all formal business of the  
598 second annual session shall be concluded not later than the last day of July of that calendar year.

599 In order to assist the Senate and House in its analysis and appraisal of laws enacted by the  
600 General Court, each joint standing committee, upon conclusion of the formal business of the

601 annual sessions, shall, as authorized by Joint Rule 1, initiate oversight hearings to evaluate the  
602 effectiveness, application and administration of the subject matter of laws within the jurisdiction  
603 of that committee. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

604 Unfinished Business of the Session.

605 12B. Any matter pending before the General Court at the end of the first annual session and any  
606 special session held in the same year shall carry over into the second annual session of the same  
607 General Court in the same legislative status as it was at the conclusion of the first annual session  
608 or any special session held during that year; provided, however, that any measure making or  
609 supplementing an appropriation for a fiscal year submitted to or returned to the General Court by  
610 the Governor, under Article LXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution, in the first annual  
611 session or in a special session held during that year shall cease to exist upon the termination of  
612 the first annual session. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

613 Papers to be deposited with the Clerks.

614 13. Information intended for presentation to the General Court by any Representative or Senator  
615 shall be deposited with the Clerk of the branch to which the member belongs; and all such  
616 information, unless they be subject to other rules or of the rules of the Senate or House, shall be  
617 referred by the Clerk, with the approval of the President or Speaker, to appropriate committees,  
618 subject to such changes as the Senate or House may make. The reading of information so  
619 referred may be dispensed with, but they shall, except as provided in these rules, be entered in  
620 the Journal of the same on the next legislative day after such reference.

621 A member may include a brief statement of intent with all papers intended for presentation to the  
622 General Court. Upon a favorable report by a joint standing committee, a committee may include

623 a brief written statement of intent. Said statement shall be dated and shall include the scope of  
624 the matter presented for consideration; provided, however, this rule shall not be construed to  
625 require the presentation of such statement of intent under this rule. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890.  
626 Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 7, 1893; Jan. 25, 1894; Dec. 22, 1920; May 25, 1923; Feb. 15,  
627 1933; Jan. 12, 1971; June 3, 1985; Feb. 12, 2009.]

628 Dockets of Legislative Counsel and Agents.

629 14. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, may prescribe the manner  
630 and form of keeping the dockets of legislative agents which are required by law. [Adopted Feb.  
631 2, 1891; Amended Feb. 19, 1920.]

632 Duties of the Clerk.

633 15. If any part of the report of a committee over the signature of the chair or members of the  
634 committee is amended in either branch, the Clerk of that branch shall endorse upon the report  
635 such amendment. [Amended Mar. 7, 2019.]

636 16. All papers, while on their passage between the 2 branches, may be under the signature of the  
637 respective Clerks, except as to the adopting of emergency preambles and the final passage of  
638 bills and resolves. Messages may be sent by such persons as each branch may direct. [Amended  
639 Feb. 21, 1919.]

640 17. After bills and resolves have passed both branches to be engrossed, they shall be in the  
641 charge of the Clerks of the 2 branches, who shall prepare the same for final passage in the  
642 manner prescribed by law; and when so prepared the same shall be delivered to the Clerk of the  
643 House of Representatives; and when the bills have been passed to be enacted or the resolves have

644 been passed in the House, they shall, in like manner, be delivered to the Senate Clerk and  
645 Parliamentarian. If a bill or resolve contains an emergency preamble, it shall be delivered in like  
646 manner, to the Senate after the preamble has been adopted by the House of Representatives and  
647 before the bill or resolve is put upon its final passage in that branch. If the Senate concurs in  
648 adopting the preamble, the bill or resolve shall be returned to the House to be there first put upon  
649 its final passage, under Joint Rule No. 22. [Amended Feb. 24, 1914; Feb. 21, 1919; Jan. 7, 1971.]

650 18. [Omitted in 1971.]

651 19. The Clerk of the branch in which a bill or resolve originated shall make an endorsement on  
652 the envelope of the engrossed copy of the bill, certifying in which branch the bill originated,  
653 which endorsement shall be entered on the journals by the Clerks respectively. [Amended Jan.  
654 28, 1889; Feb. 24, 1914.]

655 20. Bills, resolves and other papers requiring the approval of the Governor shall be laid before  
656 the Governor for the Governor's approbation by the Senate Clerk and Parliamentarian, who shall  
657 enter upon the journal of the Senate the day and date on which the same were so laid before the  
658 Governor. [Amended Jan. 28, 1889; Jan. 7, 1971.]

659 Presentation and Distribution of Documents.

660 21. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, may establish regulations  
661 for the distribution of bills, reports or other documents. Bills, reports or other documents shall be  
662 made available to members electronically and, except for petitions or other documents not  
663 assigned bill numbers, published on the Internet. The committees on Rules of the two branches,  
664 acting concurrently, may make such changes pertaining to the availability of bills, reports or  
665 other documents as they deem necessary for expediting the work of the legislature.

666 The Clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate shall be responsible for publishing  
667 the journals of their respective chamber, the book Public Officers of Massachusetts, the  
668 committee book and any other publications per order of the committees on Rules. [Amended Jan.  
669 8, 1886 ; Jan. 28, 1889 ; Jan. 27, 1911 ; Feb. 19, 1920 ; Jan. 6, 1947 ; Apr. 5, 19 67 ; Jan. 7,  
670 1971; Feb. 12, 2009; Mar. 14, 2013.]

671 Emergency Measures.

672 22. The vote on the preamble of an emergency law, which under the requirements of Article  
673 XLVIII, as amended by Article LXVII of the Amendments of the Constitution shall, upon  
674 request of 2 members of the Senate or of 5 members of the House of Representatives, be taken  
675 by call of the yeas and nays, shall be had after the proposed law has been prepared for final  
676 passage; and neither branch shall vote on the enactment of a bill or on the passage of a resolve  
677 containing an emergency preamble until it has been determined whether the preamble shall  
678 remain or be eliminated. If the bill contains an emergency preamble, a motion to amend the bill  
679 may be received in either branch before the adoption of the emergency preamble, and the  
680 amendment may contain a new emergency preamble. If the 2 branches concur in adopting the  
681 preamble, the bill or resolve shall first be put upon its final passage in the House of  
682 Representatives. If either branch fails to adopt the preamble, notice of its action shall be sent to  
683 the other branch; and the bill or resolve, duly endorsed, shall again be prepared for final passage  
684 without the preamble and without any provision that the bill or the resolve shall take effect  
685 earlier than 90 days after it has become law. Procedure shall be otherwise under the joint rules  
686 and the rules of the Senate and the House of Representatives. [Adopted Feb. 21, 1919. Amended  
687 Jan. 30, 1923; Jan. 7, 1971; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 12, 2009.]



22A. Bills and resolves passed to be engrossed by both branches and before being transmitted by the clerks to the Legislative Engrossing Division shall be made available to the committees on Bills in the Third Reading of the two branches, acting jointly, who shall examine them to ensure accuracy in the text; that the legislation is correct as to form; that references to previous amendments to any particular law are correct and to ensure proper consistency with the language of existing statutes. These committees, with the approval of the majority and minority leadership of both branches may make corrections which are not substantive in nature. The clerks of both branches shall be immediately notified, in writing, of any such changes. Errors discovered by the committees of a substantive nature shall be reported to the General Court, which in turn shall take appropriate action under its rules. Upon completion of examination and possible correction of any such bills and resolves, the bills and resolves shall be returned to the clerks, who in turn, shall transmit them to the Legislative Engrossing Division to be prepared for final passage.

[Adopted Sept. 16, 1971.]

Legislative Amendments to the Constitution.

23. All proposals for amendments to the Constitution referred to a joint committee on the first annual session of the General Court shall be reported by said committee not later than the last Wednesday of April in said year, and proposals for amendments to the Constitution referred to a joint committee subsequent to the last Wednesday in April of the first annual session shall be reported by said committee not later than the last Wednesday of April in the second session of the same General Court. The committee shall file its report, either recommending that the proposal ought to pass or ought not to pass, with any official papers in its possession that relate thereto, with the Clerk of the Senate. When the time within which said committees are required to report has expired, all matters upon which no report has been made shall forthwith be placed

711 in the Journal of the respective branches, with an adverse report under this rule; and shall then be  
712 placed on file in the office of the Clerk of the Senate. For further information of the members of  
713 the Senate and House of Representatives, the respective Clerks shall also place all such matters  
714 under a separate heading in the Calendar of each branch, as soon as is practicable. In each branch  
715 the report shall be read and forthwith placed on file; and no further legislative action shall be  
716 taken on the measure unless consideration in joint session is called for by vote of either branch,  
717 under Section 2 of Part IV of Article XLVIII (as amended by Article LXXXI) of the  
718 Amendments to the Constitution. A joint committee to which is referred any recommendation for  
719 an amendment to the Constitution made by the Governor or contained in a report authorized to  
720 be made to the General Court may report on the recommendation a proposal for a legislative  
721 amendment, which shall be deemed to have been introduced by the member of the Senate who  
722 reports for the committee; and the procedure as regards reporting, filing and subsequent action  
723 shall be that provided for legislative amendments by this rule. Or the joint committee may report  
724 ought not to pass for the reason that no legislation is necessary or that the recommendation ought  
725 not to pass; and in such cases the usual procedure as regards similar reports by joint committees  
726 shall be followed. If such an adverse report is amended in the Senate by substituting a proposal  
727 for a legislative amendment, notice of the Senate's action shall be sent to the House and said  
728 proposal, together with the official papers relating to the subject, shall be in the custody of the  
729 Clerk of the Senate; and if said report is so amended in the House, the proposal, duly endorsed,  
730 together with the other papers, shall be sent to the Senate for its information and shall be kept in  
731 the custody of its Clerk. No further legislative action shall be taken in either branch on a proposal  
732 so substituted unless consideration in joint session is called for under the Constitution. If either  
733 branch calls for the consideration of any proposal in joint session, notice of its action shall be

734 sent to the other branch; and it shall then be the duty of the Senate and the House of  
735 Representatives to arrange for the holding of the joint session not later than the second  
736 Wednesday in May. Subject to the requirements of the Constitution, joint sessions or  
737 continuances of joint sessions of the 2 branches to consider proposals for specific amendments to  
738 the Constitution, and all rules or procedures, shall be determined only by concurrent votes of the  
739 2 branches. The rules relative to joint conventions shall apply to the joint sessions of the 2  
740 houses. [Adopted Feb. 21, 1919. Amended March 30, 1921; April 11, 1935; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan.  
741 15, 1945; Nov. 9, 1951; Jan. 15, 1973; July 1, 1974; Feb. 12, 2009.]

#### 742 Executive Reorganization Plans.

743 23A. Any reorganization plan, accompanied by a bill, submitted by the Governor under Article  
744 LXXXVII of the Amendments to the Constitution shall be referred by the Clerks of the Senate  
745 and the House, with the approval of the President and Speaker, to a joint standing committee  
746 within 5 days of the presentation of the reorganization plan.

747 Said committee, to which is referred any such reorganization plan, shall, as required by said  
748 Article, not later than 30 days after the presentation of such plan by the Governor, hold a public  
749 hearing on the reorganization plan; and shall not later than 10 days after such hearing report that  
750 it either approves or disapproves such plan.

751 When recommending action, the committee shall make, in each branch, a separate report of its  
752 recommendations, and shall file said report together with the committee's recommendations and  
753 the reasons for those recommendations, in writing. Majority and minority reports shall be signed  
754 by the members of said committee. Any official papers in the possession of said committee that  
755 relate thereto shall be filed with the Clerk of the Senate.

756 If the committee recommends favorable action, the report shall be that the reorganization plan  
757 'ought to be approved'. If the committee recommends adverse action, the report shall be that the  
758 reorganization plan 'ought NOT to be approved'. In each instance, the question shall be 'Shall  
759 this reorganization plan be approved?'

760 In each branch, the report shall be read and forthwith recorded in the Journal. On the legislative  
761 day next following the Journal record, the report shall be placed in the Orders of the Day of the  
762 Senate and the House.

763 When the time within which a joint committee is required to report on a reorganization plan has  
764 expired, a matter upon which no report has been made shall forthwith be placed in the Orders of  
765 the Day by the Clerks of each branch and the question shall be 'Shall this reorganization plan be  
766 approved?'.

767 When such plan is before either branch, no motion relating to said plan shall be allowed except  
768 the motions to lay on the table (only in the Senate), to postpone to a time certain, or to commit or  
769 recommit (at the pleasure of either branch). The motions to take a recess, to adjourn, the previous  
770 question (if provided in the branch debating the issue), to close debate at a specified time, and  
771 the motion to reconsider shall also be in order.

772 A motion to discharge any committee to which is referred or to which is recommitted a  
773 reorganization plan shall not be in order prior to the expiration of 40 days after the Governor's  
774 presentation of such plan. After the expiration of said 40 days, a motion to discharge a committee  
775 shall be decided by a majority vote of the branch in which the motion is made.

776 Unless disapproved by a majority vote of the members of either of the 2 branches of the General  
777 Court present and voting, the General Court not having prorogued within 60 days from the date

778 of presentation by the Governor, the plan shall be approved and shall take effect as provided by  
779 Article LXXXVII of the Amendments to the Constitution.

780 Within 7 days of the expiration of the 60 days from the date of presentation of said plan by the  
781 Governor, unless the question has already been decided, the Clerks of the Senate and House of  
782 Representatives shall place the plan in the Orders of the Day; and no motions except the motions  
783 to take a recess, to adjourn, and previous question, or to close debate at a specified time, shall be  
784 in order.

785 No such reorganization plan presented to the General Court shall be subject to change or  
786 amendment before expiration of such 60 days. [Adopted June 13, 1967; Amended March 27,  
787 1969; June 12, 1995; Feb. 12, 2009.]

788 Joint Conventions.

789 24. The President of the Senate shall preside in Conventions of the 2 branches, and such  
790 Conventions shall be held in the Representatives' Chamber; the Senate Clerk and Parliamentarian  
791 shall be the Clerk of the Convention, and a record of the proceedings of the Convention shall be  
792 entered at large on the journals of both branches. [Amended Feb. 20, 2007.]

793 25. When an agreement has been made by the 2 branches to go into Convention, such agreement  
794 shall not be altered or annulled, except by concurrent vote, excepting that it shall be in order to  
795 recess the convention from time to time upon a majority vote of said convention. [Amended Jan.  
796 7, 1971.]

797 26. No business shall be entered on, in Convention, other than that which may be agreed on  
798 before the Convention is formed.

799 Special Sessions.

800 26A. If written statements of 21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House of  
801 Representatives, that in their opinion it is necessary that the General Court assemble in special  
802 session on a particular date and time specified in their statements are filed with their respective  
803 Clerks, such Clerks shall forthwith notify all the members of their respective branches to  
804 assemble at the State House in Boston, on said date at the time so specified. When so assembled,  
805 the first business to be taken up shall be the question of the necessity of so assembling, under  
806 Article I of Section I of Chapter I of Part the Second of the Constitution of the Commonwealth.  
807 If 21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House of Representatives judge by vote  
808 taken by call of the yeas and nays that such assembling of the General Court is necessary,  
809 specifying in such vote the facts constituting such necessity, the General Court shall then  
810 complete its organization as a special session, proceed to the consideration of the suspension of  
811 Joint Rule 12A which if suspended by the required two-thirds of the members of both branches  
812 shall permit the General Court to proceed to the consideration of matters properly before it.  
813 Nothing in this rule shall prevent the General Court from assembling in any other constitutional  
814 manner when it judges necessary. [Adopted Aug. 7, 1939. Amended March 2, 1943; March 27,  
815 19 69; May 5, 1979; July 17, 2003; July 21 and September 20, 2005.]

816 Joint Elections.

817 27. In all elections by joint ballot a time shall be assigned for such election at least 1 day  
818 previous to such election.

819 27A. In all cases of elections by ballot a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for a  
820 choice, and where there shall be no such a majority on the first ballot the ballots shall be repeated

821 until a majority is obtained; and in balloting, blanks shall be rejected and not taken into the count  
822 in the enumeration of votes, excepting that when the number of blanks shall be more than the  
823 number of votes received by the candidate having the highest number of votes, then the election  
824 shall be declared void and the balloting shall be repeated as provided herein. [Adopted March 27,  
825 1969.]

826 28. [Omitted March 28, 1972 .]

827 References to the Committees on Rules.

828 29. All motions and orders authorizing joint committees to travel or to employ stenographers, or  
829 authorizing joint committees or special commissions composed as a whole or in part of members  
830 of the General Court to make investigations or to file special reports, all propositions reported by  
831 joint committees which authorize investigations or special reports by joint committees or by  
832 special commissions composed as a whole or in part of members of the General Court, all  
833 motions or orders proposed for joint adoption which provide that information be transmitted to  
834 the General Court, and all matters referred under the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12, shall be  
835 referred without debate to the committees on Rules of the two branches acting concurrently, who  
836 shall report on the matter, under Joint Rule 10. All matters which have been referred under this  
837 rule shall, in each instance, be reported back into the branch making such reference. [Adopted  
838 Jan. 10, 1898. Amended Jan. 20, 1904; Jan. 28, 1913; Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; April 11, 1935;  
839 April 22, 1937; Jan. 27, 1955; Jan. 30, 1967; Oct. 18, 1971.]

840 29A. Meetings of any special commission, special legislative commission, task force or other  
841 group authorized or required by a statute, resolve, rule, or order to make or conduct an  
842 investigation or study of any issue shall be conducted openly and transparently. Meetings of any

843 special commission, special legislative commission, task force or other group authorized or  
844 required by a statute, resolve, rule, or order to make or conduct an investigation or study of any  
845 issue and which are chaired by members of the general court shall be posted and conducted  
846 pursuant to the rules of the senate and house of representatives and shall be conducted according  
847 to the following requirements:

848 a.) Meetings shall be open to the public;

849 b.) Meetings shall be announced by appropriate notice at least 72 hours in advance;

850 c.) Any documents used in a meeting be provided to the public upon request in a manner to  
851 be determined by the chair;

852 d.) Public testimony shall be accepted in a manner to be determined by the chair;

853 e.) The chair shall maintain a summary of the subjects discussed at each meeting, a list of  
854 documents and other exhibits used at the meetings, and shall maintain a record of proceedings,  
855 including a record of all votes. For the purposes of this rule a video or audio recording made  
856 available to the public shall be considered an adequate record of the proceedings. [Adopted, Feb.  
857 15, 2017; Amended Mar. 7, 2019.]

858 30. All motions or orders extending the time within which joint committees and the committees  
859 on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, are required to report shall be referred without  
860 debate to the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, who shall report  
861 recommending what action should be taken on the motion or order. Such extension shall be  
862 granted by a concurrent majority vote if recommended by the committees on Rules of the two  
863 branches, acting concurrently; but no such extension shall be granted, against the



864 recommendation of the committees, except by a four-fifths vote of the members of each branch  
865 present and voting on the extension. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended,  
866 except by a concurrent vote of four-fifths of the members of each branch present and voting  
867 thereon. [Adopted Jan. 16, 1903. Amended Feb. 6, 1912; Feb. 19, 1920; Jan. 6, 1947; Jan. 27,  
868 1955; June 7, 1965.]

869 Members.

870 31. A member of either branch who directly or indirectly solicits for such member or others any  
871 position or office within the gift or control of a railroad corporation, street railway company, gas  
872 or electric light company, telegraph or telephone company, aqueduct or water company, or other  
873 public service corporation, shall be subject to suspension for such solicitation, or to such other  
874 penalty as the branch of which the person is a member may see fit to impose. [See G. L. 271, sec.  
875 40.] [Adopted May 22, 1902.]

876 Accommodations for Reporters.

877 32. Subject to the approval and direction of the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting  
878 concurrently, during the session, and of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House  
879 of Representatives after prorogation, the use of the rooms and facilities assigned to reporters in  
880 the State House shall be under the control of the organizations of legislative reporters known as  
881 the Massachusetts State House Press Association and the State House Broadcasters Association.  
882 No person shall be permitted to use such rooms or facilities who is not entitled to the privileges  
883 of the reporters' galleries of the Senate or of the House. Within 10 days after the General Court  
884 convenes the Massachusetts State House Press Association and the State House Broadcasters  
885 Association shall each transmit to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of

886 Representatives and the Sergeant-at-Arms a list of the legislative reporters with the principal  
887 publication or news service which each represents. [Adopted Jan. 27, 1911. Amended Feb. 24,  
888 1914; Feb. 19, 1920; April 17, 1925; May 23, 1979; Feb. 12, 2009.]

889 Suspension of Rules.

890 33. Any joint rule except Rule 10 and Rule 30 may be altered, suspended or rescinded by a  
891 concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting thereon.  
892 [Amended Feb. 7, 1893. Adopted in revised form Jan. 9, 1899. Amended Jan. 16, 1903; Jan. 26,  
893 2005.]

894 Audit of Accounts.

895 34. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall provide that an  
896 outside independent audit of joint financial accounts be conducted by a certified public  
897 accountant no less frequently than at the end of each second fiscal year. A copy of such audit  
898 shall be filed with the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives, and made available for  
899 public inspection upon reasonable notice and during regular office hours. [Adopted May 30,  
900 1985.]

901 35. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall reexamine the Joint  
902 Rules of the House and Senate as needed, but at least every 4 years, and shall report to each  
903 branch any recommendations it may have to facilitate the work of the respective branches and  
904 the joint standing committees. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

905 Procurement.

36. (a) The House Business Manager and Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall complete the procurement of all goods and services from the joint legislative account. Procurements for goods or services shall be made pursuant to a statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division, to the extent practicable, as determined by the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate. If the Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer determine that a procurement cannot be made using a statewide procurement contract established by the operational services division, they may procure the required goods or services under subsections (b), (c) or (d).

(b) Procurement of a supply or service from a vendor not on a statewide procurement contract valued at less than \$10,000 shall be made at the discretion of the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate.

(c) If the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate seek to procure a supply or service from a vendor not on a statewide procurement contract valued at \$10,000 or more, but less than \$100,000, they shall seek quotations from not fewer than 3 persons providing such supply or service. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall record the names and addresses of all persons from whom quotations were received, the names of the persons submitting quotations and the date and amount of each quotation. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall award the contract to the responsible person whose quotation offers the needed quality of supply or service and which represents the best value for the General Court.

(d) If the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate seek to procure a supply or service from a vendor not on a statewide procurement contract valued at \$100,000 or

928 more, the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall seek  
929 proposals through a competitive bid process, which shall be established by the House Business  
930 Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate. The House Business Manager and the  
931 Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall include diversity and inclusion plan requirements in  
932 all requests for proposals and shall consider those plans alongside traditional criteria when  
933 evaluating bids.

934 (e) The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate shall maintain a  
935 file on each procurement not executed using a statewide procurement contract established by the  
936 operational services division and in excess of \$10,000 and shall include in such file all  
937 documents constituting the agreement for goods and services and all documents required by  
938 subsection (c) or (d). The files maintained shall be available for inspection by members of the  
939 General Court during regular business hours unless the information is otherwise protected by  
940 state or federal law.

941 (f) Whenever the time required to comply with a requirement of this rule would endanger the  
942 health, safety or convenience of the members, staff or visitors to the House of Representatives or  
943 Senate the House Business Manager and the Senate Chief Financial Officer may make an  
944 emergency procurement without satisfying the requirement of this rules; provided, however, that  
945 both the House Business Manager and the Senate Chief Financial Officer certify in writing that:  
946 (i) an emergency exists and explain the nature thereof; (ii) the emergency procurement is limited  
947 to only supplies or services necessary to meet the emergency; (iii) shall conform to the  
948 requirements of rule to the extent practicable under the circumstances; (iv) each contractor's  
949 name, (v) the amount and the type of each contract; (vi) the supplies or services provided under  
950 each contract; (vii) and basis for determining the need for an emergency procurement.

951 (g) In addition to the requirements of this rule, all procurements for legal services shall be  
952 approved by the House and Senate Counsel.

953 (h) If, in the determination of the House Business Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the  
954 Senate, an emergency procurement of greater than \$10,000 is necessary, the House Business  
955 Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the Senate may procure the goods or services  
956 immediately and create and maintain a file explaining the nature of the emergency and the goods  
957 or services that were procured as a result. The House Business Manager and the Chief Financial  
958 Officer of the Senate shall document the goods or services that were procured, the process used  
959 to procure the goods or services, the vendors that were contacted and any other information  
960 relevant to the procurement, and make that information available to members of the General  
961 Court during regular business hours, unless the information is otherwise protected by state or  
962 federal law. [Adopted Mar. 14, 2013; Amended Feb. 15, 2017; Mar. 7, 2019].