



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,  
19 2000.]

20 2. The Speaker shall preserve decorum and order in the House Chamber. While in the House  
21 Chamber, members, staff and guests shall be required to dress in proper and appropriate attire  
22 and be courteous and professional when using electronic devices. Members, staff and guests  
23 shall not take photographs or videos of, or in, the House Chamber during formal or informal  
24 sessions. The use of audio-visual aids including, without limitation, videos, computers, posters,  
25 displays or charts shall be permitted only upon approval of the Speaker. The Speaker also may  
26 speak to points of order in preference to other members; and shall decide all questions of order,  
27 subject to an appeal to the House. [2.] (2.) [With regard to appeals, see Rule 77.]

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

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

31 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

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

33 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

54 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

55 SCHEDULING.

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

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

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

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

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

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

97 7C. The committee on Rules may consider and make recommendations designed to improve  
98 and expedite the business and procedures of the House and its committees, and to recommend to  
99 the House any amendments to the Rules deemed necessary; provided that a majority of the  
100 members of the House present and voting shall be required to approve such recommendations.

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

102 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997.]

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

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

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

115 Monitors.

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

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

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

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

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

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

133 In addition to the legislative duties, chairpersons shall oversee the physical appearance of the  
134 Chamber and the various areas under the jurisdiction of the House of Representatives. Said  
135 chairpersons shall be authorized to act as a committee and may meet at any time at the request of  
136 at least two chairpersons. Said chairpersons, as a committee, shall be authorized to meet with the

137 appropriate agencies and historical commissions of the Commonwealth for the purpose of  
138 requesting expeditious appraisals and necessary repairs and renovations to the interior and  
139 exterior of the State House. The committee of chairpersons shall report directly to the Speaker  
140 the results of all consultations.

141 [Adopted Jan. 14, 1997.]

142 CLERK.

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

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

150 10A. The Clerk shall be the official parliamentarian of the House of Representatives.

151 [Adopted Jan. 9, 1991.]

152 10B. The Clerk shall be the official keeper of records of the House of Representatives for all  
153 legislative records.

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



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

162 When, in the determination of the Clerk, a volume of matters exists for the next legislative  
163 day, the Clerk shall be authorized to prepare and cause to be made available an advance calendar  
164 of the matters in order of consideration for the next legislative day and such other memoranda as  
165 the House or Speaker may direct. The Clerk may indicate on the advance calendar that the  
166 matters contained therein are subject to change.

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

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

174 As soon as practicable whenever the Clerk prepares a Calendar or advance Calendar under  
175 this rule, he also shall cause a true copy thereof to be posted on the Legislative Web Page that is  
176 generally available to all members and their staff, and reasonably promptly thereafter he shall  
177 cause the members and their staff to be notified of the same by way of electronic mail. [13.] (7.)

178 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Jan. 17, 1995; Jan. 24,  
179 2001; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007.]

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

182 13A. The Clerk shall make available to all members electronically and, to the public via the  
183 Internet, the text of all bills introduced and admitted for consideration in the House.

184 MEMBERS.

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

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

191

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

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

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

201 Members answering a quorum call shall vote “YES” on the roll call system. [17.] (11.)

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

203 ETHICS.

204 16. There shall be appointed a committee on Ethics as authorized by Rule 17. The committee  
205 shall consist of 11 members, 7 of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker, 4 of whom shall be  
206 appointed by the Minority Leader.

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

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

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

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

220 All proceedings including the filing of the initial complaint shall be considered confidential  
221 information.

222 If the alleged violation received in the manner described above is deemed to have merit by a  
223 majority vote of the members appointed to the committee, the committee shall file a report with  
224 the Clerk of the House. Said report shall be a public document. The committee shall not disclose  
225 any allegation deemed to be frivolous or without merit.

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

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

234 Any member, officer, or employee of the House may request from the House committee on  
235 Ethics or from the Legal Counsel to the House appointed pursuant to section 51 of chapter 3 of  
236 the General Laws a confidential advisory opinion on the requirements of chapters 268A and  
237 268B of the General Laws as well as an opinion on any other general or special law, rule or  
238 regulation applicable to their official position or concerning any contemplated personal  
239 action which may conflict with their official position. . The committee on Ethics or the Legal

240 Counsel to the House shall issue confidential advisory opinions and clarification in response to  
241 said written request.

242 No member, officer, or employee of the House shall be penalized in any manner for having  
243 acted within the guidelines of an advisory opinion from the House committee on Ethics or from  
244 the Legal Counsel to the House appointed pursuant to section 51 of chapter 3 of the General  
245 Laws, provided that all pertinent facts are stated in the request for an advisory opinion.

246 An opinion from the House committee on Ethics or from the Legal Counsel to the House  
247 appointed pursuant to section 51 of chapter 3 of the General Laws shall be a defense in any  
248 proceeding arising from said opinion or advice unless material facts were omitted or misstated by  
249 the person in the request of the opinion.

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

251 The chairman shall also convene the committee at the written request of at least 5 members of  
252 the committee.

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

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

263 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Jan. 17, 1995; Mar. 6, 1995; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 20,  
264 2011.]

265 CODE OF ETHICS.

266 16A. (1.) While members, officers and employees should not be denied those opportunities  
267 available to all other citizens to acquire and retain private, economic and other interests,  
268 members, officers, and employees should exercise prudence in any and all such endeavors and  
269 make every reasonable effort to avoid transactions, activities, or obligations, which are in  
270 substantial conflict with or will substantially impair their independence of judgment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

303 (12.) No member, officer or employee shall knowingly accept any gifts from any legislative  
304 or executive agent as prohibited by law. No member, officer or employee shall accept any gift  
305 from any person or entity having a direct interest in legislation before the General Court as  
306 prohibited by law. (For the purposes of this paragraph, the definitions of “gift” and “person” are  
307 defined in chapter 268B, section 1(g) and 1(m).).

308 (13.) No member shall convert campaign funds to personal use in excess of reimbursements  
309 for legitimate and verifiable campaign expenditures. Members shall consider all proceeds from  
310 testimonial dinners and other fundraising activities as campaign funds.

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

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

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

316 16B. The Committee on Personnel and Administration shall develop and conduct an ethics  
317 law training program for every member, officer and employee of the House; provided further,  
318 that said training program shall include, without limitation, a detailed review of the requirements  
319 and prohibitions of chapter 268A and chapter 268B of the General Laws; and provided further,  
320 that said training program shall be offered no later than July 1 of the first biennial session of the  
321 General Court and shall be mandatory for all members, officers and employees.

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



323 16C. Bills involving lobbyists' reporting laws, and laws pertaining to the ethical conduct of  
324 public officials shall, after their first reading, be referred to the committee on Ethics, for report  
325 on their relation to the ethics laws of the Commonwealth. No new provisions shall be added to  
326 such measures by the committee, unless directly pertaining to ethics.

327 COMMITTEES.

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

330 A committee on Rules;

331 (to consist of 15 members).

332 A committee on Ways and Means;

333 (to consist of 35 members).

334 A committee on Bills in the Third Reading;

335 (to consist of 3members).

336 A committee of each Floor Division;

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

338 A committee on Ethics;

339 (to consist of 11 members).

340 A committee on Personnel and Administration;

341 (to consist of 13 members).

342 A committee on Post Audit and Oversight;

343 (to consist of 11 members).

344 A committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling;

345 (to consist of 11 members).

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

347 (to consist of 11 members).

348 A committee on Global Warming and Climate Change;

349 (to consist of 11 members).

350 A committee on Redistricting;

351 (to consist of 11 members).

352 A committee on Intergovernmental Affairs;

353 (to consist of 11 members).

354

355 Committee meetings, insofar as practicable, shall not be scheduled in conflict with formal

356 sessions of the House of Representatives. [20.] (12, 12A, 12B.)

357 [Amended March 6, 1979; Sept. 16, 1981; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; May 5, 1993; Oct. 6,

358 1993; May 23, 1996; Jan. 14, 1997; Jul. 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005.]

359 17A. (a) For the purposes of this rule, the following terms shall, unless the context clearly  
360 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

391 (ii) to consider the discipline or dismissal of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against  
392 a member, officer or employee; (iii) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an executive  
393 session or other open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the  
394 committee; or (iv) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, if such  
395 discussions may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Commonwealth or a  
396 person, firm or corporation.

397 A member, officer or employee subject to an executive conference pursuant to clause (i) or  
398 clause (ii) shall be notified in writing no less than 48 hours prior to the proposed executive  
399 conference; provided, however, that upon agreement of the parties involved, the notification  
400 requirements of clause (i) and clause (ii) may be waived. Upon request of the member, officer or

401 employee subject to an executive conference pursuant to clause (i) or clause (ii) the executive  
402 conference shall be open to the public.

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

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

415 (e) Except pursuant to an emergency, a notice and agenda of every meeting of a committee  
416 subject to this rule shall be filed with the Clerk of the House, publicly posted by the Clerk on the  
417 bulletin board outside the Clerk's Office and in such other places as are designated in advance  
418 for such purpose by said Clerk, made available to all members electronically and made available  
419 to the public via the Internet at least forty-eight hours, including Saturdays, but not Sundays and  
420 legal holidays, prior to the time of such meeting and a list of the bills, petitions, and resolutions  
421 to be considered for a vote or other action by the committee. The notice shall include the date,  
422 time and place of such meeting. Such filing and posting shall be the responsibility of the

423 committee scheduling such meeting. The notice and posting requirements shall not apply to  
424 executive conferences held pursuant to clause (i) or clause (ii) of part (c) of this rule unless the  
425 member, officer or employee subject to the executive conference requests that the executive  
426 conference be open to the public,

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

434 (g) Upon prior notification and approval of the chair, a meeting of a committee may be  
435 recorded by a person in attendance by means of a recorder or any other means of audio/visual  
436 reproduction; provided, however, that said recording shall not interfere with the conduct of the  
437 meeting. Executive conferences conducted pursuant to clause (i) or clause (ii) of part (c) of this  
438 rule shall not be recorded unless upon the request of the member, officer or employee who is  
439 subject to said executive conference. Executive conferences conducted pursuant to clause (iii) or  
440 (iv) of part (c) of this rule may be recorded at the discretion of the chair.

441 (h) Copies of all redrafted bills that are to be voted on at an executive session by the House  
442 Ways and Means Committee shall be available to all members of the committee electronically in  
443 the form they will be considered no less than twenty-four hours prior to their consideration;

444 provided, however, that said committee may vote on a bill that has not been available for said  
445 period of time by vote of a majority of the committee members present.

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

448 17B. Whenever any member of a House committee present at the committee meeting so  
449 requests, the vote to give any legislation a favorable or adverse report shall be a recorded vote of  
450 the full committee. Such votes shall be recorded on appropriate forms that show all votes for and  
451 against the particular committee action. The record of all such roll calls shall be kept in the  
452 offices of the committee and shall be available for public inspection.

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

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

459 17C. There shall be a committee on Personnel and Administration on the part of the House  
460 consisting of thirteen members. Said committee shall be responsible for the allocation of office  
461 space as equitably as possible among the various members and joint and standing committees on  
462 the part of the House and their respective staff.

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

465 The Speaker may make temporary office assignments in accordance with the foregoing  
466 principles.

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

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

473 For each person who is employed or is to be employed by a joint or standing committee on  
474 the part of the House, each committee chairman shall nominate each such person and the House  
475 members of the committee by a majority vote shall vote on whether to approve each said  
476 nominee. The House members of the committee shall approve such persons whose character and  
477 qualifications are acceptable to the majority of the House members of the committee and are in  
478 accordance with the qualifications established by the Personnel and Administration committee.

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

480 The House staff members of each committee shall be appointed solely on the basis of fitness  
481 to perform the duties of their respective positions and consistent with section 4 of chapter 151B  
482 of the General Laws. The committee staff shall not:

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

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



485 The committee shall meet on request of the chairman or any 3 members of the committee.  
486 Any such meeting requested shall be convened on or within the fifth business day following such  
487 request. All such requests shall be in writing and forwarded to the chairman and each member of  
488 the committee.

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

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

491 17D. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

492 17E. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

493 17F. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

494 17G. The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall review all  
495 legislation providing for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth (see  
496 Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution, as amended by Article LXXXIV). Said  
497 committee shall be responsible for evaluating such legislation and determining the  
498 appropriateness of enacting legislation containing increased bond authorizations for the  
499 Commonwealth. The committee shall periodically review and hold open public hearings,  
500 accepting oral and written testimony on the status of the bonds and notes of the Commonwealth,  
501 including (1) general obligation debt; (2) dedicated income tax debt; and (3) special obligation  
502 debt. The committee shall also, in its continuing study of the state's bonding practices, review  
503 the Commonwealth's liabilities relative to (a) state-supported debt; (b) state-guaranteed debt; and  
504 (3) indirect obligations.

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

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

515 The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be authorized to  
516 conduct hearings relative to the statutory authority of the executive branch and the Treasurer and  
517 Receiver-General in the issuance and sale of bonds and notes and the expenditure of capital  
518 funds by the various agencies and authorities of the Commonwealth. The committee shall  
519 determine whether such laws, administrative regulations and programs are being implemented in  
520 accordance with the intent of the General Court. The committee shall be authorized to make  
521 recommendations for statutory changes and changes in the Constitution which would grant  
522 discretion to the General Court over the allotment and expenditure of fund authorized by capital  
523 appropriations.

524 The committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets shall be authorized to report  
525 to the General Court from time to time on the results of its hearings and to file drafts of

526 legislation and proposals for amendments to the Constitution necessary to carry its  
527 recommendations into effect.

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

531 18. The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the Speaker pro  
532 Tempore, the Majority Floor Leader, Assistant Majority Floor Leader, Second Assistant Majority  
533 Floor Leader and Third Assistant Majority Floor Leader. The Minority Leader shall appoint, and  
534 may recommend the removal of, the Assistant Minority Floor Leader, Second Assistant Minority  
535 Floor Leader, and Third Assistant Minority Floor Leader, Ranking minority member of Ways  
536 and Means, Ranking minority member of the committee on Rules, Ranking Minority member of  
537 the committee on Financial Services, Ranking minority member of the committee on Health Care  
538 Financing, Ranking minority member of the committee on the Judiciary, Ranking minority  
539 member of the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures, and State Assets, Ranking minority  
540 member of the committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, Ranking minority member  
541 of the committee on Transportation and Ranking minority member of the committee on  
542 Economic Development and Emerging Technologies. The Minority Leader shall be that member  
543 of the minority party who is selected for that position by the members of his/her party.

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

548 The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the chair of each standing  
549 committee. The Speaker shall appoint, and may recommend the removal of, the vice chair and  
550 assistant vice chair of the Ways and Means committee, the vice chair of the Post Audit and  
551 Oversight committee, the vice chair of the committee on Rules, the vice chair of the committee  
552 on Financial Services, the vice chair of the committee on Health Care Financing, the vice chair  
553 of the committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures, and State Assets, the vice chair of the  
554 committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight, and the vice chair of the  
555 committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies.

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

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

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

565 [Amended Jan. 16, 1979; Nov. 17, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 23,  
566 2007; Jan 23, 2013.]

567 18A. There shall be 1 member of the minority party on all committees of conference and 1 on  
568 the committee on Bills in the Third Reading. On all other standing and joint committees, the  
569 percent of minority party membership shall be at least equal to the percent of minority party

570 membership in the House of Representatives as of the first day of the session; provided, further,  
571 that where such percentage results in a fraction of a number, the fraction shall be rounded off to  
572 the nearest whole; provided, however, that the minority party shall under no circumstances have  
573 less than 4 members on the committee on Ethics, 4 on the committee on Personnel and  
574 Administration, 3 on the committee on Rules and 7 on the committee on Ways and Means. In no  
575 case shall minority party representation be less than 2 members on all other standing and joint  
576 committees.

577 The Speaker and the Minority Leader shall appoint the members of their respective party  
578 caucuses to be assigned to each standing committee. The Speaker shall appoint the vice chair of  
579 each standing committee. The appointments, except those to which Rule 18 applies, shall be  
580 voted upon together and shall be subject to ratification by majority vote of the appropriate party  
581 caucus. No member shall be removed from a standing committee except upon the  
582 recommendation of the Speaker or Minority Leader, as the case may be, subject to the  
583 ratification by their respective caucuses; provided, however, that the Speaker and the Minority  
584 Leader may, without a majority vote of their respective parties, remove a member appointed to  
585 pursuant to this rule who has been criminally indicted by a court of competent jurisdiction; and  
586 provided further, that if any vacancy occurs in a position to which Rule 18 does not apply,  
587 subsequent to the initial ratification, the Speaker or Minority Leader shall fill such vacancy.

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

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

592 18B. All votes on ratification by the caucus required by these rules shall be by written ballot  
593 and shall require a majority of those present and voting.

594 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985.]

595 19. A majority and minority party caucus may be called by the Speaker or Minority Leader,  
596 respectively, or upon petition of 25 percent of the members of the respective party caucus. A  
597 caucus may entertain resolutions, motions, or other means of ascertaining the sense of the  
598 respective party members on any subject. (13B.)

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

600 19A. The majority party and minority party shall establish caucus rules that shall dictate the  
601 procedures of each caucus.

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

603 20. The committee on Ways and Means shall report in appropriation bills the total amount  
604 appropriated. The General Appropriation Bill shall be available to the members at least 7  
605 calendar days prior to consideration thereof by the House. [25.] (27A.)

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

607 20A. Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 33A, amendments to the General Appropriation  
608 Bill shall be filed with the Clerk of the House in a format to be determined by the Clerk by 5  
609 o'clock P.M. within the close of 3 business days of said General Appropriation bill being made  
610 available in a format to be determined by the Clerk and release of said document by said Clerk if  
611 the release of said document occurs by 2o'clock P.M. Otherwise, the day following the release  
612 shall be considered the first business day. The Clerk, with the assistance of the committee on

613 Ways and Means, shall categorize the subject-matter of the amendments and arrange such  
614 amendments for consideration sequentially by subject as appearing in the published version of  
615 the General Appropriation Bill, or the Clerk, with the assistance of the committee on Ways and  
616 Means, shall categorize the subject-matter of the amendments and arrange such subject matters  
617 for consideration as determined by the committee on Ways and Means. Debate on the General  
618 Appropriation Bill shall not commence until a date and time to be determined by the House  
619 which is subsequent to the designated time established for filing of amendments.

620 Before the main question on the General Appropriation Bill is placed before the House, an  
621 amendment may be postponed or withdrawn at the request of the primary sponsor of the  
622 amendment or postponed by the committee on Ways and Means; provided that further  
623 consideration of any amendment so postponed shall take place immediately subsequent to  
624 consideration of the amendments within the particular subject-matter to which the postponed  
625 amendment was assigned according to the provisions of paragraph one of said rule; provided that  
626 if more than one amendment is so postponed, subsequent consideration of said amendments shall  
627 be in the order determined by the committee on Ways and Means; provided further, an  
628 amendment so postponed shall not be subsequently considered outside of its assigned subject-  
629 matter; and provided further, that notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 33A, amendments  
630 submitted to the Clerk shall be in a format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with  
631 said Clerk and shall include an original copy only; and provided further that perfecting or  
632 substitute amendments, including, but not limited to an amendment consolidating more than one  
633 amendment, may be submitted by the committee on Ways and Means during consideration of the  
634 subject category to which the amendment or amendments were assigned; provided, however, that  
635 an amendment may be removed from the consolidated amendment at the request of the sponsor

636 of said amendment for the purpose of it being offered as a further amendment to the consolidated  
637 amendment.

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

639 20B. When the General Appropriation Bill is reported by the committee on Ways and Means it  
640 shall be made available to all members electronically and to the public via the Internet in a  
641 format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with the Clerk. The committee on Ways  
642 and Means shall provide the membership with a copy of its proposed text of said General  
643 Appropriation Bill, and an executive summary which shall include a list of outside sections, and  
644 a short summary of each outside section prior to full House consideration of such bill. When the  
645 House considers said General Appropriation Bill, it shall be read a second time and forthwith  
646 ordered to a third reading without any amendments. The bill shall be immediately read a third  
647 time and then be open to amendments as previously determined by the House.

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

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

655 22. Bills and resolves when ordered to a third reading shall be referred forthwith to the  
656 committee on Bills in the Third Reading, which shall examine and correct them, for the purpose  
657 of avoiding repetitions and unconstitutional provisions, and insuring accuracy in the text and



658 references, and consistency with the language of existing statutes; but any change in the sense or  
659 legal effect, or any material change in construction, shall be reported to the House as an  
660 amendment.

661 The committee may consolidate into 1 bill any 2 or more related bills referred to it, whenever  
662 legislation may be simplified thereby.

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

666 Amendments of bills, resolves and resolutions adopted by the Senate and sent to the House  
667 for concurrence, shall, subsequently to the procedure required by rule 35 in respect to  
668 amendments, also be referred, in like manner, to the committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

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

673 If a bill or resolve referred to the committee on Bills in the Third Reading requires a two-  
674 thirds vote because it contains an emergency preamble, or if it provides for the borrowing of  
675 money by the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 3 of Article LXII of  
676 the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for the giving, loaning or pledging of the credit  
677 of the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 1 of Article LXII (as amended  
678 by Article LXXXIV) of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides, upon recommendation  
679 of the Governor, for a special law relating to an individual city or town and comes within the

680 provisions of clause (2) of Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution  
681 or provides for environmental protection within the provisions of Article XLIX as amended by  
682 Article XCVII, the committee shall plainly indicate the fact on the outside of the bill or resolve,  
683 or on a wrapper or label attached thereto. [26.] (33.)

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

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

690 When a bill prepared for final passage contains an emergency preamble or when it provides  
691 for the borrowing of money by the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 3  
692 of Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for the giving, loaning or  
693 pledging of the credit of the Commonwealth and comes within the provisions of Section 1 of  
694 Article LXII (as amended by Article LXXXIV) of the Amendments to the Constitution, or  
695 provides, upon recommendation of the Governor, for a special law relating to an individual city  
696 or town and comes within the provisions of clause (2) of Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the  
697 Amendments to the Constitution, or provides for environmental protection within the provisions  
698 of Article XLIX as amended by Article XCVII, the Clerk shall plainly indicate the fact on the  
699 envelope thereof. [27.] (34.) [See Rule 40.]

700 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983.]

701 23A. No member of the House, except the Speaker, Speaker pro tempore, Majority Leader,  
702 Assistant Majority Leader, Second Assistant Majority Leader, Minority Leader, Assistant  
703 Minority Leader, Second Assistant Minority Leader, Third Assistant Minority Leader, Vice-  
704 Chairperson of the Committee on Ways and Means, Assistant Vice-Chairperson of the  
705 Committee on Ways and Means and committee chairmen with respect to committee business,  
706 shall receive privileges or compensation for postage which is greater than seventy-five percent of  
707 the amount allowed as standard practice during the 186th biennial session of the General Court,  
708 as determined by the House Business Manager.

709 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985; Amended Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 26, 2005; Jan. 20, 2011.]

710 24. (1) Petitions, recommendations and reports of state officials, departments, commissions  
711 including legislative commissions, and boards, special reports including legislation initiated by  
712 the Committee on Ethics Pursuant to Rule 16, legislation initiated by the committee on Bonding,  
713 Capital Expenditures and State Assets pursuant to Rule 17G and reports of special committees  
714 and commissions including legislative commissions, shall be filed with the Clerk in a format to  
715 be determined by said Clerk, who shall, unless they are subject to other provisions of these rules  
716 or the rules of the two branches, refer them, with the approval of the Speaker, to the appropriate  
717 committees, subject to such change of reference as the House may make. The reading of all such  
718 documents may be dispensed with, but they shall be entered in the Journal of the same or the  
719 next legislative day after such reference except as provided in joint rule thirteen.

720 (2) All orders, including motions or orders proposed for joint adoption, resolutions and other  
721 papers intended for presentation, except those hereinbefore mentioned, shall be filed with the  
722 Clerk in a format to be determined by said Clerk, who shall, prior to the procedure required by

723 other provisions of these rules or of the rules of the two branches, refer them to the committee on  
724 Rules.

725 (3) Petitions and other papers so filed which are subject to the provisions of Joint Rule 7A,  
726 7B, or 9, shall be referred by the Clerk to the committee on Rules. Petitions and other papers so  
727 filed, which are subject to the provisions of the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12, shall, prior to  
728 the procedure required by said rule, be referred by the Clerk to the committee on Rules. The  
729 reading of all such papers may be dispensed with, but they shall be entered in the Journal of the  
730 same or the next legislative day after such reference.

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

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

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

744 (7) Any petition so submitted that is a refile of a measure submitted in a previous session shall  
745 include, in the appropriate space provided, the session year for which the measure was filed and  
746 the House or Senate bill number or docket number assigned to such measure in such previous  
747 session.

748 (8) Debate upon the suspension of this rule shall be limited to 10 minutes, 3 minutes for each  
749 member, and the Speaker shall recognize the member presenting the order, resolution or petition  
750 first; provided, however, that suspension of this rule shall require unanimous consent of the  
751 members present. Any order, except such order that would amend the Rules of the House,  
752 resolution or petition referred to the committee on Rules after the question of suspension of this  
753 rule has been negatived, or any order, resolution or petition filed after the beginning of the  
754 session and referred to the committee on Rules, shall not be discharged from said committee  
755 except by unanimous consent of the House. Motions to discharge the committee on Rules shall  
756 be subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of Rule 28. [28.] (20.) [See Rules 36 and 85.]

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

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

760 26. When the object of an application can be secured without a special act under existing  
761 laws, or, without detriment to the public interests, by a general law, the committee to which the  
762 matter is referred shall report such general law or ought not to pass, as the case may be. The  
763 committee may report a special law on matters referred to it upon (1) a petition filed or approved  
764 by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council, or other legislative body, of a city,  
765 or the town meeting of a town, with respect to a law relating to that city or town; (2) a

766 recommendation by the Governor; or (3) matters relating to erecting and constituting  
767 metropolitan or regional entities, embracing any two or more cities and towns, or established  
768 with other than existing city or town boundaries, for any general or special public purpose or  
769 purposes. [30.] (16.) [See Joint Rule 7.]

770 27. With the exception of matters referred to the committee on Rules under the provisions of  
771 paragraph (3) of rule24 , committees shall report on all matters referred to them. The committee  
772 on Ways and Means shall report the General Appropriation Bill not later than the second  
773 Wednesday of May; and provided further that said committee shall make available to the  
774 members all data compiled for justification of budgetary recommendations in all appropriation  
775 bills. [33.]

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

777 27A. [Omitted Jan. 23, 2007.] 28. (1) Motions directing the committee on Ways and Means to  
778 report certain matters to the House, or motions discharging said committees from further  
779 consideration of certain matters, shall not be considered until the expiration of seven calendar  
780 days and shall require a majority vote of the members present and voting for adoption.  
781 Committees so directed to report shall file a report with the Clerk within 4 legislative days. The  
782 committee on Ways and Means may not be directed to report or be discharged from further  
783 consideration of any appropriation or capital outlay measure.

784 (2) The committee on Rules, except as provided in Rule 24, and the committee on Bills in the  
785 Third Reading shall not be discharged from consideration of any measure or be directed to report  
786 on any measure within 10 calendar days of its reference without the unanimous consent of the

787 House, or after such 10 day period except by a vote of a majority of the members present and  
788 voting thereon.

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

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

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

798 (6) As an alternative procedure to that provided under the provisions of this rule, the members  
799 of the House may, by filing a petition signed by a majority of the members elected to the House,  
800 discharge the House committee on Ways and Means, the House committee on Bills in the Third  
801 Reading, and the House committee on Rules from further consideration of a legislative matter.  
802 Seven days following the filing of the petition with the House Clerk, the committee shall be  
803 discharged from further consideration of the legislative matter specified in the petition and the  
804 House Clerk shall place the matter in the Orders of the Day for the next calendar day that the  
805 House is meeting.

806 (7) For the purpose of this rule, matters not appearing on the Calendar which are not before  
807 any committee shall be deemed to be before the Rules committee. Notwithstanding the previous  
808 sentence, a bill which has been engrossed by the House and Senate, shall be placed before the

809 House for enactment. Any member may request to the House that a matter, engrossed in the  
810 House and Senate, returned for final passage by the engrossing division and reviewed and  
811 released by the Committee on Bills in Third Reading be placed before the House for enactment.  
812 The Speaker shall, in response to such a request of a member, put the matter before the House at  
813 the conclusion of the matter then pending.

814 (8) This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.  
815 (27C, 32A.)

816 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; April 27, 1981; Jan. 12, 1983; Nov. 17, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 9,  
817 1989; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007.]

818 28A. The committee on Bills in the Third Reading shall report on a legislative matter not later  
819 than 45 days following the day the matter was referred to it. The Clerk shall indicate on the  
820 Calendar entry of every matter before the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading the date that  
821 said matter was referred to said committee.

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

823 REGULAR COURSE OF PROCEEDINGS.

824 Petitions.

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

827 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

828 Motions Contemplating Legislation, etc.



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

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

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

838 [Amended Jan. 24, 2001.]

839 Bills and Resolves.

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

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

846 32. If a committee to which a bill is referred reports that the same ought not to pass, the  
847 question shall be “Shall this bill be rejected?”. If the question on rejection is negatived, the bill, if  
848 it has been read but once, shall go to a second reading without question; otherwise it shall be

849 placed in the Orders of the Day for the next day, pending the question on ordering to a third  
850 reading, or to engrossment, as the case may be. [43.] (30.)

851 32A. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

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

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

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

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

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

870 33A. Copies of all bills shall be available, in a format to be determined by the Speaker in  
871 consultation with the Clerk, to all members of the House and the public at least 24 hours in  
872 advance of consideration by the House.

873 All amendments offered by members to any legislative matter in the House shall be submitted  
874 in a format to be determined by the Speaker in consultation with the Clerk; and shall be  
875 considered chronologically as submitted to the Clerk, except for an amendment in the second  
876 degree; provided that all of said amendments shall be drafted in proper form acceptable to the  
877 clerk; and provided further that there shall be available to the members a duplicate copy of each  
878 amendment. (33A.)

879 [Adopted Nov. 17, 1983; Amended Nov. 28, 1984; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 17,  
880 1995]; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007.]

881 33B. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

882 33C. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

883 33D. [Omitted Jan. 26, 2005.]

884 33E. No consolidated amendment offered by the committee on Ways and Means shall be  
885 considered by the House until the expiration of at least 30 minutes after the consolidated  
886 amendment shall have been first filed with the Clerk and made available to the members. This  
887 rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

888 [Added Feb. 4, 2010.]

889 34. Bills from the Senate, after their first reading, shall be referred to a committee of the House.  
890 [45.] (26.)

891 [Amended Jan. 26, 1999.]

892 35. Amendments proposed by the Senate, and sent back to the House for concurrence, shall  
893 be referred to the committee on Bills in Third Reading, provided that the journal shall reflect the  
894 referral. [46.] (36.)

895 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 26, 2005, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 23, 2013.]

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

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

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

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

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

909 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

910 40. No engrossed bill shall be amended, except by striking out the enacting clause. A motion  
911 to strike out the enacting clause of a bill shall be received when the bill is before the House for  
912 enactment. If the bill contains an emergency preamble, a motion to suspend this rule may be  
913 received before the adoption of the emergency preamble and, if suspended, the amendment may  
914 contain a new emergency preamble. This rule shall not apply to a bill or resolve returned by the  
915 Governor with a recommendation of amendment in accordance with the provisions of Article  
916 LVI of the Amendments to the Constitution; nor shall it apply to amendments of engrossed bills  
917 proposed by the Senate and sent to the House for concurrence, which amendments shall be  
918 subject to the provisions of Rule35 , provided, however, that an affirmative vote on a motion to  
919 suspend this rule shall be required in order to offer an amendment to such an engrossed bill when  
920 the question before the House is on adoption of an emergency preamble, re-enactment or  
921 enactment, as the case may be. [53.] (49.)

922 [Amended, Jan. 23, 2007; Jan. 20, 2011; Jan. 23, 2013.]

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

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

929 42. Reports of committees, not by bill or resolve, including orders if proposed for joint  
930 adoption, after they are received from the Senate, or made in the House, as the case may be,  
931 shall, unless subject to the provisions of any other House or joint rules, be referred to the

932 committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling; provided that the report of a committee asking to  
933 be discharged from further consideration of a subject, and recommending that it be referred or  
934 recommitted to another committee, or a report of a committee recommending that a matter be  
935 placed on file, shall be immediately considered. Reports of committees on proposals for  
936 amendments to the Constitution shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Joint  
937 Rule23 . [57.] (36.)

938 [Amended Jan. 14, 1997.]

939 42A. The Clerk shall, prior to 3 o'clock P.M., on the day preceding a session, make available  
940 by electronic communication or other means, a list of all reports of the committee on Steering,  
941 Policy and Scheduling, asking to be discharged from further consideration of subjects, and  
942 recommending that the subjects be referred to other committees.

943 [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005.]

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

946 Special Rules Affecting the Course of Proceedings.

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

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

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

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

964 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 17, 1995; Jan. 14, 1997; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9,  
965 2003.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

986 Voting.

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

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



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

999 49. If the presence of a quorum is doubted, a count of the House shall be made. When a yea  
1000 and nay vote is taken, the members, with the exception of the Speaker, shall vote only from their  
1001 seats. A member who has been appointed by the Speaker to perform the duties of the Chair, or a  
1002 person who has been elected Speaker pro tempore, may designate some member or a court  
1003 officer to cast a vote for him/her on any vote taken on the electronic voting system while such  
1004 member is presiding. Said designated member performing the duties of the Chair, or Speaker pro  
1005 tempore, may, if the Speaker is in the State House, cast a vote for the Speaker. The Speaker  
1006 shall state the pending question before opening the system for voting.

1007 The Speaker may direct the Clerk to cast a vote for a member who is in the House Chamber,  
1008 but who is unable to vote due to a malfunction of his/her voting station or inability to open  
1009 his/her voting station.

1010 Except in the case of a vote to ascertain the presence of a quorum, if a member is prevented  
1011 from voting personally using the electronic voting system because of physical disability, said  
1012 member shall, if present in the State House, be excused from so voting and the Speaker shall  
1013 assign a court officer to cast said member's vote so long as said physical disability continues;  
1014 provided that the Speaker shall announce the action of the Chair to the membership prior to  
1015 assigning a court officer to cast the member's vote and provided further that the Speaker shall  
1016 announce the action to the membership the first time a vote is cast for that member on each  
1017 successive day. [65.]

1018 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 9, 2003; Jan. 20, 2011.]

1019 50. When a question is put, the sense of the House shall be taken by the voices of the  
1020 members, and the Speaker shall first announce the vote as it appears to the Speaker by the sound.  
1021 If the Speaker is unable to decide by the sound of the voices, or if the announcement made  
1022 thereupon is doubted by a member rising in his/her place for that purpose, the Speaker shall  
1023 order a division of the number voting in the affirmative and in the negative, without further  
1024 debate upon the question. [66.] (55.)

1025 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1026 51. When a return by division of the members voting in the affirmative and in the negative is  
1027 ordered, the members for or against the question, when called on by the Speaker, shall rise in  
1028 their places, and stand until they are counted. If, upon the taking of such a vote, the presence of a  
1029 quorum is doubted, a count of the House shall be had, and if a quorum is present the vote shall  
1030 stand. [67.]

1031 52. The sense of the House shall be taken by yeas and nays whenever required by ten percent  
1032 of the members elected. The Speaker shall, after waiting up to an interval of twelve minutes,  
1033 state the pending question and, after opening the electronic voting system, instruct the members  
1034 to vote for not less than two minutes and no more than twenty-two minutes, the Speaker shall  
1035 close said system and cause totals to be displayed and a record made of how each member  
1036 present voted; provided, that if at any time during said voting period any standing, joint or  
1037 conference committee is meeting in public or executive sessions, the Speaker shall leave the  
1038 electronic voting machine open for not less than 5 minutes.

1039 Any member desiring to be recorded as being “present” when a yea and nay vote is taken on  
1040 the electronic roll call system shall so notify the Clerk in person after said vote is ordered and  
1041 before the vote is announced.

1042 In the event the electronic voting system is not in operating order, the roll of the House shall  
1043 be called in alphabetical order; provided, however, that no member shall be allowed to vote or to  
1044 answer “present” who was not on the floor before the vote is declared; provided, however, that a  
1045 member, who was in the State House on a previous roll call, may be recorded by reporting to the  
1046 Clerk within five minutes after such vote is closed, unless objection is made thereto and it is  
1047 seconded; and provided further that the presiding officer shall not, for said purpose, interrupt the  
1048 member who is speaking on the floor; provided, however, that such request may be announced to  
1049 the House subsequent to the five minutes. The Speaker shall not entertain any requests beyond  
1050 said five minute period. Once the voting has begun it shall not be interrupted except for the  
1051 purpose of questioning the validity of a member’s vote before the result is announced. Except as  
1052 heretofore provided, any member who shall vote or attempt to vote for another member or any  
1053 person not a member who votes or attempts to vote for a member, or any member or other person  
1054 who willfully tampers with or attempts to impair or destroy in any manner whatsoever the voting  
1055 equipment used by the House, or change the records thereon shall be punished in such manner as  
1056 the House determines; and provided further, that such a violation shall be reported to the Ethics  
1057 Committee. [68.] (56, 57.)

1058 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 11, 1985; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 24, 2001; Jan. 9,  
1059 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; Jan 20, 2011.]

1060 53. The call for yeas and nays shall be decided without debate. If the yeas and nays have been  
1061 ordered before the question is put, the proceedings under rules fifty and fifty-one relative to  
1062 verification of the vote by the voices of the members or by a return of divisions shall be omitted;  
1063 if not, they may be called for in lieu of a return by divisions when the Speaker's announcement is  
1064 doubted by a member rising in his/her place, and, if then ordered, the proceedings under rules  
1065 fifty and fifty-one shall be omitted. [69.] (52.)

1066 [Amended Jan. 26, 1999.]

1067 Reconsideration.

1068 54. No motion to reconsider a vote shall be entertained unless it is made on the same day on  
1069 which the vote was taken, or before the Orders of the Day have been taken up on the next day  
1070 thereafter on which a quorum is present. If reconsideration is moved on the same day, the motion  
1071 shall be placed first in the Orders of the Day for the succeeding day; but, if it is moved on the  
1072 succeeding day, the motion shall be considered forthwith except that if said motion is moved on  
1073 a day on which an informal session has been designated, it shall be placed in the Orders of the  
1074 Day for the succeeding day. If reconsideration is moved after July first of the second annual  
1075 session and thereafter, on any main question, it shall be considered forthwith. This rule shall not  
1076 prevent the reconsideration of a vote on a subsidiary, incidental or dependent question at any  
1077 time when the main question to which it relates is under consideration; and provided, further,  
1078 that a motion to reconsider a vote on any subsidiary, incidental or dependent question shall not  
1079 remove the main subject under consideration from before the House, but shall be considered at  
1080 the time when it is made. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
1081 members present. [70.] (53.)

1082 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981, Jan. 23, 2007.]

1083 55. When a motion for reconsideration is decided, that decision shall not be reconsidered, and  
1084 no question shall be twice reconsidered; nor shall any vote be reconsidered upon any of the  
1085 following motions:

1086 to recess,

1087 to adjourn,

1088 on sustaining a ruling of the Chair,

1089 to close debate at a specified time,

1090 to postpone if voted in the negative,

1091 to discharge or direct a committee to report,

1092 to commit or recommit,

1093 for second or subsequent legislative days,

1094 for the previous question, or

1095 for suspension of rules.

1096 This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [71.]

1097 (53.)

1098 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 9, 1991.]

1099 56. Debate on motions to reconsider shall be limited to fifteen minutes, and no member shall  
1100 occupy more than three minutes, but on a motion to reconsider a vote upon any subsidiary or  
1101 incidental question, debate shall be limited to ten minutes, and no member shall occupy more  
1102 than three minutes.

1103 If the House has voted to close debate on any question, a motion to reconsider said question  
1104 shall be decided without debate. [72.] (52.)

1105 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 12, 1987.]

1106 RULES OF DEBATE.

1107 57. Every member, when about to speak, shall rise and respectfully address the Speaker and  
1108 shall confine himself/herself to the question under debate. [73.] (39.)

1109 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1110 58. Every member while speaking shall avoid personalities; and shall sit down when finished.  
1111 No member shall speak out of his/her place without leave of the Speaker. [73.] (39.)

1112 When two or more members rise at the same time, the Speaker shall name the member  
1113 entitled to the floor, preferring one who rises in his/her place to one who does not. [74.] (40.)

1114 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1115 59. If a member repeatedly violates any of the rules of the House, or disrupts the orderly  
1116 procedure of the House, the Speaker, after warning the member of such violations, shall call the  
1117 member to order, and order that member to take his/her seat. A member so called to order shall  
1118 lose the right to speak on the pending subject-matter but shall not be debarred from voting. A

1119 member so called to order shall remain seated until the House begins consideration of another  
1120 subject-matter or unless the Speaker earlier returns to the member his/her rights to the floor.

1121 If a member so called to order refuses to immediately take his/her seat, the Speaker shall  
1122 immediately name that member, who shall be escorted from the Chamber under escort of the  
1123 Sergeant-at-Arms. The matter shall thereupon, on motion, be referred to a special committee of  
1124 three to be appointed by the Speaker. Said special committee shall make a report to the House of  
1125 its recommendations, which report shall be read and accepted.

1126 Having been named, a member shall not be allowed to resume his/her seat until said member  
1127 has complied with the recommendations of the committee as accepted by the House.

1128 If, after a member is seated or named, the action of the Speaker is appealed, the House shall  
1129 decide the case by a majority vote of the members present and voting, but if there is no  
1130 immediate appeal, the decision of the Speaker shall be conclusive.

1131 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 11, 1985.]

1132 60. No member shall interrupt another while speaking except by rising to a point of order, to a  
1133 question of personal privilege, to doubt the presence of a quorum, or to ask the person speaking  
1134 to yield.

1135 Members may rise to explain matters personal to them by leave of the presiding officer, but  
1136 shall not discuss pending questions in such explanations.

1137 Questions of personal privilege shall be limited to questions affecting the rights, reputation, and  
1138 conduct of the member in his/her representative capacities.

1139 Members may rise to ask questions of parliamentary inquiry concerning the pending matter by  
1140 leave of the presiding officer, but shall not debate the pending questions. [75.] (42.)

1141 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1142 61. No member shall speak more than once to the prevention of those who have not spoken  
1143 and desire to speak on the same question.

1144 This prohibition shall not apply to those members designated by the committee or committees  
1145 reporting the bill.

1146 No member shall occupy more than thirty minutes at a time while speaking on any question  
1147 where debate is unlimited.

1148 Unless the operation of another rule provides to the contrary (such as previous question,  
1149 limitation of debate, etc.), no member shall be prohibited from speaking more than once on any  
1150 question when no other member who has not spoken is seeking recognition by the Chair. [76.]  
1151 (41.)

1152 Motions.

1153 62. Every motion shall be reduced to writing, if the Speaker so directs. [77.] (44.)

1154 63. A motion need not be seconded, except an appeal from the decision of the Chair, and may  
1155 be withdrawn by the mover if no objection is made. [78.] (44.)

1156 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1157 Limit of Debate.



1158 64. A motion to recess or adjourn shall always be first in order, and shall be decided without  
1159 debate; and on the motions to close debate at a specified time, to postpone to a time certain, to  
1160 commit or recommit, not exceeding ten minutes shall be allowed for debate, and no member  
1161 shall speak more than three minutes. On the motion to discharge any committee, or on a motion  
1162 directing any committee to report matters before it, not exceeding fifteen minutes shall be  
1163 allowed for debate, and no member shall speak more than three minutes.

1164 If the main motion is undebatable, any subsidiary or incidental motion made relating to it  
1165 shall also be decided without debate. [79.] (52.) [See Rules 56 and 83.]

1166 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1167 64A. Debate on the question on adoption of orders for second and subsequent legislative days  
1168 shall be limited to ten minutes, and no member shall speak more than three minutes. After  
1169 entering into a second or subsequent legislative day, the House shall immediately proceed to  
1170 consideration of engrossed bills, reports of committees, papers from the Senate or the Orders of  
1171 the Day. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present.

1172 [Adopted Jan. 12, 1983.]

1173 65. When a question is before the House, until it is disposed of, the Speaker shall receive no  
1174 motion that does not relate to the same, except the motion to recess or adjourn or some other  
1175 motion that has precedence either by express rule of the House, or because it is privileged in its  
1176 nature; and the Speaker shall receive no motion relating to the same, except,—

1177 for the previous question, . . . . .

1178 to close debate at a specified time, . . . . .

1179 to postpone to a time certain, . . . . .

1180 to commit (or recommit), . . . . .

1181 to amend, . . . . . See Rules 66, 67 and 68

1182 See Rules 64, 69 and 70

1183 See Rules 64 and 70

1184 See Rules 64 and 71

1185 See Rules 72, 73, 74 and 75

1186 — which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are arranged in  
1187 this rule. [80.] (46.)

1188 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985.]

1189 Previous Question.

1190 66. Any member may call for the previous question on the main question.

1191 The previous question shall be put in the following form: “Shall the main question be now  
1192 put?” and all debate on the main question shall be suspended until the previous question is  
1193 decided.

1194 The adoption of the previous question shall require the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the  
1195 members present and voting and shall put an end to all debate, and bring the House to direct vote  
1196 upon pending amendments, if any, in their regular order, and then upon the main question.

1197 A motion to reconsider the vote on any of the pending amendments shall be decided without  
1198 debate. [81.]

1199 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1200 67. Any member may call for the previous question on any pending amendment.

1201 The previous question shall be put in the following form: “Shall the question on adoption of  
1202 the amendment be now put?” and all debate shall be suspended until the previous question is  
1203 decided.

1204 The adoption of the previous question on a pending amendment shall require the affirmative  
1205 vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting and shall put an end to all debate and bring  
1206 the House to a direct vote upon the pending amendment.

1207 A motion to reconsider the vote on the pending amendment shall be decided without debate.

1208 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1209 68. The previous question shall be decided without debate.

1210 Motion to Close Debate at a Specified Time.

1211 69. Debate may be closed at any time not less than thirty minutes from the adoption of a  
1212 motion to that effect. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the  
1213 members present. [85.] (47.)

1214 Motion to Postpone to a Time Certain.

1215 70. When a motion is made to postpone to a time certain, and different times are proposed,  
1216 the question shall first be taken on the most remote time; and the time shall be determined before  
1217 the question is put on postponement, which may then be rejected if the House sees fit. [87.] (51.)

1218 Motion to Commit.

1219 71. When a motion is made to commit, and different committees are proposed, the question  
1220 shall be taken in the following order:

1221 a standing committee of the House,

1222 a select committee of the House,

1223 a joint standing committee,

1224 a joint selected committee;

1225 and a subject may be recommitted to the same committee or to another committee at the  
1226 pleasure of the House. [88.] (48.)

1227 Motion to Amend.

1228 72. A motion to amend an amendment may be received; but no amendment in the third degree  
1229 shall be allowed. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members  
1230 present. [89.]

1231 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983.]

1232 73. No motion or proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be  
1233 admitted under color of amendment. This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous  
1234 consent of the members present. [90.] (50.)

1235 [Amended Jan. 12, 1987.]

1236 73A. No motion to amend a report from the committee on Ways and Means or a report from  
1237 the committee on Bills in the Third Reading, when such an amendment contains an expenditure  
1238 of public money or an increase or decrease in taxes, shall be considered unless a brief  
1239 explanation of the amendment is stated.

1240 [Adopted Jan. 17, 1995; Amended Jan. 26, 1999.]

1241 74. A question containing two or more propositions capable of division shall be divided  
1242 whenever desired by any member, if the question includes points so distinct and separate that,  
1243 one of them being taken away, the other will stand as a complete proposition. The motion to  
1244 strike out and insert shall be considered as one proposition and therefore indivisible. The  
1245 question on ordering a bill or resolve to a third reading, or to be engrossed, or to be enacted, or  
1246 similar main motions shall be considered as indivisible under this rule. This rule shall not be  
1247 suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [91.] (45.)

1248 [Amended Jan. 12, 1983.]

1249 75. In filling blanks, the largest sum and longest time shall be put first. [92.] (51.) [See Rule  
1250 70.]

1251 Declaration of Recess.

1252 76. The Speaker may declare a recess of 15 minutes duration, or less.

1253 [Amended Jan. 9, 1991.]

1254 Appeal.

1255 77. No appeal from the decision of the Speaker shall be entertained unless it is seconded; and  
1256 no other business shall be in order until the question on the appeal has been disposed of. Debate  
1257 shall be limited to 15 minutes on the question of sustaining a ruling by the Chair, and no member  
1258 shall occupy more than three minutes. [94.] (43A.) [See Rule 2.]

1259 [Amended Jan. 9, 1989.]

1260 Resolves.

1261 78. Such of these rules as are applicable to bills, whether of the House or of the Senate, shall  
1262 apply likewise to such resolves as require the concurrence of the Senate and approval by the  
1263 Governor in order to become law and have force as such. [95.]

1264 Seats.

1265 79. (1) The desk on the right of the Speaker shall be assigned to the use of the Clerk and such  
1266 persons as he/she may employ to assist said Clerk, and that on the left to the use of the chairman  
1267 and vice-chairman of the committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

1268 (2) The Speaker shall assign members to vacant seats. The seat assigned to any member, other  
1269 than seats assigned under paragraph (1) of this rule, shall be his/her seat for the year and for such  
1270 additional years as said member may elect so long as service in the House remains continuous.  
1271 An exchange of seats may be made with the approval of the Speaker. [98.]

1272 [Amended Jan. 11, 1985; May 5, 1993.]

1273 Privilege of the Floor.

1274 80. The following persons shall be entitled to admission to the House of Representatives,  
1275 during the session thereof, to stand in an area designated by the Speaker in the rear of the  
1276 Chamber, unless otherwise invited by said Speaker to occupy seats not numbered:

1277 (1) The Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor, members of the Executive Council, Secretary  
1278 of the Commonwealth, Treasurer and Receiver-General, Auditor of the Commonwealth,  
1279 Attorney-General, Librarian and Assistant Librarian.

1280 (2) The members of the Senate.

1281 (3) Persons in the exercise of an official duty directly connected with the business of the  
1282 House.

1283 (4) Contestants for seats in the House, whose papers are in the hands of a special committee  
1284 of the House, may be admitted, while their cases are pending, to seats to be assigned by the  
1285 Speaker.

1286 No other person shall be admitted to the floor during the session, except upon the permission  
1287 of the Speaker.

1288 No legislative agent or counsel may be admitted to the floor of the House Chamber during a  
1289 session unless that part of the session is ceremonial in nature in which no other legislative  
1290 business is conducted.

1291 The legislative reporters shall be entitled to the privileges of the reporters' galleries.

1292 This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [99.] (60,  
1293 61.)

1294 [Amended Jan. 9, 1991, Jan. 23, 2007.]

1295 Representatives' Chamber and Adjoining Rooms.

1296 81. Use of the Representatives' Chamber shall be subject to the approval of the Speaker or the  
1297 committee on Rules.

1298 No legislative agent or counsel shall be admitted to the members' corridor or adjoining  
1299 rooms. No other person shall be admitted to the members' corridor or adjoining rooms, except  
1300 persons entitled to the privileges of the floor of the House unless upon written invitation of a  
1301 member bearing the name of the member and the person the member invites. Upon entering, the  
1302 invitation shall be given to the court officer assigned to the area. The provisions of this paragraph  
1303 shall not apply if the purpose of admittance is to attend a meeting in an adjoining room to which  
1304 members of the general public are allowed to attend.

1305 No person shall be admitted to the north gallery of the House except upon a card of the  
1306 Speaker.

1307 Subject to the approval and direction of the committee on Rules during the session and of the  
1308 Speaker after prorogation, the use of the reporters' galleries of the House Chamber shall be under  
1309 the control of the organization of legislative reporters known as the Massachusetts State House  
1310 Press Association and the State House Broadcasters Association.

1311 Every legislative reporter desiring admission to the reporters' galleries shall state in writing  
1312 that he/she is not the agent or representative of any person or corporation interested in legislation



1313 before the General Court, and will not act as representative of any such person or corporation  
1314 while retaining a place in the galleries; but nothing herein contained shall prevent such  
1315 legislative reporter from engaging in other employment, provided such other employment is  
1316 specifically approved by the committee on Rules and reported to the House.

1317 All formal sessions of the House of Representatives shall be open to both commercial and  
1318 public radio and television, except designated times during such sessions, as determined by the  
1319 House, reserved for the consideration of non-controversial business which does not give rise to  
1320 debate. The manner and conditions of such broadcasts shall be established by the Speaker.  
1321 Television, radio or web-broadcasts may be prohibited on any given day by the Speaker with the  
1322 approval of the House.

1323 This rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [100.]  
1324 (59.)

1325 [Amended April 18, 1979; Jan. 12, 1983; Jan. 12, 1987; Jan. 9, 1991; Jan. 26, 1999, Jan. 23,  
1326 2007.]

1327 Quorum.

1328 82. Eighty-one members shall constitute a quorum for the organization of the House and the  
1329 transaction of business. [See amendments to the Constitution, Art. XXXIII.]

1330 In the event that a quorum is not present, the presiding officer shall compel the attendance of  
1331 a quorum. During the absence of a quorum, no other business may be transacted or motions  
1332 entertained except a declaration of adjournment or a recess by the Speaker. [105.]

1333 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 14, 1997.]

1334 Debate on Motions for Suspension of Rules.

1335 83. The question of suspension of House rules 45, 47, 56, 61, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 77 and 83  
1336 shall be decided without debate. Debate upon the motion for the suspension of any other House  
1337 rule, unless otherwise indicated, or any joint rule shall be limited to fifteen minutes and no  
1338 member shall occupy more than three minutes. This rule shall not be suspended unless by  
1339 unanimous consent of the members present. [102.] (52.)

1340 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981; Jan. 9, 1989.]

1341 84. Unless otherwise indicated, nothing in the House rules or joint rules shall be suspended,  
1342 altered or repealed unless two-thirds of the members present and voting consent thereto. This  
1343 rule shall not be suspended unless by unanimous consent of the members present. [103.] (63.)

1344 [Amended Jan. 12, 1981.]

1345 84A. The clerk may, due to technical limitations or upon exigent circumstances, elect to waive  
1346 any requirement relative to the electronic availability and posting on the internet of any bills,  
1347 resolves, summaries or other documents contained herein; provided, however, that if the clerk so  
1348 waives any such requirement he shall make paper copies of the documents available to all  
1349 members and the public within the limitation established for the electronic availability and  
1350 posting on the internet of any bills, resolves, summaries or other documents contained herein.

1351 Reference to Committee on Rules.

1352 85. All motions or orders authorizing committees of the House to travel or to employ  
1353 stenographers, all propositions involving special investigations by committees of the House, all  
1354 resolutions presented for adoption by the House only, and all motions and orders except those

1355 which relate to the procedure of the House or are privileged in their nature or are authorized by  
1356 rule65 , shall be referred without debate to the committee on Rules, which shall report thereon,  
1357 recommending what action should be taken. The committee shall not recommend suspension of  
1358 Joint Rule9, unless evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that the petitioners have  
1359 previously given notice, by public advertisement or otherwise, equivalent to that required by  
1360 Chapter 3 of the General Laws. [104.] (13A.)

1361 85A. The House Business Manager, with the approval of House Counsel, shall provide that  
1362 outside, independent audits of House financial accounts be conducted for each fiscal year upon  
1363 receipt of the fiscal year end appropriation activity with balance report from the comptroller of  
1364 the Commonwealth. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with auditing standards  
1365 generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial  
1366 audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the  
1367 United States. The House Business Manager shall provide the independent auditor with  
1368 requested documents for such audit. A copy of such audit shall be filed with the Clerk of the  
1369 House and said copies shall be made available to the members and the general public upon  
1370 request.

1371

1372 [Adopted Jan. 11, 1985, Amended Jan. 20, 2011.]

1373 Parliamentary Practice.

1374 86. The rules of parliamentary practice shall govern the House in all cases to which they are  
1375 applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with these rules or the joint rules of the two  
1376 branches. (62.)

1377 Procurement.

1378 87. (a) All procurement for goods or services shall be completed by the House Business  
1379 Manager. (b) All procurements for goods or services shall, to the extent practicable, be made  
1380 from the statewide procurement list established by the operational services division.

1381 (c) Upon certification by the House Business Manager that a necessary procurement cannot be  
1382 made using the statewide procurement list established by the operational services division, the  
1383 House Business Manager may procure the required goods or services pursuant to the following:

1384 (i) for a procurement of a supply or service in an amount of less than \$ 10,000, the House  
1385 Business Manager shall use sound business practices;

1386 (ii) for a procurement of a supply or service in an amount of \$10,000 , but less than \$100,000  
1387 50,000, the House Business Manager shall seek written or oral quotations from no fewer than 3  
1388 persons customarily providing such supply or service. The House Business Manager shall record  
1389 the names and addresses of all persons from whom quotations were sought, the names of the  
1390 persons submitting quotations and the date and amount of each quotation. The House Business  
1391 Manager shall award the contract to the responsible person whose quotation offers the needed  
1392 quality of supply or service and which represents the best value for the Commonwealth;

1393 (iii) for a procurement of a supply or service in an amount exceeding \$100,000 the House  
1394 Business Manager shall seek proposals through a competitive bid process established by the  
1395 Office of House Counsel; provided, however, that the Office of House Counsel shall file the  
1396 competitive bid process with the House Clerk no later than March 31 of the first year of the  
1397 session.

1398 (d) All procurements for legal consulting services shall be handled exclusively by the Office of  
1399 House Counsel in compliance with the provisions of this rule. Prior to executing a contract for  
1400 legal consulting services, said office shall certify, in writing, to the Clerk of the House of  
1401 Representatives that no employee of the House of Representatives possesses the required skills  
1402 to complete the service which is the subject of the contract.

1403 (e) The House Business Manager shall maintain a file on each contract not executed using the  
1404 statewide procurement list established by the operational services division and in excess of  
1405 \$10,000 and shall include in such file a copy of all documents related to the contract. The House  
1406 Business Manager shall make the file available for inspection within said office by members of  
1407 the House for at least 3 years from the date of final payment under the contract; provided,  
1408 however, that the Business Manager, in consultation with the Counsel to House of  
1409 Representatives appointed pursuant to section 51 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, shall redact  
1410 from said file any information which (i) is legally privileged; (ii) is proprietary; or (iii) is related  
1411 to individual members or House personnel.

1412 (f) Whenever the time required to comply with a requirement of this rule would endanger the  
1413 health, safety or convenience of the members, staff or visitors to the House of Representatives  
1414 the House Business Manager may make an emergency procurement without satisfying the  
1415 requirement of this rule; provided, however, that both the House Business Manager and the  
1416 Counsel to the House of Representatives appointed pursuant to section 51 of chapter 3 of the  
1417 General Laws certify in writing that: (i) an emergency exists and explain the nature thereof; (ii)  
1418 said emergency procurement is limited to only supplies or services necessary to meet the  
1419 emergency; (iii) conforms to the requirements of this rule to the extent practicable under the  
1420 circumstances; (iv) each contractor's name; (v) includes the amount and the type of each

1421 contract; (vi) includes the supplies or services provided under each contract; (vii) and includes  
1422 the basis for determining the need for an emergency procurement. Such certification shall be  
1423 filed with the Clerk of the House prior to an emergency procurement.

1424 [Adopted Jan. 20, 2011, Amended Jan. 23, 2013.]