

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 02015

Order (filed by Mr. Binienda of Worcester) relative to Joint Rules governing the 2013-2014 legislative sessions (House, No. 2015). January 16, 2013.



## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

1           **Ordered**, That, the joint rules of the Senate and House of Representatives for the years  
2 2013-2014 be adopted, as follows:

3 Committees.

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

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

7 A committee on Community Development and Small Businesses;

8 A committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure;

9 A committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies;

10 A committee on Education;

11 A committee on Elder Affairs;

12 A committee on Election Laws;

13 A committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture;

14 A committee on Financial Services;

15 A committee on Health Care Financing;

16 A committee on Higher Education;

17 A committee on Housing;

- 18 A committee on the Judiciary;
- 19 A committee on Labor and Workforce Development;
- 20 A committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse;
- 21 A committee on Municipalities and Regional Government;
- 22 A committee on Public Health;
- 23 A committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security;
- 24 A committee on Public Service;
- 25 A committee on Revenue;
- 26 A committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight;
- 27 A committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy;
- 28 A committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development;
- 29 A committee on Transportation;
- 30 A committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs

31

32 Each to consist of 6 members of the Senate, and 11 on the part of the House except the  
33 committees on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, Health Care Financing and  
34 Transportation which shall consist of 7 members of the Senate and 13 of the House.

35

36 Within 4 weeks of the appointment of joint standing committees in the first annual session of the  
37 General Court, each joint standing committee shall adopt rules of procedure regarding the  
38 conduct of said committee. Said rules of procedure, together with any amendments, shall be filed  
39 with the Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House and shall be available to the public and  
40 members of the General Court on the official website for the General Court.

41

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

46

47 Matters referred by either the Senate or the House to its committee on Ways and Means shall be  
48 considered by the respective committees of the two branches, acting as a joint committee, when,  
49 in the judgment of the chairmen of the respective committees of the 2 branches, the interests of  
50 legislation or the expedition of business will be better served by such joint consideration. Matters  
51 may also be referred to the committees on Ways and Means, of the two branches, as a joint  
52 committee.

53

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

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

63

64 (i) each joint committee shall review and study, on a continuing basis, the implementation,  
65 administration, execution and effectiveness of those laws, or parts of law, the subject matter of  
66 which is within the jurisdiction of that committee, the administrative regulations adopted to  
67 implement those laws, and those state agencies or entities having responsibilities for the  
68 administration and execution of such laws;

69

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

74

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

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

81

82 Each committee may, upon completion of its oversight hearings, report to the General Court the  
83 results of its findings and recommendations together with accompanying corrective legislation, if  
84 any, by filing the same with the Clerk of the House of Representatives or the Clerk of the Senate.  
85 Copies of such reports shall be, whenever practicable, made available to all members  
86 electronically and to the public via the Internet. The disposition of said reports shall be  
87 determined by the Clerks with the approval of the Speaker and the President.

88

89 The Senate and House chairmen of a joint committee may appoint subcommittees to investigate  
90 and study any matter referred to said subcommittee. Any subcommittee so established shall be  
91 co-chaired by a majority member of the Senate and a majority member of the House who are  
92 members of the joint standing committee appointing the subcommittee. The composition of the  
93 subcommittee shall be proportional to the composition of the appointing joint committee;  
94 provided, however, that not less than 10 per cent of the subcommittee's members shall be from  
95 the minority party. Chairmen of subcommittees shall not be considered chairmen under section 2  
96 of chapter 3 of the acts of 2005. A subcommittee may, upon completion of an investigation and  
97 study, report the results of the investigation and study together with legislation, if any, by filing  
98 the same with the Senate and House chairmen of the appointing joint committee.

99

100 Temporary employees of the general court assigned to a joint committee who are students at an  
101 accredited education institution or employees or grantees of other non-profit organizations under  
102 section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code may receive compensation from such  
103 organization, according to that organization's regular program of providing such compensation  
104 for temporary governmental or public service employment. A temporary employee's Senate or  
105 House supervisor shall establish the employee's total compensation, shall verify that the sum of  
106 the employee's state compensation, if any, and that any outside compensation the employee is to  
107 receive under this rule would not exceed this total compensation, and shall file the written terms  
108 of the employee's compensation with the Senate Personnel Office or House Human Resources  
109 Office, where it shall be available for public inspection. The temporary employee shall sign a  
110 confidentiality and ethics agreement provided by the Senate Personnel Office or House Human  
111 Resources Office. [Amended Jan. 6, 18 82; Jan. 5, 18 83; Jan. 7, 18 84; Jan. 8 and 26, 1885; Jan.  
112 8, 18 86; Jan. 12, 18 87; Jan. 9, 18 88; Jan. 28, 18 89; Jan. 8, 18 90; Feb. 2, 18 91; Jan. 11 and  
113 Feb. 10, 18 92; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan. 8, 1894; Jan. 7, 18 95; Jan. 7, 18 96; Jan. 11, 18 97; Jan. 10,  
114 18 98; Jan. 9, 18 99; Jan. 22 and 29, 1901; Jan. 6, 19 02; Jan. 9, 19 03; Jan. 8, 19 04; Jan. 6, 19  
115 05; Jan. 4, 19 07; Jan. 5, 19 10; Jan. 4, 19 11; Jan. 1, 19 13; Jan. 12, 19 14; Jan. 2, 19 18; Jan. 1

116 and 8 and Feb. 21, 1919; Jan. 7, 19 20; Jan. 5, 19 21; April 17 and 30, 1925; Jan. 5, 19 27; Jan. 7,  
117 19 31; Jan. 6, 19 37; Jan. 4, 19 39; Jan. 1, 19 41; Jan. 3, 19 45; Jan. 2, 19 46; Jan. 6, 19 47; Feb.  
118 1, 19 49; Jan. 7, 19 53; Jan. 7, 19 59; Jan. 30, 19 61; Jan. 7, 19 63; Jan. 12, 19 65; Feb. 24, 19 65;  
119 Mar. 10, 19 66; Jan. 30, 19 67; Jan. 7, 1971 ; July 23, 1974 ; Sept. 30 and Oct. 12, 1976 ; Nov. 3,  
120 1981 ; Dec. 21, 1981 ; Mar. 15, 1982 ; Oct. 3, 1983 ; June 3, 1985 ; Jan. 25 and Mar. 14, 1988 ;  
121 Mar. 27, 1995 , June 12, 1995 ; July 17, 2003 ; Jan. 26, 2005; July 21 and September 20, 2005;  
122 Feb. 20, 2007; Feb 12, 2009.]

123

124 1A. All meetings of joint committees acting concurrently, Senate and House standing  
125 committees, special committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, and joint special  
126 committees and committees of conference on the disagreeing votes of the 2 branches shall be  
127 open to the public, unless a majority shall vote otherwise. [Adopted July 17, 1973. Amended  
128 July 18, 1974; Feb. 12, 2009.]

129

130 1B. A joint standing committee shall hold a public hearing on each matter referred to it in each  
131 legislative session. [Adopted June 3, 1985; Amended Feb. 12, 2009.]

132

133 1C. All joint standing committees shall schedule committee hearings and executive sessions so  
134 as not to conflict, to the extent feasible, with the schedules of other committees and, to the extent  
135 feasible, the day of the week and times during that day set aside for formal sessions by the  
136 respective branches from the first Wednesday in January through the fourth Wednesday of April  
137 in the first annual session. [Adopted June 3, 1985; Amended June 12, 1995.]

138

139 1D. All meetings of joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and  
140 House of Representatives, shall be open to the public, and any person shall be permitted to attend  
141 any such meeting unless such committee convenes in executive session, as provided herein. All  
142 joint standing committees shall determine a schedule for committee hearings to be held from the  
143 beginning of the first annual session through the fourth Wednesday in June in said session. These  
144 committee schedules shall be submitted to the Clerk of the House who shall cause them to be  
145 published on the official website for the General Court. Establishment of such schedules shall  
146 not preclude joint standing committees from scheduling additional hearings or meetings as  
147 needed. No executive session shall be held except upon extraordinary circumstances and only  
148 after the committee has first convened in an open session for which notice has been given, the  
149 presiding officer has stated the purpose of the executive session, a majority of the committee  
150 members present has voted to go into executive session, the vote of each member has been

151 recorded on a roll call vote, and the presiding officer has stated before the executive session if  
152 the committee will reconvene after the executive session. The records of all such roll calls shall  
153 be kept in the offices of the committee for the duration of the General Court during which said  
154 vote was recorded, and shall be available for public inspection upon reasonable notice and during  
155 regular office hours.

156

157 All joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of  
158 Representatives, shall notify the Sergeant-at-Arms of the time, place and agenda of all public  
159 hearings and executive sessions not less than 48 hours prior to the time of such meetings. The  
160 Sergeant-at-Arms shall notify the clerk, who shall inform all members electronically and publish  
161 such information on the official website of the General Court whenever practicable.

162

163 Nothing contained in this rule shall prohibit a joint standing committee or special joint  
164 committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives from taking appropriate action  
165 including, but not limited to, the exclusion of a person from a committee meeting in order to  
166 prevent the disruption of or interference with committee proceedings.

167

168 The 48 hour requirement shall be suspended in an emergency only after all reasonable efforts  
169 have been made to contact all committee members and upon a recorded vote of at least a  
170 majority of the members of each branch appointed to the committee, but not less than two-thirds  
171 of the members of each branch voting.

172

173 A meeting of a committee may be recorded by a person in attendance by means of a recorder or  
174 any other means of audio/visual reproduction except when a meeting is held in executive session;  
175 provided, that a person seeking to record a meeting of a committee notifies the Chairs of the  
176 committee prior to commencing such recording; and provided further that during such recording  
177 there is no interference with the conduct of the meeting. [Adopted June 3, 1985. Amended June  
178 12, 1995; Feb. 20, 2007.]

179

180 1E. The joint standing committee on Health Care Financing shall review all legislation relating  
181 to health care to evaluate the appropriateness and fiscal effect of such legislation. A matter  
182 within the jurisdiction of said committee may, if appropriate, initially be referred to another joint  
183 standing committee sharing jurisdiction of the subject-matter. Any matter reported favorably by  
184 such joint standing committee shall be referred to the joint committee on Health Care Financing;

185 provided, however, that notwithstanding any rule to the contrary, any such matter so reported  
186 shall not be read a first time in the branch in which the report was received. The next favorable  
187 report on any such matter, if made by a joint committee, may be made to either branch. Such  
188 next favorable report shall be considered the first reading. The branch of origin for any such bill  
189 so reported shall be the branch receiving such favorable report.

190

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

195

196 In compliance with section 38A of chapter 3 of the General Laws, the joint committee on Health  
197 Care Financing when reporting on bills shall include a fiscal note prepared under section 3A of  
198 chapter 29 of the General Laws, showing the estimated cost or the fiscal effect of the proposed  
199 legislation, if, in the opinion of said committee, such cost or fiscal effect exceeds the sum of  
200 \$100,000; provided, however, that any matter reported by the committee on Health Care  
201 Financing with a fiscal effect of less than \$100,000 shall not be referred, under the rules, to the  
202 committee on Ways and Means.[Adopted Jan. 26, 2005; Amended May 19, 2005; Feb. 20, 2007;  
203 Feb. 12, 2009.]

204

205 1F. [Omitted February 12, 2009].

206

207 1G. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Minority Leader  
208 of the Senate, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Senate and House chairmen  
209 and the Senate and House ranking minority members of the joint committee on Public Safety and  
210 Homeland Security may receive security clearance from federal and state homeland security  
211 officials in order to be granted access to confidential homeland security briefings, information  
212 and materials. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the  
213 Senate and House committee chairmen and the Senate and House ranking minority members  
214 may designate 1 or more members of their staff who may receive such security clearance.

215

216 Any person who receives security clearance under this rule shall sign all confidentiality  
217 agreements required by homeland security officials. The breach of any such confidentiality  
218 agreement shall constitute a violation of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of

219 Representatives. Any alleged violation of a confidentiality agreement shall be referred for  
220 investigation to the Senate committee on Ethics and Rules or the House committee on Ethics,  
221 respectively, and, if appropriate, to law enforcement authorities for potential criminal  
222 prosecution. [Adopted Jan. 26, 2005; Amended Feb. 12, 2009 .]

223

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

226

227 2A. No member of either branch shall purchase, directly or indirectly, the stock or other  
228 securities of any corporation or association knowing that there is pending before the General  
229 Court any measure specially granting to such corporation or association any immunity,  
230 exemption, privilege or benefit or any measure providing for the creation of, or directly affecting  
231 any, contractual relations between such corporation or association and the Commonwealth. This  
232 rule shall not apply to the purchase of securities issued by the Commonwealth or any political  
233 subdivision of the Commonwealth. [See G.L. chapter 268, section 10.] [Adopted Jan. 16, 1922 .]

234

235 3. When the General Court is in session, authorization for any committee of the Senate or  
236 House of Representatives to travel during the session of the General Court shall be approved by a  
237 vote of two thirds of the members of its branch present and voting. When the General Court is in  
238 session, authorization for any committee of the Senate or House of Representatives to sit and  
239 travel during the recess of the General Court shall be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the  
240 members of each branch present and voting. During the recess of the General Court, the  
241 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives may, by written consent,  
242 allow standing committees of their respective branches or appoint special committees to sit,  
243 travel and incur expenses not exceeding sums authorized in writing by said presiding officers and  
244 appropriated for such purposes. When the General Court is in session, authorization for any  
245 joint committee to travel during the session, or to sit or travel during the recess, of the General  
246 Court shall be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and  
247 voting. During the recess of the General Court, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the  
248 House of Representatives, acting jointly, may, by written consent, allow joint committees or  
249 appoint joint special committees to sit, travel and incur expenses not exceeding sums authorized  
250 in writing by said presiding officers and appropriated for such purposes. The Clerks of the Senate  
251 and House of Representatives shall be notified of any appointments made and authorizations  
252 granted during the recess for said committees to sit, travel and incur expenses during the recess  
253 and the Clerks shall enter such information in the journals for the next year, as soon as may be  
254 practicable. Committees authorized by the presiding officers to sit during the recess in the odd  
255 numbered year shall report not later than the fourth Wednesday of January during the following



256 year and committees authorized by the presiding officers to sit during the recess in the even  
257 numbered year shall report not later than the fourth Wednesday of December during the same  
258 year.

259

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

267

268 All bills for the traveling expenses of committees shall be submitted by the Sergeant-at-Arms to  
269 the committee by whom they have been incurred and shall be approved by a majority of said  
270 committee before being presented to the Comptroller for payment. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890;  
271 Amended Feb. 2, 1891 ; Jan. 20, 1904 ; April 17, 1925 ; March 2, 1943 ; July 27, 1950 ; Oct. 18,  
272 1971 ; March 28, 1972 ; Jan. 15, 1973; Feb. 12, 2009.]

273

274 3A. A joint standing committee may, upon the written and signed report of two-thirds of the  
275 members of the Senate and two-thirds of the members of the House appointed to said committee,  
276 report a bill or other form of legislation without said legislation being founded upon petition;  
277 provided, however, that matters so reported shall be germane to the subject matters regularly  
278 referred to the committee. The committee shall hold a public hearing on such bill or other form  
279 of legislation before it is reported. A bill or other form of legislation so reported shall be placed  
280 in the Orders of the Day by the Clerk of the respective branch to which it is reported or referred  
281 to a standing committee of said branch under the rules. All reports of committees not founded  
282 upon petition shall bear the designation "committee bill, resolve, order or resolution", as the  
283 case may be, in the Orders of the Day. Committees to which messages from the Governor,  
284 reports of state officers, boards, committees, commissions and others authorized to report to the  
285 General Court, may report by bill or otherwise such legislation as may be germane to the subject  
286 matter referred to them. [Adopted June 3, 1985 .]

287

288 4. Favorable reports, and adverse reports on subjects of legislation other than petitions, by joint  
289 committees may be made to either branch, at the discretion of the committee, having reference to  
290 an equal distribution of business between the 2 branches, except that reports on money bills shall

291 be made to the House and if adverse reports on matters other than petitions which are  
292 accompanied by money bills are accepted by the House, this shall constitute final rejection.  
293 Adverse reports by joint committees on petitions shall be made to the branch in which the  
294 petition was originally introduced, except that such adverse reports on petitions accompanied by  
295 proposed money bills shall be made to the House; and, if accepted by the branch in which they  
296 are made, shall be considered as a final rejection. When a report is made from any committee to  
297 either branch, and the subject-matter of the report is subsequently referred to a joint committee,  
298 such committee, except for the committee on Health Care Financing, shall report its action to the  
299 branch in which the reference originated. [See also Joint Rule 5.]

300

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

307

308 All committee members shall have an opportunity to sign a form accompanying a report of the  
309 committee signifying approval of, dissent or abstention from a report of a joint standing  
310 committee before the report is final or filed. No signature shall be valid unless the report to  
311 which the signature is affixed includes the substantially complete text of the legislation being  
312 reported. [Amended Jan. 3, 1952; April 8, 1959; June 7, 1965; Jan. 7, 1971; March 11, 1974;  
313 June 3, 1985; Feb. 20, 2007.]

314

315 4A. In compliance with section 38A of chapter 3 of the General Laws, all joint committees of  
316 the General Court when reporting on bills referred to them shall include a fiscal note prepared  
317 under section 3A of chapter 29 of the General Laws, showing the estimated cost or the fiscal  
318 effect of the proposed legislation, if, in the opinion of said committee, such cost exceeds  
319 \$100,000. Such fiscal note shall be filed electronically in the office of the clerk to which the  
320 report is being made, and shall be promptly made available on the official website of the General  
321 Court. [Adopted Jan. 15, 1973.]

322

323 5. Matters reported adversely by joint committees and the committees on Rules of the 2  
324 branches, acting concurrently, may be recommitted to the same committees at the pleasure of the  
325 branch acting on the report, and bills or resolves may be recommitted in either branch. If a bill or

326 resolve is laid aside in either branch for the reason that it is declared to be broader in its scope  
327 than the subject-matter upon which it is based, the subject-matter shall be recommitted to the  
328 committee. A concurrent vote shall, however, be necessary for recommittal, with instructions.  
329 After recommitment, report shall, in all cases, be made to the branch originating the  
330 recommitment. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; April 11, 1935; Jan. 6, 1947; May 7, 19 53; March 26,  
331 1963; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; March 11, 1974.]

332

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

336

337 Joint Petitions.

338

339 6A. A member of the Senate and a member of the House of Representatives may file a joint  
340 petition in either branch and shall endorse their name on the petition and a brief statement of the  
341 nature and object of the instrument and the reading of the instrument shall be dispensed with,  
342 unless specially ordered. The petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of either the Senate  
343 or House of Representatives, depending on whether it is a "Joint Senate/House Petition" or a  
344 "Joint House/Senate Petition" but the Journal records in the Senate and House of Representatives  
345 shall carry both members' names as presenters of the petition. [Adopted Jan. 15, 1973.]

346

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

351

352 7A. A petition for legislation to authorize a county to reinstate in its service a person formerly  
353 employed by it, or to retire or pension or grant an annuity to any person, or to increase any  
354 retirement allowance, pension or annuity, or to pay any sum of money in the nature of a pension  
355 or retirement allowance, or to pay any salary which would have accrued to a deceased official or  
356 employee but for his death, or to pay any claim for damages or otherwise, or to alter the benefits  
357 or change the restrictions of any county retirement or pension law, shall, subsequently to the  
358 procedure required by Senate Rule No. 20 and by House Rule No. 24, be reported adversely,  
359 unless, when filed it be the petition of, or be approved by, a majority of the county

360 commissioners. [Adopted April 29, 1915. Amended Jan. 13, Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; May 24,  
361 1926; April 11, 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945; Feb. 20, 1951; Jan. 30, 1967;  
362 Jan. 7, 1971; Jan. 15, 1973.]

363

364 7B. A petition, the operation of which is restricted to a particular city or town (and which does  
365 not affect the powers, duties, etc., of state departments, boards, commissions, etc., or which does  
366 not affect generally the laws of the Commonwealth) and which is not filed in conformity with  
367 Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the Constitution shall, subsequent to the  
368 procedure required by Senate Rule 20 and House Rule 24, be reported adversely, unless it be on  
369 petition filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor and city council, or other  
370 legislative body, of a city, or the town meeting of a town. A joint committee to which is  
371 inadvertently referred a petition or other subject of legislation the operation of which is restricted  
372 to a particular city or town and which is not in conformity with Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of  
373 the Amendments to the Constitution shall report a general law which applies alike to all cities, or  
374 to all towns, or to all cities and towns, or to a class of not fewer than 2; or shall report "ought not  
375 to pass", with the further endorsement that it "would be unconstitutional to enact such special  
376 law". [Adopted Jan. 13, 1920. Amended Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; May 24, 1926; April 11,  
377 1935; April 22, 1937; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 9, 1941; Jan. 15, 1945; Feb. 20, 1951; Jan. 30, 1967;  
378 Jan. 7 and Mar. 22, 1971 ; Jan. 15, 1973 .]

379

380 Notice to Parties Interested.

381

382 8. No legislation affecting the rights of individuals or the rights of a private or municipal  
383 corporation, otherwise than as it affects generally the people of the Commonwealth or the  
384 people of the city or town to which it specifically applies, shall be proposed or introduced except  
385 by a petition, nor shall any bill or resolve embodying such legislation be reported by a committee  
386 except upon a petition duly referred, nor shall such a bill or resolve be reported by a committee,  
387 whether on an original reference or on a recommittal with instructions to hear the parties, until it  
388 is made to appear to the satisfaction of the committee that proper notice of the proposed  
389 legislation has been given by public advertisement or otherwise to all parties interested, without  
390 expense to the Commonwealth, or until evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that  
391 all parties interested have in writing waived notice. A committee reporting adversely due to lack  
392 proper notice or of a waiver of proper notice shall so state in its report and no bill or resolve shall  
393 be in order as a substitute for, or amendment of, such report. Objection to the violation of this  
394 rule may be taken at any stage prior to that of the third reading. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890. Amended  
395 Dec. 22, 1920 ; Jan. 12, 1939 ; Jan. 15, 1945; Jan. 7, 1971 .]

396

397 9. A petition for the incorporation of a city or town, for the annexation of 1 municipality to  
398 another, for the consolidation of 2 or more municipalities or for the division of an existing  
399 municipality, or for the incorporation or revival of a railroad, street railway, elevated railroad,  
400 canal, telephone, telegraph, water, gas, electric light, power or other public service corporation,  
401 for the amendment, alteration or extension of the charter or corporate powers or privileges, or for  
402 the change of name, of any such company, whether specially incorporated or organized under the  
403 General Laws, or for authority to take water for a water supply, or relative to building structures  
404 in or over navigable or tide waters, shall be placed on file, and not referred to a committee,  
405 unless the petitioner has given the notice and followed the procedure required by section 5 of  
406 chapter 3 of the General Laws. But if, no objection being raised, any such petition is referred to a  
407 committee without such required notice or procedure, the committee shall forthwith report  
408 adversely, setting forth as the reason for such report failure to comply with the law, unless  
409 evidence satisfactory to the committee is produced that all parties interested have in writing  
410 waived notice. In case a bill or resolve is reported upon such a petition, after proof of such  
411 waiver of notice, this fact shall be set forth in the report of the committee. When an adverse  
412 report is made by a committee, on account of failure to give the required notice, no bill or resolve  
413 shall be substituted for such report, nor shall such report be recommitted or referred to another  
414 committee.

415

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

423

424 Any petition placed on file for want of proper notice or procedure under this rule shall not affect  
425 action upon any other measure involving the same subject matter. [Adopted Feb. 7, 1890.  
426 Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 3, 1898; Jan. 16, 1903; Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; May 24, 1926;  
427 Feb. 27, 1929; April 11, 1935; Jan. 6, 1938; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 9, 1941; Jan. 15, 1945; April 8,  
428 1959; Jan. 7, 1963; Jan. 7, 1971 ; Jan. 15, 1973 , June 12, 1995; Feb. 12, 2009.]

429

430

431 Limit of Time allowed for Reports of Committees.

432

433 10. All joint committees and the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently,  
434 shall make final report not later than the third Wednesday of March of the second annual session  
435 of the General Court on all matters referred to them before the third Wednesday in February of  
436 the second annual session and within 30 days on all matters referred to them on and after the  
437 third Wednesday in February of the second annual session of the General Court except that the  
438 committee on Health Care Financing shall make final report not later than the last Wednesday of  
439 April of the second annual session on all matters referred to them on or before the fourth  
440 Wednesday of March and within 30 days on all matters referred to it after the fourth Wednesday  
441 in March of the second annual session of the General Court. When the time within which said  
442 committees are required to report has expired, all matters upon which no report has then been  
443 made shall forthwith be reported by the chairman of the committee on the part of the branch in  
444 which they were respectively introduced, with an adverse recommendation under this rule. If the  
445 chairman fails to make such report by the end of the legislative day next following the expiration  
446 date, all matters remaining unreported shall be placed in the Orders of the Day by the Clerk of  
447 the branch in which the matter was originally filed with an adverse report under this rule. Matters  
448 which have been referred under Joint Rule 29, upon which the chairmen of the committees on  
449 Rules fail to make a report, shall be placed by the respective Clerks in the Orders of the Day of  
450 the branch in which the subject matter was referred to said committees. Committees to whom are  
451 referred subjects of legislation may combine petitions of similar subject matter, or other forms of  
452 legislation of similar subject matter, into 1 adverse report, and the report on the petition shall be  
453 that said petitions or other forms of legislation "ought NOT to pass," and if the report is  
454 accepted, all the matters contained in the report shall be disposed of. However, petitions upon  
455 which an adverse report is accepted in only 1 branch may not be combined with other subjects of  
456 legislation upon which adverse reports must be accepted, in concurrence. This rule shall not  
457 apply to petitions referred to the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently,  
458 under the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or  
459 suspended, except by a concurrent vote of four-fifths of the members of each branch present and  
460 voting thereon. Notwithstanding Joint Rule 30, this rule shall not be rescinded, amended or  
461 suspended more than 3 times except by unanimous consent. [Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Jan. 25,  
462 1894; Jan. 16, 1903; Jan. 20, 1904; Dec. 22, 1920; April 17, 1925; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan. 15, 1945;  
463 Jan. 6, 1947; May 7, 1953; Jan. 27, 1955; Jan. 30, 1967; Jan. 7, 1971; Feb. 4, 1974, June 12,  
464 1995; July 17, 2003; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 12, 2009.]

465

466 10A. The form for all subjects of legislation receiving a favorable report shall be "ought to  
467 pass." The form for all subjects of legislation receiving an adverse report shall be "ought NOT to

468 pass." A committee to whom is referred any other matter may report recommending that the  
469 same be placed on file. [Adopted Jan. 7, 1971.]

470 Committees of Conference.

471

472 11. Committees of conference shall consist of 3 members on the part of each branch,  
473 representing its vote; and their report, if agreed to by a majority of each committee, shall be  
474 made to the branch asking for the conference, and may be either accepted or rejected, but no  
475 other action shall be had, except through a new committee of conference.

476 Committees of conference to whom are referred matters of difference in respect to bills or  
477 resolves, shall, before filing their reports, have the same approved or discharged by each  
478 committee on Bills in the Third Reading. [Amended April 22, 1937; Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3,  
479 2011.]

480 11A. Committees of conference to whom are referred matters of difference in respect to  
481 appropriation bills, including capital outlay programs, shall, before filing their reports, have the  
482 same approved or discharged by each committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

483 Upon the appointment of a committee of conference to whom matters of difference in respect to  
484 any appropriation bill or in respect to any bill providing for capital outlay programs and projects  
485 are referred, the clerk of the branch requesting said committee of conference shall make  
486 available to members of the General Court a list of the matters in disagreement identified by item  
487 number and item purpose and showing the amount made available by each branch of the General  
488 Court, and any other matters in disagreement and the position of each of the said branches.

489 The report of said committee of conference shall consist of the matters of difference so referred  
490 and so identified, showing the amounts appropriated by each of the said branches and other  
491 matters in disagreement and the position of each branch with respect to those matters, and shall  
492 state said committee's recommendations with respect to the matters so referred. Matters on which  
493 there exists no disagreement between the branches shall not be disturbed by the committee on  
494 conference.

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

498 11B. No report from a committee of conference shall be considered or acted upon by either  
499 branch until the calendar day following the day on which said report shall have been available to  
500 the public and to the members of the General Court. The committee shall file its report no later  
501 than 8 p.m. on the day preceding its consideration and the General Court shall not consider said  
502 report before 1 p.m. on the following day, except that a report from such committee of

503 conference that it is unable to agree may be considered and acted upon at the time that such  
504 report is filed. [Adopted Oct. 3, 1983. Amended July 17, 2003; July 21 and September 20, 2005;  
505 Feb. 3, 2011.]

506 11C. Reports, other than those filed under Rule 11A, from a committee of conference shall,  
507 whenever practicable, be accompanied by a summary which shall be filed with the clerk.  
508 [Adopted Feb. 12, 2009; Feb. 3, 2011.]

509 11D. Upon the filing of a report by a committee of conference the clerk shall, as soon as  
510 practicable, make the report and the summary of the report available to all members  
511 electronically and to the public on the official website of the General Court. [Adopted Feb. 12,  
512 2009; Feb. 3, 2011.]

513

514 Limit of Time allowed for New Business.

515

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

519

520 All such matters except messages from the Governor, reports required or authorized to be made  
521 to the General Court and petitions filed or approved by the voters of a city or town, or the mayor  
522 and city council, or other legislative body of a city, or the town meeting of a town, for the  
523 enactment of a special law under Section 8 of Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the  
524 Constitution and which do not affect the powers, duties, etc., of state departments, boards,  
525 commissions, etc., or which do not affect generally the laws of the Commonwealth deposited  
526 with the respective clerks subsequent to 5 p.m. on the third Friday of January of the first annual  
527 session of the General Court shall be referred by the Clerks to the committees on the Rules of the  
528 two branches, acting concurrently. No such matter shall be admitted for consideration except on  
529 report of the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, and then upon  
530 approval of two-thirds of the members of each branch voting thereon. Matters upon which  
531 suspension of Joint Rule 12 has been negatived shall be placed on file.

532

533 At any special session called under Rule 26A, however, matters relating to the facts constituting  
534 the necessity for convening such session shall, if otherwise admissible, be admitted as though  
535 filed seasonably under the first sentence of this rule. Any recommendations from the Governor  
536 shall be similarly considered. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended, except by



537 a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting thereon.  
538 [Amended Feb. 7, 18 90; Feb. 2, 18 91; Feb. 7, 18 93; Jan. 10, 18 98; Jan. 9, 18 99; Feb. 15, 19  
539 01; May 4, 19 04; Jan. 31, 19 10; Feb. 2, 19 17; Dec. 22, 19 20; March 30, 19 21; Jan. 30, 19 23;  
540 Feb. 15, 19 33; Jan. 12 and Aug. 7, 19 39; Jan. 15, 19 45; Jan. 6, 19 47; May 27, 19 48; Jan. 30,  
541 19 67; March 26, 19 69; Jan. 7, 1971 ; Jan. 15 and Oct. 2, 1973 ; Oct 3, 1983 , June 12, 1995 ;  
542 Jan. 26, 2005; July 17, 2003; Jan. 26, 2005; July 21, 2005; Sept. 20, 2005; Feb. 12, 2009.]

543

544 12A. All formal business of the first annual session of the General Court shall be concluded not  
545 later than the third Wednesday in November of that calendar year and all formal business of the  
546 second annual session shall be concluded not later than the last day of July of that calendar year.

547

548 In order to assist the Senate and House in its analysis and appraisal of laws enacted by the  
549 General Court, each joint standing committee, upon conclusion of the formal business of the  
550 annual sessions, shall, as authorized by Joint Rule 1, initiate oversight hearings to evaluate the  
551 effectiveness, application and administration of the subject matter of laws within the jurisdiction  
552 of that committee. [Adopted June 12, 1995.]

553

554 Unfinished Business of the Session.

555

556 12B. Any matter pending before the General Court at the end of the first annual session and any  
557 special session held in the same year shall carry over into the second annual session of the same  
558 General Court in the same legislative status as it was at the conclusion of the first annual session  
559 or any special session held during that year; provided, however, that any measure making or  
560 supplementing an appropriation for a fiscal year submitted to or returned to the General Court by  
561 the Governor, under Article LXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution, in the first annual  
562 session or in a special session held during that year shall cease to exist upon the termination of  
563 the first annual session. [Adopted June 12. 1995.]

564

565 Papers to be deposited with the Clerks.

566

567 13. Information intended for presentation to the General Court by any Representative or Senator  
568 shall be deposited with the Clerk of the branch to which the member belongs; and all such  
569 information, unless they be subject to other rules or of the rules of the Senate or House, shall be

570 referred by the Clerk, with the approval of the President or Speaker, to appropriate committees,  
571 subject to such changes as the Senate or House may make. The reading of information so  
572 referred may be dispensed with, but they shall, except as provided in these rules, be entered in  
573 the Journal of the same on the next legislative day after such reference.

574

575 A member may include a brief statement of intent with all papers intended for presentation to  
576 the General Court. Upon a favorable report by a joint standing committee, a committee may  
577 include a brief written statement of intent. Said statement shall be dated and shall include the  
578 scope of the matter presented for consideration; provided, however, this rule shall not be  
579 construed to require the presentation of such statement of intent under this rule. [Adopted Feb. 7,  
580 1890. Amended Feb. 2, 1891; Feb. 7, 1893; Jan. 25, 1894; Dec. 22, 1920; May 25, 1923; Feb.  
581 15, 1933; Jan. 12, 1971; June 3, 1985; Feb. 12, 2009.]

582

583 Dockets of Legislative Counsel and Agents.

584

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

588

589 Duties of the Clerk.

590

591 15. If any part of the report of a committee over the signature of the chairman or members of the  
592 committee is amended in either branch, the Clerk of that branch shall endorse upon the report  
593 such amendment.

594

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

599

600 17. After bills and resolves have passed both branches to be engrossed, they shall be in the  
601 charge of the Clerks of the 2 branches, who shall prepare the same for final passage in the

602 manner prescribed by law; and when so prepared the same shall be delivered to the Clerk of the  
603 House of Representatives; and when the bills have been passed to be enacted or the resolves have  
604 been passed in the House, they shall, in like manner, be delivered to the Senate Clerk and  
605 Parliamentarian. If a bill or resolve contains an emergency preamble, it shall be delivered in like  
606 manner, to the Senate after the preamble has been adopted by the House of Representatives and  
607 before the bill or resolve is put upon its final passage in that branch. If the Senate concurs in  
608 adopting the preamble, the bill or resolve shall be returned to the House to be there first put upon  
609 its final passage, under Joint Rule No. 22. [Amended Feb. 24, 1914; Feb. 21, 1919; Jan. 7, 1971.]

610

611 18. [Omitted in 1971.]

612

613 19. The Clerk of the branch in which a bill or resolve originated shall make an endorsement on  
614 the envelope of the engrossed copy of the bill, certifying in which branch the bill originated,  
615 which endorsement shall be entered on the journals by the Clerks respectively. [Amended Jan.  
616 28, 1889; Feb. 24, 1914.]

617

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

622

623 Presentation and Distribution of Documents.

624

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

631

632 Bills, reports and other documents, available under the general order of either branch, may be  
633 distributed as follows: copies to each member of the Senate and House of Representatives (to be  
634 placed on his file under the direction of the Sergeant-at-Arms, if desired by the member); copies

635 to each Clerk in either branch, and copies to each reporter in regular attendance, to whom a seat  
636 has been assigned in either branch; copies to the Executive; copies to the Secretary's office;  
637 copies to the State Library; copy to each Public Library in the Commonwealth. [Amended Jan. 8,  
638 1886 ; Jan. 28, 1889 ; Jan. 27, 1911 ; Feb. 19, 1920 ; Jan. 6, 1947 ; Apr. 5, 19 67 ; Jan. 7, 1971;  
639 Feb. 12, 2009.]

640

641 Emergency Measures.

642

643 22. The vote on the preamble of an emergency law, which under the requirements of Article  
644 XLVIII, as amended by Article LXVII of the Amendments of the Constitution shall, upon  
645 request of 2 members of the Senate or of 5 members of the House of Representatives, be taken  
646 by call of the yeas and nays, shall be had after the proposed law has been prepared for final  
647 passage; and neither branch shall vote on the enactment of a bill or on the passage of a resolve  
648 containing an emergency preamble until it has been determined whether the preamble shall  
649 remain or be eliminated. If the bill contains an emergency preamble, a motion to amend the bill  
650 may be received in either branch before the adoption of the emergency preamble, and the  
651 amendment may contain a new emergency preamble. If the 2 branches concur in adopting the  
652 preamble, the bill or resolve shall first be put upon its final passage in the House of  
653 Representatives. If either branch fails to adopt the preamble, notice of its action shall be sent to  
654 the other branch; and the bill or resolve, duly endorsed, shall again be prepared for final passage  
655 without the preamble and without any provision that the bill or the resolve shall take effect  
656 earlier than 90 days after it has become law. Procedure shall be otherwise under the joint rules  
657 and the rules of the Senate and the House of Representatives. [Adopted Feb. 21, 1919. Amended  
658 Jan. 30, 1923; Jan. 7, 1971; Feb. 20, 2007; Feb. 12, 2009.]

659

660 22A. Bills and resolves passed to be engrossed by both branches and before being transmitted  
661 by the clerks to the Legislative Engrossing Division shall be made available to the committees on  
662 Bills in the Third Reading of the two branches, acting jointly, who shall examine them to ensure  
663 accuracy in the text; that the legislation is correct as to form; that references to previous  
664 amendments to any particular law are correct and to ensure proper consistency with the language  
665 of existing statutes. These committees, with the approval of the majority and minority leadership  
666 of both branches may make corrections which are not substantive in nature. The clerks of both  
667 branches shall be immediately notified, in writing, of any such changes. Errors discovered by the  
668 committees of a substantive nature shall be reported to the General Court, which in turn shall  
669 take appropriate action under its rules. Upon completion of examination and possible correction  
670 of any such bills and resolves, the bills and resolves shall be returned to the clerks, who in turn,

671 shall transmit them to the Legislative Engrossing Division to be prepared for final passage.

672 [Adopted Sept. 16, 1971.]

673

674 Legislative Amendments to the Constitution.

675

676 23. All proposals for amendments to the Constitution referred to a joint committee on the first  
677 annual session of the General Court shall be reported by said committee not later than the last  
678 Wednesday of April in said year, and proposals for amendments to the Constitution referred to a  
679 joint committee subsequent to the last Wednesday in April of the first annual session shall be  
680 reported by said committee not later than the last Wednesday of April in the second session of  
681 the same General Court. The committee shall file its report, either recommending that the  
682 proposal ought to pass or ought not to pass, with any official papers in its possession that relate  
683 thereto, with the Clerk of the Senate. When the time within which said committees are required  
684 to report has expired, all matters upon which no report has been made shall forthwith be placed  
685 in the Journal of the respective branches, with an adverse report under this rule; and shall then be  
686 placed on file in the office of the Clerk of the Senate. For further information of the members of  
687 the Senate and House of Representatives, the respective Clerks shall also place all such matters  
688 under a separate heading in the Calendar of each branch, as soon as is practicable. In each branch  
689 the report shall be read and forthwith placed on file; and no further legislative action shall be  
690 taken on the measure unless consideration in joint session is called for by vote of either branch,  
691 under Section 2 of Part IV of Article XLVIII (as amended by Article LXXXI) of the  
692 Amendments to the Constitution. A joint committee to which is referred any recommendation for  
693 an amendment to the Constitution made by the Governor or contained in a report authorized to  
694 be made to the General Court may report on the recommendation a proposal for a legislative  
695 amendment, which shall be deemed to have been introduced by the member of the Senate who  
696 reports for the committee; and the procedure as regards reporting, filing and subsequent action  
697 shall be that provided for legislative amendments by this rule. Or the joint committee may report  
698 ought not to pass for the reason that no legislation is necessary or that the recommendation ought  
699 not to pass; and in such cases the usual procedure as regards similar reports by joint committees  
700 shall be followed. If such an adverse report is amended in the Senate by substituting a proposal  
701 for a legislative amendment, notice of the Senate's action shall be sent to the House and said  
702 proposal, together with the official papers relating to the subject, shall be in the custody of the  
703 Clerk of the Senate; and if said report is so amended in the House, the proposal, duly endorsed,  
704 together with the other papers, shall be sent to the Senate for its information and shall be kept in  
705 the custody of its Clerk. No further legislative action shall be taken in either branch on a proposal  
706 so substituted unless consideration in joint session is called for under the Constitution. If either  
707 branch calls for the consideration of any proposal in joint session, notice of its action shall be  
708 sent to the other branch; and it shall then be the duty of the Senate and the House of

709 Representatives to arrange for the holding of the joint session not later than the second  
710 Wednesday in May. Subject to the requirements of the Constitution, joint sessions or  
711 continuances of joint sessions of the 2 branches to consider proposals for specific amendments to  
712 the Constitution, and all rules or procedures, shall be determined only by concurrent votes of the  
713 2 branches. The rules relative to joint conventions shall apply to the joint sessions of the 2  
714 houses. [Adopted Feb. 21, 1919. Amended March 30, 1921; April 11, 1935; Jan. 12, 1939; Jan.  
715 15, 1945; Nov. 9, 1951; Jan. 15, 1973; July 1, 1974; Feb. 12, 2009.]

716

717 Executive Reorganization Plans.

718

719 23A. Any reorganization plan, accompanied by a bill, submitted by the Governor under Article  
720 LXXXVII of the Amendments to the Constitution shall be referred by the Clerks of the Senate  
721 and the House, with the approval of the President and Speaker, to a joint standing committee  
722 within 5 days of the presentation of the reorganization plan.

723

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

728

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

734

735 If the committee recommends favorable action, the report shall be that the reorganization plan  
736 "ought to be approved". If the committee recommends adverse action, the report shall be that the  
737 reorganization plan "ought NOT to be approved". In each instance, the question shall be "Shall  
738 this reorganization plan be approved?"

739

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

743

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

748

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

754

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

759

760 Unless disapproved by a majority vote of the members of either of the 2 branches of the General  
761 Court present and voting, the General Court not having prorogued within 60 days from the date  
762 of presentation by the Governor, the plan shall be approved and shall take effect as provided by  
763 Article LXXXVII of the Amendments to the Constitution.

764

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

770

771 No such reorganization plan presented to the General Court shall be subject to change or  
772 amendment before expiration of such 60 days. [Adopted June 13, 1967; Amended March 27,  
773 1969 ; June 12, 1995; Feb. 12, 2009.]

774

775 Joint Conventions.

776

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

781

782 25. When an agreement has been made by the 2 branches to go into Convention, such agreement  
783 shall not be altered or annulled, except by concurrent vote, excepting that it shall be in order to  
784 recess the convention from time to time upon a majority vote of said convention. [Amended Jan.  
785 7, 1971 .]

786

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

789

790 Special Sessions.

791

792 26A. If written statements of 21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House of  
793 Representatives, that in their opinion it is necessary that the General Court assemble in special  
794 session on a particular date and time specified in their statements during a recess of the General  
795 Court, are filed with their respective Clerks, such Clerks shall forthwith notify all the members  
796 of their respective branches to assemble at the State House in Boston, on said date at the time so  
797 specified. When so assembled, the first business to be taken up shall be the question of the  
798 necessity of so assembling, under Article I of Section I of Chapter I of Part the Second of the  
799 Constitution of the Commonwealth. If 21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House  
800 of Representatives judge by vote taken by call of the yeas and nays that such assembling of the  
801 General Court is necessary, specifying in such vote the facts constituting such necessity, the  
802 General Court shall then complete its organization as a special session, proceed to the  
803 consideration of the suspension of Joint Rule 12A which if suspended by the required two-thirds



804 of the members of both branches shall permit the General Court to proceed to the consideration  
805 of matters properly before it. Nothing in this rule shall prevent the General Court from  
806 assembling in any other constitutional manner when it judges necessary. [Adopted Aug. 7, 1939.  
807 Amended March 2, 1943; March 27, 19 69; May 5, 1979; July 17, 2003; July 21 and September  
808 20, 2005.]

809

810 Joint Elections.

811

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

814

815 27A. In all cases of elections by ballot a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for a  
816 choice, and where there shall be no such a majority on the first ballot the ballots shall be repeated  
817 until a majority is obtained; and in balloting, blanks shall be rejected and not taken into the count  
818 in the enumeration of votes, excepting that when the number of blanks shall be more than the  
819 number of votes received by the candidate having the highest number of votes, then the election  
820 shall be declared void and the balloting shall be repeated as provided herein. [Adopted March 27,  
821 1969 .]

822

823 28. [Omitted March 28, 1972 .]

824

825 References to the Committees on Rules.

826

827 29. All motions and orders authorizing joint committees to travel or to employ stenographers, or  
828 authorizing joint committees or special commissions composed as a whole or in part of members  
829 of the General Court to make investigations or to file special reports, all propositions reported by  
830 joint committees which authorize investigations or special reports by joint committees or by  
831 special commissions composed as a whole or in part of members of the General Court, all  
832 motions or orders proposed for joint adoption which provide that information be transmitted to  
833 the General Court, and all matters referred under the second paragraph of Joint Rule 12, shall be  
834 referred without debate to the committees on Rules of the two branches acting concurrently, who  
835 shall report on the matter, under Joint Rule 10. All matters which have been referred under this  
836 rule shall, in each instance, be reported back into the branch making such reference. [Adopted

837 Jan. 10, 1898. Amended Jan. 20, 1904; Jan. 28, 1913; Feb. 19 and Dec. 22, 1920; April 11, 1935;  
838 April 22, 1937; Jan. 27, 1955; Jan. 30, 1967; Oct. 18, 1971.]

839

840 30. All motions or orders extending the time within which joint committees and the committees  
841 on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, are required to report shall be referred without  
842 debate to the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, who shall report  
843 recommending what action should be taken on the motion or order. Such extension shall be  
844 granted by a concurrent majority vote if recommended by the committees on Rules of the two  
845 branches, acting concurrently; but no such extension shall be granted, against the  
846 recommendation of the committees, except by a four-fifths vote of the members of each branch  
847 present and voting on the extension. This rule shall not be rescinded, amended or suspended,  
848 except by a concurrent vote of four-fifths of the members of each branch present and voting  
849 thereon. [Adopted Jan. 16, 1903. Amended Feb. 6, 1912; Feb. 19, 1920; Jan. 6, 1947; Jan. 27,  
850 1955; June 7, 1965.]

851

852 Members.

853

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

860

861 Accommodations for Reporters.

862

863 32. Subject to the approval and direction of the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting  
864 concurrently, during the session, and of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House  
865 of Representatives after prorogation, the use of the rooms and facilities assigned to reporters in  
866 the State House shall be under the control of the organizations of legislative reporters known as  
867 the Massachusetts State House Press Association and the State House Broadcasters Association.  
868 No person shall be permitted to use such rooms or facilities who is not entitled to the privileges  
869 of the reporters' galleries of the Senate or of the House. Within 10 days after the General Court  
870 convenes the Massachusetts State House Press Association and the State House Broadcasters

871 Association shall each transmit to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
872 Representatives and the Sergeant-at-Arms a list of the legislative reporters with the principal  
873 publication or news service which each represents. [Adopted Jan. 27, 1911. Amended Feb. 24,  
874 1914; Feb. 19, 1920; April 17, 1925; May 23, 1979; Feb. 12, 2009.]

875

876 Suspension of Rules.

877

878 33. Any joint rule except Rule 10 and Rule 30 may be altered, suspended or rescinded by a  
879 concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members of each branch present and voting thereon.  
880 [Amended Feb. 7, 1893. Adopted in revised form Jan. 9, 1899. Amended Jan. 16, 1903; Jan. 26,  
881 2005.]

882

883 Audit of Accounts.

884

885 34. The committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, shall provide that an  
886 outside independent audit of joint financial accounts be conducted by a certified public  
887 accountant no less frequently that at the end of each second fiscal year. A copy of such audit  
888 shall be filed with the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives and made available for  
889 public inspection upon reasonable notice and during regular office hours. [Adopted May 30,  
890 1985.]

891

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