

2016 -- H 7039

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

HOUSE RESOLUTION

AMENDING THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS  
2015-2016

Introduced By: Representative John J. Lombardi

Date Introduced: January 07, 2016

Referred To: House Rules

1           RESOLVED, That Section 45 of the rules for the House of Representatives adopted by  
2 the House of Representatives at its January session, A.D. 2015, entitled "House Resolution  
3 Adopting Rules of the House of Representatives for the Years 2015-2016" be and the same is  
4 hereby amended to read as follows:

5           Establishment of Caucuses

6           (45)(a) Members of the House may establish affiliate groups to be known as "Caucuses."

7           (b) Membership in any said Caucus is limited to duly elected members of the House. No  
8 party, person, nor organization who is not a duly elected member of the House shall be involved  
9 in nor be allowed to join nor participate in any manner in the business of the Caucus except staff  
10 members authorized by the highest ranking member present at the majority party caucus and by  
11 the highest ranking member present at the minority party caucus.

12           (c) Membership in any said Caucus is open to those who are primarily in said affiliate  
13 group, but should not necessarily be closed to other House members.

14           (d) Notwithstanding 45(c):

15           (1) Any Caucus organized around a political party affiliation is limited solely to those  
16 House members who belong to said party, provided that any member elected to the House as an  
17 Independent may caucus with any party, but not more than one party, and not before submitting  
18 written communication to the House announcing such intention. The party for which the  
19 Independent member wishes to caucus with shall not be obligated to accept the Independent into

1 the caucus, and if permission is so denied, shall communicate that decision to the House clerk  
2 within seven (7) days of the Independent member's notification to the House. The Speaker shall  
3 make such determination for the majority party caucus, and the Minority Leader shall make such  
4 decision for the minority party caucus. The Independent then may seek admission to any other  
5 party for purposes of joining a caucus.

6 (2) Any Caucus organized around a county and/or municipal affiliation is limited solely  
7 to those House members who represent said county and or municipality.

8 (e) The duties of each Caucus shall be to provide a common association and opportunity  
9 for members to interact with each other and to address concerns and to act as a positive body to  
10 implement legislation, initiatives, suggestions and other forms of action on issues of common  
11 interest to the membership.

12 (f) The governing body of any Caucus is limited to a chairperson and vice chairperson  
13 and any member of the Caucus shall be eligible to hold any office.

14 (g) The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

15 (1) Chairperson:

16 (i) To preside over all meetings of the Caucus;

17 (ii) To provide an agenda for each meeting to those attending; and

18 (iii) To conduct the annual election of officers.

19 (2) Vice Chairperson:

20 (i) To assume duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence; and

21 (ii) To conduct all votes, notwithstanding 45(g)(1)(iii), at meetings.

22 (h) Office holders shall be elected by a simple majority of a quorum vote by the body for  
23 a two (2) - year term.

24 (i) In the event an officer cannot fulfill his or her term, the following rules shall apply:

25 (1) A vacancy in the Chairperson's office shall be filled by the Vice Chairperson.

26 (2) A vacancy in the Vice-Chairperson's office shall be filled by a majority vote of a  
27 quorum of the membership of the Caucus.

28 (3) The term of the replaced officers shall begin immediately and shall terminate upon the  
29 regular election of new officers.

30 (j) A quorum shall consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the current membership of the Caucus.

31 (k) No budget shall be appropriated for any Caucus nor shall any Caucus engage in the  
32 raising of funds nor in-kind donations to pay for any of its activities.

33 (l) All caucuses shall be established by written notification to the Speaker or his/her  
34 designee with all elections being held one month after the establishment. The two (2) – year

1 election term shall run from the date of said election.

2 (m) Rules 45(f), 45(g), 45(h), and 45(i) shall not apply to political party caucuses.

3 (n) Nothing shall preclude the formation of joint caucuses between the house and senate.

4 (o) Effective with the 2016 legislative session, there shall be a standing caucus to be  
5 known as the "Freshman Caucus." The Freshman Caucus shall consist of and be limited to all  
6 members of the house who are serving in their first or second year as a member of the House of  
7 Representatives without regard to political affiliation. The Speaker of the House shall convene the  
8 first session of the Freshman Caucus as soon as practicable for organizational purposes, and the  
9 Freshman Caucus shall then organize itself in accordance with these rules. After the Freshman  
10 Caucus convened in 2016 has served for one legislative session, said Caucus shall be dissolved,  
11 and a new Freshman Caucus shall be formed from among the then newly elected members of the  
12 House. Each succeeding Freshman Caucus shall be dissolved after two (2) consecutive legislative  
13 sessions. Provided, nothing shall prohibit a group of representatives who have served together as  
14 a Freshman Caucus to organize into a new Caucus once their Freshman Caucus has been  
15 dissolved.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
HOUSE RESOLUTION  
AMENDING THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE YEARS  
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- 1 This resolution would propose an amendment to the house rules which would establish a
- 2 standing caucus to be known as the "Freshman Caucus".

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