

# State of Vermont House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

## House Resolution

H.R. 13

House resolution amending the Rules and Orders of the House of Representatives related to discrimination, ethics, and sexual harassment

Offered by: Committee on Rules

Whereas, the Rules of the House of Representatives should be clarified in its provisions regarding discrimination, legislative ethics, and sexual harassment, particularly in regard to that chamber's overall policies on these issues, now therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That RULES AND ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 90 and 90a are amended to read as follows:

~~90. (a) A member and officer of the House shall be responsible for ensuring that each legislative employee and colleague enjoys a workplace free from discrimination by conducting himself or herself in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of the House.~~

~~(b) Violation of this rule will result in appropriate disciplinary action enforced by the full House, if necessary.~~

~~(c) Retaliation against a person who complains, reports or cooperates in an investigation of sexual harassment is prohibited.~~

~~(d) The House Rules Committee shall develop and adopt a policy and procedures for reviewing allegations of discrimination involving the conduct of members or officers of the House.~~

~~(e) The Clerk of the House shall develop procedures for employees of the Clerk's office.~~

~~(f) The House Rules Committee shall, at the beginning of the biennium, or as soon as possible thereafter, establish a Sexual Harassment Prevention Panel with the authority to receive, investigate and resolve complaints of sexual harassment, retaliation and noncompliance made against members or officers of the House. The panel shall be comprised of five members of the House.~~

~~(g) The Speaker shall ensure that training is made available to all House members and employees and that they receive copies of the policy and procedures which implement this rule.~~

~~90a. (a) The House Rules Committee shall, at the beginning of the biennium or as soon as possible thereafter, establish an Ethics Panel with the following powers and duties:~~

~~(1) to advise individual members and provide training to all members on ethical conduct, including compliance with House Rule 75; and~~

~~(2) to receive and investigate complaints of alleged ethical violations made against members of the House, except for those complaints~~

~~covered under House Rule 90, and to recommend to the House any disciplinary action against a member for an ethical violation, if the Panel deems it necessary.~~

~~(b) The Panel shall comprise be composed of five members of the House who shall serve until successors are appointed. The members shall elect a chair and adopt policies and procedures to conduct their business.~~

~~(c) Annually, on or before December 31, the Ethics Panel shall report to the House the number of complaints filed, the disposition of those complaints, and the number of member requests for ethical advice.~~

It is the policy of the House to provide a professional work environment. All members and officers of the House are responsible for ensuring that each legislative employee and colleague enjoys a workplace free from discrimination and sexual harassment and that members conduct themselves in a manner that promotes public confidence through ethical behavior in accordance with the Vermont Constitution and the House Rules.

(a) Discrimination

(1) The House of Representatives is opposed to and prohibits discrimination without qualification. This policy covers the conduct of Representatives and persons that either the Speaker's or the House Clerk's office employs.

(2) This policy protects Representatives, employees, and members of the public, including lobbyists, advocates, and members of the press, from discrimination attributable to a Representative or an employee of these offices.

(3) The Rules Committee shall, at the beginning of the biennium, appoint a Discrimination Prevention Panel composed of five members of the House who shall serve until successors are appointed.

(4) The Panel shall elect a chair, adopt procedures to conduct its business to implement this policy, and shall provide copies of the policy set forth in this rule and the adopted procedures to all members of the House and employees of the Speaker's and the House Clerk's offices.

(5) The Panel shall receive and investigate complaints of alleged discrimination made against members of the House or an employee of the Speaker's or House Clerk's office.

(6) The Panel shall advise individual members and provide training to all House members, employees, and interns on the scope of conduct constituting prohibited discrimination.

(7) The Panel, if it deems it necessary, may recommend to the House any disciplinary action against a member for a discrimination violation.

(8) These Rules prohibit retaliation against a person who complains, reports, or cooperates in an investigation of discrimination.

(9) Annually, on or before December 31, the Discrimination Prevention Panel shall report to the House the number of complaints filed, the disposition of those complaints, and the number of member requests for advice on discrimination inquiries.

(b) Ethics

(1) The House of Representatives, without qualification, is opposed to and prohibits violations of the Vermont Constitution and House Rules standards of ethical behavior. This policy covers the conduct of Representatives and persons that either the Speaker's or the House Clerk's office employs.

(2) The House Rules Committee shall, at the beginning of the biennium, appoint an Ethics Panel composed of five members of the House who shall serve until successors are appointed.

(3) The Panel shall elect its chair, adopt procedures to implement this policy, and conduct its business and provide copies of the policy set forth in this rule and the adopted procedures to all members of the House and employees of the Speaker's and the House Clerk's offices.

(4) The Panel shall advise individual members and provide training to all members on ethical conduct, including compliance with House Rule 75.

(5) The Panel shall receive and investigate complaints of alleged ethical violations made against members of the House.

(6) The Panel may recommend to the House any disciplinary action against a member for an ethical violation.

(7) These Rules prohibit retaliation against a person who complains, reports, or cooperates in an investigation of an ethics violation.

(8) Annually, on or before December 31, the Ethics Panel shall report to the House the number of complaints filed, the disposition of those complaints, and the number of member requests for ethical advice.

(c) Sexual Harassment

(1) The House of Representatives is opposed to and prohibits sexual harassment without qualification. This policy covers the conduct of Representatives and persons that either the Speaker's or the House Clerk's office employs.

(2) This policy protects Representatives, employees, and members of the public, including lobbyists, advocates, and members of the press, from sexual harassment attributable to a Representative or an employee of these offices.

(3) The Rules Committee shall, at the beginning of the biennium, appoint a Sexual Harassment Prevention Panel composed of five members of the House who shall serve until successors are appointed.

(4) The Panel shall elect a chair, adopt procedures to conduct its business to implement this policy, and shall provide copies of the policy set forth in this rule and the adopted procedures to all members of the House and employees of the Speaker's and the House Clerk's offices.

(5) The Panel shall receive and investigate complaints of alleged sexual harassment made against members of the House or an employee of the Speaker's or House Clerk's office.

(6) The Panel shall advise individual members and provide training to all House members, employees, and interns on the scope of conduct constituting prohibited sexual harassment.

(7) The Panel, if it deems it necessary, may recommend to the House any disciplinary action against a member for a sexual harassment violation.

(8) These Rules prohibit retaliation against a person who complains, reports, or cooperates in an investigation of sexual harassment.

(9) Annually, on or before December 31, the Sexual Harassment Prevention Panel shall report to the House the number of complaints filed, the disposition of those complaints, and the number of member requests for advice on sexual harassment inquiries.