

**JOINT RULES
OF THE
SENATE AND
HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

(2021 BIENNIAL SESSION)

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*(Adopted January 30, 1990)
(with Amendments of April 25, 1991, April 16, 2002, and January 8, 2010)*

I

JOINT RULES

- 1. Joint Rules of the House and Senate may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the membership of each house.*
- 2. Joint Rules adopted by the regular session of any General Assembly shall be in full force during both the regular session and any adjourned or special session of the same General Assembly, unless amended, or repealed as therein provided.*
- 3. The Joint Rules may be suspended by joint resolution at any time upon a three-fourths vote in each house of those present.*
- 4. The Joint Rules shall govern all matters of common concern to and involving joint action by both houses.*

II

COMMITTEE ON JOINT RULES

- 5. At the beginning of each session a Committee on Joint Rules shall be appointed, consisting of four members from the House including the Speaker of the House and three members of the House chosen by the Speaker; and four members from the Senate including the President pro tempore of the Senate and three members of the Senate chosen by the Senate Committee on Committees.*
- 6. The Committee on Joint Rules shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from among its members. The chair shall rotate between the houses each biennium. The clerk of the Committee shall be the Clerk of the House when a House member is serving as Chair, and the Secretary of the Senate when a senator is serving as Chair.*
- 7. The Committee on Joint Rules shall propose and have referred to it matters relating to the Joint Rules of the General Assembly.*

III
JOINT ASSEMBLY

8. A Joint Assembly shall be formed by a union of the Senate and the House of Representatives in the hall of the latter, at such times and for such specific purposes only as may be expressed in a joint resolution of both houses; and may adjourn from time to time during the session of the General Assembly. The President of the Senate shall, in all cases, preside; and the Secretary of the Senate, or in the absence of the Secretary, the Clerk of the House, shall officiate as clerk. The rules of the Senate as far as applicable shall be observed in regulating the proceedings of every Joint Assembly.

9. The proceedings of every Joint Assembly, including the resolution ordering the same, shall be recorded by the clerk and preserved in the office of the Secretary of State. They shall also be published with the Journal of the proceedings of the Senate, and the Secretary of the Senate shall furnish a copy to the Governor.

10. (a) Whenever a Joint Assembly is required to elect one or more persons to any office, the voting shall be by ballot, except that if there is only one candidate for any office, and if there is no objection, the Chair may put the question to the Joint Assembly by voice vote.

(b) If two or more offices are to be filled, each office will be voted upon and decided separately. If two or more vacancies for the same office are to be filled, nominations for all vacancies will be received before voting begins for the first vacancy, but each vacancy will be voted upon and decided separately. The Joint Assembly may limit the number and length of nominating and seconding speeches for each candidate.

(c) Election to any office is by a majority of the votes cast, exclusive of spoiled and blank ballots. After two votes have been taken for any vacancy without an election, all nominees except the two having the highest number of votes on the second ballot shall be withdrawn, and voting shall then continue until a candidate is elected. In no event shall the involuntary removal of nominees result in fewer than two nominees remaining in the contest.

(d) The person who first nominated a candidate may withdraw that candidate's name at any time; a withdrawal may be complete or may be limited to one or more vacancies. A candidate for any office having more than one vacancy who is defeated for the first vacancy shall automatically be a candidate for successive vacancies, unless the nomination is voluntarily withdrawn.

IV

BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

11. *When a bill or joint resolution is on its passage between the two houses, it shall be verified by the attestation of the Secretary of the Senate or Clerk of the House, or an assistant. Upon passage by both houses it shall be verified by the attestation of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate.*

12. *Each house shall give notice to the other of its action upon any measure originating in the other, and shall return all such bills or joint resolutions with the accompanying papers.*

13. *Either house may substitute for the original bill or joint resolution a copy attested by the secretary or clerk of the house of origin to be a true copy.*

14. *A bill or joint resolution shall be lost when: (1) either house shall have rejected it; (2) either house shall have adhered to a vote of disagreement; or (3) a Committee of Conference has been appointed and has reported a disagreement without a request for a further Committee of Conference or has reported and the report has been rejected by either house without further action taken. But a vote of rejection or adherence, or the rejection of the report of a Committee of Conference may be reconsidered.*

15. *After a bill shall have passed both houses, before being delivered to the Governor for approval, it shall remain for one legislative day in the files of the clerk of the house in which it originated, unless either house shall otherwise order, or the Governor shall sooner request it.*

16. *A joint resolution may be treated as a bill by either house, regardless of the manner in which it is treated in the other house. When a joint resolution is treated as a bill, those procedural rules governing passage of bills shall apply to the joint resolution. When a joint resolution is treated as a bill, it does not thereby become a bill; it may not be used for purposes of general legislation and does not require the approval of the Governor to become effective.*

16a. *Resolutions that express sentiments of congratulations, commendations, condolences, or the like, or that designate, on a one-time basis, a specified period of time for a commemorative or public education purpose and do not address matters related to public policy, the rules and operations of either or both houses of the General Assembly, or other matters, shall be styled as concurrent resolutions, and may be jointly cosponsored by members of the Senate and House. The Senate and House cosponsors shall appear separately on two distinctive sponsorship lists on the concurrent resolution. A concurrent resolution shall be cited by title only in the permanent journals of the Senate and House with a cite to the Acts and Resolves for that session unless it has been treated as a bill or*

subject of a roll call vote, in which case, the resolution shall be printed in the permanent journal of the voting legislative body.

16b. Upon introduction, if not treated as a bill, the full text of concurrent resolutions shall be published in the calendar of the legislative body where introduced on the legislative day of introduction. The resolutions shall be considered as adopted, and transmitted to the other body, unless a member of the body requests consideration by the entire body prior to adjournment on the following legislative day.

16c. Upon receipt from the other body, joint concurrent resolutions shall follow the same procedure as set forth in Rule 16b.

16d. The provisions of joint rules 16a, 16b and 16c shall supercede any provision of the Rules and Orders of the Senate or the Rules and Orders of the House of Representatives that is inconsistent with these joint rules.

V

COMMITTEES OF CONFERENCE

17. In every case of disagreement between the Senate and House of Representatives, if either shall request a conference, and appoint a committee for that purpose, the other house shall also appoint a committee on its part. Such committees shall consist of three members from each house.

18. In any Committee of Conference, the Chair shall be the first member chosen from the house in which the bill did not originate and the Vice-Chair shall be the first member chosen from the other house.

19. A Committee of Conference shall meet at an hour to be agreed upon by its Chair and Vice-Chair. Its members shall state to each other, verbally or in writing, the reasons of each house for its vote on the subject matter of disagreement; confer freely thereon, and make report of their doings to their respective houses as soon as may be. The bill or resolution referred to a Committee of Conference shall be returned to the house other than that in which the bill or resolution originated.

20. A report by a Committee of Conference shall be made only with the concurring votes and signatures of at least two members from each house.

21. If either house shall reject the report of a Committee of Conference or if the committee shall fail to agree, either house may thereupon ask for another Committee of Conference.

VI

JOINT COMMITTEES AND JOINT HEARINGS

22. *Joint committees, consisting of members from each house, may be created by these joint rules, by statute, or by joint resolution.*

23. *For the purpose of facilitating business, committees of like functions of the Senate and House of Representatives may meet together as a joint committee, for the purpose of public hearings. They may consider in joint conference all measures but shall take action separately and report only to their respective houses.*

VII

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

24. *On the first day of each session, each house shall appoint a joint canvassing committee to consist of one senator and three representatives from each senatorial district, to canvass votes for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State, Auditor of Accounts, and Attorney General, and report the result of the canvass to the General Assembly.*

25. *Permission to use either legislative chamber for other than statutory purposes may be granted in accordance with the rules of the house in question.*

26. Public Conduct in the State House

(a) *Persons in the State House shall refrain from:*

(1) *loud or unusual noise or profanity;*

(2) *running, crowding, pushing or shoving;*

(3) *any other conduct which creates a risk of harm to any person or which would disrupt essential governmental operations;*

(4) *any conduct which obstructs entrances, walks, corridors, elevators, cafeterias, offices or stairways.*

(b) *Banners, signs and placards may be permitted in the State House, except in the House and Senate chambers, under the following conditions:*

(1) *No sticks, rods or similar devices may be used to support a banner, sign or placard.*

(2) *Banners, signs and placards may not be carried or held in such a way as to obstruct another's view or to endanger the safety of another.*

(c) *No person while in the State House shall carry a firearm or other dangerous or deadly weapon or an explosive, openly or concealed, except for official purposes.*

(d) *The presiding officers shall have general supervision over their*

respective Chambers, and the Chairs of Committees shall have general supervision over their respective committee rooms or hearing rooms, and in the case of a disturbance or disorderly conduct or other violation of this rule, may order the Sergeant-at-Arms to restore order or to clear the area.

(e) The Sergeant-at-Arms shall have general supervision over the conduct of the public within the State House building, including but not limited to its entrances, walks, corridors, elevators, cafeteria, offices and stairways, and shall maintain order therein and, if necessary, take measures to prevent disruption of essential governmental operations, consistent with this joint rule and all other rules of the General Assembly.

ATTESTED TO:

*John H. Bloomer, Jr.
Secretary of the Senate*

*BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the House*

January 6, 2021