

**2008-2009**  
**RULES**  
**OF**  
**THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

Adopted January 9, 2008  
Amended March 8, 2008

# RULES OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES

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**I. Organization.**

**Elections.**

Rule 1. At the elections in the House, the voting shall be by use of the electronic voting system or, if it is inoperable, viva voce by response to the call of names, and the vote shall be recorded in the Journal. Only one person shall be chosen at a time. If, on the first voting, no one receives a majority, the person having the smallest number of votes shall not be voted for on the next voting and so on until someone shall receive a majority of the whole vote. If the election is by joint vote of the two houses, messages shall be exchanged for each voting announcing the names of persons in nomination. A committee of three from each house shall compare the votes and ascertain and report the result.

At the election for any judgeship to the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Court of Appeals of Virginia, Circuit Courts, and Courts not of Record, no nominee shall be offered to the House unless that nominee has been interviewed by the House Courts of Justice Committee and subsequently certified as qualified for election. If more than one nominee is offered for any judgeship, a member may cast a vote for only one nominee.

**The Speaker.**

Rule 2. The House of Delegates shall choose its own Speaker from among the members of the House. The Speaker shall be elected in even-numbered years for a term of two years. The nominations for Speaker shall be viva voce without debate and no second shall be required to place a name in nomination. Once nominations are closed, the election of the Speaker shall be a matter of privilege and shall be conducted immediately and shall not be debated. The voting for Speaker shall be by use of the electronic voting system or, if it is inoperable, viva voce by response to the call of names, and the vote shall be recorded in the Journal. Each member shall vote for only one nominee for Speaker in each round of voting. If, on the first voting, no one receives a majority, the person having the smallest number of votes shall not be voted for on the next voting and so on until someone shall receive a majority of the whole vote. Once elected, the Speaker shall not be removed from his office during his term except with the concurrence of two-thirds of the elected membership of the House.

1 The Speaker may appoint to the Chair any member who shall exercise its  
2 functions for the time. However, no member, by virtue of such appointment, shall  
3 preside for a longer time than three consecutive days. During such appointment  
4 the Speaker may participate in the debates.

5  
6 If the Speaker be absent, and have named no one to act in his stead, the duties  
7 shall be performed by the chairman of one of the standing committees taking  
8 precedence in the order in which the committees are named in Rule 16.

9  
10 Rule 3. The Speaker shall take the Chair every day precisely at the hour to  
11 which the House shall have adjourned on the preceding legislative day. He shall  
12 immediately call the House to order. After divine services are performed, he shall  
13 direct that the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America be  
14 recited, and he shall direct that the roll of members be taken, pursuant to Rule 32,  
15 and the names of those members present entered upon the Journal. A quorum  
16 being present, he shall proceed with the business of the day. The Speaker shall  
17 have the power to supervise and correct the Journal. The Speaker, having  
18 examined the Journal of the proceedings of the last day's sitting and approved the  
19 same, shall announce to the House his approval of the Journal. The Speaker's  
20 approval of the Journal shall be deemed to be agreed to subject to a vote on  
21 agreeing to the Speaker's approval on the demand of any member, which vote, if  
22 decided in the affirmative, shall not be subject to a motion to reconsider. It shall  
23 be in order to offer one motion that the Journal be read only if the Speaker's  
24 approval of the Journal is not agreed to, and such motion shall be determined  
25 without debate and shall not be subject to a motion to reconsider. Upon the last  
26 day of the session, the Journal for that day being examined and found correct shall  
27 be signed by the Speaker and the Clerk. The said Journals, when so signed, shall  
28 be the authentic record of the proceedings of the House.

29  
30 Rule 4. The Speaker shall have a general direction of the House Chamber with  
31 power, in case of disturbance or disorderly conduct in such part thereof as may be  
32 appropriated to spectators, to have the same cleared. Representatives of news  
33 media, wishing to report the proceedings of the House, may be admitted by the  
34 Speaker, who shall assign them to such places in the House Chamber as shall not  
35 interfere with the convenience of the members.

36  
37 Rule 5. All enrolled bills and joint resolutions proposing amendments to the  
38 Constitution shall be signed by the Speaker and all writs and warrants issued by  
39 order of the House shall be under his hand and seal, attested by the Clerk.

**The Clerk.**

Rule 6. A Clerk shall be elected by the House in even-numbered years and shall be deemed to continue in office until another is chosen. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Clerk during a recess of the General Assembly, a successor to fill said vacancy shall be elected by the members of the Committee on Privileges and Elections at a meeting to be called by the chairman of the committee or, in his absence, by the senior ranking member of the committee able and willing to act in calling the meeting. At least five days' written notice by mail of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting shall be given to all members of said committee, and the person receiving a majority of the votes of the members of said committee present and voting shall be deemed to be elected to fill said vacancy.

Rule 6(a). The Clerk shall have authority, with the approval of the Speaker, to employ personnel necessary to accomplish the work of the House subject to such terms and conditions as shall be deemed appropriate by the Speaker; such personnel may be removed by the Clerk with the approval of the Speaker. The Clerk shall be charged with the clerical business of the House and its committees.

Rule 6(b). The Clerk shall be charged with the duty of assigning each member to a seat in the House Chamber and office space. No seat or office space assigned to and occupied by a member who is reelected shall be changed without such member's consent.

Rule 7. The Clerk shall perform all the duties of his office under the direction of the Speaker. He shall keep a journal of the proceedings of the House, have the same in proper form to be signed as provided by Rule 3, and submit it daily to the Speaker in time to be examined before the next assembling of the House. He shall keep at the Clerk's table, during the sittings of the House, a calendar or docket so arranged as to show the condition and progress of the business of the House. He shall provide to each member before the assembling of the House each day, a printed calendar of pending bills and a list of all bills offered on the preceding day, under Rule 37, with the names of the patrons, titles of the bills, and the committees to which the same have been referred. After amendments have been agreed to by the House, he shall see that they are handled only by the clerks at the desk or the clerks charged with the duty of engrossing bills until such amendments have been duly engrossed and verified.

Rule 8. The Clerk shall keep accounts of the compensation of the members, officials and employees of the House, and shall from time to time certify the same to the Comptroller. He shall provide the stationery required for the business of the

1 House and for the official use of the members. He shall also provide postage for  
2 the official use of the members within the limitations established by the Rules  
3 Committee. The claims shall be certified for payment as provided by law. He  
4 shall keep detailed accounts of all these transactions, which shall be at all times  
5 open to inspection by members of the House.  
6

7 Rule 9. The Clerk shall procure for the members, when required, certificates  
8 for pay and mileage, and, at their request, collect and pay over to those entitled the  
9 money due upon such certificates.  
10

### 11 **Sergeant at Arms.**

12

13 Rule 10. A Sergeant at Arms shall be elected by the House and continue in  
14 office during its pleasure. He shall have as his assistants during sessions of the  
15 House doorkeepers and pages who shall be appointed by the Speaker. Pages shall  
16 be appointed annually and shall be thirteen or fourteen years old at the time of their  
17 initial appointment. They shall be ineligible for reappointment after serving for  
18 two years.  
19

20 Rule 11. The Sergeant at Arms shall, with his assistants, attend upon the House  
21 during its sitting, and execute its commands, together with all such process, issued  
22 by its authority, as shall be directed to him by the Speaker.  
23

24 Rule 12. The Sergeant at Arms shall, under the direction of the Speaker, have  
25 charge of the policing of the Hall and prevent any interruption of the business of  
26 the House by disorder within or without. He shall distribute among the members  
27 all papers printed for their use and give such attendance upon them during the  
28 sittings of the House as will promote their comfort and facilitate the business of the  
29 House.  
30

31 Immediately prior to the convening of every session, he shall clear the floor of  
32 the House of all persons other than those specified under Rule 83 who are  
33 authorized to be there during each session.  
34

35 Rule 13. The Sergeant at Arms shall attend to receiving and dispatching all  
36 messages in the House Chamber intended for or sent by members and make such  
37 arrangement as to promote the convenience of the members. He shall attend to the  
38 display of the Mace during sessions of the House and direct all persons not entitled  
39 to privileges on the floor of the House to the gallery.

**Oaths of Office.**

Rule 14. The oaths which the officers of the House are required by law to take shall be administered and certified by a person authorized to administer oaths and shall be filed with the Clerk of the House.

**Committees.**

Rule 15. All committee members shall be appointed by the Speaker. The Speaker shall designate the chairman and vice chairman of each committee provided that no member shall be chairman of more than one committee, and no member shall be vice chairman of more than one committee, as designated in Rule 16. If the chairman and vice chairman are absent or excused by the House, one of the members shall act as the chairman, taking precedence in the order named by the Speaker. The Speaker shall serve as chairman of the Committee on Rules.

Rule 16. There shall be appointed standing committees, to be named and to consist of up to the number of members indicated below:

1.	Privileges and Elections .....	22 members
2.	Courts of Justice .....	22 members
3.	Education .....	22 members
4.	General Laws.....	22 members
5.	Transportation.....	22 members
6.	Finance.....	22 members
7.	Appropriations .....	24 members
8.	Counties, Cities and Towns.....	22 members
9.	Commerce and Labor .....	22 members
10.	Health, Welfare and Institutions.....	22 members
11.	Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources ....	22 members
12.	Militia, Police and Public Safety .....	22 members
13.	Science and Technology.....	22 members
14.	Rules .....	14 members
		and the Speaker

The Speaker shall designate seven members of the House Rules Committee to meet with members of the Senate to constitute the Joint Rules Committee.

1 Rule 16(a). Membership on all standing committees shall be contingent upon  
2 membership or nonmembership in the majority party caucus. The apportionment  
3 of members on all standing committees shall be according to the same ratio of  
4 members in the House of Delegates who are members or nonmembers of the  
5 majority party caucus. If such ratio would represent a fractional number of the  
6 committee membership assigned to the majority party caucus, then the number of  
7 majority party caucus members on standing committees shall be the next highest  
8 whole number of committee members. For the purposes of this rule only, members  
9 who do not caucus with the majority party caucus or the largest minority party  
10 caucus shall be deemed part of the majority party caucus.

11  
12 Rule 16(b). The Speaker shall strive to appoint from each congressional district  
13 at least one member who represents that congressional district on all standing  
14 committees with the exception of Rules.

15  
16 Rule 17. A majority shall constitute a quorum for committees. Each committee  
17 shall meet pursuant to a regular meeting schedule as approved by the Speaker. In  
18 addition to a committee's regular scheduled meeting(s), a committee chairman may  
19 call additional meetings. It shall be the duty of a committee to meet on call of a  
20 majority of the committee's members if the chairman is absent or declines to call a  
21 meeting. However, additional committee meetings may not be scheduled that are  
22 in conflict with another committee's regularly scheduled meeting time. No  
23 committee shall meet while the House is in session without special leave granted  
24 by the Speaker.

25  
26 Rule 17(a). The chairman of any standing committee may appoint  
27 subcommittees provided any such subcommittee shall consist of no fewer than five  
28 members, a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of  
29 business.

30  
31 Rule 17(b). The chairman of any standing committee may appoint ad hoc  
32 subcommittees of less than five members to consider no more than one bill or  
33 resolution, a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum to conduct business.

34  
35 Rule 17(c). Between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through  
36 Friday, no subcommittee of a standing committee except for the Appropriations or  
37 Rules Committee shall meet opposite another standing committee unless the parent  
38 committee foregoes meeting at its designated time to allow its subcommittees to  
39 meet.

1 Rule 18. The several standing committees shall consider and report on matters  
2 specially referred to them and, whenever practicable, suggest such legislation as  
3 may be germane to the duties of the committee. The chairman shall have  
4 discretion to determine when, and if, legislation shall be heard before the  
5 committee. The chairman, at his discretion, may refer legislation for consideration  
6 to a subcommittee. If referred to a subcommittee, the legislation shall be  
7 considered by the subcommittee. If the subcommittee does not recommend such  
8 legislation by a majority vote, the chairman need not consider the legislation in the  
9 full committee. It shall be the duty of each committee to inquire into the condition  
10 and administration of the laws relating to the subjects which it has in its charge; to  
11 investigate the conduct and look to the responsibility of all public officers and  
12 agents concerned; and to suggest such measures as will correct abuses, protect the  
13 public interests, and promote the public welfare.

14  
15 Any committee of the House may, at its discretion, confer with a committee of  
16 the Senate having under consideration the same subject. No select committee shall  
17 be appointed to consider any subject falling properly within the province of a  
18 standing committee.

19  
20 Rule 18(a). When a question is before the committee, no motion shall be  
21 received unless specially provided for, except to adjourn, to pass by, to lay upon  
22 the table, to postpone for a specified time or purpose, to refer or rerefer, to amend,  
23 to strike from the docket, or report; which several motions shall have precedence in  
24 the order in which they are arranged and each such motion shall be required to be  
25 seconded.

26  
27 The Committee on Rules may, on a vote of a majority of the members  
28 appointed plus one, send a bill, joint resolution, or resolution to the floor on a  
29 motion that "the bill, joint resolution, or resolution be reported to the floor by the  
30 committee without specific recommendation." This motion is a special motion and  
31 can only be made in the Committee on Rules.

32  
33 When a question has been decided, it may be reconsidered on the motion of any  
34 member who voted with the prevailing side provided it be made on the same day or  
35 if such motion has not been communicated to the House, such motion may be  
36 made no later than the adjournment of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the  
37 full committee.

38  
39 Rule 18(b). Committees shall in all cases report by bill or resolution, with or  
40 without amendment or amendments, in such form that, if passed or agreed to, it  
41 will carry into effect their recommendations; but no papers returned therewith shall

1 be printed unless the committee shall so recommend. Every bill shall be printed,  
2 as provided in Rule 37. Bills may be considered in executive session, but final  
3 vote thereon shall be in open session.  
4

5 Rule 18(c). A recorded vote of members upon each measure sent to the floor,  
6 including those measures reported and referred by committee, shall be taken and  
7 the name and number of those voting for, against, or abstaining shall be reported  
8 with the bill or resolution and ordered printed on the Calendar.  
9

10 Rule 18(d). Reports of the committees may be handed to the Clerk at any time  
11 and may be disposed of in the morning hour. If, in the judgment of the Speaker,  
12 any report of a committee requires immediate action he may bring it to the  
13 attention of the House at any time.  
14

15 Rule 18(e). No member shall be excluded from any meeting of a committee,  
16 subcommittee, joint subcommittee, or interim study committee except as  
17 hereinafter provided for the maintenance of order. If an electronic meeting is  
18 authorized by the chairman, no member shall be excluded from participating by  
19 electronic communication means, and members participating by electronic  
20 communication means shall not be counted in attendance for purposes of a  
21 quorum. The chairman of the committee shall maintain order and decorum, and  
22 the business of the committee shall be conducted at all times in accordance with  
23 the Rules of the House.  
24

25 Rule 19. The chairman of the committee, or the majority of the membership of  
26 the committee, may call meetings of the committee during the interim to study, call  
27 hearings, and consider any continued bill or resolution, or to consider such other  
28 matters as may be germane to the duties of the committee.  
29

30 Rule 20. The chairman of any standing committee is authorized to seek and  
31 obtain the services of citizens of the Commonwealth whose function will be to  
32 participate with such committees or subcommittees thereof in reviewing legislation  
33 or in performing any referred study or study initiated by the committee or its  
34 chairman.  
35

36 Citizens so appointed to serve may receive a daily compensation as provided in  
37 the Appropriation Act and reimbursement for their actual expenses incurred in the  
38 performance of services for the committee. For this purpose and for such other  
39 expenses as may be occasioned by the conduct of any committee study, payments  
40 shall be made from the general appropriations to the House of Delegates.

1 Persons who are asked by a committee chairman to appear before a committee  
2 or subcommittee to offer expert testimony may receive reimbursement for their  
3 actual and reasonable expenses if approved by the chairman and the Speaker.  
4

5 Rule 21. The conduct of the business of any subcommittee of any House  
6 committee, any joint subcommittee of House and Senate committees, and any  
7 interim study committee created by a House measure shall be governed in  
8 accordance with the Rules of the House. If a House measure and a Senate measure  
9 create the same study, the conduct of business of the study shall be governed by  
10 the rules of the house of the chairman of the study, or in the case of co-chairmen,  
11 the rules of the house as agreed upon by the co-chairmen.  
12

13 Rule 22. Any bill or resolution introduced in an even-numbered year and not  
14 reported to the House of Delegates by the committee to which it has been referred,  
15 may be continued on the agenda of the committee for hearings and committee  
16 action during the interim between regular sessions and not otherwise. The  
17 committee shall report, prior to the adjournment sine die of the House of  
18 Delegates, such bills or resolutions as shall be continued and the Clerk of the  
19 House of Delegates shall enter upon the Journal the fact that such bill or resolution  
20 has been continued. Any bill or resolution that has been continued and  
21 subsequently reported from a committee shall be placed upon the Calendar of the  
22 House of Delegates.  
23

24 The House of Delegates, upon consideration of any bill or resolution on the  
25 Calendar, may rerefer the bill to the committee reporting the same and direct the  
26 committee to continue the bill or resolution until the following odd-numbered year  
27 regular session and hold such hearings and render such further consideration of the  
28 bill or resolution as the committee may deem proper.  
29

30 (The provisions of any rule relating to legislative continuity between sessions  
31 shall be subject to the provisions of Article IV, Section 7 of the Constitution of  
32 Virginia.)  
33

### 34 **Standards of Conduct.**

35

36 Rule 23. There shall be a subcommittee on Standards of Conduct of the Rules  
37 Committee consisting of four members, two of whom shall be members of the  
38 majority caucus and two of whom shall be nonmembers of the majority caucus,  
39 appointed by the chairman, which shall review annually members' statements of  
40 economic interests and consider any request by a member for an advisory opinion  
41 with respect to the general propriety of any current or proposed conduct of such  
42 member.

1 Rule 24. The Privileges and Elections Committee shall receive and investigate  
2 any charges or complaints brought against any member of the House of Delegates  
3 in the performance of his duties or the discharge of his responsibilities and  
4 recommend to the House such action as it may deem appropriate to establish and  
5 enforce standards of conduct for members.

6  
7 **Committee of the Whole.**

8  
9 Rule 25. When the House shall go into the Committee of the Whole, the  
10 Speaker may vacate the Chair and appoint a member to preside in Committee; the  
11 other officers shall attend, and the Rules of the House shall be observed and  
12 enforced in Committee, as far as applicable, except that the previous question shall  
13 not be ordered.

14  
15 Rule 26. If the Committee of the Whole arise before the consideration of the  
16 subject referred is concluded, the same shall be reported back and have its place in  
17 order as unfinished business of the House. When it shall be again reached in order,  
18 unless it be otherwise disposed of, the House, after making such orders as it may  
19 deem proper in relation to the business before the Committee, shall stand again  
20 resolved into the Committee of the Whole, and so on until the business therein be  
21 disposed of.

22  
23 Rule 27. Nothing shall be in order in the Committee of the Whole except such  
24 matters as may be specially referred to it by the House.

25  
26 Rule 28. Whenever the Committee of the Whole shall find itself without a  
27 quorum, the chairman shall cause the roll to be called and thereupon the  
28 Committee shall rise, and the chairman shall report the fact and the names of the  
29 absentees, which shall be entered upon the Journal of the House.

30  
31 Rule 29. The motion to go into Committee of the Whole, and the motion to  
32 discharge the Committee, shall not be debated.

33  
34 **II. Attendance and Adjournment.**

35  
36 **Attendance.**

37  
38 Rule 30. No member shall absent himself from the service of the House unless  
39 he has leave granted by the Speaker or is sick or otherwise unable to attend and  
40 such leave shall be entered upon the Journal.

1 Rule 31. Any ten members or more including the Speaker, if there is one, and  
2 he is present, shall be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members by a  
3 call of the House.

4  
5 Rule 32. The roll of the House shall be taken by the use of the electronic voting  
6 system or, if it is inoperable, by viva voce by response to the call of names  
7 arranged and called in alphabetical order except that the Speaker shall be called  
8 last.

9  
10 Rule 33. The electronic voting system may be used for a call of the House;  
11 however, if it is inoperable, the call of the House shall be by viva voce, the names  
12 of the members shall be first called over by the Clerk, and the absentees noted;  
13 after which the names of the absentees shall be again called over. The doors shall  
14 then be shut and those for whom no excuse or insufficient excuses are made may,  
15 by order of those present, if ten in number, be taken into custody as they appear or  
16 may be sent for and taken into custody, wherever to be found, by the Sergeant at  
17 Arms or his assistants, or by special messengers to be appointed for that purpose.

18  
19 Rule 34. When a member shall be discharged from custody and admitted to his  
20 seat the House shall determine whether such discharge shall be with or without  
21 payment of fees and expenses.

### 22 **Adjournment.**

23  
24  
25 Rule 35. Any member or members may adjourn from day to day. A motion to  
26 adjourn and a motion to fix the time for which the House will adjourn shall always  
27 be in order and be decided without debate.

## 28 **III. Introduction of Business.**

### 29 **Messages, Reports, and Communications.**

30  
31  
32  
33 Rule 36. Messages from the Governor and reports and communications from  
34 any other public officer or agent may be received at any time. If, in the judgment  
35 of the Speaker, they require immediate action they may be brought at once to the  
36 attention of the House. Otherwise, they shall lie upon the Speaker's table and be  
37 disposed of in the morning hour. The same rule shall be observed with regard to  
38 messages from the Senate.

## 1 **Introducing Legislation.**

2  
3 Rule 37. Members having bills or resolutions to present may, at any time, hand  
4 them to the Clerk in triplicate, one "original" copy endorsed by one or more  
5 members with their names. Any bill or joint resolution introduced in the House  
6 may show as "Senate Patrons" the signatures of members of the Senate. Any bill,  
7 joint resolution, or resolution filed prior to the commencement of the session in  
8 which it is to be considered may have the names of co-patrons signed to the  
9 measure by the chief patron, provided that each such co-patron expressly  
10 authorized the chief patron to sign for such co-patron and the chief patron plainly  
11 marks such signatures on the original copy of the measure as being signed by the  
12 chief patron.

13  
14 No member may introduce more than 15 bills during the Regular Session of an  
15 odd-numbered year. [The amendment changed the number of bills from ten to 15.]

16  
17 No bill expressly amending an existing law shall be offered by any member  
18 unless or until both the original and duplicate copies thereof have been prepared so  
19 as to indicate deletions and additions. The form for deletions and additions shall  
20 set forth the material deleted with lines through such material and by underscoring  
21 the words added, before they are received in the Senate or House of Delegates. The  
22 stricken material and underscorings or italics in the printed bills, enrolled bills, and  
23 printed Acts shall not be considered evidence of all amendments to any bill or  
24 existing statute but merely as an aid for quick reference to amended portions.  
25 Nothing herein contained shall be construed as requiring the use of stricken  
26 material or underscoring where new words are substituted for existing words and  
27 the new words or the omission of words do not change the sense or meaning of the  
28 act.

29  
30 The Clerk shall, under the direction of the Speaker, refer all such "original"  
31 papers to the proper committee and enter the fact, with the names of the members  
32 presenting them, upon the Journal. Such bills shall be printed, unless otherwise  
33 ordered by the House, and numbered in the order in which they are handed to the  
34 Clerk.

35  
36 The Speaker shall review all legislation introduced in the House or  
37 communicated to the House for its action to determine if such legislation is in  
38 conflict with Article IV, Section 12 of the Constitution of Virginia. If such  
39 legislation is determined to be in conflict, the Speaker may withhold committee  
40 referral of the legislation.

1 The designation of "House Bill," "House Joint Resolution," or "House  
2 Resolution" shall not be changed after a bill or resolution is introduced in the  
3 House. Nor shall the designation of "Senate Bill" or "Senate Joint Resolution" be  
4 changed or amended after the bill or resolution is received by the House. In  
5 addition, no bill or resolution introduced for a purpose other than to direct or  
6 request a study shall be amended for the purpose of directing or requesting a study  
7 unless authorized by unanimous consent of the members of the House.

8  
9 Rule 38. No bill, joint resolution, or resolution calling for information from the  
10 Governor or other public officer or agent shall be introduced, considered, or acted  
11 upon otherwise than is provided by Rule 37 and shall not be acted upon until it  
12 shall have been examined and reported upon by a committee.

13  
14 Rule 39. Any other resolution or motion upon which a member may desire the  
15 judgment of the House, or any action other than a reference to a standing  
16 committee, may be presented to the House in the morning hour after the business  
17 on the Speaker's table is disposed of. A recorded vote shall be required on a  
18 resolution authorizing a study or an expenditure of funds. To obtain immediate  
19 consideration of any resolution other than a procedural or a memorial or  
20 commending resolution, without reference to a standing committee, the vote of  
21 two-thirds of the members elected, as required by Rule 81, shall be a recorded  
22 vote.

23  
24 Rule 39(a). All memorial or commending joint resolutions or resolutions shall  
25 conform to the procedure set forth by the Clerk of the House and shall not be  
26 referred under Rule 37, unless so ordered by the Speaker or by majority vote of the  
27 House on motion of a member, but shall be placed on the Calendar.

#### 28 29 **IV. Order of Business.**

##### 30 31 **The Morning Hour.**

32  
33 Rule 40. After the approval and signing of the Journal, a time, to be called the  
34 morning hour, shall be devoted to the dispatch of business upon the Speaker's table  
35 and to resolutions presented under Rule 39. The business on the Speaker's table  
36 shall be disposed of in such order as the Speaker deems best, except as may be  
37 herein otherwise provided, or as the House may at any time order.

38  
39 Rule 41. The annual message of the Governor shall be laid before the House as  
40 soon as it is received. It shall be printed for the use of the House and be considered  
41 by the several standing committees without any special order therefor.

1 Rule 42. All other messages from the Governor may be referred by the Speaker  
2 to the proper committees. The same rule shall be observed as to reports and  
3 communications from other public officers.  
4

5 Rule 43. Bills and resolutions originating in the Senate and not requiring  
6 immediate action shall be read or printed on the Calendar by title the first time  
7 when received and referred to their appropriate committees, unless the House  
8 directs otherwise.  
9

10 Rule 44. All bills reported from committee, pursuant to Rule 18(c), shall be  
11 transferred to the Calendar and the reading or printing on the Calendar of the titles  
12 as reported shall constitute the first reading or printing of the House bills and the  
13 second reading or printing of the Senate bills as required by the Constitution.  
14

15 Rule 45. All other reports from committees shall be considered and disposed of  
16 in the order in which the Speaker presents them, unless the House directs  
17 otherwise.  
18

19 Rule 46. A member presenting a resolution under Rule 39 shall be allowed five  
20 minutes in which to explain his wishes in relation to it, after which the question on  
21 referring to a standing committee shall be taken without debate.  
22

23 Rule 47. Printing recommended by committees under Rule 18(b) shall be  
24 ordered by the Speaker, unless the House directs otherwise. Under such order no  
25 more copies of any document shall be printed than is provided by law.  
26

27 Rule 48. Once the morning hour expires, the House shall proceed to the  
28 business of the House as defined in Rule 49; however, the Speaker shall be  
29 permitted, without objection, to return to the morning hour for the purpose of  
30 recognizing any distinguished visitor or other individual defined in Rule 83 that  
31 may be present and seated on the floor or in the gallery.  
32

### 33 **The Calendar.**

34  
35 Rule 49. At the expiration of the morning hour, the House shall proceed to  
36 consider bills, joint resolutions, and resolutions on the Calendar which shall be  
37 arranged in the following order:  
38

- 39 1. Senate bills on third reading.
- 40 2. House bills on third reading.
- 41 3. House bills on second reading.
- 42 4. House bills and joint resolutions returned from Senate with amendments.
- 43 5. Resolutions.

- 1       6. Memorial and commending resolutions.
- 2       7. House bills returned by Governor without approval.
- 3       8. House bills returned by Governor with recommendations.
- 4       9. Senate bills returned by Governor without approval.
- 5       10. Senate bills returned by Governor with recommendations.
- 6       11. House bills and resolutions in conference.
- 7       12. Senate bills and resolutions in conference.
- 8       13. Unfinished business – House and Senate bills and joint resolutions.
- 9       14. Senate bills on second reading.
- 10      15. House bills on first reading.
- 11      16. Resolutions reported.
- 12      17. Senate bills and joint resolutions referred.
- 13      18. Bills referred.
- 14      19. Resolutions referred.
- 15      20. Resolutions presented.

16  
 17       The House may direct that bills and resolutions of either house be divided on  
 18 the Calendar between the designations "Uncontested Calendar" and "Regular  
 19 Calendar" and be considered in such order. When such a division is directed for  
 20 bills and resolutions on the Calendar, the Uncontested Calendar shall not include  
 21 any bill or resolution (i) which received a dissenting vote or an abstention in  
 22 committee, or (ii) to which objection is made by any member. Any bill or  
 23 resolution shall be removed from the Uncontested Calendar and placed on the  
 24 Regular Calendar at the request of any member rising from his seat for that  
 25 purpose and stating the request for such legislation to be moved. Once legislation  
 26 is moved to the Regular Calendar there it shall remain.

27  
 28       Rule 50. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to see that the printing and engrossing,  
 29 when ordered, shall be done in such time that the bills and resolutions may be  
 30 acted on according to their priorities on the Calendar.

31  
 32       Rule 51. If any bill or resolution shall not be ready for consideration when it is  
 33 reached on the Calendar it shall be passed by and be allowed to retain its position  
 34 on the Calendar. When the Calendar has been called through, it may be called  
 35 again in order to dispose of any business that may then be ready. If there be none,  
 36 the business of the morning hour shall be resumed.

37  
 38       Rule 52. The regular order of business herein established shall not be changed,  
 39 nor shall any special order be made, except by vote of two-thirds of the members  
 40 present. However, a majority may postpone the Calendar not exceeding one day at  
 41 a time, or pass by any subject coming up in order without changing its place, or  
 42 agree to a joint order with the Senate, or postpone or discharge any special order.

## V. Conduct of Business.

### Order and Decorum.

Rule 53. The Speaker shall preserve order and decorum, may speak to points of order in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose, and shall decide questions of order without debate, subject to an appeal to the House. If the decision relate to a question of decorum or propriety of conduct, it shall not be debatable; if it relate to the priority of business or the relevancy or applicability of propositions, the appeal may be debated, but no member shall speak on it more than once except by leave of the House.

Rule 54. When a member rises to speak he shall respectfully address, "Mr. Speaker," standing in his place; he shall confine himself strictly to the question before the House, and when he has finished he shall sit down.

Rule 55. When two or more members rise at the same time the Speaker shall name the person to speak.

Rule 56. Every motion or proposition shall be reduced to writing, if desired by the Speaker or any member, and shall be delivered at the Clerk's table to be there read; and the question shall be stated by the Chair before the same shall be debated. When the reading of any paper in possession of the House, not being the precise matter upon which the House is acting, is called for, and objection is made by any member, the question shall be determined by a vote of the House without debate. Any motion or proposition may be withdrawn by the mover at any time before a decision, amendment, or other action of the body upon it, except a motion to reconsider which shall not be withdrawn without leave of the House.

Rule 57. No member shall in debate use any language or gesture calculated to wound, offend, or insult another member.

Rule 58. If any member, in speaking, transgress the Rules of the House, the Speaker shall, or any member may, call him to order; in which case the member called to order shall immediately take his seat unless permitted to explain. If there be no appeal, the decision of the Chair shall be final. If the decision be in favor of the member called to order, he shall be at liberty to proceed; otherwise, he shall not proceed, except by leave of the House. For frequent or repeated violations of order, especially if persisted in after the admonition of the Speaker, a member shall be liable to the censure of the House.

1 Rule 59. If any member be called to order by another member for words  
2 spoken, the words excepted to shall be immediately taken down in writing in order  
3 that the Speaker and House may be better able to judge the matter.  
4

5 Rule 60. No member shall, while the House is sitting, interrupt or hinder its  
6 business by standing up, leaving his place, moving about the Hall, engaging in  
7 conversation, expressing approval or disapproval of any of the proceedings, or by  
8 any other conduct tending to disorder and confusion.  
9

10 Rule 61. No member shall speak more than once on any question until all  
11 others have spoken who desire to do so, nor more than twice, without the consent  
12 of a majority of the members present.  
13

#### 14 **Ascertaining the Question.** 15

16 Rule 62. If the question for decision includes several distinct propositions any  
17 member may have the same divided, but a motion to strike out and insert shall not  
18 be so divided; nor shall a motion to strike out, being lost, preclude either  
19 amendment or a motion to strike out and insert. In filling blanks, the question shall  
20 be put first upon the largest sum and the longest time or the broadest question.  
21

22 Rule 62(a). No motion or proposition, or subject different from that under  
23 consideration, shall be admitted under color of amendment.  
24

25 Rule 62(b). The Speaker shall determine all questions of germaneness relevant  
26 to any legislation under consideration by the House including House legislation  
27 and any amendments thereto communicated by the Senate or the Governor to the  
28 House for its action.  
29

30 Rule 63. When a question is before the House no motion shall be received  
31 unless specially provided for except to adjourn, to pass by, to lay upon the table, to  
32 postpone for a specified time or purpose, to refer or rerefer, to amend, or to strike  
33 from the Calendar, which several motions shall have precedence in the order in  
34 which they are arranged.  
35

36 Rule 64. Upon the motion to pass by, the mover shall be allowed two minutes  
37 to state the reason for his motion, and one member opposed to the motion shall be  
38 allowed a like time to object. The motion to lay upon the table, for the previous  
39 question, and for the pending question shall not be debated; nor shall debate be  
40 allowed on a motion to take up a subject from the table or to reconsider any  
41 question which was not debated. When a question not debatable is before the

1 House all incidental questions arising after it is stated to the House shall be decided  
2 and settled, whether on appeal or otherwise, without debate; and the same rule  
3 shall apply to incidental questions rising after any question is put to the House.  
4

### 5 **Pending and Previous Questions.**

6  
7 Rule 65. Pending a debate, any member who obtains the floor for the purpose  
8 only, and submits no other motion or remark, may move for the "previous  
9 question" or the "pending question," and in either case the motion shall be  
10 forthwith put to the House. Two-thirds of the members present shall be required to  
11 order the main question; however, a majority may require an immediate vote upon  
12 the pending question, whatever it may be.  
13

14 Rule 66. The previous question shall be in this form: "Shall the main question  
15 now be put?" If carried, its effect shall be to put an end to all debate and bring the  
16 House to a direct vote upon a motion to refer or rerefer, if pending; then upon  
17 amendments reported by a committee, if any; then upon pending amendments; and  
18 then upon the main question. If upon the motion for the previous question, the  
19 main question be not ordered, debate may continue as if the motion had not been  
20 made.  
21

### 22 **Taking the Vote.**

23  
24 Rule 67. The Speaker shall rise to put a question, but may state it sitting.  
25 Questions shall be distinctly put in substantially the following forms, viz.: "As  
26 many as agree that, etc. (as the question may be), say 'Aye,'" and "Those opposed  
27 say 'No.'" If the Speaker doubts or a division is called for, the House shall divide  
28 with those in the affirmative of the question rising first from their seats and  
29 afterwards those in the negative, or by a show of hands in the affirmative and then  
30 in the negative. If required, the Speaker shall cause the result to be ascertained by  
31 a count.  
32

33 Rule 68. The yeas and nays on any question may be called for at any time  
34 before proceeding to another question or proposition but, being refused, they shall  
35 not be again demanded on the same question. Any member shall have a right to  
36 vote at any time before the decision is announced by the Chair.  
37

38 Rule 69. Upon a division of the House on any question, a member who is  
39 present and fails to vote shall on the demand of any member be counted on the  
40 negative of the question and when the yeas and nays are taken shall, in addition, be  
41 entered on the Journal as present and not voting. However, no member who has an  
42 immediate and personal interest in the result of the question shall either vote or be  
43 counted upon it.

**Reconsideration.**

Rule 70. When a question has been decided it may be reconsidered on the motion of any member who voted with the prevailing side provided it be made on the same day. If such action has not been communicated to the Senate, such motion may be made within the next two days of actual session. The motion may be entered as a matter of privilege and shall take precedence of everything except special orders and other questions of privilege and be disposed of in the morning hour or with the Calendar, as the case may be. All motions to reconsider shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present.

**Bills and Amendments.**

Rule 71. Every bill shall be read or printed on the Calendar by title on three different calendar days in the House previous to its being passed, and it shall be distinctly announced or set out at each reading or printing on the Calendar, whether it is the first, second, or third time.

Rule 72. The first reading or printing on the Calendar of the House bill shall be for information merely, and it shall go to second reading or printing on the Calendar without a question.

Rule 73. Upon the second reading or printing on the Calendar of a House bill it shall be open to amendment or to referral or rereferral or to any of the motions provided for in Rule 63, and the final question shall be "Whether it shall be engrossed and read or printed on the Calendar a third time?" Upon the third reading or printing on the Calendar of a Senate bill it shall be open to amendment or to referral or rereferral or to any of the motions provided in Rule 63.

Rule 74. A House bill ordered to be engrossed shall not have its third reading or printing on the Calendar until the engrossment is actually and properly done. However, in the case of a Senate bill, the engrossment shall only apply to such amendments as may have been made in the House.

Rule 75. No amendment to a House bill shall be received upon its third reading or printing on the Calendar by way of rider or otherwise, and no amendment involving an additional appropriation shall be added to the general appropriation bill, and no amendment to increase any tax shall be added to any tax measure, unless either such amendment be to carry into effect an existing law or unless it received the vote required to pass the bill itself. A Senate amendment to a House bill to be concurred in, or a conference report to be adopted, must receive the same recorded vote as required to pass the bill itself. A bill at any time before its passage may be referred or rereferred.

1 Rule 75(a). If the Senate refuses to concur in the amendments of the House and  
2 so communicates such action to the House, the House may vote to recede from its  
3 amendments and subsequently pass the legislation in the form originally passed by  
4 the Senate or insist on its amendments and request a committee of conference with  
5 the Senate. Conversely, the House in considering Senate amendments to House  
6 legislation shall wait for communication by the Senate that they have voted to  
7 insist on their amendments and request a committee of conference whereby the  
8 House may agree to the request for a committee of conference.  
9

10 Rule 75(b). Upon an affirmative vote to form a committee of conference, the  
11 Speaker shall appoint the House membership to the committee. A majority of the  
12 members of each house on the conference committee shall agree to the committee  
13 of conference report prior to its submission and consideration by the House. If a  
14 conference committee is unable to reach agreement and reports such action to the  
15 House, the Speaker may appoint new conferees or upon the motion of a member  
16 and an affirmative vote of the House a new set of conferees shall be appointed. In  
17 addition, if a committee of conference report is considered and rejected, the House  
18 may agree by a majority vote of the members present to request an additional  
19 committee of conference.  
20

21 Rule 76. On the third reading or printing on the Calendar of a bill, the question  
22 shall be, "Shall the bill pass?"  
23

24 Rule 77. The title of a bill and all amendments offered shall be entered upon  
25 the Journal, except that amendments in the nature of substitutes may be printed  
26 separately and only the titles thereof entered upon the Journal.  
27

### 28 **Withdrawals of Exhibits.**

29

30 Rule 78. Original papers, filed as exhibits with any bill or resolution, may be  
31 withdrawn by the patron or he may leave attested copies, for which he shall pay the  
32 Clerk at the rate provided by law for other copies made by him.  
33

### 34 **Messages.**

35

36 Rule 79. It shall be the duty of the Clerk, without any special order therefor, to  
37 communicate to the Senate any action of the House upon business coming from the  
38 Senate or upon matters requiring the concurrence of that body; however, no such  
39 communication shall be made in relation to any action of the House while it  
40 remains open for consideration.

**Manual and Rules.**

Rule 80. The rules of parliamentary practice comprised in Jefferson's Manual shall govern the House in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Rules of the House and such joint rules as are or may from time to time be established by the two houses of the General Assembly.

Rule 81. The Rules of the House shall be adopted in even numbered years by a majority vote of members elected and shall remain in effect for two years coinciding with the terms of members. The rules may be suspended by a vote of two-thirds of the members elected to be ascertained by an actual division of the House except as prohibited by the Constitution; provided that a motion to discharge a committee from the consideration of a bill shall require a majority of those voting, which shall include two-fifths of the members elected to the House, the vote thereon to be taken by yeas and nays and recorded in the Journal; and provided further, that a motion to dispense with the printing and reading of a bill, or its printing on the Calendar, or either, shall not be entertained, except as provided by the Constitution.

A proposition to change a rule of the House shall be submitted in writing and forthwith printed. In its printed form it shall lie upon the Speaker's table for five days and be read by the House during the morning hour of each day during that time. At the expiration of five days it shall be ready for consideration and may be adopted or rejected by a majority vote of the members present; provided that as to all resolutions or bills which involve an appropriation or expenditure of money by the Commonwealth, or which may create a charge upon the treasury, the rule of the House shall not be changed or suspended save by a vote of two-thirds of the members present to be ascertained by an actual division of the House.

Upon a motion to suspend a rule of the House the mover shall be allowed two minutes to state the reasons for his motion, and one member opposed to the motion shall be allowed a like time to object.

**Hall of the House of Delegates.**

Rule 82. The Hall of the House of Delegates shall be used for no other purpose than the sessions of the House and for meetings of the committees and members of the legislature on public affairs except by vote of the House or the Rules Committee or with the approval of the Speaker when the House is not in session.

Rule 83. Only members of the General Assembly, former members, members of the Congress of the United States, State officers, judges, officers and employees of the General Assembly, and such other persons as the Speaker may designate

1 shall be permitted on the floor of the House during the session; however, the  
2 privileges granted hereunder shall not be exercised by any person having business  
3 for compensation before the House or any committee thereof and the officers of  
4 this body shall enforce this rule under the direction of the Speaker.  
5

6 **General Assembly Building.**  
7

8 Rule 84. The area of the General Assembly Building assigned to the members  
9 of the House of Delegates, their legislative support staff, the clerical staff of the  
10 House of Delegates, the facilities and space for those charged with the  
11 maintenance, repair, and security of such building, and such space designated for  
12 the news media shall not be utilized or occupied as office space by any other  
13 person or persons, except by vote of the House or the Rules Committee.

**VOTES REQUIRED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF VIRGINIA,  
THE RULES OF THE HOUSE, AND THE PROCEDURAL RESOLUTION**

**BILLS:**

(a) Ordinary .....	Majority of those voting.....	<b>at least 40</b>
	(Art. IV, Sec. 11)	
	(Same for Senate amendments and conference reports)	
(b) Appropriation Claim or demand of Commonwealth Debt or charge New office Tax .....	Majority of those elected.....	<b>at least 51</b>
	(Art. IV, Sec. 11)	
	(Same for Senate amendments and conference reports)	
(c) Amendment to charter Charter Special Act – county, city, town.....	2/3 of members elected .....	<b>at least 67</b>
	(Art. VII, Sec. 1)	
	(Same for Senate amendments and conference reports)	
<b>DISCHARGING COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>Majority of those voting.....</b>	<b>at least 40</b>
	(Art. IV, Sec. 11)	
<b>DISPENSING WITH READING AND/OR PRINTING OF BILL TO CODIFY THE LAWS OF THE COMMONWEALTH AND IN CASE OF EMERGENCY .....</b>	<b>4/5 of members voting</b>	
	(Art. IV, Sec. 11)	
<b>EMERGENCY CLAUSE.....</b>	<b>4/5 of members voting</b>	
	(Art. IV, Sec. 13)	
<b>GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION .....</b>	<b>Majority of members present</b>	
	(Art. V, Sec. 6)	
<b>GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION NOT SPECIFIC AND SEVERABLE .....</b>	<b>Majority of members present</b>	
	(Art. V, Sec. 6)	
<b>OVERRIDE VETO AND PASS NOTWITHSTANDING .....</b>	<b>2/3 of members present .....</b>	<b>at least 51</b>
	(Art. V, Sec. 6)	
<b>PETITION SPECIAL SESSION.....</b>	<b>2/3 of members elected</b>	
	(Art. V, Sec. 5)	
<b>STUDY, CREATING OR CONTINUING .....</b>	<b>2/3 of members voting</b>	
	(Procedural Resolution)	
<b>SUSPENSION OF RULES .....</b>	<b>2/3 of members elected .....</b>	<b>at least 67</b>
	(House Rule 81)	



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