



Amendment #1 - Public Committee Votes

Amendment 1 will require two amendments, one to the House Rules, governing House-only committees, and a second to the Joint Rules, governing the majority of legislative committees.

Amended Version of the House Rules:

Rule 17A. (f)

A committee shall maintain accurate records of its meetings and hearings setting forth the date, time and place thereof, and recording any action taken at each meeting, hearing, executive conference or executive session. All testimony at hearings and other written materials submitted to a committee shall be made available to members of the House and the public; provided however a committee shall in its rules of procedure establish exceptions for materials of a personal or confidential nature where the person or organization submitting the materials so requests in writing. All votes requested to be taken in executive sessions shall be recorded roll call votes and shall become a part of the record of said executive sessions. The record of each meeting shall become a public record and be available to the public; provided, however, that the records of any executive conference shall remain secret as long as publication may defeat the lawful purposes of the executive conference.

Rule 17A. (h)

Copies of all redrafted bills that are to be voted on at an executive session or by an electronic poll of a House committee by the House Ways and Means Committee shall be available to all members of the committee electronically in the form they will be considered no less than twenty-four hours prior to their consideration; provided, however, that said committee may vote on a bill that has not been available for said period of time by vote of a majority of the committee members present.

Rule 17B

Whenever any member of a House committee present at the committee meeting so requests, the vote to give any legislation a favorable or adverse report shall be a recorded vote of the full committee. Such votes shall be recorded on appropriate forms that show all votes for and against the particular committee action; provided that votes may also be recorded in LAWS. The record of all such roll calls shall be kept in the offices of the committee and shall be posted on the website of the General Court within 48 hours of the vote for public inspection.

All votes by the committee to give any legislation a favorable report, adverse report, or study order, whether by recorded vote at an executive session or by an electronic poll of the committee, shall be recorded on appropriate forms that show all votes for and against the particular committee action, shall be kept in the offices of the committee, and shall be posted on the website of the General Court as soon as practicable but no later than 48 hours of the vote being taken; provided that votes may also be recorded in LAWS.



No report of a House committee on any legislation shall be final until those members of the committee present and voting with the majority have been given the opportunity to sign such appropriate forms before the report is made to the House. No signature shall be valid unless the forms to which the signatures are affixed include the substantially complete text of the legislation being reported.

Amended Version of the Joint Rules:

Joint Rule 4

Favorable reports, and adverse reports on subjects of legislation other than petitions, by joint committees shall be made to the branch in which the matter was originally introduced, unless the committee decides otherwise under its own rules and, except that reports on money bills shall be made to the House and if adverse reports on matters other than petitions which are accompanied by money bills are accepted by the House, this shall constitute final rejection. Adverse reports by joint committees on petitions shall be made to the branch in which the petition was originally introduced, except that such adverse reports on petitions accompanied by proposed money bills shall be made to the House; and, if accepted by the branch in which they are made, shall be considered as a final rejection. When a report is made from any committee to either branch, and the subject-matter of the report is subsequently referred to a joint committee, such committee, except for the committee on Health Care Financing, shall report its action to the branch in which the reference originated.

All votes by a joint standing committee to give any legislation a favorable report, adverse report, or study order, whether by recorded vote at an executive session or by an electronic poll of the committee, shall be recorded on appropriate forms that show all votes for and against the particular committee action, shall be kept in the offices of the committee for the duration of the General Court during which said vote was recorded, and shall be posted on the website of the General Court as soon as practicable but no later than 48 hours of the vote being taken; provided that votes may also be recorded in LAWS.

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

All committee members shall have an opportunity to sign a form accompanying a report of the committee signifying approval of, dissent or abstention from a report of a joint standing committee before the report is final or filed. No signature shall be valid unless the report to which the signature is affixed includes the substantially complete text of the legislation being reported.



Joint Rule 1D

All meetings of joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, shall be open to the public, and any person shall be permitted to attend any such meeting unless such committee convenes in executive session, as provided herein. All joint standing committees shall determine a schedule for committee hearings to be held from the beginning of the first annual session through the fourth Wednesday in June in said session. These committee schedules shall be submitted to the Clerk of the House who shall cause them to be published on the official website for the General Court. Establishment of such schedules shall not preclude joint standing committees from scheduling additional hearings or meetings as needed. No executive session shall be held except upon extraordinary circumstances and only after the committee has first convened in an open session for which notice has been given, the presiding officer has stated the purpose of the executive session, a majority of the committee members present has voted to go into executive session, the vote of each member has been recorded on a roll call vote, and the presiding officer has stated before the executive session if the committee will reconvene after the executive session. The records of all such roll calls shall be kept in the offices of the committee for the duration of the General Court during which said vote was recorded, and shall be available for public inspection upon reasonable notice and during regular office hours. All testimony at hearings and other written materials submitted to a committee shall be made available to members of the House and Senate and the public; provided however a committee shall in its rules of procedure establish exceptions for materials of a personal or confidential nature where the person or organization submitting the materials so requests in writing.

Committees shall provide to members of the committee either the text or comprehensive summaries of the bills or other forms of legislative matters prior to the beginning of an executive session or poll. All joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, shall notify the Sergeant-at-Arms of the time, place and agenda of all public hearings and executive sessions not less than 72 hours prior to the time of such meetings. If public testimony is being solicited, agendas shall include an electronic mail address and physical mail address for the submission of testimony. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall notify the clerk, who shall inform all members electronically and publish such information on the official website of the General Court whenever practicable.

Nothing contained in this rule shall prohibit a joint standing committee or special joint committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives from taking appropriate action including, but not limited to, the exclusion of a person from a committee meeting in order to prevent the disruption of or interference with committee proceedings. All meetings of joint standing committees, and special joint committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, shall be limited to no more than 50 bills to be discussed in a hearing, unless it can be determined that all of the bills being considered are of the same subject matter.



The 72 hour requirement shall be suspended in an emergency only after all reasonable efforts have been made to contact all committee members and upon a recorded vote of at least a majority of the members of each branch appointed to the committee, but not less than two-thirds of the members of each branch voting.

A meeting of a committee may be recorded by a person in attendance by means of a recorder or any other means of audio/visual reproduction except when a meeting is held in executive session; provided, that a person seeking to record a meeting of a committee notifies the Chairs of the committee prior to commencing such recording; and provided further that during such recording there is no interference with the conduct of the meeting.

The Chairs of each committee shall preserve decorum and order during each committee hearing. Persons attending hearings shall be required to refrain from the use of cellular telephones, beepers and pagers. The use of visual aids including, without limitation, posters, displays, or charts shall be permitted only upon approval of the Chairs.