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(JANUARY 13, 2005)**

**(AS AMENDED BY H. R. 307 OF
FEBRUARY 3, 2005)**

**(AS AMENDED BY H. R. 454 OF
MAY 16, 2005)**

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

15th Legislature

1st Regular Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. R. 1

JANUARY 2, 2005

Introduced by Representatives *Aponte-Hernández, Jiménez-Cruz, Ruiz-Class, Ramos-Rivera, Bonilla-Feliciano, Bulerín-Ramos, Chico-Vega, Cintrón-Rodríguez, Colón-Ruiz, Concepción-Hernández, Crespo-Arroyo, del Valle-Colón, Fernández-Rodríguez, González-Colón, González-Rodríguez, Jiménez-Negrón, Márquez-García, Méndez-Núñez, Molina-Rodríguez, Navarro-Suárez, Peña-Rosa, Pérez-Ortiz, Pérez-Otero, Ramírez-Rivera, Ramos-Peña, Rivera-Aquino, Rivera-Guerra, Rivera-Ortega, Rivera-Ramírez, Rodríguez-Aguiló, Silva-Delgado, and Torres-Calderón*

Referred to the Committee on Internal Affairs

RESOLUTION

To establish the Rules of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, in order to adopt the new rules of legislative proceedings and internal government of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in the Fifteenth Legislature.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, by virtue of the powers conferred by the Constitution, Article III, Section 9, and the obligations imposed by Section 17 of said Article III, hereby adopts these Rules to fully exercise the prerogatives conferred.

Pursuant to the constitutional mandate, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has adopted, throughout time, the different regulatory principles that have governed its legislative endeavor, as well as its internal government. In adopting these Rules, we guarantee our constituents that they will be represented in all matters addressed by this Body. This is made possible by guaranteeing a uniform and balanced participation for Legislators in all legislative processes. We must bear in mind that we have promised the People who elected us to use public funds efficiently and adequately.

These Rules are the product of a thorough study and the consideration of diverse sources and suggestions that have governed the proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Likewise, some of its provisions emanate from common usage, others from applicable law, and some are completely new; all of these provisions are subordinated and conform to the nontransferable constitutional power of this Legislative Body to regulate its internal order and operations.

The adoption of these Rules, with the changes incorporated therein, makes it possible for legislative works to be conducted efficiently, expeditiously and at the lowest cost possible for the public treasury. Likewise, these Rules are a facilitator for the joint effort of the members of the New House to elicit optimal productivity for the benefit of the People of Puerto Rico.

Be It Resolved By The House Of Representatives Of Puerto Rico:

Section 1.—To establish the Rules of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in order to adopt the legislative and internal government procedures of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, included below:

**“ADOPTION, AMENDMENTS, SUSPENSION
AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES**

RULE 1 – INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS

Section 1.1.—Name.—

These Rules shall be known as the “Rules of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.”

Section 1.2.—Power to Adopt.—

These Rules are adopted by virtue of the authority conferred onto the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico by Article III, Section 9 of the Constitution of Puerto Rico, which provides that the House “adopt the rules proper to the legislative bodies for its proceedings and internal government.”

Section 1.3.—Purposes.—

The adoption of these Rules has the purpose of guaranteeing the logical and reliable order of the legislative process, as well as the

implementation of effective norms and directives to address the parliamentary procedures and ministerial and administrative matters.

Section 1.4.—Applicability.—

These Rules shall be applicable to:

(a) all Representatives, officials and employees of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Standing and Special Committees of the House, and any other office or entity attached to or under the control of the House. Joint Committees shall be governed pursuant to the provisions adopted by the Legislature to that respect;

(b) all citizens summoned by the House, its Speaker, its Standing or Special Committees, as well as any person who voluntarily appears without a summons, in relation to his/her appearance and for its duration, or until he/she is excused; and

(c) all those present in the facilities of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or in any other public or private facilities transferred or leased to the House to conduct its business.

Section 1.5.—Interpretation.—

The Speaker shall be responsible for the compliance with the provisions of these Rules. For such purposes, he/she shall be empowered to interpret and the responsibility to apply these Rules in a fair and reasonable

manner, taking into consideration the order, dignity and integrity of the House and its proceedings.

When a situation not contemplated under these Rules arises, the decisions of the Speaker may be established by referring to previous decisions of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico on similar matters, or in its default, decisions of the Senate or equity principles.

The corresponding rule of the Jefferson's Legislative Procedure Manual may be used as a basis in the interpretation made on that matter by the legislative houses of other state jurisdictions of the United States.

RULE 2 – AMENDMENTS OR SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

Section 2.1.—Resolution to Amend or Suspend the Rules.—

These Rules may be suspended or amended by a Resolution to that effect, introduced through the Office of the Clerk, pursuant to the process indicated further.

However, their provisions may be suspended at any time without applying the preceding requirement in those cases whereby three-fifths (3/5) of those present at House sessions give their tacit or express consent.

Section 2.2.—Processing of Amending or Suspension Resolution.—

Any resolution to amend or suspend the Rules shall be referred to the Committee on Internal Affairs. This Committee shall render its report within seventy-two (72) hours after receipt of said resolution. The Chairperson of the Committee, however, may request and be granted by the House additional time to study and report on the resolution introduced.

In the event the amending or suspension resolution is proposed by the Committee on Internal Affairs, the same shall be introduced with the Office of the Clerk for the corresponding processing, but it shall not have to be referred to said Committee.

Section 2.3.—Consideration of Reports.—

The reports rendered by the Committee on Internal Affairs on that respect shall be considered in the Session following their date of filing, and the same shall be considered preferentially over all other business for the day.

Section 2.4.—Approval of Resolutions.—

Resolutions to suspend or amend the Rules shall require for their approval the vote of an absolute majority of the House by roll call vote.

**CONSTITUTION, COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

RULE 3 – CONSTITUTION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE HOUSE

Section 3.1.—Length of Term.—

The term of the office for which Representatives are elected begins, as established in the Constitution, Article III, Section 8, as amended, on January 2 following the date on which general elections have been held. Said term shall extend to the date of expiration of the Legislature to which they were elected.

Section 3.2.—Election Certificate and Filed Audited Financial Statement Certificate.—

As of the 2nd day of January on which their term begins and before they take oath and the Inaugural Session of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is held, all Representatives must submit the Election Certificate issued by the Commonwealth Elections Commission (CEC) to the Clerk of the House.

The Clerk shall also receive the certification issued by the CEC concerning the Representatives that have been elected in the general elections.

The abovementioned information shall be entered into a registry book, to be prepared by the Clerk, in which the following shall be recorded:

- (a) the full name of each Representative;
- (b) the date of the Election Certificate;
- (c) whether the Representative was elected by a particular representative district or at large; and
- (d) the name of the officials undersigning the document.

The Clerk of the House shall return the Election Certificates to Representatives after the Inaugural Session.

Section 3.3.—Swearing In.—

In keeping with the provisions of the Political Code in relation to being sworn into office and with the constitutional term for doing so, each Representative shall be sworn into office before the Clerk of the House.

Representatives shall begin to discharge their functions immediately after they have been sworn in.

The date and the text of the oath taken by each Representative elected by a district or at large shall be entered into the Minutes of the Inaugural Session.

Section 3.4.—The Clerk Acting as Speaker.—

The Clerk of the House shall act as the Speaker of the Body from the 1st of January following general elections until the House elects its Speaker and he/she is sworn in and takes office.

In the exercise of such functions, the Clerk shall have the following responsibilities:

(a) he/she shall act as the chief executive officer of the House with all the powers and prerogatives said office entails;

(b) he/she shall keep the Office of the Clerk of the House operating, also discharging all the duties said office entails;

(c) he/she shall be the custodian of the property of the House and take all steps necessary for the return of property held by Representatives who have lapsed from office as of December 31st of the year of the general elections;

(d) he/she shall make the disbursements pertinent to his/her tenure, including those necessary for holding the Inaugural Session;

(e) he/she shall report to the House through a written document submitted to the elected Speaker on all measures, determinations, disbursements and obligations incurred while acting as Speaker;

(f) he/she shall swear in elected Representatives, pursuant to the provisions of this Rule; and

(g) he/she shall hold office as Speaker during the Inaugural Session in order to discharge the duties provided for in these Rules.

RULE 4 – INAUGURAL SESSION AND ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

Section 4.1.—Date.—

The Inaugural Session of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico of the First Regular Session of each Legislature shall be held on the second Monday of January following the general elections, to begin at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 PM).

Section 4.2.—Election of Officials; Vacancies.—

The Speaker, the Vice Speaker, the Clerk and the Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be elected during the Inaugural Session.

The Speaker and the Vice Speaker shall be elected from among the members of the House. As to the Clerk and the Sergeant at Arms, they cannot be members of the House.

Should a vacancy arise as a result of the resignation, removal, disability or death of any of these four officials, the office shall be immediately covered by election, if the House is convened. If not, the

election shall be carried out in the first Session to be held, whether Regular or Special, after the vacancy occurs. In this case, the Speaker shall designate a substitute to discharge such functions pro tempore.

If the vacant office is that of the Speaker, the Vice Speaker shall act in his/her stead until the new Speaker is elected and takes office. In the event both the office of Speaker and Vice Speaker are left vacant, the Clerk, or in his/her default the Representative of the parliamentary majority with higher seniority in the Body, shall preside over the Body with the sole purpose of conducting the election of the new officials.

Should the House not be convened, the acting Speaker shall convoke a Special Session for these purposes within ten (10) days following the occurrence of such vacancies.

Section 4.3.—Special Proceedings in the Inaugural Session.—

The Inaugural Session shall be held following the general rules established below:

(a) The Clerk shall act as the Speaker, call to order and read the account of elected Representatives remitted by the Commonwealth Elections Commission (CEC).

(b) If not sworn in on January 2, Representatives shall be sworn into office as prescribed by law before the Clerk, acting as the Speaker, on or before the Inaugural Session.

(c) The roll shall be called to determine the presence of the quorum required by the Rules. This shall be determined by the acting Speaker. It shall be understood that the House is officially constituted when the number of duly certified and sworn in Representatives present is greater than half the total number of elective offices.

(d) The political parties represented in the House shall officially state the names of their Floor Leaders and Alternate Floor Leaders.

(e) The Speaker shall be elected by roll call vote and by the absolute majority of the members that compose the House.

(f) The acting Speaker shall proclaim the election of the new Speaker of the House and designate a Committee to escort him/her to the presidential dais. He/she shall be sworn into office before the acting Speaker and after having being instated shall deliver his/her inaugural address.

(g) Upon conclusion of the Speaker's address, the Vice Speaker, the Clerk and the Sergeant at Arms shall be nominated and elected. Once

elected, they shall be sworn in before the Speaker and take their respective offices.

(h) If any of these three officials can not be elected during the Inaugural Session, said election shall be conducted during the next Session, but the Speaker shall designate officials to hold said offices pro tempore.

(i) The House shall receive the members of the Senate at the Floor to accept their protocol salutations and reports. The Speaker shall appoint a Committee of House members to reciprocate the visit. Both Committees shall agree on a joint visit to the Governor of Puerto Rico to extend the salutations of the Legislature, inform him/her of the constitution of both Bodies and notify that they are ready for him/her to deliver his/her address of State. The House Committee shall render a report to the Body in relation to the visit to the Governor during the Session following the visit.

Section 4.4.—Adoption of Rules in the Inaugural Session.—

The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall adopt during the Inaugural Session the rules that shall govern its proceedings and internal procedures. To that effect, it may ratify if deemed convenient the Rules of the preceding Legislature, in effect at that time, to continue in effect entirely until they are amended or repealed.

RULE 5 – THE SPEAKER

Section 5.1.—Powers and Obligations.—

The Speaker of the House shall have the following powers and obligations:

(a) be the Chief Executive Officer of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in all legislative and administrative matters. He/she may in turn delegate functions as deemed necessary to fully discharge his/her tasks, when not prohibited from doing so by law or by the rules;

(b) preside over the sessions of the House and the Committee of the Whole;

(c) resolve all parliamentary issues, including questions of order raised during sessions;

(d) appoint Standing and Special Committees, designate and replace their members, fill vacancies and designate House members to Joint Committees. At any time he/she may administratively allow the participation of any Representative in standing or special committees if deemed necessary or at the request of a Representative;

(e) refer bills and resolutions to the Standing and Special Committees for their consideration and study; he/she shall refer to any Committee, including Special Committees, the matters of public interest that

should be investigated or studied and request that said Committee render the corresponding report. The Speaker may delegate onto the Clerk the task of referring legislative measures or matters to the Committees;

(f) be an ex-officio member of all Standing and Special Committees; he/she may participate in the deliberations, works and votes thereof;

(g) sign all bills and joint resolutions approved by the Legislature that are to be sent to the Governor, as well as all other measures approved by the House or by both Legislative Bodies which do not require the signature of the latter; he/she shall sign all mandates or citations issued by order of the Body;

(h) convoke Special or Called Sessions, pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution, the laws, and these Rules;

(i) maintain at all times order and decorum on all premises, structures and facilities of the House. Likewise, he/she shall not allow the public to make expressions of pleasure or displeasure, whether written or oral, caused by the expressions or actions of the Representatives; nor shall allow the public to interrupt or obstruct the works of the Body. In the exercise of said function, he may order the immediate evacuation of said places, as well as the arrest of the persons who caused or promoted the

situation. In the case of any disorder in the Chamber when the House is assembled, the Speaker may order the suspension of the Session or decree a recess so that the corresponding action may be taken;

(j) be under the obligation to vote on all matters, unless he/she wishes to be excused, for which reason he or she shall call on the Vice President to preside or on any other Representative, in the absence or upon an excuse of the former;

(k) call on the Vice President to preside or on any other Representative in the absence or upon excuse of the former, when he/she is to introduce a motion or participate in a debate. To such effects, he/she shall take a seat among the Representatives. The questions of order are exempted from this Rule;

(l) may appoint any other Representative to substitute him/her when absent or when he/she must leave the Session, and the Vice President is not present. This appointment shall not be extended to more than one Session without the consent of the House;

(m) when the House is not assembled, the Speaker may entrust to any Standing or Special Commission the study of any issue that is considered of urgent nature or of compelling public interest;

(n) Shall have a Corps of Advisors, composed of advisors, technicians, and experts, who, upon his/her petition shall offer their advice to him/her as well as the House and its Committees in the study and investigation of legislative matters that require knowledge, skills or expertise. For these same purposes and when deemed necessary, he/she may also create Special Units through an Administrative Order, which may be assigned to work in coordination with any of the Committees of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico for the duration of the study or investigation and for the time established by the Speaker;

(o) shall represent the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and appear before any General Court of Justice or before the Courts of the United States in any action filed against the House, its officers, Committees or employees thereof due to their legislative duties. He/she shall also file or intervene on behalf of the House in those judicial actions in which he/she deems may affect the rights, powers and prerogatives of the House, its officers and Committees in the performance of their legislative duties. These powers are extensive to review and appeals mechanisms. The Speaker may contract lawyers, experts and technicians as well as any other services needed to comply with this task;

(p) when the House is not assembled, the Speaker shall be authorized to fill the vacancies that arise in the offices of Secretary and Sergeant at Arms provisionally, and shall inform the Body in the first Session held after the vacancy has occurred. The House shall then proceed with the election of the new officer;

(q) shall be in charge of the administrative affairs of the House. As such, he/she shall organize and direct all activities pertaining to the operation of the Body, including, among others, all those pertaining to personnel transactions and the promulgation of norms for the administration thereof; preparation and management of the budget; control of purchases and disbursement of public funds and administration of the property and equipment and materials inventory system; adoption of accounting methods; and contracting of goods and services. For this, the Speaker may delegate any of these tasks through an Order to such effects;

(r) shall authorize the televised or radio broadcast of any Session or public hearings on issues of interest for the People of Puerto Rico, chargeable to the budget of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

(s) shall order a monthly report of the measures filed, including their numbers, titles, dates of introduction, and the committee or committees

to which they were referred, and shall make the same available for the information and evaluation by the public. He/she shall also prepare a monthly report of the attendance of Representatives to the Sessions of the House and to the public hearings of the Committees. These duties may be delegated on the Clerk of the House;

(t) at the beginning of the first Session of the year, or as soon as possible, he/she shall render a public report on the work performed by the House during the previous year and its projections for the current year. Said report shall also contain a presentation and analysis of the use of the House budget;

(u) shall appoint an Internal Auditor for the purpose of ensuring that the resources of the House have been used pursuant to the applicable laws and provisions. To such effects, the Internal Auditor shall render an Annual Report, in writing, to the Speaker, and the latter, in turn shall inform the House. Said Report shall be available for public access at the Office of the Clerk;

(v) shall grant the officers and employees of the House the leave deemed pertinent, without any limitation other than his /her prudent judgment, and pursuant to the needs of the service. In no case shall a leave with pay be granted for a term to exceed two (2) months in a year. Sick

leave that does not exceed sixty (60) days shall not be deducted from the term of vacation leave. He/she shall also grant maternity leave, as provided by our code of laws;

(w) shall ensure strict compliance of these Rules as well as of the constitutional and legal principles that govern the legislative power;

(x) shall introduce the House budget in a Called Session; and

(y) shall appoint as members of the Bidding Board of the House of Representatives persons from different political parties represented in the House, as established in the Rules of the Bidding Board.

RULE 6 – THE VICE SPEAKER

Section 6.1.—Powers and Obligations.—

The Vice Speaker shall have the same duties and equal attributions as the Speaker of the House while substituting the latter in the exercise of his/her functions. He/she shall also assist the Speaker in his/her tasks as such; discharge those duties delegated on him/her by the Speaker or assigned by the House or by code of laws; and shall be ex officio member of all Standing and Special Committees, thus enabling him/her to participate in the deliberations, works and voting thereof.

Section 6.2.—Vice Speaker Acting as Speaker.—

Pursuant to the provisions of Rule 5, the Vice Speaker discharge the duties of Speaker in the case of absence of the latter and while the absence lasts; when he/she wishes to be excused from voting or when he/she is to introduce a motion or participate in a debate.

Likewise, in the case of the death, resignation or removal of the Speaker, the Vice Speaker, pursuant to the provisions of Rule 4.2, shall exercise those duties until a new Speaker is elected and takes office.

Section 6.3.—Designation of Incidental Speaker.—

The Vice Speaker, acting as Speaker, may appoint a Representative to substitute him/her in the case of absence, but said designation shall not extend to more than one session without the consent of the House.

RULE 7 – THE CLERK

Section 7.1.—Duties and Responsibilities of the Clerk.—

The Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

(a) shall be the acting Speaker, as provided in Section 3.4 of these Rules;

(b) shall hold the Office of Speaker in the Inaugural Session and shall discharge those duties prescribed in Rules 3 and 4, and shall decide the questions of order subject to appeal before the House;

(c) an hour before the commencement of every Session, he/she shall place on the desk of each Representative and/or distribute through electronic means, a copy of the Minutes of the previous Session, a list of the bills, resolutions and petitions introduced in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and of those received from the Senate, as well as a copy of the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day filed up to that time;

(d) shall deliver to all Representatives and/or distribute through electronic means, together with the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day, a copy of the Reports of the Committees regarding the bills and resolutions to be considered by the House on that same day, including their respective engrossed bills. He/she shall also deliver to the members of the House those documents that should be made known to them or for them to take action, or in which there is an order to such effect from the House or from the Speaker;

(e) shall call the roll at the beginning of each Session or when required, and shall call the names of absent Representatives for a second time. He/she shall state to the Speaker the number of members present at the Floor to determine quorum;

(f) shall read to the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico all the documents about which the latter should be apprised pursuant to the provisions of these Rules;

(g) shall remit to the Senate all the messages and communications that should be addressed to that Body;

(h) shall prepare the Minutes corresponding to each Session of the House, including approved amendments thereto;

(i) shall prepare, furthermore, an account of the bills, resolutions and petitions introduced in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and those received from the Senate; and he/she shall keep a register in which he/she shall make note of all stages of processing, efforts, and measures undertaken by the Bodies and their Committees regarding said bills, resolutions and petitions, including from their introduction to their final processing stage. The same may be available by electronic means;

(j) shall assign the number corresponding to the legislative measures filed with the Office of the Clerk, which shall immediately follow the pertinent processing stage, as provided in these Rules;

(k) shall keep a register of the documents remitted to Committee Chairpersons, and shall remit to the latter the petitions, memorials, bills and

resolutions as corresponds for their study or investigation; reports returned by the House for further action; and any other document addressed to the Committee;

(l) the Clerk shall receive the reports that any government agency is to submit to the House by mandate of law. He/she shall give monthly notice to members of the receipt of said reports and shall refer them to the Legislative Library. It shall be the obligation of the Director of the Office of Legislative Services to keep copies of said reports and to keep a centralized inventory thereon in an organized register with a subject index, in order to facilitate the use of and access to said reports by House members;

(m) shall be the custodian of physical, electronic and/or digital documents and files related with the parliamentary process of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and shall keep a document filing, preservation and disposal system, using modern technology norms and mechanisms. He/she shall not allow any original document to circulate outside the Office of the Clerk, unless so directed by order of the Speaker or the House of Representatives;

(n) shall prepare the enrolled version of all legislative measures that so require and which have been originated at the House, for their

corresponding final certification by both Legislative Bodies, and he/she shall sign all enrolled versions certifying their accuracy;

(o) shall remit to the Governor of Puerto Rico the duly certified bills and joint resolutions originated at the House and approved by both Legislative Bodies;

(p) shall seal all the orders, summons or documents of the House; shall be responsible for certifying and giving notice to the corresponding parties of the agreements adopted by the House in its sessions;

(q) shall be responsible, in coordination with the Office of Legislative Services, for the publication of law and resolution books for each year, including legislative measures approved in Regular and Special Sessions. Furthermore, it shall be the obligation of the Clerk to prepare a monthly list of the bills approved indicating the number of the measure, the title and the date of approval. Said list shall be available to the public at the Office of the Clerk and/or on the House of Representatives website;

(r) shall maintain a register of legislative measures that have been defeated in final vote or of those on which a negative report has been filed. The Speaker shall not allow the filing thereof unless they are approved by two thirds ($2/3$) of the members of the Body during the same or the next Session;

(s) shall print and distribute the Decisions of the Speaker, the Rules, and any other provision or amendment to the Rules adopted by the House. Likewise, he/she shall publicize any other information as required by rule provision or by order of the Speaker;

(t) shall be responsible for the faithful compliance of the duties entrusted to the employees of the Office of the Clerk and for the operation thereof, as well as for any others assigned to him/her by the House or the Speaker. He/she shall sign requests for vacation, compensatory, and sick leave, as well as daily and weekly attendance sheets of the employees of the Office of the Clerk. Moreover, he/she shall notify the Speaker of any fault committed by the employees of the Office of the Clerk in the discharge of their functions and duties;

(u) shall deliver or remit by mail to each Representative a copy of all documents printed by order of the House;

(v) when the Speaker convenes a Called or a Special Session, he/she shall be responsible for preparing the convening announcement for the signature of the Speaker and shall submit the same to the Sergeant-at-Arms in order for the same to be served as corresponds;

(w) shall discharge any other function imposed on him/her by law or by regulations, or by order of the House or the Speaker;

(x) shall send a reminder of the date and time of commencement of each Regular Session of the legislative quadrennium to Representatives at least ten (10) days in advance.

RULE 8 – THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Section 8.1.—Functions of the Sergeant-at-Arms.—

The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

(a) shall attend all Sessions of the House and the Committee of the Whole;

(b) shall execute the orders of the House, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Chairpersons of the Committees, and the Clerk;

(c) shall immediately serve the summons, convening announcements and reminders issued, and shall distribute the documents that are to be distributed by order of the House, the Speaker, the Committees, or the Clerk;

(d) before four o'clock in the afternoon (4:00 PM) of each Friday, the Sergeant-at-Arms shall distribute to House members and the press the upcoming week's calendar, as scheduled to that time, of Committee public

hearings and executive meetings. Said calendar shall indicate the time, the place, the number of the measure, the title, and the author;

(e) shall be responsible for the cleanliness of all House dependencies;

(f) shall see to the faithful compliance of duty by ushers in the House and the Committees;

(g) shall provide Representatives at the Floor and at the Committees with office supplies;

(h) shall be responsible for the security and order in the facilities of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In the discharge of this function and by authorization or order of the House or the Speaker, he/she may make arrests as provided in these Rules;

(i) shall fully enforce the provisions of Rule 24 regarding access to the Hall of Sessions, corridors and aisles of the House;

(j) may request the intervention of the Puerto Rico Capitol Police in order to be able to carry out any responsibilities conferred onto him/her by these Rules;

(k) shall fulfill all other functions and responsibilities imposed on him/her by law or by regulations or assigned by the House or the Speaker.

RULE 9 – HOUSE EMPLOYEES**Section 9.1.—Employees.—**

Employees of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be appointed by the Speaker and shall discharge their functions during the term of each Legislature. The Speaker may declare the term of appointment of any employee to be due at any time when in his/her judgment this is necessary in the interest of service. Likewise, the Speaker shall appoint the corresponding successor.

Section 9.2.—Temporary Employees.—

Temporary House employees shall be appointed by the Speaker to work on a temporary basis for the term of one Legislature, in the discretion of the Speaker and in the interest of service.

Section 9.3.—Suspension of Employees.—

The Speaker may impose disciplinary measures on employees and temporary employees and shall have the power to suspend them from their office for noncompliance of duty. In such case, the employee thus suspended shall not earn any salary or compensation whatsoever, and the Speaker may appoint a substitute.

RULE 10 – FLOOR LEADERS**Section 10.1.—Appointment.—**

Any major political party represented at the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be entitled to appoint a Floor Leader and an Alternate Floor Leader from among its members. The Floor Leader of the majority party shall be denominated Majority Floor Leader and the Floor Leader of each minority party shall be known as Minority Floor Leader.

As for political parties by petition, after having filed the Commonwealth Elections Commission certificate recognizing them as such with the Office of the Clerk, they shall be entitled to request that the Body recognize their right to appoint a Floor Leader and an Alternate Floor Leader from among their members.

Section 10.2.—Majority Floor Leader.—

The Floor Leader of the Parliamentary Majority of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

(a) shall represent and speak on behalf of the group of Representatives from his/her party, caucuses, and conferences;

(b) shall chair the Committee on Calendar and Special Debate Rules;

(c) shall determine and establish the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day and shall channel the works of the House by raising the questions and proposals that may correspond; and shall see to the orderly and efficient processing of House business;

(d) shall be responsible for dividing the time assigned to the majority among the Representatives that are to participate in a debate. When special rules for the same are agreed on, he/she shall notify the House of the order and the time that shall correspond to each intervention;

(e) shall be responsible for promoting, channeling and conducting conversations with legislative minorities to achieve the agreements necessary or convenient for the most effective operation of the House. He/she shall also be responsible for complying with his/her respective part of such commitments or agreements;

(f) shall discharge all the function delegated onto him/her by the Speaker or assigned by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

- (g) shall strictly enforce the provisions of Rule 30.2 of these Rules.

Section 10.3.—Alternate Majority Floor Leader.—

The Alternate Majority Floor Leader shall have the same duties and equal attributions as the Majority Floor Leader while he/she substitutes the latter in the discharge of his/her functions, be it due to absence or by delegation. He/she shall also assist the Majority Floor Leader in his/her functions as such.

Section 10.4.—Minority Floor Leader.—

The Minority Floor Leader of a major political party or of a political party by petition recognized by the Body, shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- (a) shall represent and speak on behalf of the group of Representatives of his/her party, caucuses, and conferences held;
- (b) shall express and arrange for the agreements of his/her group in parliamentary terms;
- (c) shall make recommendations concerning the appointment and substitution of the Representatives of his/her party in Standing and Special Committees;

(d) shall promote and conduct conversations with majority members and be responsible for complying with his/her respective part of the commitments and agreements issuing from said conversations;

(e) shall be responsible for dividing the time assigned to his/her delegation among the Representatives that are to participate in a debate. When special rules for the same are agreed on, he/she shall notify the House of the order and the time corresponding to each intervention.

Section 10.5.—Alternate Minority Floor Leader.—

The Alternate Minority Floor Leader shall have the same duties and equal attributions as the Minority Floor Leader while he/she substitutes the latter in the discharge of his/her functions, be it due to absence or by delegation. He/she shall also assist the Majority Floor Leader in his/her functions as such.

RULE 11 – CREATION, COMPOSITION, AND JURISDICTION OF

STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 11.1.—Determination of Standing and Special Committees.—

The business of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be organized by means of Standing or Special Committees.

As for Standing Committees, these shall be created and their jurisdiction determined by Resolution.

Likewise, should the need to establish a Special Committee arise, the same would have to be created and its composition and jurisdiction would have to be determined by a Resolution to that effect, which shall have the affirmative vote of three fifths (3/5) of the Members of the Body. To meet the purposes for which it was created, said Special Committee could only have an effective term of up to two (2) years maximum, which may be extendable only by the approval of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Section 11.2.-Jurisdiction.—

Bills, resolutions, messages, petitions, memorials, and documents shall be remitted to the Standing and Special Committees, based on the particular jurisdiction of each Committee as established in the House Resolution to be adopted for the creation and determination of jurisdiction of the Committees.

The Speaker of the House shall have the discretion to refer projects and resolutions to a maximum of two (2) Committees, with the exception of the Committee on Budget and Appropriations, which shall be the only Committee that may consider a measure in the third (3rd) instance. When the

Committee on Budget and Appropriations is at the second (2nd) or the third (3rd) instance, it shall only evaluate the availability of fiscal resources for the implementation of the measure, if the same so provides.

Section 11.3.—Evaluation of Laws in Effect.—

All Standing Committees shall be under the obligation to review the laws in effect that deal with a matter or matters under their respective jurisdiction, in order to be able to prepare and submit to the Body a report with their findings, conclusions, and recommendations not later than the first day of the Fifth Regular Session.

RULE 12 – COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Section 12.1.—Appointment of Members and Office.—

The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint the members of Standing and Special Committees and determine the representation of the minority in these. Office within the Committees shall be determined as follows. Majority or minority parties, or parties by petition which are duly certified island-wide, shall have effective participation in all Committees.

(a) the Representative who appears in the first place in the roster of members of a Committee shall be the Chairperson thereof;

(b) the Representative who appears in the second place shall be the Vice Chairperson;

(c) the Representative who appears in the third place shall be the Secretary; and

(d) the Representative of each minority who has been appointed to the first place shall be the Spokesperson of the Minority he/she represents.

Should a vacancy in said offices arise, the Speaker shall appoint a successor and make the changes or substitutions he/she deems convenient.

The Speaker and Vice Speaker of the House may not chair any Standing or Special Committee. For such reason, the Speaker shall be an ex officio member in all Committees, fully entitled to voice and vote. Likewise, the Vice Speaker shall be an ex officio member of all Committees, but shall only be entitled to vote when the Speaker is not present. Likewise, Alternate Floor Leaders shall be entitled to vote when the Floor Leader is not present.

In any hearing or meeting held by the Committee on Budget and Appropriations to consider general expenses petitions from the different branches, agencies, government dependencies and public corporations, the Chairperson of the Committee must include as members pro tempore the Chairpersons of the Committees with jurisdiction over the agency called or summoned. The inclusion of these members shall not require the consent of

the House, and should they attend, their attendance shall be considered for all legal purposes, except that they shall not be able to vote in the deliberations of the Committee.

Likewise, the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget and Appropriations shall be entitled to participate in all public, executive, or on-site hearing for any measure that has a budgetary impact.

Section 12.2.—Appointment in Coordination with Floor Leaders.—

In the exercise of his/her authority to appoint members to the Standing and Special Committees, the Speaker may request recommendations from the Floor Leaders of the various parties in relation to the appointment of members.

Section 12.3.—Attendance to Committee Meetings; Excessive Absences.—

It shall be the duty of the members of each Committee to attend and participate in its meetings. The Chairperson of the Committee shall keep an attendance register at meetings, which he/she shall file with the Office of the Clerk and of which he/she shall keep a copy.

When a Representative is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings of a Committee of which he/she is an official member, he/she shall

provide an excuse for his/her absences to the satisfaction of the Committee upon request. Should he/she fail to do so, the Chairperson of the Committee shall give notice of said fact to the Speaker of the House, who shall proceed to take the corresponding action, including disciplinary sanctions or the substitution of said Representative in said Committee.

When a Representative participates in another Committee of which he/she is an official member during the same date, this shall not be considered as an absence and the provisions of this Section shall not apply. Furthermore, should a Committee meeting be held on the same day of a Session of the House, this shall not be understood to be an absence from the Committee meeting if the Representative participates in said Session.

Section 12.4.—Disqualification from Business before the Committee.—

Members of a Committee shall disqualify themselves from participating in any business before the Committee when they have a direct interest.

RULE 13 – FUNCTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS IN THE COMMITTEES

Section 13.1.—Functions and Authorities of Standing Committees.—

The Standing Committees of the House shall have the following functions and authorities:

(a) to draft and introduce bills, resolutions and substitute legislative measures;

(b) to investigate, study, evaluate, report, make recommendations, amend, or substitute the legislative measures referred to them or any business related with their jurisdiction;

(c) to review and monitor the implementation and administration of all the laws corresponding to business within their jurisdiction. To achieve this end, they shall study the pertinent reports and data submitted by government bodies to the House and conduct investigations as necessary;

(d) to hold public hearings, on-site hearings and executive meetings, summon witnesses, hear testimony, including testimony under oath, and request all documental or any other kind of information that they deem necessary for their endeavor.

Each Committee, with the previous consent of the Speaker of the House, may include in its works the author of a measure under its jurisdiction, in order for the latter to participate in the hearings and meetings in which the measure is being considered, and he/she shall be recognized as member pro tempore of the Committee for all legal purposes, except that

he/she may not vote in the deliberations of the Committee, subject to Section 5.1(d) of these Rules.

Committees shall use only those changes that are germane to the original spirit of a measure as the basis for making recommendations, amendments or substitute measures.

Section 13.2.—By-Laws.—

For the faithful and effective compliance of their obligations, the Committees shall approve their by-laws, which may not contravene our Constitution or our body of laws or the provisions of these Rules, especially with the following provisions concerning the general procedure norms that shall prevail at Committees. The by-laws adopted by said Committees shall take effect after they have been filed with the Office of the Secretary and notice has been given to the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in the most immediate Session.

Once a legislative measure or any other business has been considered in a public hearing or an executive meeting, no Committee may reach agreements on said matters unless by a Referendum.

There will be no preferential turns at any Committee, and the participation of Committee members shall be dictated by their order of arrival. Committee by-laws shall conform to this rule.

Section 13.3.—Subcommittees.—

In those cases in which a specific matter has been commissioned to a Standing or a Special Committee, the Chairperson, in his/her discretion, shall appoint a Subcommittee from among Committee members. He/she shall notify the Speaker of the house of said appointment. If the Speaker recognizes and allows the creation of the Subcommittee, the same shall have the same authorities to convene, summon, hold hearings, prepare minutes, certify attendance for per diem payment purposes, and draft and file reports, as Standing or Special Committees have. The Subcommittee shall be dissolved automatically upon completion of the purpose for which it was created.

Section 13.4.—Book of Minutes and Official Records.—

Each Committee shall keep, on an appropriate book, the minutes of its proceedings, on which it shall record the dispatching of bills, resolutions, and business, as well as the dates and places of meetings, the names of Representatives that are present, excused, and absent, the name of all the persons who appeared to express their points of view regarding a measure, and the final decision, if any, made by the Committee thereon, including the final vote cast by each member, in the event there is a roll call vote or a referendum.

The official record of a Committee on measures and business under its consideration shall include all the documents and record all stages of processing pertinent to these. Said record shall include a copy of the original measure, a copy of the amendments proposed, copy of any fiscal or actuarial report, and a copy of statements and explanatory memorials by interested parties, a copy of the Minutes of meetings in which agreements were reached or the final report was adopted, and a copy of said report as well. These shall be public documents.

At the end of the term of mandate of each Legislature, Committee Chairpersons shall hand over to the Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, for their filing and custody, a copy of the original version of all measures referred to them and a copy of their respective reports. Likewise, Committee Chairpersons shall be under the obligation to hand over to the Office of Legislative Services all official records of the measures assigned to and handled by their respective committees, save for the book of minutes.

Section 13.5.—Calendar and Business Agendas.—

The Chairperson of each Committee shall prepare a business agenda or calendar to be followed during the Regular or Special Session, subject to the approval of the Speaker of the House.

Regular Standing Committee meetings shall be scheduled by the Chairpersons of each Committee so as to prevent to the extent possible any conflicts in terms of attendance of its members to other committees and sessions of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and to allow for the most effective use of facilities and staff.

To such ends, the holding of any public hearings shall be notified by the Committee Chairpersons to the Clerk, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and the Press and Communications Office of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico at least two (2) days before the date on which the hearing is to be held. No public hearing may be held if this provision is not complied with, save on exceptional cases in which the Committee Chairperson addresses a written request to the Speaker asking to be exempted from this requirement and the latter so authorizes.

Section 13.6.—Meeting Notice.—

The Chairperson of each Committee shall notify the members in writing of the date, the time, and the place in which the public hearings are to be held at least two (2) days before the holding thereof. This Rule shall not apply during the last ten (10) days of Session, when it shall suffice for the Committee Chairperson to give members the corresponding schedule before the holding of the public hearing. Giving said schedule shall

constitute sufficient notice of the holding of the meetings specified on the schedule. Should a change arise as to the schedule, said change shall be immediately notified during the turn for Messages and Communications of the next Session. In the event the House is not assembled, the Chairperson or the Executive Secretary of the Committee shall immediately notify Members of said changes.

No other Committee meeting shall be held unless notice of the date, the time, and the place in which the same is to be held has been given sufficiently in advance. However, in those cases in which there is just cause to hold a meeting, the time factor may be forgone, but the Committee Chairperson shall ascertain that all Committee members have been duly summoned and notified before carrying on with the meeting.

Any objection to the notice and summons process shall not be valid when the Committee Chairperson demonstrates that reasonable efforts were made to deliver notice, including having given notice of said summons, upon failure to achieve contact personally or by phone, to a direct employee or a close relative so that he/she would relay the notice of summons as soon as possible.

Section 13.7.—Meetings Open to the Public.—

Committee meetings shall be public, except when the Committees adopt measures to the contrary in their bylaws, when they reach specific agreements according to the case in particular or when otherwise gathered from a provision in these Rules.

Section 13.8.—Public Hearings.—

Committees may hold public hearings concerning any measure or business before their consideration. After it is determined that a public hearing will be held, the Clerk shall take the necessary measures so that all public hearings be announced through the media and the website of the House at least two (2) days in advance. This effort shall be made by the Clerk in coordination with the Press and Communications Office of the House.

This requirement shall not apply during the last ten (10) days of any Session.

During the course of the public hearing, the Committee shall circumscribe to hearing and questioning the persons summoned, as well as interested persons who request a turn to that effect and are so granted. Public hearings are held with the sole purpose of hearing testimonies, questioning, and seeking the most complete information concerning business being considered by the Committee. During public hearings, no discussions or

debates among Representatives shall not be allowed, including those arising from procedural issues. Any observation not relative to the business considered in the measure under evaluation may be addressed in an executive meeting, in the discretion of the Committee Chairperson.

Deponents may express their points of view orally or in writing. The Committee shall also receive for study, and shall so consign for the record, all written testimonies submitted to the Committee.

For purposes of the public hearing, the Committee Chairperson, even if there is no quorum, shall have the authority to begin the same, to recess, and to receive oral or written information from summoned deponents.

Section 13.9.—Executive and Special Meetings.—

The Chairperson of a Committee may call to an executive or a special meeting only on days of Session of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or on days on which the Committee has held a public hearing concerning business referred for its attention. Should the need to call to an executive or a special meeting on other days arise, the Committee Chairperson shall address a written request or a petition to the Speaker and receive authorization to be exempted from this requirement. The payment of per diems shall not be authorized unless there is compliance with the aforementioned requirement.

Notice to Committee members shall be given pursuant to the provisions of Sections 13.5 and 13.6.

With the exception of members and summoned persons, no person may enter or participate in an executive meeting without the previous consent of the Chairperson thereof or unless there is an affirmative vote of the absolute majority of the Committee.

Section 13.10.—Meetings During a Session.—

No Committee, except the Committee on Calendar and Special Rules on Debate, may assemble once the House has begun to consider the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day; any work carried out during that day shall be null and void unless there is consent from the House.

Section 13.11.—Attendance Certification.—

At the beginning of each Committee meeting, the Committee Chairperson shall consign for the record the names of those Representatives present, and afterwards, he/she shall consign for the record the names of those members arriving during the course of the same. He/she shall certify the members present at each meeting, who shall sign an attendance sheet, which shall be the document to be used by the Clerk when paying the corresponding per diems. The Committee Chairperson shall attest to and be personally responsible for the information included in the attendance sheet.

Said attendance sheet shall be filed with the Office of the Clerk immediately after the conclusion of the meeting, unless there is just cause, in the case of on-site hearings or meetings outside the Capitol or during the weekend, or in the case of meetings that conclude before or after working hours.

When the meeting or hearing is held during the weekend, when a meeting or hearing held outside the Capitol and the distance or the time makes the return to the Capitol on that same day impossible, or when the meetings extend beyond working hours, the attendance sheet shall be filed at ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 AM) of the next working day, or provisionally, by fax.

The only exceptions to be made shall be those authorized by the Speaker of the House.

Section 13.12.—Agreements, Voting at the Committee.—

No Committee shall adopt agreements concerning a measure or business under its consideration, unless by a Referendum or a regular, special or executive meeting duly called under Sections 13.5 and 13.6.

Representatives shall cast their vote on the referendum sheet, being it required for the approval of the business under consideration, the affirmative vote of the majority of the Committee members. To determine the amount of

votes that constitutes the majority of Committee members when voting in a referendum on the report on any measure or business, half the number of official members plus one, as established by the Resolution required under Section 1.1, shall be taken as the base number. Ex officio Committee members shall not be counted for purposes of determining the amount of votes required for the referendum, but their votes may be counted to attain the majority necessary to reach a determination.

Section 13.13.—Conduct at Hearings.—

The Chairperson of a Committee shall not allow deponents or persons present at the hearings to question Committee members. Neither shall he/she allow discussions among those present or commentaries that are impertinent or out of order. Committee members shall treat each other with due respect and decorum. Committee members shall conduct themselves likewise toward deponents and the public present when public hearings are being held.

The Committee Chairperson shall see to the order and decorum in the course of business, being able to limit the access of persons to meetings, in order to guarantee the efficient development of works. If necessary, the Committee Chairperson may use the means provided under these Rules to

maintain the order in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Section 13.14.—Summons.—

The Committee Chairperson shall have the authority to issue summons in order to require any person to appear to testify or to surrender any other documental or physical evidence to the Committee.

As an exception to this rule, and whenever indispensable for purposes of the investigation or evaluation referred to the Committee, the Committee may, by absolute majority, authorize its Chairperson to issue summons so those summoned appear before the Committee Chairperson, before a Special Unit of the House, or before a Committee Investigator. Said summonses shall be signed by the Committee Chairperson and channeled to the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House, who shall serve the same without delay.

Section 13.15.—Activities During the Legislative Recess.—

Standing Committees may assemble during legislative recesses to consider business referred to these by the House.

The Chairperson of each Committee shall prepare a detailed business agenda for the legislative recess, in order to address measures and business pending consideration before the Committee. Said business agenda shall be approved by the Speaker of the House; Committees may not assemble

during the legislative recess unless the latter has previously given his/her consent.

Committees shall prepare and file their reports on measures and business considered during the recess upon completion of this task.

Section 13.16.—Reports on Studies and Investigations.—

Reports ensuing from an investigation or a study directed by the House and conducted by a Standing or a Special Committee, shall be submitted to the House on the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day to apprise the whole. The House may accept or reject the recommendations contained in such reports. The House may also direct that recommendations requiring legislative action are submitted as a bill or a resolution.

Section 13.17.—Mark-up Sessions.—

A Committee with primary jurisdiction over a matter may, at the initiative of its Chairperson, hold Mark-up Sessions to amend, approve, or reject measures or business referred to the Committee.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico may require that a Committee Chairperson hold such a Session to consider a particular measure or business.

Section 13.18.—Applicability of Rules to Subcommittees and Special and Joint Committees.—

The provisions of this Rule, or any others relative to Standing Committees, shall apply to Subcommittees and to Special and Joint Committees in all matters not in contravention with the particular conditions of these, their functions or their mandate, unless the House adopts any other agreements on the matter by regulations.

MEASURES

RULE 14 – INTRODUCTION, PRINTING, AND PROCESSING

Section 14.1.—Kinds of Legislative Measures.—

There are four (4) kinds of legislative measures, which are the following:

- (a) House Bills;
- (b) Joint Resolutions;
- (c) House Concurrent Resolutions; and
- (d) House Resolutions.

Section 14.2.—Authority and Term to Introduce.—

Only may Representatives and Standing Committees introduce any kind of legislative measure.

Introduction may be made at any time during the term of the Legislature. However, in order for a measure to be considered during the course of a same regular session, the same must be introduced within one hundred twenty (120) days after the first annual regular session has begun or within sixty (60) days after the second annual regular session has begun, except for Resolutions and Concurrent Resolutions. These terms may be varied by the affirmative vote of the members of the House pursuant to the provisions of Sections 2 and 5 of Act No. 9 of April 9, 1954, as amended.

Representatives may also introduce any kind of measure during a special session. These shall be numbered in correlative and chronological order. However, bills and joint resolutions may not be considered unless they are included in the Convening Announcement issued by the Governor. As for resolutions and concurrent resolutions, these may be considered during the course of a special session.

Section 14.3.—Procedure for Introduction.—

All measures shall be introduced at the Office of the Clerk in its original and five (5) typewritten copies and on computerized format, be it on a floppy disk or by e-mail. The name of the author, or authors if more than one Representative, and the Chairperson of the Committee introducing the measure shall be specified. Likewise, the measure shall have the signature of

the Representatives who, without being the main authors, undersign the measure.

The Clerk of the House shall provide for the details of the procedure pertaining to the reproduction and entry of measures into the computer system of the House of Representatives, including its electronic introduction.

Section 14.4.—Numbering of Legislative Measures.—

When a measure is introduced, the Clerk shall assign a number to the measure in question according to its correlative and chronological order. The numbering shall be made in a continuous manner for the entire term of the Legislature and be consecutive.

Section 14.5.—Format.—

Measures shall be constituted by the following parts, in this order:

- (a) heading;
- (b) title;
- (c) statement of motives (optional);
- (d) enacting or resolving clause; and
- (e) sections.

When any of the parts of a measure is missing, with the exception of the Statement of Motives, which is optional, the Clerk shall not accept the introduction thereof unless the corresponding corrections are made.

Section 14.6.—Heading.—

The heading of all measures shall indicate the number corresponding to the Legislature in which they are introduced and the number of the Regular or Special Session to which they pertain.

The format of said heading, which shall be strictly observed, shall be the following:

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

____ Legislature

____ Regular Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. B. ____

DATE

Introduced by Representative(s) _____

Referred to the Committee on _____

Resolutions shall conform to the same format, except that Joint Resolutions shall be designated as “H. J. R.,” Concurrent Resolutions as “H. Conc. R.,” and House Resolutions as “H. R.”

Measures introduced by the Parliamentary Majority which are programmatic commitments, shall be designated by the use of a “P,” followed by the corresponding number, which shall be placed on the top right margin. Likewise, Administration measures shall be introduced by

Representatives of the political party presided by the Governor and shall be designated by the use of an “F,” followed by the corresponding number, which shall be placed on the top right margin.

Section 14.7.—Title.—

All measures shall have a short title whereby the business and scope thereof shall be stated clearly and concisely. No measure, with the exception of the general budget measure, may address more than one matter at a time.

When a measure’s purpose is to amend any laws or joint resolutions in effect, the Title shall indicate the name, if any, the parts that are to be amended, stating the corresponding article, section, subsection or clause, the name of the law or joint resolution, its date of approval, and whether the same has been amended. When the bill’s purpose is to amend a Code, its title shall include the name by which it is known.

Section 14.8.—Statement of Motives.—

Representatives shall have the option to include in the measures they introduce a Statement of Motives whereby they may state the reasons that make the measure deserving of approval. The Statement of Motives shall be as explicit, but as brief as possible.

Section 14.9.—Enacting or Resolving Clause.—

All measures shall contain an Enacting or a Resolving Clause, depending on the measure in question, which shall be included after the Statement of Motives, if any. Should there be no Statement of Motives, the Enacting or Resolving Clause shall be included after the Title.

The Clauses shall read as follows:

- (a) Bills: “Be It Enacted By The Legislature Of Puerto Rico”;
- (b) Joint and Concurrent Resolutions: “Be It Resolved By The Legislature Of Puerto Rico”;
- (c) House Resolutions: “Be It Resolved By The House Of Representatives.”

Section 14.10.—Sections.—

This concept refers to the text containing the provisions of a measure.

Section 14.11.—Amendment to the Law in Effect.—

In those cases in which an introduced measure amends a measure in effect, the parts to be eliminated from the text, if any, shall appear in **bold** and in brackets ([]). Those parts that are being added to the text, if any, shall appear in *italics*. Regular type shall be used for those parts of the text which are to remain unaltered according to legislative intent.

Section 14.12.—Account of Legislative Measures Introduced.—

The Clerk shall prepare for each day of Session an account of the legislative measures that have been introduced in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or which have been received in the Senate. On said account, the Title of each measure, the author, and the House Committee to which it was referred shall be recorded.

This account shall include those measures introduced up to two (2) hours before the time set for beginning the Session of the day. Measures introduced after that time shall be included in the account of measures corresponding to the next day of Session.

Measures included in this account shall be those comprised in the introduced legislative measures reading made within the Order of Business during the course of a Session, pursuant to the provisions of these Rules.

Section 14.13.—Request to be the Co-author.—

The name of the first Representative to appear on any legislative measure shall correspond to the author. Subsequent names shall correspond to co-authors.

After the measure has been introduced, a Representative may include his/her name as co-author thereof by filling out the corresponding request form. The same shall be handed to the Clerk during the course of the Session in which said measure is included in the account of measures introduced and referred to a Committee. In such a case, the Representative shall be included in the heading of the measure.

After the Session has transpired, the request to that effect shall be included in the Journal of Sessions, but the name of the Representative making the request shall not be appear in print on the measure. However, in those cases in which the Office of the Clerk orders the printing of a version of a “TEXT APPROVED IN FINAL VOTE BY THE HOUSE” of the legislative measure in question, coauthors’ names shall be included.

Section 14.14.—Distribution of Legislative Measures.—

Once a measure has been assigned to the Committee or Committees to which it was referred and the House has been notified of the introduction thereof by the account provided for in Section 14.12 of these Rules, the Clerk shall process, print and distribute the measure as follows:

(a) one copy of the measure shall be sent to the Document Printing Center and another copy to the corresponding Committee, together with a printed copy, a copy to the Archive, and one copy to the press box; and

(b) measures introduced by Committees shall be sent, together with their respective reports (including the engrossed version), to the Majority Floor Leader, in order for these to be included in the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day, unless the House provides otherwise.

Section 14.15.—Document Printing Unit.—

The Clerk shall order the printing of the copies he/she deems necessary for each legislative measure as soon as the requirements provided for in Section 14.3 of these Rules have been met, except in the case of House Resolutions.

Printing of legislative measures shall be done pursuant to Section 14.11 of these Rules. Distribution of printed legislative measures shall be made pursuant to Section 14.14 of these Rules.

House Resolutions shall not be printed until they are approved by the Body, unless the House provides otherwise.

Section 14.16.—Duplication of Legislative Measures.—

When a Representative introduces a legislative measure that is identical or extremely similar to another measure being processed and which has been introduced previously by a Representative, before processing the introduction of such a measure, the Clerk shall notify the author of said

duplication, in order for said Representative to decide, and the Body shall be notified so that it authorizes the withdrawal of the same.

Section 14.17.—Withdrawal of Legislative Measures.—

A measure may be withdrawn by its author or authors, as the case may be, by giving the House written or oral notice at any time before the report of any of the Committees to which it has been referred has been introduced.

Section 14.18.—Elimination of Original Legislative Measures.—

Any original legislative measure shall be rendered ineffective and be eliminated from any processing stage or statistical account relative to pending legislative measures when the House or the Senate have approved a substitutive measure.

RULE 15 – JOINT RESOLUTIONS

Section 15.1.—Definitions.—

Joint Resolutions are those legislative measures that require the approval of the Legislature and the Governor of Puerto Rico, and which, once approved, will lose their force of law and effectiveness when the work is performed or the intended purpose met. These shall not become a part of the permanent statutes of Puerto Rico.

Section 15.2.—Processing.—

For their approval, Joint Resolutions shall undergo the same processing stages as a bill as provided for in these Rules.

RULE 16 – CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS

Section 16.1.—Definition.—

Concurrent Resolutions are those legislative measures approved by the Legislature and whose purpose is:

- (a) to propose amendments to the Constitution of Puerto Rico;
- (b) to consign expressions of the Legislature not in the nature of legislation;
- (c) to provide for the government of the Legislature.

Section 16.2.—Processing in General.—

Concurrent Resolutions, except for those proposing amendments to the Constitution after introduced shall be referred to the Committee on Internal Affairs, which shall render its report and introduce the same at the Office of the Clerk. Once the report has been rendered, the Majority Floor Leader may include the same in the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day.

Processing at Committees may be forgone if the House agrees to include Resolutions in said Calendar immediately. After their approval, these shall be sent to the Senate of Puerto Rico and undergo the same

processing stages as bills and joint resolutions, except that Concurrent Resolutions do not require the approval of the Governor of Puerto Rico.

Section 16.3.—Amendments to the Constitution.—

After their introduction, Concurrent Resolutions proposing amendments to the Constitution shall undergo the same processing stages as bills and be referred for their consideration and study to Standing or Special Committees as provided to that effect. Once they are approved as provided for by the Constitution, said Concurrent Resolutions shall be sent to the Governor of Puerto Rico, even when these do not require his/her approval, and to the officials concerned, so that they may carry out the corresponding processing stages established in our Constitution and our body of laws.

Section 16.4.—Approval.—

Pursuant to what is established by Article VII, Section 1 of the Constitution, Concurrent Resolutions that propose amendments to the Constitution shall be understood to be approved upon obtaining the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds ($2/3$) the total number of the members that constitute each Body.

After having complied with the above approval requirement, the amendment shall be then submitted to voters via a special referendum. However, the legislature may provide for the referendum to be held together

with the next general elections, insofar as the Concurrent Resolution is approved by not less than three fourths the total number of members of each Body.

All other Concurrent Resolutions shall be understood to be finally approved when obtaining the affirmative vote of the majority of the members who constitute each Legislative Body.

RULE 17 – HOUSE RESOLUTIONS

Section 17.1.—Definition.—

House Resolutions are those legislative measures that the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico uses to:

- (a) direct that a study or an investigation be conducted;
- (b) consign petitions of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;
- (c) provide for the internal government of the Body; or
- (d) consign expressions of the House not in the nature of legislation.

Section 17.2.—Petition for Information or Documents.—

Petitions by any Representative requesting information through the House from any of the Branches of the Government, their dependencies,

subdivisions or offices, as well as from their employees or officials shall be submitted in writing to the Office of the Clerk, to be introduced as a Resolution of the House of Representatives.

Any Representative may submit petitions. These shall be referred to the Committee on Internal Affairs, which shall have seventy-two (72) hours to bring it to the Body for its consideration. Should this deadline not be met, the petitioner may request the immediate consideration of the Speaker via a petition to the Speaker. The Body shall consider the same, and if approved, determine the term for the Agency or Body to reply to the petition, on a case by case basis.

If approved by the House, the Clerk shall be responsible for the follow up as to compliance with the same. Should the information requested not be delivered in a reasonable period of time, the Clerk shall notify the House so that the latter may adopt the measures that correspond to compel compliance with what is directed under the petition Resolution. To that effect, the House may even appeal to the Court pursuant to applicable provisions of law.

Section 17.3.—Expressions by the House.—

Expressions by the House not processed as Resolutions shall be considered via written motions or oral motions at the turn for motions of a Session and as provided for in Section 25.2 of these Rules.

Section 17.4.—Processing.—

Once they have been introduced, House Resolutions shall be referred to the Committee on Internal Affairs, which shall render its report and introduce it at the Office of the Clerk. Once the report has been filed, the Majority Floor Leader may include the same in the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day.

Any Resolution consigning expressions of the House shall be introduced at or before ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 AM) of the day of Session on which it is to be considered. Those introduced after the time indicated above shall be considered on the next day of Session.

After they have been introduced, the Resolutions referred to herein shall be corrected as to style and spelling. The Committee on Internal Affairs shall prepare an electronically engrossed version of each Resolution by using the typographical keys provided for in Section 14.11. Resolutions and their corresponding engrossed versions shall be circulated among Representatives for their consideration.

The processing relative to the electronic engrossment by the Committee may be forgone if the House agrees to include the Resolution in said Calendar immediately.

RULE 18 – BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS BY PETITION

Section 18.1.—Introduction by Petition.—

Representatives may introduce legislative measures at the petition of any citizen, group, or organization with an interest on the matter. Record of such a request shall be made on the heading thereof by including beside the signature of the Representative the phrase “(By Petition).”

Section 18.2.—Endorsement of Legislative Measures.—

When a Representative introduces any legislative measure by petition, he/she shall not be under the obligation to endorse the same unless it is his/her pleasure.

Section 18.3.—Processing.—

Legislative measures introduced “By Petition” shall undergo the same processing stages, as applicable, provided for all other bills and resolutions in these Rules.

SESSIONS

RULE 19 – CLASSIFICATION OF SESSIONS

Section 19.1.—Classification.—

House Sessions are classified as Regular, Special, or Called Sessions.

Section 19.2.—Regular Sessions.—

Section 1 of Act No. 9 of April 9, 1954, as amended, provides that the annual Regular Sessions of the Legislature are the following:

(a) a First Session that begins on the second Monday of January and ends on June 30 of the same year; and

(b) a Second Session that begins on the third Monday of August and ends on Tuesday, preceding the third (3rd) Thursday of the month of November. This Second Session shall not be held in years when general elections are to be held.

These terms may be extended via a Joint Resolution, which shall be approved during the Regular Session whose extension is intended.

Section 19.3.—Special Sessions.—

Special Sessions are those held on any date of a calendar year and on which no Regular Session is being held pursuant to the provisions of this Rule.

These Special Sessions may be convened by the Governor or by the Speaker of the House, as provided for by the Constitution and these Rules.

(a) Special Sessions Convened by the Governor: Pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution, Article III, Section 10, and Article IV, Section 4, the Governor may convene the Legislature or the House, respectively, into Special Session, which may not extend beyond twenty (20) calendar days. In said Session, only the business, bills and joint resolutions included in the Convening Announcement of the Governor or in a special message sent by the latter during the course thereof, may be considered. However, in the exercise of its inherent and constitutional functions, the House may also consider during said Session any internal business of the Body.

(b) Special Sessions Convened by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico: During the term of any Legislature, at any time and in order to attend to urgent business, the Speaker may convene the House into Special Session. When making the convening announcement, the Clerk shall state the date and time in which said Session shall become effective and provide an account of the business to be considered therein. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be responsible for immediately processing the convening announcement by summoning

members by the speediest means possible and delivering a copy of the announcement to them. In Special Sessions convened by the Speaker, only may the business stated on the convening announcement addressed to the House be considered.

Section 19.4.—Called Sessions.—

Called Sessions are those held at any time during the term of a Legislative Session, which may be convened by the Speaker or agreed to by the House to address one or various matters of import to the Body or of public interest, other than the consideration of bills or joint resolutions.

In those cases in which the House agrees to hold such a Called Session, the matter or matters to be considered therein shall be stated in the Minutes of the Session during which said agreement was reached.

In a Called Session, the House may not adopt resolutions not relative to the business set forth.

RULE 20 – DATE AND TIME OF SESSIONS, RECESSES, AND ADJOURNMENT

Section 20.1.—Date and Time.—

The House, as a Body, shall conduct its legislative business by holding sessions. To such ends, on the days of session, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall assemble at one o'clock in the afternoon (1:00 PM) to begin their works for the day with the

First Turn, except when the Body agrees by majority of the members present to alter the schedule of its sessions.

Any motion to adjourn or to recess shall state the precise date and time in which the Body shall reconvene.

Section 20.2.—Beginning and End of the Day of Session.—

Sessions shall begin at the time set in Section 20.1 or at the time agreed on by the House, and shall not extend beyond six o'clock in the afternoon (6:00 PM), except when there is consent from three fifths ($3/5$) the total number of members that constitute the Body, except during the last ten (10) days of Session.

Section 20.3.—Recess, Adjournment.—

The terms as to the duration of a Session are hereby defined as follows:

(a) the temporary interruption of business during a same legislative day shall be considered to be a recess. However, the Body, by agreement of the majority present, may decree a recess that transcends from one legislative day to another. In such a case, the Minutes and the Journal of Sessions shall be prepared for each legislative day as if they were different sessions;

(b) when business is concluded for a legislative day, it shall be understood that the Body has adjourned the Session for that day;

(c) the final adjournment of the sessions of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico during any Regular or Special Session shall be known as an adjournment “sine die”; and

(d) the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico may not adjourn a session for more than three (3) consecutive days without the previous consent of the Senate, pursuant to the provisions of Article III, Section 13 of the Constitution.

Section 20.4.—Motions to Recess or to Adjourn.—

Motions to decree a recess or to adjourn the Session are privileged and shall always be in order, except when otherwise provided for by these Rules. Such motions may not be debated or amended and shall be approved by the affirmative vote of the majority of the members present.

When the House resumes business after a recess, it shall continue considering the same matter before the Body at the time said recess was decreed. Any motion to recess shall state the precise time at which the Body shall reassemble.

When the Session is recessed or adjourned for a next day, the matter being considered by the Body at the time said adjournment was decreed

shall be considered on the Second Turn of the day on which the House reassembles, unless the Body agrees otherwise by the majority of the members present.

Before the House adjourns its business “sine die,” the House shall so communicate to the Senate.

RULE 21 – ATTENDANCE, QUORUM

Section 21.1.—Duty to Attend.—

It shall be the duty of each Representative to attend to and remain at all House sessions and meetings of Committees of which they are official members.

Section 21.2.—Attendance Register.—

There shall be the following classifications:

(a) Present – the Representative who participates in the sessions or meetings of the Committees;

(b) Out on Official Business – the Representative whose participation in the Session or in Committee meetings is impeded by his/her being out on official House business as authorized or directed by the Speaker. He/she shall not be recorded on the Attendance Register as being “absent,” but on the Minutes and on the Journal of Sessions, he/she shall be recorded to be “Out on Official Business”;

(c) Absent with Excuse – the Representative who is absent and presents a reasonable excuse; and

(d) Absent – the Representative who is absent without there being a reasonable excuse.

In the event of an absence, the Speaker may require that Representative provide the motive therefor on the very next Session to which the latter attends, if another Representative, by request of the latter, had not excused him/her during said absence.

The Speaker of the House or the Chairperson of a Committee, if a Committee meeting, may excuse the absence of a Representative for a meritorious reason and grant the latter authorization to that effect. However, the Representative who was absent shall comply with the provisions of the above paragraph. The Representative shall not be entitled to collect the per diem.

When absent for more than three days, the Representative shall request authorization from the Body in advance. If absent without having been granted said authorization, he/she shall be subject to the disciplinary measures that the House determines.

Furthermore, for a Representative to be entitled to collect the per diem, he/she shall be present at the Session during the initial roll call or during the final approval vote.

Section 21.3.—Excuse “For All Legal Purposes”.—

An excuse “For All Legal Purposes” entails the payment of per diem for the absent Representative. This shall apply when a Representative is out carrying out a task or official business as assigned by the House or by the Speaker, and for such a reason, is unable to attend or complete his/her attendance to sessions of the Body or to meetings of a Committee. Payment of this per diem corresponding to the Session shall not be in order when the official business that caused the absence is a trip for which the Representative was paid per diems in advance.

During the course of a House Session, a Representative attending a meeting of a Committee of which he/she is an official member, shall be officially excused “For All Legal Purposes,” insofar as the Body has authorized said meeting.

Section 21.4.—Definition of Quorum.—

The regulation quorum for the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be constituted by a majority of duly

elected Representatives who have been sworn in as provided for by law and the Rules, and who are have taken office.

A quorum shall be required for the House to reach valid agreements on legislative measures or on business before its consideration, as provided for in these Rules, except in those cases in which these Rules only require the consent or the approval of the members present.

Section 21.5.—Roll Call.—

The roll call shall be the responsibility of the Clerk, on any occasion that it is necessary to conduct a vote or to determine quorum. The roll shall be called in alphabetical order of the surnames, the Speaker holding the last place on the roll.

The roll shall be called a first time by calling all Representatives. Then the roll shall be called a second time, calling those Representatives who were not present during the first roll call.

A Representative shall not be considered to be absent if he/she arrives after the second roll call for a just cause. The Representative shall immediately notify the Clerk of his/her arrival, and the Clerk shall proceed to record his/her presence into the Minutes.

In those cases in which the House may not be constituted due to lack of quorum, the attendance of the Representatives present shall be considered as if the legislative Session had been held.

Section 21.6.—Question of Quorum.—

As a general norm, the question or quorum may be raised not more than once (1) every half (1/2) hour for the duration of the Session, except during the first turn of the order of business, when said question may not be raised.

The Speaker shall stop the works and direct the Clerk to state the number of Representatives present. The Speaker shall inform the House of the result of the head count and shall declare whether or not there is quorum. This procedure shall transpire without debate.

The Secretary shall record on the Minutes the raising of the question of quorum and the name of the Representative who raised the question. The result of the head count of members shall also be recorded, as well as any decision made by the House once said result is known.

Section 21.7.—Whether or Not There Is Quorum; Requirement from Absent Representatives.—

In the event the question of quorum arises as established in the preceding Section, the Speaker shall provide for the following:

(a) should there be quorum, works shall be resumed on the same matter being considered when these were interrupted;

(b) should there not be quorum, the Speaker may:

(1) adjourn the works of the Session by agreement of a majority of those present;

(2) declare a recess and direct the Sergeant-at-Arms to require the presence at the Session of all Representatives not in hall, except for those excused. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall immediately proceed with said directive, which shall not be debatable.

The Sergeant-at-Arms shall inform the Speaker of the result of his efforts, in order for the House to take action as it deems pertinent, including, if deemed necessary, directing the arrest of said Representatives.

While this directive is being executed and until quorum is reached, the House shall not be able to continue its works except for recessing or adjourning the same until a specific date and time.

When a Representative is involuntarily brought before the House by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the former shall take his/her place and excuse him/herself before the Body stating his/her motives. The House may either excuse him/her or impose a penalty equal to one (1) per diem.

Any Representatives who, having been present on that day of Session, abandon the Floor without having excused themselves with the Speaker and do not return at the time the question of quorum is raised, may be penalized for a sum equal to one (1) per diem.

RULE 22 – ORDER OF BUSINESS AT SESSIONS

Section 22.1.—Commencement of the Session.—

At the commencement of the Session or when resuming the works of the Session after a recess, the Speaker shall occupy the presidential dais and shall call to order. The Clerk shall call the roll to determine the presence of a quorum when works had been adjourned at the end of the preceding day of Session.

If present, it shall be understood that the Body has been constituted and the Body shall proceed to commence works. If absent, action shall be taken as provided for in Section 21.7 of these Rules.

Section 22.2.—Minutes.—

After the Body has been constituted, the Speaker shall submit the Minutes of the preceding Session for the corresponding action. Any motion to amend, correct or approve the same shall be subject to the provisions of Rule 23.2.

Minutes shall be approved by the majority of the Representatives present.

Section 22.3.—Order of Business.—

Once the Minutes have been approved, the Clerk shall give an account of the business to be submitted to the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico on that day of Session, in the following order:

- (1) First Turn
 - (a) reading of reports issued by standing, special, and joint committees, in that order;
 - (b) reading of the account of bills and resolutions;
 - (c) communiqués;
 - (d) petitions and notices;
 - (e) motions for expressions by the House; and
 - (f) reading of the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day.
- (2) Second Turn
 - (a) consideration of communiqués from the Senate;
 - (b) business to be concluded;
 - (c) motions to discharge bills and resolutions; and

(d) consideration of the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day.

(3) Third Turn

(a) petitions for final turns; and

(b) Calendar of Final Approval.

(4) Final Turns.

Section 22.4.—First Turn.—

(A) The Clerk or the Minutes Officer onto whom the former delegates shall proceed to read the reports issued by standing, special and joint committees, in that order. He/she shall continue with the reading of the account of bills and resolutions introduced and announce their referral to the various committees, and with the reading of the communiqués of legislative processing relative to messages from the Senate or the Governor informing the approval or nonapproval of legislation, as well as with all memorials issued by the Executive and the Judicial Branches of the Government. Important communiqués may be presented at any time with the consent of the members present.

Communiqués addressed to the House in the form of memorials shall be sent to the Clerk in triplicate, together with a concise summary of the business to which they refer. If these requirements are not met, the Clerk

shall prepare the summary and the additional copies, unless the sender is a government official or agency, in which case, the Clerk shall return the same with a copy of this Rule.

The Clerk shall forward communiqués to the corresponding committees, reporting to the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as to their receipt and the committee to which they were forwarded.

(B) Upon conclusion of the readings and communiqués, House members may make petitions to the Speaker or the House, excluding petitions for final turns, as well as briefly notify those matters that require action or to apprise the Speaker or the House.

(C) Motions for expressions of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be processed and considered as follows:

(1) Written Motions: Shall be expressions of congratulations, acknowledgment, joy, sorrow, or condolences; concerning tragedies or emergencies of great proportions; special events in Puerto Rico or abroad; to commemorate the anniversary of the birthday of some illustrious Puerto Rican or of personalities of great relevance locally or internationally; and for expressions in relation to dates with a

historical value for both Puerto Rico and mankind. These shall be introduced in writing at the Office of the Clerk with a simple copy, and at least two (2) hours in advance of the commencement of the Session in which they are to be considered. The Office of the Clerk shall assign a number to each of these written motions, in a chronological order separate from that used for bills and resolutions. The introduction thereof may even be made over the phone with the Clerk or the person onto whom he/she delegates the receipt and processing thereof. The Office of the Clerk shall have available a form for introducing these written motions, both in hard copy and in computerized format. These shall be circulated to all Representatives before beginning to consider motions for expressions of the House. These shall be considered and approved en bloc. Written motions introduced after the time set in these provisions shall be considered during the next day of Session.

(2) Verbal Motions: Shall be those pursuing the expressions of the House mentioned in clause (1) of this Section. These shall only be authorized during the First Turn, by the unanimous consent of the House. In exercising this parliamentary recognition, the time intended to be used and the subject shall be briefly stated upon making the

request. In no case shall more than three (3) turns on the same verbal motion be authorized.

Amendments may be made to, co-authorship may be requested on, or objections may be raised to any written or verbal motions. Amendments, co-authorship requests, and objections shall not be debatable. In the first two cases, the author shall decide whether he/she accepts the amendments or co-authorship requests. In the event an objection is raised to any motion, the same shall be withdrawn and the author thereof shall have the opportunity to introduce it as a resolution.

(D) Upon conclusion of the processing and consideration of motions for expressions of the House, the Clerk or the Minutes Officer onto whom he/she delegates shall read the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day.

Section 22.5.—Second Turn.—

At the commencement of the Second Turn, action shall be taken, if so required, on Communiqués from the Senate regarding legislative processing. Subsequently, Unfinished Business, if any, shall be considered. Upon conclusion of the consideration of Unfinished Business, the introduction of Motions to Discharge Bills and Resolutions shall be authorized.

Any Representative may introduce a Motion to Discharge in order for a Committee to be relieved from considering or reporting on a particular legislative measure referred thereto, which motion shall be authorized by agreement of the majority of the members present. In the event the Motion to Discharge is approved, the particular measure or business shall not be considered immediately, but rather, it shall be considered during the next House Session. This motion shall be considered without debate. However, the Speaker may, for orientation purposes, allow the Chairperson of the Committee to which the measure or business was referred to briefly state before the House his/her points of view on the matter.

After the Motion to Discharge has been approved, it may be provided for a measure or business to be immediately considered when there is the consent of three fourths (3/4) of the members present. However, during the last ten (10) days of Session, the consent of the majority of the members present shall suffice to authorize the consideration of such a measure.

Amendments to measures included in Discharge Calendars which have been previously circulated may be included in the Reading Calendar in order for said amendments to be considered and approved en bloc by the majority of the members present. The Majority Floor Leader may introduce a calendar of amendments supplementary to the Discharge Calendar, which

may be included in a Reading Calendar for these to be considered and approved en bloc by the majority of the members present.

However, the Speaker may, for orientation purposes, allow the Chairperson of the Committee to which the measure or business was referred to briefly state before the House his/her points of view on the matter.

At the end of the Second Turn, the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day shall be considered, which calendar shall include the following matters:

- (a) Bills;
- (b) Joint Resolutions;
- (c) Concurrent Resolutions;
- (d) House Resolutions; and
- (e) Committee Reports on studies and investigations.

Section 22.6.—Third Turn.—

Before the Calendar of Final Approval is submitted to a vote, the members of the House of Representatives who so please may request Final Turns from the Speaker.

Section 22.7.—Final Turns.—

Upon approval by the Speaker, Representatives shall be allowed to address the House only in regard to any business of general interest for the House, or to any business which due to its nature is vested in public interest.

In using the Final Turns, there shall be strict adherence to norms of absolute pulchritude, respect and decorum in respect of the Body, as well as in respect of all its constituting members individually, and of any persons or institutions even when these are not a part of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Any Representative who seeks the Floor on such an occasion shall so request from the Speaker during the Third Turn of the Session. However, the House may decide by agreement of the majority of the members present, when deemed convenient, for said turns to be consumed in the order thus agreed on.

In the course of a Session, the Speaker shall recognize not more than five (5) nontransferable turns, in the order in which the first five (5) Representatives have requested them and have been recognized by the Speaker, for which turns they shall be guaranteed a maximum of five (5) minutes. Not more than half (1/2) an hour per Session shall be devoted to this matter, unless the House agrees by unanimous consent to grant more time.

Section 22.8.—Change in Order.—

The order of business may not be altered without the consent of the majority of the Representatives present. Likewise, the order of Turns shall be strictly observed, unless the House by a majority of the members present

declares that the business for which priority is requested is a privileged matter. In such a case, the order of Turns may be altered and the discussion of the business in question shall proceed without delay. Any motion to alter the order of business or Turns shall be voted on without debate.

Section 22.9.—Special Calendar.—

When the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico agrees to declare one or various matters of business to be privileged, these shall be included in a Special Calendar to be prepared to that effect. Matters shall be discussed strictly in the order in which they appear on said calendar. To alter the order of said calendar and discuss one of the matters with priority over others on the calendar, the unanimous consent of the Body shall be indispensable.

RULE 23 – THE MINUTES AND THE JOURNAL OF SESSIONS

Section 23.1.—Definition and Contents of the Minutes.—

The Minutes are the constitutional and legal instrument used to record in brief the events relative to the processing of legislative measures and the vote on these. Said documents also include other matters which by their nature are of import to the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The Clerk shall record on the Minutes corresponding to House Sessions the following information, among other things:

- (a) all agreements adopted by the House;
- (b) the amendments approved;
- (c) the State of the Commonwealth Address presented during each Regular Session, not to include its report on the State of the Treasury of Puerto Rico or on the disbursements proposed for the subsequent economic year;
- (d) the name of the Representatives present and absent, with a statement as to which Representatives have requested and received a leave of absence;
- (e) the time of commencement and conclusion of the Session;
- (f) a brief account of Committee reports, including conference reports;
- (g) the result of all votes; for roll call votes, the names of the Representatives who have voted for or against, shall be recorded;
- (h) the name of the author and the title of all measures introduced in the House or received in the Senate, and the names of the Committees to which these have been referred;
- (i) the printing or reading of a bill;

(j) a brief account of the messages received from the Senate and government departments and agencies;

(k) the signing of bills and resolutions by the Speaker;

(l) the election of House officials and their swearing in and taking office, as well as the appointment of Representatives to Standing or Special Committees;

(m) a brief statement of the questions of order raised and the decisions of the Speaker on that matter; and

(n) the Committees appointed and the designation of Representatives who shall be members of said Committees.

The Minutes shall never include the following, unless the House agrees otherwise:

(a) speeches from Representatives or guests;

(b) explanatory votes from Representatives;

(c) debate incidents; and

(d) newspaper articles or editorials.

When these matters have been entered into the record of a Session, they will be included verbatim into the Journal of Sessions.

Section 23.2.—Approval of the Minutes.—

In each Session, the Speaker shall ask whether there are any amendments to the Minutes of the meeting of the preceding day. Should there be no objections, the same shall be deemed to be approved. Should an objection be raised, the House shall resolve said question before handling any other business and approve the Minutes pursuant to the determination adopted by the Body in connection with the objection.

Any motions to amend, correct or approve the Minutes shall be considered to be a privileged question and shall be voted on without debate.

Section 23.3.—Vote.—

Motions indicated in the preceding Section shall be approved by the majority of Representatives present. The decision made on that matter may not be subject to reconsideration.

Section 23.4.—Printing the Minutes.—

It shall be the duty of the Clerk to reproduce daily a copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the preceding day. The same shall be immediately distributed to all Representatives.

Any error or omission on said copies shall be notified by the Clerk to the Body so that the corresponding action may be taken.

Section 23.5.—Book of Minutes.—

At the end of each Legislature, the Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall prepare an official compilation of all Minutes of the quadrennium, to be known as the “Book of Minutes of the House.” A copy of this Book shall be sent to the Legislative Library for its conservation and filing and to be used reference, as provided for by Act No. 59 of June 19, 1964, as amended.

Section 23.6.—Journal of Sessions.—

The Journal of Sessions is the constitutional and legal instrument used by the Legislature to publicize, verbatim, all proceedings and events which transpire during the Sessions of both Bodies.

The provisions relative to the Journal of Sessions are included in the Constitution of Puerto Rico, Article III, Section 17, and in Act No. 24 of July 24, 1952, as amended, which provides on the contents thereof and the procedure therefor. The Clerk of the House shall be responsible for preparing all informational material to be included in said publication, pursuant to our body of laws.

Section 23.7.—Recording Systems.—

The Clerk may use a magnetophonic tape recording system or any other modern technology system to achieve the verbatim reproduction of all

proceedings and events that transpire in each Session, which are to be included in detail in the Journal of Sessions.

Said tapes, or any other means employed under any other system, may not be used for any purpose other than the publication of the Journal of Sessions, unless there is the consent of the majority of the House.

Recordings taken for the Journal of Sessions must be preserved as historical documents, and their preservation and custody shall be subject to the provisions of Act No. 5 of December 8, 1955, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Public Document Administration Act.”

RULE 24 – ORDER AND CONDUCT AT THE HALL OF SESSIONS

AND THE GALLERIES

Section 24.1.—Public Session.—

House Sessions shall be public, pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution of Puerto Rico, Article III, Section 11. Citizens may attend the same from the High Gallery on the third floor of the main structure of the Capitol. The public must observe utmost respect during House proceedings and conduct themselves with order and decorum as established in these Rules.

Section 24.2.—Attention During Proceedings.—

While the Speaker of the House has the Floor or when a vote is being cast, Representatives may not make comments, talk among themselves or leave their seats.

While a Representative has the Floor, the other members of the Body shall not talk among themselves or pass between the Representative who has the Floor and the Speaker's dais.

Section 24.3.—Mentioning Persons at the Galleries.—

While having the Floor, no Representative may mention or address the persons attending from the Galleries. Furthermore, no Representative may propose or request any action whatsoever from the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to recognize said persons while present. Exception from this Rule is made of the official salute to high Government officials, foreign dignitaries, or other persons whose mere presence constitutes an honor for the House.

Section 24.4.—The Desk of the Clerk.—

No person, except for Representatives and House officials, may approach the desk of the Clerk while the Body is in Session. However, exception is made of House officials and employees whose presence at that time is indispensable due to the nature of their functions. When a roll call

vote is being cast, no person, including Representatives, may approach the desk of the Clerk.

Section 24.5.—Gatherings.—

Gatherings at the Hall of Sessions during the course of a Session are strictly prohibited. Likewise, there shall be no gatherings or chatting in the hallways and offices contiguous to the Hall of Sessions. The order and decorum that should prevail in the House shall be observed in all House facilities.

Section 24.6.—Persons Alien to the Body.—

With the exception of those persons allowed into the Hall of Sessions and the Ángel Viera Martínez Hall, as provided for in the subsequent Section, no person alien to the Legislature may speak with Representatives in said Hall during the course of a Session.

Section 24.7.—Admission into the Hall of Sessions and the Ángel Viera Martínez Hall.—

When the House of Representatives is in Session, only the following persons shall be admitted into the Hall of Sessions:

- (a) Representatives;
- (b) the Governor of Puerto Rico and the Secretary of State;
- (c) the Resident Commissioner;

- (d) Senators;
- (e) the Clerk and his/her executive assistant, the Deputy Clerk, the Advisors to the Speaker, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, and the Secretary and the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate;
- (f) the Director of the Office of Legislative Services;
- (g) the officials and employees of the Hall of Sessions of the House, while in the discharge of their official duties;
- (h) the persons invited by agreement of the House or by decision of the Speaker;
- (i) one single advisor or assistant per Representative, as per written notice given to the Clerk and recorded by the Sergeant-at-Arms;
- (j) the advisors to the Floor Leaders, as per written notice given to the Clerk and recorded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, never to be more than three at a time at the Floor per Floor Leader.

Furthermore, when the House is in Session, only the following persons shall be allowed admission into the Ángel Viera Martínez Hall:

- (a) persons allowed into the Hall of Sessions;
- (b) Judges of the Supreme Court;
- (c) Secretaries, Heads of Agency and Mayors;

(d) former Governors, former Resident Commissioners and former Government Secretaries;

(e) former Legislators;

(f) former Clerks and former Sergeants-at-Arms of the House;

(g) officials and advisors of the Office of Legislative Services, while in the discharge of their functions;

(h) special aides to the Governor, while in the discharge of their duties; and

(i) persons who have been extended an invitation by agreement of the House or by decision of the Speaker.

Section 24.8.—*Salón Café*.—

The *Salón Café* is part of the work space of the House. Therefore, admission into the same shall be restricted to Representatives and persons admitted into the Hall of Sessions. However, the *Salón Café* shall serve the following persons, exclusively:

(a) Representatives;

(b) the Governor of Puerto Rico and the Secretary of State;

(c) the Resident Commissioner;

(d) Senators;

(e) the Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms of the House and the Secretary and Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate;

(f) any other person so authorized by the Speaker.

Section 24.9.—Seating.—

It shall be the duty of the Sergeant-at-Arms to provide seating in the Hall of Sessions for Advisors to the Speaker and Representatives, as well as for guests of the House on special occasions, such as the reading of the Governor's Addresses. Likewise, the Sergeant-at-Arms shall provide guests and authorized visitors of the House with seating at the boxes or at designated places in the Hall, the Ángel Viera Martínez Hall, and the High Gallery during the Inaugural Session or on any other occasion as determined by the House or by the Speaker.

Under no circumstances shall any person other than a House member occupy the seats designated for Representatives and the Speaker during the course of a Session or function.

Section 24.10.—Press Box.—

The Speaker of the House shall authorize the Clerk to provide for the designation of spaces for those persons acting in the capacity of accredited press members, at a box especially prepared for that purpose. No person shall be admitted into the press box without being duly authorized by the

Clerk by request of a newspaper or a news service. Journalists thus authorized shall receive a credential from the Clerk and be entitled to occupy the seats they are assigned and to use the facilities of the press box.

The Speaker may, at any time, cancel the authorization of any journalist who does not abide by these Rules.

Section 24.11.—Public Present.—

The public may attend functions held at the Hall of Sessions from the High Gallery, provided they observe the provisions of these Rules. The Speaker may, by agreement with the Capitol Police, regulate the admission into the galleries and stands of the Hall of Sessions of persons or packages or any other object which might be considered to constitute a risk for public safety, or of persons not properly attired or not in keeping with the serious tone of the business conducted at the Floor.

All persons present, without exception, shall observe all civility practices and rules when at the Galleries or on the premises of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Section 24.12.—No Smoking.—

Smoking in the Hall of Sessions and the *Salón Café* is not allowed. As to all other House facilities, smoking shall be regulated by the provisions of Act No. 40 of August 3, 1993, as amended, and by the applicable administrative orders and regulations.

Section 24.13.—Dress Code.—

During the hours of Session or in Committee meetings, Representatives, as well as officials and employees of the House who discharge functions at the Hall of Sessions, the Ángel Viera Martínez Hall, the Galleries, the *Salón Café*, the Hearings Rooms, and the elevators, shall wear appropriate professional attire.

Due to the nature of the legislative endeavor, professional attire for gentlemen shall be considered to be a suit and tie. On the other hand, inappropriate, therefore inadmissible, attire shall be considered to be the use of sneakers, wearing men's shoes without socks, jeans, shorts, sleeveless shirts, midriff shirts, décolleté or bare-back shirts, or skirts or dresses which are too short or too tight, among others.

The Speaker may issue waivers on the Dress Code provided for herein for reason of health conditions in connection with disease or pregnancy, among others.

PROCEDURAL ASPECT AND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE
DURING SESSIONS

RULE 25 – MOTIONS IN GENERAL

Section 25.1.—Definition.—

A Motion is any petition raised by a Representative which entails some kind of action or determination from the House, except for Bill Drafts and Resolutions.

Section 25.2.—General Rule.—

Motions strictly in connection with parliamentary procedure in the Session may be presented at any time during the Session, with the exceptions provided for in these Rules. Those motions concerning Expressions of the House or individual requests from Representatives or Committees shall be presented only during the corresponding turn within the Order of Business, except for that which is further provided for Privileged Motions.

Once a motion has been presented and processed, the Speaker shall immediately submit it to the consideration of the House during the corresponding turn. On his/her own initiative, the Speaker may provide for a

motion presented orally to be handed over with a written copy to all Representatives, through the Clerk, before submitting the same to the consideration of the Body. This provision on written motions shall not apply to Privileged Motions, to motions of personal privilege or of House privilege, to motions of House privilege, to incidental motions, to subsidiary motions, or to parliamentary routine motions.

Section 25.3.—Presenting Motions.—

No motion whatsoever may be presented when any of the following circumstances is present:

- (a) while the roll is being called;
- (b) while a vote is being cast, until the results of the vote are known;
- (c) when the previous question has been raised; and
- (d) when a Representative has the Floor, except for that which is provided further.

Section 25.4.—Separation of Motions.—

When a motion addresses various matters which should be considered separately, the Speaker, by request of a Representative or in his/her own discretion, shall proceed to separate one matter of business from another in order to submit them to the consideration of the House.

Section 25.5.—Resolution In Lieu of Motion.—

When a matter of business is submitted to the House as a motion when it is in reality a resolution pursuant to the provisions of these Rules, the Speaker, *motu proprio* or by request of a Representative, shall not allow the consideration of the matter of business. In its stead, the Speaker shall order said motion to be processed under the rules as a resolution.

When a motion is presented to consign an Expression of the House concerning a person or an event, the provisions of Section 22.4, subsection (C) of these Rules, shall apply.

Section 25.6.—Withdrawal.—

The author of a motion may withdraw the same at any time before the motion *per se* or an amendment thereto is approved.

RULE 26 – PRIVILEGED MOTIONS**Section 26.1.—Classification and Preference.—**

When a matter of business is being discussed, the Speaker may not accept any motion whatsoever except for one of the following:

- (a) to adjourn the Session;
- (b) to decree a recess;
- (c) to leave the matter of business pending;
- (d) to raise the previous question;

(e) to propose that a Committee be relieved from considering a matter of business when the Committee to be relieved is not the only one to which the matter has been referred;

(f) to postpone the matter of business until a specific date;

(g) to postpone the matter of business indefinitely;

(h) to amend; or

(i) to propose that the matter of business be referred to a Committee.

These motions shall have preference pursuant to the order in which these are listed. The first five shall be voted on without debate.

RULE 27 – READING OF DOCUMENTS

Section 27.1.—Request.—

Any Representative who wishes to have a reading of a document not produced in the course of parliamentary proceedings and which is relative strictly to the legislative process, shall so request to the House by means of a motion to that effect explaining briefly the need to have such document read, and the contents and extension of the same. If there is no objection, the Speaker shall order the reading of the document.

Section 27.2.—Objection.—

If there is an objection to said request for a reading, the same shall be explained briefly, but it shall not be debatable. The House shall then resolve whether the document is to be read through the affirmative vote of four fifths (4/5) of the members present.

Section 27.3.—Recording into the Journal.—

The affirmative vote of four fifths (4/5) of the members present shall also be required to determine whether the contents of the document are to be recorded into the Journal of Sessions.

RULE 28 – REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION MADE TO THE HOUSE

Section 28.1.—Requests to the House.—

Any citizen may present a petition to the House in relation to any matter of his/her interest. All formal petitions made to the House shall be remitted to the Clerk in order for the same to follow through the corresponding processing.

RULE 29 – COMMUNICATIONS

Section 29.1.—Report to the House.—

The Clerk shall receive all communications issued by the Governor and the Senate as well as all memorials issued by the Executive and the Judiciary Branches when these are addressed to the House of

Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The Clerk shall report having received such to the House within the most immediate Session by providing an account thereof at the corresponding time within the Order of Business.

RULE 30 – COMMITTEE REPORTS

Section 30.1.—Referral of Legislative Measures and Matters of Business to Various Committees.—

The Speaker of the House shall refer legislative measures and matters of business to the Committees; these are not to be referred to more than two (2) Committees. However, under exceptional circumstances, the Speaker may, in his/her discretion, remit such legislative measures or matters of business to the Committees he/she deems convenient.

The Committee to which the consideration of a legislative measure or matter of business is first referred shall have the primary responsibility of holding hearings and rendering the corresponding report. Said Committee shall invite all other designated Committees to hold joint hearings and to render a report. These Committees, if deemed convenient or necessary, may accept said invitation or proceed with their own course.

In the event that any of the Committees to which a legislative measure has been referred renders its report, said report shall be duly substantiated.

The Majority Floor Leader shall notify all other Committees as to having received the report not later than the following work day and send a copy of the same. If within the term of three (3) work days said Committees have not rendered their report or request a time extension to the House, said Committees shall be automatically relieved according to procedure. This automatic relief shall not proceed when the first report filed has been issued by the Committee on Budget and Appropriations and the same is not the First Instance Committee. The Majority Floor Leader shall then proceed to include the legislative measure or matter of business into the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day if deemed convenient.

Section 30.2.—Term to Render Reports.—

Committees shall render their reports as soon as possible from the date on which the legislative measure or matter of business was referred to these for their consideration. The Majority Floor Leader, as part of his/her endeavor, shall closely follow the Committees' agenda to ensure compliance with this provision. In the event the reports are filed late, the Majority Floor Leader shall ascertain the Committee's reasons, in order for the pertinent measures to be taken to enforce compliance with this provision.

Section 30.3.—Minority Reports.—

Committee minorities shall be entitled to have their reports, whether these are concurrent or dissenting, consigned as part of the Committee reports. The House shall vote on said minority reports only in those cases in which the decision of the majority is defeated. Any Representative may refer to a minority report while the majority report is under debate or consideration.

In the event the majority report is defeated and there is more than one minority report, said reports shall be considered, giving priority to reports signed by the greatest number of Representatives. If said reports have been signed by an equal number of Representatives, the Speaker of the House shall determine in what order the same are to be considered.

Section 30.4.—Filing and Contents of Reports.—

Committees shall file their reports with the Office of the Clerk of the House by surrendering one (1) printed original and five (5) printed copies as well as in electronic form, whether on a disc or by e-mail. The original report shall be signed by the Committee Chair.

When a Committee proposes amendments to any legislative measure it shall do so by engrossing the bill electronically, which action shall be incorporated into the report; the engrossed bill shall replace the original. In this case, the Report shall indicate that the amendments recommended by the

Committee are included in the engrossed bill, which shall bear in its heading the phrase “ENGROSSED BILL.”

The bill shall be engrossed on the version of the measure which was referred to the Committee for its study, and the Chair of the Committee rendering the Report shall initial all of the pages thereof.

In the event the Committee does not recommend any amendments, then the printed version of the legislative measure shall be attached to the Report.

Said reports shall include, in the following order: the heading identifying the report, the introduction, a statement on the scope of the legislative measure, and the recommendations and conclusions of the Committee.

All reports and their corresponding engrossed version shall be filed with the Office of the Clerk and included into the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day handed to all Representatives.

Section 30.5.—Copies of Reports.—

Once the Committee Report has been filed, the Clerk of the House shall remit a copy of the same and the engrossed version to the Majority Floor Leader, to the Document Printing Center, and to the Archive.

Journalists who so desire may request a copy of said report and its corresponding engrossed version.

Upon receipt of the report's printed copies, the Clerk shall remit a copy thereof to the Majority Floor Leader, who shall establish its turn for consideration by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day.

Section 30.6.—Reports on Appointments.—

Reports on Appointments shall be included in the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day as soon as these are filed, pursuant to what is provided further.

Section 30.7.—Appropriation of Funds.—

All bills or resolutions providing for an appropriation of funds shall be referred to the Committee or Committees with primary substantive jurisdiction, as well as to the Committee on Budget and Appropriations. The Committee with primary jurisdiction shall evaluate the substantive and fiscal aspects, but in the latter case, the Committee shall follow the instructions of the Committee on Budget and Appropriations. In order for the same to be

considered by the House, the Committee with primary jurisdiction shall file a Joint Report with the Committee on Budget and Appropriations.

Section 30.8.—Reports with Amendments.—

In those cases in which the engrossed version of a Committee report proposes amendments to a bill or resolution, said amendments shall be read, discussed and voted on with preference over any others.

In the engrossed version, the proposed amendments which suggest additional text shall appear underscored (*underscored*), and those which suggest the elimination of text shall appear stricken (~~stricken~~). Should there be the need to reinstate text in effect which has been omitted, the same shall be underscored (*underscored*).

The approval of amendments contained in the engrossed version of the report shall be tantamount to the approval of the report.

After the amendments contained in the engrossed version of a report have been discussed and voted on, all other amendments proposed at the Floor may be considered and put to vote, as provided for in these Rules. Should any amendments arise during the Session, the same shall be made using the pages and lines of the engrossed version as reference.

RULE 31 – SUBSTITUTE MEASURES

Section 32.1.—Definition.—

A substitute measure is a bill or resolution which, after having been considered by the Committee to which the same was referred, is drafted and filed with a totally new text instead of specific amendments.

Section 31.2.—Amendments.—

A substitute measure is an amendment to the original measure, and therefore, the same shall be subject to constitutional, statutory and regulatory provisions relative to amendments.

RULE 32 – CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Section 32.1.—When to Request the Conference.—

The designation of a Conference Committee may be requested in the following cases:

(a) when the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico does not concur with the amendments introduced by the Senate of Puerto Rico to a Bill, a Joint Resolution or a Concurrent Resolution originated in the House; or

(b) when the Senate does not concur with amendments introduced by the House to a Bill, a Joint Resolution or a Concurrent Resolution originated by the Senate.

Section 32.2.—Proceedings.—

When the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico does not agree with the amendments adopted by the Senate of Puerto Rico in connection with a measure originated by the House, the House may request the appointment of a Conference Committee to the Senate in order to discuss said amendments.

Likewise, when the Senate requests such a Conference Committee to discuss amendments with which the Senate does not concur, the House shall honor such a request immediately.

The Speaker of the House shall designate the members of the Body who shall constitute the Conference Committee. The Clerk shall notify such designation to the Senate.

Section 32.3.—Constitution and Meetings of the Committee.—

The Conference Committee of each House shall have its own Chair. Once designated, both Committee Chairs shall hold a meeting immediately to establish the work plan that shall govern the Conference Committee.

Section 32.4.—Lack of Agreement.—

In the event an agreement can not be reached during the first stage of a conference, the House may accept, at its discretion, a petition from the

Senate for a new conference, or if deemed convenient or necessary, proceed to request the same.

Section 32.5.—Conference Reports.—

Reports rendered by the Conference Committee shall be read and considered when submitted to the House. Said reports shall not amend any matter of business whatsoever which is not in dispute. Only recommendations on those matters on which the Bodies did not reach an agreement may be made.

Committee members shall not insert or eliminate any matter of business whatsoever from the text which contravenes the mandate received by the Bodies or their previous agreements.

This provision shall not apply to reports relative to the general budget resolution or special budget resolutions.

RULE 33 – COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Section 33.1.—Definition and Purpose.—

The Committee of the Whole is a parliamentary proceeding whereby the House as a whole is constituted into a Committee with the purpose of achieving, when considering a matter of business, a discussion which is freer and more informal than that of a deliberative body operating under its regular rules on proceedings.

Section 33.2.—Constitution of the Committee of the Whole.—

The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico may be constituted into the Committee of the Whole anytime by motion to that effect, in order to address any matter of business as deemed convenient.

The Speaker of the House shall chair the Committee of the Whole.

Section 33.3.—Motions.—

The only admissible motions while the Committee of the Whole is assembled shall be motions raised to submit amendments.

Section 33.4.—Applicable Rules.—

Once the amplitude of the discussion and the debate which the Committee of the Whole entails has been assessed, the Committee on Calendar and Special Debate Rules shall set forth the special rules that shall govern the proceedings.

Section 33.5.—Consideration of Legislative Measures.—

Bills and resolutions before the consideration of the Committee of the Whole shall be read in their entirety before being discussed. This requirement may be forgone by affirmative vote of the majority of House members, and thus proceed with the reading and the discussion of the legislative measure by taking each section or article of the same individually.

The engrossed version, if any, of a legislative measure may not be stricken by the Committee without having the amendments introduced by the Committee, designated by the page and line number, recorded by the Clerk as these are approved, in order for the House to take further action as corresponds based on said recommendations.

Section 33.6.—Consideration of Matters of Business.—

When the Committee of the Whole is considering a matter of business other than a bill or a resolution, the same shall proceed similarly. The Committee report and the corresponding engrossed version shall be both submitted to the House for action as pertinent.

Section 33.7.—Vote.—

The Committee of the Whole shall not vote by call of the roll.

Section 33.8.—Proceeding to Adjourn.—

The Committee of the Whole shall be adjourned when a Representative who has been duly seconded so requests and it is thus agreed by the absolute majority of the members of the House. Such a determination shall be agreed to by the House without debate.

The Chair shall notify the House of the recommendations agreed to by the Committee in order for the pertinent action to be taken.

RULE 34 – CALENDAR OF SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

Section 34.1.—Definition.—

The Calendar of Special Orders of the Day is a list prepared by the Majority Floor Leader which includes all legislative measures or matters of business reported on by or discharged by the Committees which are to be considered at a specific legislative day, according to the order in which these were included in said Calendar.

No legislative measure or matter of business may be considered if not included in the Calendar, or when a Special Calendar is prepared, or when the measure has been relieved from processing through discharge.

Section 34.2.—Circulation of the Calendar.—

The Calendar of Special Orders of the Day shall be filed with the Office of the Clerk not later than six o'clock in the afternoon (6:00 PM) on the day before the Session in which the same is to be considered, except when three fourths ($3/4$) of the members present authorize the immediate consideration of a Calendar of Special Orders of the Day during the Session held that same day. The same shall be circulated as soon as it has been printed.

This provision shall not apply during the last ten (10) days of Session.

Section 34.3.—Reading of the Calendar.—

Before considering the matters of business included in the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day, the bills and the resolutions shall be read in order for amendments to be introduced, discussed and approved.

When legislative measures have been read in the Committee of the Whole, only the recommendations for amendment shall be read in order for the House to take action as pertinent.

Section 34.4.—Corrections to Legislative Measures.—

Before the final roll call vote begins, the House, by agreement of the absolute majority of its members, may resolve that any bill or resolution be referred again to the Committee in order to correct any errors in form or style that should be repaired before the final vote or for further consideration.

RULE 35 – AMENDMENTS

Section 35.1.—Preference.—

All bills and resolutions shall be subject to amendments, which are to be germane to the matter under consideration. Written amendments shall be preferred over oral amendments.

Section 35.2.—Amendments Not Considered.—

The following amendments may not be considered:

- (a) amendments which contravene the matter addressed by the bill or resolution;
- (b) amendments which alter the intent of the measure;
- (c) amendments not directly related to the matter in question.

Section 35.3.—Procedure.—

Amendments formulated for bills and resolutions shall expressly indicate the page and line number into which these are to be incorporated, whether these are to be engrossed electronically, or in default, on the original version of the legislative measure.

Section 35.4.—Order in the Discussion of Amendments.—

When a matter of business is being discussed by the House, an amendment may be proposed, as well as an amendment to said first amendment. In such a case, the second amendment shall be discussed and voted on before the first. Once an agreement has been reached regarding said second amendment, the first amendment shall be discussed. All amendments shall be addressed before addressing the main matter of business.

By agreement of the majority present, amendments introduced in writing into a Calendar of Discharge that have been previously circulated with enough time so as to allow for an adequate evaluation of the same, do not have to be read.

Section 35.5.—New Amendments.—

While an amendment to a legislative measure or matter of business is being discussed, no new amendments whatsoever may be introduced.

Section 35.6.—Withdrawal of Amendment.—

The author of an amendment may withdraw the same before it is put to vote.

Section 35.7.—Postponement of Amendments.—

An amendment to a bill or a resolution may be postponed indefinitely without postponing the consideration of the legislative measure.

Section 35.8.—Enacting or Resolving Text.—

A motion to eliminate the enacting or resolving text of a bill or a resolution shall be considered to be an amendment. Said amendment shall have preference over any other amendments pending. In the event an amendment of this kind is introduced, the same may be discussed on the merits of the bill or resolution *per se*. If the amendment is approved by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the bill or resolution shall be defeated.

Section 35.9.—Amendments to the Title.—

Amendments to the title of a bill or resolution may be introduced, considered and approved only after said legislative measure has been approved in the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day.

Section 35.10.—Approval of Amendments.—

Amendments shall be approved by a majority of the Representatives present, except in cases in which these Rules provide otherwise.

RULE 36 – DEBATES

Section 36.1.—Request to Have the Floor.—

When a Representative seeks the Floor to intervene in a discussion concerning any matter of business, he or she shall rise and address the Speaker as follows: “Mr./Mme. Speaker.” The Speaker shall respond: “Mr./Mme. Representative” and properly identify the Representative. The Representative may then address the House from his or her desk.

Section 36.2.—Assignment and Order of Turns.—

The Speaker shall recognize the Representatives who are to participate in a debate, yielding the Floor in the order the requests were made. When two (2) or more Representatives request to have the Floor at the same time, the Speaker shall decide the order of the turns.

Section 36.3.—Right to Open or Close Debates.—

The Chair of the Committee reporting on a legislative measure or a matter of business shall be entitled to open and to close the debate on the same. The authority to close the debate may be exercised by the reporting Chair, even if he or she did not open the debate. When more than one Committee is reporting, the debate shall be closed by the same Committee Chair who opened the same. Said turn shall have a maximum duration of ten (10) minutes.

Said right is also vested in the author of a legislative measure or matter of business not reported on by a Committee or a Representative who introduced a debatable motion.

The approval of the previous question shall not impede the exercise of the right to close the debate, pursuant to the provisions established in this Section. In the event such a motion is approved, the turn to close the debate shall be granted without delay, after which the immediate matter of business being discussed at the time the previous question was introduced and approved, shall be put to vote.

Section 36.4.—Turns, Opening Statement and Rectification.—

Except for the Chair of the reporting Committee and the author of the measure discharged or a debatable motion, no Representative may speak on

more than two occasions concerning the same matter of business in the course of a debate.

The first shall be the opening statement turn, which shall have a duration of fifteen (15) minutes, and the second shall be the rectification turn, with a duration of five (5) minutes. However, other Representatives who have not spoken may yield up to their entire time to the Representative who has the Floor, but said Representative may not speak for more than forty (40) minutes while using the opening statement turn. Rectification turns may not be yielded.

Any Representative may request time in addition to that which has been authorized or yielded for his or her opening statement, which may be granted by two-thirds ($2/3$) of the members present.

The rectification turn may not be used until all Representatives who have requested and obtained an opening statement turn have participated in the debate. After the rectification round has begun, no Representative may seek the Floor for the first time in the debate.

The closing statement turn, which corresponds to the Chair of the reporting Committee, shall follow the rectification turns.

The Speaker shall keep track of the time corresponding to each turn. When a Representative is notified that his or her time is up, he or she shall stop talking and sit down at his or her desk.

Section 36.5.—Amendments Turn.—

Once the discussion concerning a Bill, a Joint Resolution, a Concurrent Resolution, a House Resolution, or any Motion, has begun, amendments to the same may be introduced and shall be discussed during a single amendments turn. In this single turn, each delegation shall be allotted some time to debate the amendments introduced; after said time has been consumed, no more amendments may be introduced for debate, including amendments to the title. Turns shall have a duration of thirty-five (35) minutes for the parliamentary majority, twenty-five (25) minutes for the minority with the greatest number of Representatives, and ten (10) minutes for the minority with the lesser number of Representatives. If necessary due to the nature of the matter of business, the time limit may be rendered ineffective and new terms established by vote of the majority of members present.

Section 36.6.—Matters Not Pertinent to the Debate.—

All Representatives, when addressing the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, shall speak adhering to the matter under

debate, and shall not be allowed to discuss issues which are personal or not pertinent or irrelevant to the debate.

In the event a Representative who has the Floor fails to observe the abovementioned Rule or any provisions of these Rules, the Speaker, *motu proprio* or by request of another Representative, may call the former to order. Said Representative may not continue having the Floor and he or she shall sit at his or her desk, unless he or she requests an authorization from the Speaker to explain him/herself. In the event the Speaker agrees to listen to his or her explanation and accepts the same, the Speaker may allow the Representative to continue with his or her intervention observing the Rules of the House.

Section 36.7.—Call to Order.—

The Speaker, *motu proprio* or by request of a Representative, may call any House member to order at any time when said member has incurred a fault or a violation of the provisions of these Rules. The call to order shall be made immediately after the Representative has incurred the fault or violation.

In the event a determination of this nature is made, the Representative thus affected shall respect the decision of the Speaker, but the former may appeal such a decision at the House. The appeal shall be resolved without

debate by vote of the majority of the Representatives present, and if the decision favors the Representative, he or she may continue having the Floor. Otherwise, he or she shall sit at his or her desk without further argument.

If the Representative called to order does not appeal the Speaker's decision, or if he or she has appealed and the decision of the House does not favor him or her, the Speaker, the very Representative found to be out of order, or any other member of the House may request that the statements made while out of order be erased from the account of the debate recorded in the Journal of Sessions. In order to erase the statements, the vote of four-fifths (4/5) of the members present shall be required, except for vulgar or obscene words or expressions which mar the dignity or decorum of the House and its members, which shall require the consent of the majority of the Representatives present in the House.

When the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico imposes a corrective measure on a Representative for a fault committed, he or she shall indefectibly observe the resolution of the House.

Section 36.8.—Interruptions While Having the Floor.—

When a Representative has the Floor, he or she may not be interrupted except in the following cases:

(a) when a question of order or a question of personal or House privilege which requires an immediate determination, is raised; or

(b) when a question is addressed to him or her, provided the Representative who has the Floor admits the question. Should such a situation arise, the Representative who wishes to pose a question shall address the Speaker to notify his or her intention. The Speaker shall ask the Representative who has the Floor whether he or she wishes to hear the question. Said Representative may hear the question but is in no obligation to answer the same. If the question is answered, the time consumed in communicating said answer shall be subtracted from the time corresponding to the Representative who posed the question.

RULE 37 – CALENDAR OF FINAL APPROVAL

Section 37.1.—Preparation and Consideration.—

Upon conclusion of the consideration of the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day, the bills and resolutions that the House decides shall be entered into the Calendar of Final Approval. This Calendar may be considered immediately or on the day and at the time set by the Majority Floor Leader.

Section 37.2.—Markup of Measures Before Final Approval.—

When considering a bill or a resolution for final approval, no amendments or debate shall be allowed. However, the House may at that time consider amendments needed to correct errors or to conform the wording to the text of the statutes in effect. These amendments shall be voted on without debate.

Section 37.3.—Vote.—

For final approval of any bill or joint or concurrent resolution, the vote shall be cast by roll call and the results thereof shall be recorded in the Minutes. No bill or resolution shall be approved unless the absolute majority of the members of the House votes in favor of the approval of the same. House Resolutions that have been approved shall be relieved from final vote by roll call.

The Clerk shall remit to the Senate three copies certified by the Clerk of all bills and joint or concurrent resolutions approved by the House.

RULE 38 – VOTE

Section 38.1.—Absent Representatives.—

Before initiating a vote, the Speaker may ask that Representatives not present at the Floor but within the Capitol area be called.

Likewise, the Speaker may provide for the suspension of the vote for a term not greater than twenty-four (24) hours and for absent members

outside the Capitol area but in the Island to be compelled to attend vote on the day and at the time established to that effect.

The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be responsible for enforcing the provisions of these Rules to that effect.

Section 38.2.—Entering the Floor.—

When Representatives so summoned enter the hall, the Speaker shall brief them on the matter of business submitted, and then the vote shall begin.

Section 38.3.—Viva Voce Vote and Division of the House.—

In those cases in which the matters of business under consideration do not require a roll call vote, the Speaker shall submit the same to the House using the following terms: “Representatives in favor shall say YEA.” Then the Speaker shall state: “Those against shall say NAY.”

When the results of the vote are uncertain, the Speaker, whether *motu proprio* or by request of a Representative, shall provide for the members of the House to rise. The first Representatives to rise shall be those in favor, and after they sit down, those against shall rise.

The Clerk shall make the head count required in both cases and report the results to the Speaker, who shall then express the action decided on by the House by virtue of said vote.

Section 38.4.—Roll Call Vote.—

In roll call votes, after all names have been called, the Clerk shall call again those who have not cast their vote; after so doing, the Speaker shall not allow the consignment of any vote whatsoever.

Section 38.5.—Participation in the Vote (Abstention).—

The Representatives present at the time a roll call vote is being conducted shall be under the obligation to cast their vote, except in the cases indicated below:

(a) Representatives shall abstain from voting on any instance in which they have a direct interest or derive a direct personal benefit in connection to the matter of business put to vote;

(b) Representatives may abstain from voting for reasons which are morally transcendental and which create a conflict of interest, which reasons they shall state; or

(c) Representatives may abstain from voting with the consent of the majority present when they are not prepared to cast their vote due to being unfamiliar with the matter of business put to vote.

In all those cases in which a Representative requests to be allowed to abstain from voting, the matter shall be resolved without debate. If the

House decided against said request, the Representative who requested to abstain shall be under the obligation to cast his or her vote.

If present in the hall and after being called to cast his or her vote a Representative refuses to vote, it shall be understood that he or she is voting against and it shall so be recorded in the vote sheet.

Section 38.6.—Explanatory Vote.—

Upon conclusion of the vote, any Representative may present an explanatory vote in connection to the vote he or she has cast within a term that shall not exceed ten (10) days.

Explanatory votes shall be recorded in the Journal of Sessions on the day the Clerk reports said votes to the House. The entering of these votes into the Journal shall be made at the end of the Session being held on that day.

RULE 39 – FINAL BILL AND RESOLUTION PROCESSING

Section 39.1.—Limitation on Processing.—

During the five (5) days which precede the date on which a Regular Session is to conclude, bills and joint resolutions shall not undergo any processing unless these have been approved by both Legislative Houses in a final vote.

Section 39.2.—Printing and Remittance.—

All bills or resolutions approved by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be printed in uniform type and shall bear on its heading the caption “TEXT OF FINAL APPROVAL BY THE HOUSE,” and shall consign the date on which it was thus approved.

The Clerk shall remit to the Senate, for its consideration, one (1) certified copy of each measure together with its respective engrossed version, such as they were submitted by the House Committees when rendering their report.

RULE 40 – RECONSIDERATION OF MATTERS OF BUSINESS

Section 40.1.—Reconsideration Requested.—

By request of any Representative, the House may agree to reconsider of a matter of business which has been already resolved, provided the request is made during the same Session in which the matter of business was addressed or during the next day of Session.

Under no circumstances may the reconsideration of a matter of business be requested twice on two (2) occasions or more; requests shall be made pursuant to that which is provided above.

Section 40.2.—Seconded Motion.—

All motions to reconsider any matter of business already resolved during the Session shall be duly seconded.

Section 40.3.—Reconsideration by Roll Call Vote.—

In order to reconsider a bill or a resolution that has been passed on to the Senate or the Governor of Puerto Rico, agreement by the absolute majority of the members of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico obtained by roll call vote, shall be necessary.

When vote has been conducted by calling the roll, the reconsideration of the legislative measure or matter of business voted on may only be requested by a Representative whose vote makes him or her a part of the group who obtained the majority in said vote.

Section 40.4.—Reconsideration and Return of Approved Legislative Measures.—

The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, by absolute majority, may decide to reconsider those House bills and resolutions approved by the House which have been passed on to the Senate of Puerto Rico for its consideration, or those House measures approved by both Bodies which have been passed on to the Governor for his or her consideration. If the House should so determine, the Senate or the Governor, as the case may be, shall be requested to return the measure.

Once the measure has been received, said measure shall be referred to the Majority Floor Leader in order for the same to undergo the corresponding processing.

RULE 41 – CONSIDERATION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

PENDING APPROVAL

Section 41.1.—Consideration During the Term of the Legislature.—

The House may again consider, within the term of the same Legislature, any bill or resolution which has not been defeated or approved in final vote in a specific Session.

The consideration of said bill or resolution shall be conducted in any subsequent Regular Session or at a Special Session if the matter of business has been included into the Call to Session issued by the Governor. To that effect, the processing stage in which the measure was in during the preceding Session shall be the point of departure.

Section 41.2.—Remittance to the Majority Floor Leader.—

At the closing of a Regular or a Special Session of the same Legislature, all those matters of business left pending on the various Calendars of Special Orders of the Day or of Final Approval, shall be automatically referred to the Majority Floor Leader. The Floor Leader shall

be responsible for the further processing of said legislative measure or matter of business pursuant to the provisions of these Rules.

RULE 42 – QUESTIONS OF ORDER

Section 42.1.—Definition.—

A question of order is a motion introduced by a Representative whereby he or she raises an issue relative to the application, observance or interpretation of these Rules.

Section 42.2.—Time to Raise a Question of Order.—

Questions of order may be raised at any time during the Session of the day on which any situation relative to the application, observance or interpretation of these Rules arises.

A question of order may not be raised while another question of order previously raised is pending, except when the Speaker invokes Rule 42.3.

Section 42.3.—Decision Regarding a Question of Order.—

Questions of order shall be submitted to the Speaker of the House, who shall resolve the same immediately. However, when deemed necessary, the Speaker may reserve his or her decision on such questions of order, but he or she shall deliver his or her decision within the term of forty-eight (48) hours from the time the question was submitted. This term may be extended by request of the Speaker.

Section 42.4.—Debate.—

When a question of order is introduced, the Speaker shall not allow any debate whatsoever on the matter. However, when deemed necessary for orientation or information purposes, the Speaker may yield the Floor to any Representative so that he or she may state whether he or she is in favor or against the merits of the question of order which has been raised.

The stage whereby turns are granted shall conclude at the discretion of the Speaker, and each individual term may not exceed five (5) minutes.

Section 42.5.—Appeal to the House.—

Representatives are entitled to appeal to the House on decisions made by the Speaker on the matter of questions of order. The appeal shall be presented by the Representative who has raised the question of order immediately after the decision is known.

When requesting an appeal and unless the House decides otherwise, the Speaker may grant one turn to a Representative in favor and one turn to a Representative against, to have a duration of five (5) minutes each, so that Representatives may express their opinion about the same. The appeal shall be resolved by a majority of the Representatives present.

RULE 43 – QUESTIONS OF PRIVILEGE**Section 43.1.—Classification of Privileges.—**

(A) House Privilege – Those questions raised before the House concerning facts or expressions which compromise the rights, the dignity, the decorum, the safety, and the austerity of the House, as well as the integrity of its proceedings.

(B) Personal Privilege – Those questions raised before the House to point out facts or expressions which compromise the rights, the reputation, or the official conduct of Representatives individually, in their capacity as a Representative, or as a member of the House.

Section 43.2.—Raising the Question.—

After a succinct statement or after having raised the question in detail, the Speaker may resolve whether said question constitutes a personal privilege or a House privilege or not.

This decision may be appealed before the House, but the appeal shall be voted on without debate and resolved by the majority of the members present.

In those cases in which the Speaker or the House determines that the question involves a personal or a House privilege, consideration shall be

given as to which measures or remedies are necessary to correct or to prevent said situation from persisting in its effects or from being repeated.

Section 43.3.-Preference.—

Questions of personal or House privilege shall have preference over all other matters of business, except:

- (a) for the calling of the roll;
- (b) when Minutes from the preceding Session are being considered;
- (c) when the Clerk is in the discharge of his or her functions relative to the reading of documents and calendars;
- (d) when a motion to recess or to adjourn the Session has been introduced;
- (e) when voting, until the results of the vote are known; or
- (f) when the previous question has been raised.

RULE 44 – THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Section 44.1.—Definition.—

A previous question is a motion used to finish a debate and to bring before the House of Representatives of Puerto Rico without delay, the immediate matter of business under debate, so that the same may be finally put to vote without further discussion.

Section 44.2.—Raising the Previous Question.—

The previous question may be raised at any time in the course of a debate pursuant to the provisions of Rule 26 on Privileged Motions. This motion must be seconded by not less than four (4) Representatives.

The previous question may not be raised when the House is constituted into the Committee of the Whole.

Section 44.3.—Procedure Concerning the Previous Question.—

Once approved, each delegation shall have five (5) minutes to discuss the matter of business without impairing the right conferred under Section 36.3 onto the Chairperson of the Committee reporting on a measure or onto the author of a measure or debatable motion to open or close a debate.

APPOINTMENTS**RULE 45 – CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS****Section 45.1.—Procedure.—**

When the Office of the Clerk receives an appointment proposed by the Governor for the confirmation of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Clerk shall inform the same in the first Legislative Session held after receipt and shall immediately refer the same to the Committee on Government to consider and report on the same.

Examination and consideration in respect of appointments proposed by the Governor, as well as the analysis of reports submitted to the House, shall be conducted strictly observing decorum and respect for the dignity and integrity of the persons thus nominated.

Section 45.2.—Filing Reports.—

No reports on appointments proposed by the Governor may be presented until forty-eight (48) hours have elapsed from the time the same was received at the Committee unless the House agrees otherwise by absolute majority.

Section 45.3.—Inclusion into the Calendar.—

As soon as a report on an appointment is received at the Office of the Clerk, said report shall be referred to the Majority Floor Leader in order for the same to be included in the Calendar of Special Orders of the Day.

Should the Committee fail to issue its report on an appointment after said Committee has had the same in its possession for ten (10) consecutive days, the House, after a motion and an agreement to that effect, may cause said report to be taken into account and resolved in the very next Session.

Section 45.4.—Vote.—

Votes on appointment shall be cast by roll call. The approval of the report of the Committee on Government shall result in the confirmation or nonconfirmation of the appointment addressed on the report.

When the Committee report refers to more than one nomination, its approval shall result in the confirmation of the appointments addressed in the report, except when a Representative requests to have each appointment considered and voted on separately.

Section 45.5.—Notice to the Governor.—

The Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall notify the Governor of Puerto Rico of this Legislative Body's findings relative to appointments as soon as an agreement on this matter is reached. However, notice shall not be given to the Governor until the term during which reconsideration of a matter may be requested, as provided for in these Rules, has lapsed.

INTERNAL GOVERNMENT AND MISCELANEOUS MATTERS

RULE 46 – CODE OF ETHICS

Section 46.1.—House Resolution.—

The Code of Ethics shall be established by means of the approval of a House Resolution to that effect.

RULE 47 – OFFICIAL TRAVEL**Section 47.1.—Applicable Norm.—**

Travel shall only be authorized for Representatives, officials and employees if traveling within the United States, its possessions and territories, and if traveling to tend to federal business or to business relative to national organizations in which the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is a member. Likewise, Representatives, officials and employees shall be authorized to travel abroad only when conducting investigations or inspections or when representing the House in functions of an official nature, after so authorized by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico by means of the vote of a simple majority, and in all cases, when involving a public purpose, or when the House is in recess, by means of a written request authorized by the Speaker of the House.

Section 47.2.—Procedure Governing Travel.—

Requests to travel within the United States and its possessions and territories shall be presented in writing to the Speaker for his/her authorization and processed pursuant to the Rules and the applicable norms of the Office of Finances.

Requests to travel abroad shall be presented by means of a House Resolution and are to be introduced and considered as established in Rules 14 and 17 and observing the additional requirements established in this Rule. Any Resolution introduced pursuant to the above Rule must be approved by three-fifths (3/5) of the number of members of the House and the Speaker. The Resolution shall contain accurate information regarding the dates and costs. It shall also include an itemized justification in terms of those Representatives, officials or employees who are being authorized to travel.

Should the House be in recess, traveling abroad shall be allowable by virtue of a written request authorized by the Speaker of the House.

Once approved, the request to travel shall be processed pursuant to these Rules and the applicable norms of the corresponding office. The Speaker shall inform the House that he/she has authorized a House member to travel to the United States of America and state the motive thereof.

Section 47.3.—Reports to be Submitted.—

Each Representative, official or employee who uses public resources to travel within the United States or its possessions or territories or to travel abroad, shall submit to the Office of the Clerk of the House a preliminary individualized report justifying the trip. The preliminary report shall explain the purpose and objective of said trip and provide an itemized account of the

costs and expenses to be incurred during the same. Without a preliminary report, no public fund disbursement whatsoever shall be made.

Likewise, after completing any travel, be it within the United States, its possessions and territories or abroad, the Representative, official or employee in question shall be under the obligation to submit a final report on the official business tended to during said trip, as well as an itemized report on the expenses incurred. Without these, no reimbursement whatsoever shall be made with public funds.

Section 47.4.—Disbursement and Reimbursement.—

Each Representative, official or employee who participates in a legislative travel paid for with public funds shall be under the obligation to present a preliminary report and a final report detailing the expenses incurred or to be incurred, as the case may be. Furthermore, all invoices and bills referred to in the reports shall be included as part of the report in order to qualify for any disbursement or reimbursement.

Section 47.5.—Limitations on Reimbursements.—

Only those expenses arising from official business shall qualify for reimbursement.

Section 47.6.—Funds to be Used.—

“Section 47.6.—Funds to be Used.—

All travel within the United States, its possessions and territories or abroad shall be chargeable to the budget of the Representative or of the office to which the official or employee in question is attached.

Furthermore, charging travel to surplus funds in the individualized budget of Representatives, is hereby authorized.”

Section 47.7.—Public Nature.—

Preliminary and final reports on travel shall be public in nature.

RULE 48 – LOBBYIST REGISTER**Section 48.1.—Applicability.—**

All natural or juridical persons professionally engaged in the representation of their clients’ interests at legislative proceedings shall be under the obligation to register as such with the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

In the case of juridical persons, these shall not only be under the obligation to register, but they shall also indicate the stockholders, partners, associates or employees who are to engage in said endeavor.

Section 48.2.—Location of the Register.—

The Clerk shall be the custodian of said Register. The same shall be kept at the Office of the Clerk proper, and the Clerk shall prepare the necessary regulations for the establishment thereof.

Section 48.3.—Information to be Requested.—

The Regulations to be prepared by the Clerk shall provide for the information to be requested from all natural and juridical persons professionally engaged in the representation of their clients' interests at legislative proceedings.

Section 48.4.—Effect.—

All natural and juridical persons professionally engaged in the representation of their clients' interests at legislative proceedings that are not duly registered, may not represent themselves as being recognized as such by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Section 48.5.—Public Nature.—

The Lobbyist Register shall be available to the public at the Office of the Clerk.

RULE 49 – LEGISLATIVE PROCEEDINGS TO BE MADE PUBLIC**Section 49.1.—Televised Broadcast.—**

The broadcast of legislative sessions and public hearings through the media is hereby authorized, provided the Speaker of the House so authorizes.

Section 49.2.—Town Hall Meetings.—

All District Representatives shall be entitled to hold town hall meetings, which shall be open to the public and announced in advance so as to be able to listen to the constituents of their district and keep in touch with the people.

All town hall meetings shall be chargeable to the Representatives' budgets, except for those meetings held three (3) months before a primary or an election is held.

Section 49.3.—Observance of the Electronic Government Act.—

The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is hereby authorized to fully discharge the duties and responsibilities imposed under Act No. 151 of June 22, 2004, better known as the "Electronic Government Act," paying special attention to guaranteeing access to information by persons with disabilities.

Section 49.4.—Public Hearing Announcement.—

Pursuant to Sections 13.6 and 13.8 of these Rules, the House is to make public hearings truly accessible to the people by requiring that the same are announced at least two (2) days in advance in newspapers, the webpage, or other media, so as to offer to the public a real opportunity to participate and express their views. This requirement shall not apply during the last ten (10) days of any Session.

**RULE 50 – ADDRESSES BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OR THE LEGISLATURE****Section 50.1.—State of the Commonwealth Address.—**

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution of Puerto Rico and Section 50 of the Political Code of 1902, as amended, the Governor shall present to the Legislature at the beginning of the first Regular Session of the year, an address on the state of the Commonwealth and shall also submit a report on the state of the Treasury of Puerto Rico and the disbursements proposed for the following economic year. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall coordinate, together with the Governor, the date on which this address is to be delivered at House chambers during a Joint Called Session.

Section 50.2.—Special Addresses Delivered at the House of Representatives or the Legislature.—

All special addresses other than the address provided for in Section 50.1 shall require the approval and consent of the majority of House members.

RULE 51 – CALLED SESSIONS

Section 51.1.—Called Sessions.—

The House may summon its members to convene in a Called Session at any time during the term of the Fifteenth Legislature.

Section 51.2.—Called Sessions for Tributes or Acknowledgments.—

Approval by three-fifths (3/5) of the Representatives shall be required for the approval of a Resolution or a Motion whose objective is to provide for the holding of a Called Session for a Tribute or an Acknowledgment.

RULE 52 – PROHIBITIONS ON SPONSORSHIPS AND PAYMENTS.—

Section 52.1.—Prohibition.—

It is hereby prohibited for the House to provide any kind of sponsorship or payment for a private activity or event which serves no public purpose whatsoever.

RULE 53 – CONTINUING EDUCATION**Section 53.1.—Continuing Education.—**

The House shall offer continuing legislative training and education opportunities to Representatives, as well as to those advisors and employees whose functions, among others, are the drafting, analysis and processing of legislative measures. This Training and Continuing Education Program shall be attached to the Office of the Clerk.

Section 53.2.—Agreements with Educational or Technical Institutions.—

The Clerk, with the authorization of the Speaker, may enter into agreements with educational and technical institutions which may offer assistance relative to training and continuing education.

Section 53.3.—Validation of Continuing Education Courses .—

Licensed attorneys may validate the continuing education credit-hours which they are compelled to complete by the Supreme Court or the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

RULE 54 – EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RULES**Section 54.1.—Effectiveness.—**

These Rules shall take effect from the time of their approval and shall be effective immediately, subject to that which is established in Section 4.4.”

Section 2.—This Resolution shall take effect immediately after its approval.