

# Colorado House of Representatives

## Selected Rules at a Glance



### Powers and Duties of Speaker

- To chair of House when seated as the body. **House Rule 3 (b)(1)**
- To preserve order and decorum. **House Rule 3 (b)(2)**
- To decide all questions of order, subject to member's right to appeal to the House. **House Rule 3 (b)(3)**
- To name the chair of Committee of the Whole. **House Rule 3 (b)(6)**
- To determine number of committee members and number from each political party. Appoints majority and unaffiliated committee members and designates chair and vice-chair for each committee of reference. **House Rules 3 (b)(8) and 25 (d)**
- To refer bills and may refer resolutions to appropriate committees of reference. **House Rule 3 (b)(9)**
- To create a House select committee to review a single specified subject. **House Rule 25B (a)**
- To promulgate regulations for remote participation in legislative proceedings. **House Rules 53 and 54**
- To govern any matter not covered by House Rules, subject to appeal. **House Rule 46 (a)**

### Introduction, Reading, and Passage of Bills

Every bill is read by title when introduced and read on second and third reading on different days before final passage. **House Rule 27 (b)(1)**

Unless a member requests reading a bill at length on second or third reading, it is read by title only, and the unanimous consent of the members present to dispense with reading at length is presumed. **House Rule 27 (b)(1)**

A member requesting a bill be read at length on second or third reading must remain in the chamber for the duration of the reading, except for brief absences. If the requesting member is absent from the chamber for more than five minutes, the request is deemed withdrawn. **House Rule 27 (b)(2)**

If the request to read a bill at length is withdrawn, another member may request for the bill to be read at length for which the reading picks up where the previous reading left off. **House Rule 27 (b)(3)**

The House Majority Leader may suspend reading a bill at length. **House Rule 27 (b)(4)**

Reading before the House sitting as Committee of the Whole constitutes second reading. **House Rule 27 (b)(1)**

No bill is declared passed unless a majority of the members elected (33) vote for the bill. **House Rule 33 (d)**

### House Order of Business

**General orders.** When House proceeds to general orders, no other business, unless it is a special order, is in order until general orders are disposed of, except upon a majority vote of House members. **House Rule 6 (d)**

**Special orders.** After a bill has been returned to the House by a committee of reference for consideration by the House sitting as a Committee of the Whole, bill may be made a special order for a particular day or hour. **House Rule 6 (e)**

**Proceeding out of order.** House may, upon the affirmative vote of a majority of all members present, proceed out of order to any order of business or return to an order already passed. **House Rule 6 (f)**

### Questions Decided Without Debate

- Questions of order, except on appeal from decision of the Speaker. **House Rule 10**
- Adjournment to a day certain. **House Rule 15 (a)**
- Taking a recess. **House Rule 15 (b)**
- Questions relating to the priority of business. **House Rule 15 (c)**
- Suspension of the rules. **House Rule 15 (d)**
- Previous question, and motions to limit or to extend the limits of, or to close debate. **House Rule 15 (e)**
- Amending or reconsidering a non-debatable question. **House Rule 15 (f)**
- Considering the orders of the day. **House Rule 15 (g)**
- Resolving into Committee of the Whole. **House Rule 15 (h)**
- Call of the House. **House Rule 15 (i)**
- Suspending reading of a bill at length and laying it over to a date or time certain. **House Rule 15 (j)**

### Disagreement - Conference Committee

House may concur in Senate amendments to a House bill; requires a vote of a majority of members elected (33). **House Rule 36 (a)**

If Senate amends a House bill, the House may adhere to its position, recede from its position and concur with the position of the Senate, or request a conference committee. **House Rule 36 (b)**

The House may recede from any matter of difference existing between it and the Senate before consideration of a conference committee report by the House or the Senate, or after Senate's rejection of the conference committee report, not later than the next day of actual session following the rejection of the report. **House Rule 36 (c)**

The Speaker appoints three members to represent House on conference committee. **House Rule 36 (d)**

### Committee of the Whole - Second Reading

Every bill on general or special orders must be considered by the House sitting as the Committee of the Whole. **House Rule 31 (a)**

Committee of the Whole formed upon adoption of non-debatable motion, and the Speaker appoints a chair who exercises all powers of the Speaker. Chair not entitled to vote in Committee of the Whole unless the committee is evenly divided on question. **House Rules 3 (b)(6), 15 (h), and 32 (a)**

A member may speak more than twice upon the same subject. A call for the ayes and noes (on the voting machine) may not be made but a demand for a standing vote may be made upon any question. A motion for the previous question or motion for reconsideration is not in order. There is no appeal from a decision of the chair. **House Rule 32 (b)**

**Rise and report.** Deliberations of the Committee of the Whole end when a motion is made to rise and report, which is always in order and decided without debate. **House Rule 32 (e)**

**Motions that are in order on second reading:**

- That the enacting clause of the bill be stricken.
- That the bill be recommitted to a committee of reference for further study and consideration.
- That the bill be passed over and retain its place on the calendar.
- That the bill be amended.
- That the bill be adopted.
- That the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.
- That the committee rise and report. **House Rule 29 (h)**

Reports of the Committee of the Whole must be adopted by a majority vote of the members elected (33), which constitutes passage on second reading of each bill considered and approved by the Committee of the Whole. **House Rule 32 (h)**

### Third Reading Amendments

A third reading amendment is not in order unless a majority of the House gives consent to offer a third reading amendment. A substitute amendment is never in order on third reading. **House Rule 33 (b)**

Except after the 110<sup>th</sup> day of a regular session or during a special session, only technical third reading amendments are in order. A majority of the House may consent to refer a bill back to second reading from third reading for consideration of a substantial amendment. **House Rule 33 (b.5)**

## Speaking and Voting

A member rising to speak, debate, give a notice, make a motion, submit a report, or for any other purpose cannot proceed before addressing and being recognized by the chair. Then the member may proceed to address the House from the central microphone, or from his or her desk, confining his or her remarks to the purpose for which the member rose. **House Rule 13 (a)**

A member, other than the one moving the question, shall not speak more than twice nor longer than 10 minutes on the same question without the consent of the House. **House Rule 13 (d)**

Voting is done electronically on the voting machine, with the names and corresponding votes recorded in the journal, in the following instances:

- Upon all bills and concurrent resolutions upon third reading and final passage;
  - Upon House concurrence to amendments made by the Senate to House bills;
  - Upon adoption of conference committee reports;
  - Upon adoption or amendment to a report of the Committee of the Whole.
- House Rule 20 (a)**

All other votes sitting as the body are taken by voice vote, but a member may demand the ayes and noes (on the voting machine) upon any question. **House Rule 20 (b)**

Every member within the House chamber when a question is stated from the chair shall vote on the question, unless the member is directly interested in the question or has been excused from voting by the House. When a vote is taken without the use of the voting machine, a member is not obliged to vote upon the question unless the member is within the House chamber when his or her name is called. **House Rule 21 (a)**

A member requesting to be excused from voting shall make the request before the call for the ayes and noes has begun and shall make a brief statement of the reasons for the request. **House Rule 21 (b)**

**Conflict of interest.** A member who has an immediate personal or financial interest in a bill or measure proposed or pending before the General Assembly shall disclose the fact to the House and shall not vote upon such bill or measure. **House Rule 21 (c)**

When a vote is taken without the use of the voting machine, a member may change his or her vote before the result is announced, but not after. **House Rule 21 (d)**

A member shall not be compelled by a majority of a political caucus to cast a vote for or against a legislative measure. **House Rule 21 (e)**

## House Calendar

If a bill is favorably recommended by a committee for consideration by the House, chair delivers the report and the bill to the chief clerk who places bill on the calendar for consideration by Committee of the Whole. **House Rule 29 (g)(1)**

Chief clerk prepares a list of all bills and concurrent resolutions on second reading, arranged as general or special orders and, after adoption on second reading, a list of bills and concurrent resolutions on "Third Reading—Final Passage" in the order adopted. **House Rule 43 (f) and (g)**

## Previous Question and Limiting Debate

**Previous question.** The previous question may be moved upon: 1) All recognized motions or amendments that are debatable; 2) A single pending motion or amendment; 3) All or some of a series of pending motions and amendments. **House Rule 16 (a)**

If motion to move previous question is adopted by a majority vote of all members elected (33), all debate ends and the House holds a direct vote upon all motions and amendments involved in the inverse order in which they were offered. **House Rule 16 (b)**

**Limiting debate.** Upon the affirmative vote of a majority of all members elected (33), debate may be closed at a time not less than one hour from the adoption of a motion to that effect, and once motion is made, no other motion except to adjourn or to recess shall be entertained until the motion to close debate upon the pending question is decided. **House Rule 14 (a)**

**Neither applies during the Committee of the Whole.** A motion for consideration of the previous question nor to limit debate is available during the Committee of the Whole.

## Misc. Rules and Customs

**Amending the rules.** Requires a two-thirds majority vote to suspend, amend, or repeal permanent House rules. **House Rule 47.** However, the custom and practice of the House is to adopt a resolution establishing the rules of the House as temporary and providing that these rules may be amended by a majority vote of members elected (33).

**Demand or "blast" motion.** Three days after bill is referred to a committee of reference, any House member may make a 24-hour demand for the committee to report the bill back to the House upon a motion adopted by a majority of all members elected (33). **House Rule 30**

**"24-hour rule".** Amendments exceeding one page must be distributed 24 hours in advance.

**"Settled question".** If the House or Committee of the Whole adopts or rejects an amendment, the chair may rule that a subsequent amendment is out of order if its adoption effectively defeats or resurrects the previous final action. **House Rule 34 (a)**

**Reconsideration.** After House decides a question, a member voting on the prevailing side may, before adjournment, move to reconsider or give notice of intention to reconsider, but after the 110<sup>th</sup> day of a regular session or during a special session, a member may not give notice of intent to reconsider. Motion to reconsider requires the affirmative vote of two-thirds of members elected (44) in the first 110 days of a regular session and a majority vote after the 110<sup>th</sup> day of a regular session or during a special session. Notice of intent to reconsider not available in committees. **House Rule 35 (a), (b), and (e)**

**Title question.** The chair may, upon request, make a ruling on whether an amendment is germane to the subject of a bill and "fits under the title." **House Rule 28 (a)**

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## Committees of Reference

Members appointed at commencement of the first regular session after general election and at other times as necessary. Every House member, except the Speaker, Majority Leader, and Minority Leader, is appointed to at least one committee. **House Rule 25 (c)**

Party representation on committees is proportional to number of members of the two political parties. **House Rule 25 (h)**

Committees meet at regularly scheduled times and places. **House Rule 25 (j)(1)(A) and (k)**

The chair shall announce cancellation of a regularly scheduled committee meeting while the House is in actual session before the time the meeting is scheduled to take place. **House Rule 25 (j)(1)(C)**

The chair of each committee of reference determines the order of business for each committee meeting, including measures to be considered at each meeting, and announces on the House floor the measures to be considered. **House Rule 25 (j)(1)(D)**

Two-thirds of committee members may, at least seven days after a measure has been delivered to the chair, petition the chair in writing submitted at a regularly scheduled meeting that the measure be considered. Upon receiving the petition, the chair shall list the petitioned measure on the next calendar for consideration by the committee no later than seven days after receiving the petition. **House Rule 25 (j)(1)(D)**

Committee consideration of a bill's merits and action is required in each committee to which the bill is assigned within legislative deadlines. **House Rule 25 (j)(1)(E), (E.1), and (E.4)**

The chair of each committee of reference may limit testimony and discussion on a measure to that which is adequate, in the chair's discretion, to enable the committee to consider the measure on its merits. **House Rule 25 (j)(1)(E.2)**

**"Super motion".** Consideration of measure required when motion is made out of order to report measure favorably to the Committee of the Whole. **House Rule 25 (j)(1)(G)**

After "final action on a measure," chair must make report to the chief clerk within three legislative days. After the 110<sup>th</sup> day of a regular session or during a special session, the chair "shall make any committee of reference report as soon as possible." **House Rule 25 (j)(3)**

Measure considered P'd if motion that would constitute final action dies on tie vote and committee deadline passes without getting deadline delayed. **House Rule 25 (j)(3)**

The chair and each committee member shall vote on every question coming before the committee unless he or she has an immediate personal or financial interest in the proposed measure. **House Rule 25 (j) (6)**

## Motion to Adjourn or Recess

A motion to adjourn (except when an appeal of the decision of the chair is pending) or recess is always in order; but if motion fails, it cannot be considered again unless a motion other than for a call of the House, to adjourn, or to recess, intervenes. **House Rule 8 (a)**