



House Rules

Adopted on 10 December 2014

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PREAMBLE

We, the Members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines, in order to fulfill our constitutional duty to make laws that effectively respond to the

needs of our people and fulfill their aspirations for a just and humane society where every Filipino can enjoy the blessings of freedom and democracy under a Government strengthened by the rule of law, social justice and people empowerment, hereby promulgate and pledge faithful obedience to these Rules.

Declaration of Principles and Policies

- I. The House of Representatives is the House of the People. The involvement and participation of the people in the processes of legislation shall be encouraged, guaranteed and sustained.
- II. Public office is a public trust. The House of Representatives and every Member thereof are accountable to the people at all times. They shall perform their legislative mandates with utmost competence, efficiency, effectiveness, integrity and fidelity to the people's welfare.
- III. Efficient and effective access to and dissemination of appropriate and accurate information are imperative in lawmaking. The development of institutional capabilities to harness technology to improve the legislative process and to continually inform the public of legislative performance in all facets of legislative work shall be pursued vigorously.
- IV. The continuing development of the capabilities of Members to craft and secure the passage of socially relevant legislation is imperative. Continuing educative programs in disciplines relating to legislative work and its effective management shall be implemented for the Members. The establishment of institutional continuing education instrumentalities and systems and the pursuit of cooperative and coordinative networks with academic communities and the private sector for the purpose shall be fostered and strengthened.
- V. The harnessing and development of a competent and efficient corps of professionals able to provide necessary legislative support services is a paramount concern. Programs for the continuing recruitment, training and development of qualified professionals and the establishment of appropriate organizational systems to best utilize their talents and skills to enhance institutional legislative performance shall be undertaken.

I. CONVENING AND ORGANIZING THE HOUSE

Section 1. First Meeting and Organization of the House. The Members shall meet and proceed to the organization of the House on the fourth Monday of July immediately following their election at the place designated for the holding of their sessions.

The Secretary General of the immediately preceding Congress shall preside over the inaugural session of the House until the election of a new Speaker. As presiding officer, the Secretary General shall call the session to order, call the roll of Members by provinces, cities and municipalities comprising districts, and by party-lists in alphabetical order, designate an acting Floor Leader, and preserve order and decorum.

After the designation of an acting Floor Leader, the body shall proceed to the election of the Speaker. The Speaker shall be elected by a majority vote of all the Members through a roll call vote with Members casting their vote without explanation. The presiding officer shall record the vote of each Member in the Journal.

After the oath-taking of the newly-elected Speaker, the body shall proceed to the adoption of the rules of the immediately preceding Congress to govern its proceedings until the approval and adoption of the rules of the current Congress.

Thereafter, the body shall proceed to the election, in successive order, of the six (6) Deputy Speakers, the Secretary General and the Sergeant-at-Arms who shall be elected by a majority of the Members, there being a quorum.

Section 2. Convening of the House. The House shall convene once every year on the fourth Monday of July for its regular session unless a different date is fixed by law, and shall continue to be in session for such number of days as it may determine through a legislative calendar: *Provided*, That a regular session shall end not later than thirty (30) days before the opening of the next regular session exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays. The President may call a special session at any time.

Section 3. Convening of the House in Exceptional Cases.

- a. Pursuant to *Section 10, Article VII* of the Constitution, the House shall, at ten o'clock in the morning of the third day after the vacancy in the offices of the President and Vice-President occurs, convene in accordance with its rules without need of a call and within seven days enact a law calling for a special election to elect a President and a Vice-President to be held not earlier than forty-five days nor later than sixty days from the time of such call. The bill calling such special election shall be deemed certified under *paragraph 2, Section 26, Article VI* of the Constitution and shall become law upon its approval on third reading by the Congress. Appropriations for the special elections shall be charged against any current appropriations and shall be exempt from the requirements of *paragraph 4, Section 25, Article VI* of the Constitution. The convening of the Congress cannot be suspended nor the special election postponed. No special election shall be called if the vacancy occurs within eighteen months before the date of the next presidential election;
- b. Whenever the President transmits to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a written declaration of inability to discharge the powers and duties of the office of the President and until a written declaration to the contrary is transmitted to them, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.

Whenever a majority of all the members of the cabinet transmit to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives a written declaration that no inability exists, the President shall reassume the powers and duties of the office of the President. Meanwhile, should a majority of all the members of the cabinet transmit within five days to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of the office of the President, Congress shall decide the issue. For that purpose, Congress shall convene, if it is not in session, within forty-eight hours, in accordance with its rules and without need of call.

If Congress, within ten days after receipt of the last written declaration, or, if not in session, within twelve days after it is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both Houses, voting separately, that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of the office of the President, the Vice-President shall act as the President; otherwise, the President shall continue exercising the powers and duties of the office; and

- c. Whenever the President suspends the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus or place the Philippines or any part thereof under martial law, the House, if not in session, shall, within twenty-four hours following such proclamation or suspension, convene in accordance with these rules without any need of a call.

II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 4. Composition. The membership of the House shall be composed of elected representatives of legislative districts and those elected through the party-list system.

Section 5. Term. The Members of the House shall be elected for a term of three (3) years which shall begin, unless otherwise provided by law, at noon on the thirtieth day of June next following their election.

A Member cannot serve for more than three (3) consecutive terms. Voluntary renunciation of office for any reason and for any length of time shall not be considered as an interruption of the full term for which the Member is elected. In case a Member dies, resigns, is permanently incapacitated or lawfully barred from performing the duties of a Member, or is lawfully removed from office, vacancies may be filled as follows: (a) for vacancies in the representation of legislative districts, special elections may be called to fill the vacancies; and (b) for vacancies in the representation of party-lists, party-list representatives may be chosen to fill the vacancies in the manner provided by law. A Member elected or designated to fill a vacancy shall serve only for the duration of the unexpired term.

Section 6. Oath or Affirmation of Members. Members shall take their oath or affirmation collectively or individually before the Speaker in open session.

Section 7. Duties. The primary duty of Members is to legislate. In order to fulfill this duty, Members shall:

- a. prepare, introduce and work for the passage of legislative measures to effectively address social, political and economic needs and concerns;
- b. attend plenary sessions and meetings of committees of which they are members or where their proposed legislative measures are under consideration;
- c. participate actively in deliberations on legislative measures;
- d. articulate faithfully the demands and interests of their constituencies as well as those of other sectors that are affected by proposed legislative measures or by conditions, issues and concerns requiring legislative action;
- e. secure, through every lawful means possible, any and all data and information relevant and necessary for the determination and formulation of appropriate legislative actions and measures on public issues and concerns;
- f. make information pertaining to the performance of their legislative and constituent functions and duties available and accessible to the public; and
- g. perform such other functions and activities as may be lawful and necessary to ensure the swift passage of legislative measures needed to effectively address social, political and economic needs and promote national development, as well as the efficient and timely conduct of legislative oversight.

Section 8. The Majority and the Minority. Members who vote for the winning candidate for Speaker shall constitute the Majority in the House and they shall elect from among themselves the Majority Leader. The Majority Leader may be changed, at any time, by a majority vote of all the Majority Members.

The Minority Leader shall be elected by the Members of the Minority and can be changed, at any time, by a majority vote of all the Minority Members.

The Majority and Minority shall elect such number of Deputy Majority and Minority Leaders as the rules provide.

A Member may transfer from the Majority to the Minority, or vice versa, at any time: *Provided*, That:

- a. The concerned Member submits a written request to transfer to the Majority or Minority, through the Majority or Minority Leaders, as the case may be. The Secretary General shall be furnished a copy of the request to transfer;
- b. The Majority or Minority, as the case may be, accepts the concerned Member in writing; and
- c. The Speaker shall be furnished by the Majority or the Minority Leaders, as the case may be, a copy of the acceptance in writing of the concerned Member.

In case the Majority or the Minority declines such request to transfer, the concerned Member shall be considered an independent Member of the House.

In any case, whether or not the request to transfer is accepted, all committee assignments and memberships given the concerned Member by the Majority or Minority, as the case may be, shall be automatically forfeited.

Members who choose not to align themselves with the Majority or the Minority shall be considered as independent Members of the House. They may, however, choose to join the Majority or Minority upon written request to and approval thereof by the Majority or Minority, as the case may be.

Section 9. Immunities, Limitations and Disqualifications. Members shall be privileged from arrest for any and all offenses punishable by not more than six (6) years imprisonment while Congress is in session. A Member shall neither be questioned nor held liable in any other place for any speech delivered or debate undertaken in the House or in any of its committees.

Section 10. Salaries and Benefits. Salaries and benefits of Members shall be determined in accordance with law. Any increase in the compensation and benefits of Members shall take effect after the expiration of the full term of all the Members approving such increase.

Any Member legally barred by competent authority from attending sessions and performing such other functions as a Member of the House of Representatives shall be denied salary, other compensation, office space and other privileges to which Members are entitled as of the date the bar becomes effective. However, upon the lifting or cessation of such bar, the salary and other entitlements that were denied shall, forthwith, be restored.

III. OFFICERS

Section 11. Election of Officers. The officers of the House namely the Speaker, the six (6) Deputy Speakers, the Secretary-General and the Sergeant-at-Arms shall be elected at the commencement of each Congress and whenever there is a vacancy.

At the commencement of each Congress, the Speaker shall be elected by a majority vote of all the Members and the Secretary General shall record the vote of each Member which shall be cast without explanation. Thereafter, the six (6) Deputy Speakers, the Secretary General and the Sergeant-at-Arms shall be elected in successive order by a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum.

Likewise, whenever there is a vacancy, the Speaker shall be elected by a majority vote of all the Members and the Secretary General shall record the vote of each Member which shall be cast without explanation. The six (6) Deputy Speakers, the Secretary General and the Sergeant-at-Arms shall be elected by a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum.

Section 12. Term of Office. The officers shall hold office until the term of the Congress in which they were elected ends unless they resign, are removed from

office, or are permanently incapacitated to perform their duties. The incumbent Secretary General and Sergeant-at-Arms at the close of a Congress shall, however, remain in office and, respectively, preside over and maintain order during the inaugural session of the succeeding Congress until after the election of a new Speaker.

Section 13. Vacancy. A vacancy is created whenever any of the officers dies, resigns, or is permanently incapacitated, or when the House declares any office vacant.

In case of death, resignation or permanent incapacity of the Speaker, an Acting Speaker chosen by a majority of the six (6) Deputy Speakers from among themselves, shall assume the duties of the Speaker until a new Speaker is elected. Should a day lapse without an Acting Speaker having been chosen by a majority of the six (6) Deputy Speakers, they shall proceed to choose an Acting Speaker by lot from among themselves.

In case of death, resignation or permanent incapacity of any of the Deputy Speakers, the Secretary General, or the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Speaker shall designate an Acting Deputy Speaker, Secretary General, or Sergeant-at-Arms until the election of a new Deputy Speaker, Secretary General, or Sergeant-at-Arms, as the case may be.

Except for the position of Speaker, any position may be declared vacant by a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum. The position of Speaker may only be declared vacant through nominal voting by a majority vote of all the Members. In cases when all offices are declared vacant, the incumbent Secretary General shall preside over the proceedings of the House only for the purpose and until the election of a new Speaker.

Section 14. Absence or Temporary Incapacity. In case of absence of any of the officers or temporary incapacity to perform the functions of their office, the following rules shall apply:

- a. The Deputy-Speaker chosen by a majority of the six (6) Deputy Speakers from among themselves shall assume the duties and powers of the Speaker when the latter is absent or temporarily incapacitated. Should a day lapse without an Acting Speaker having been chosen by a majority of the six (6) Deputy Speakers, they shall proceed to choose an Acting Speaker by lot from among themselves;
- b. The Speaker may designate a Member as acting Deputy Speaker who will assume the powers and duties of an absent or temporarily incapacitated Deputy Speaker until such time that the latter returns to office and resumes work;
- c. The Speaker may designate from among the Deputy Secretaries General an Acting Secretary General who will assume the duties and powers of the Secretary General until such time that the latter returns to office and resumes work; and
- d. The Speaker may designate an Acting Sergeant-at-Arms from among the senior officers of the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms who will assume the duties of the

Sergeant-at-Arms until such time that the latter returns to office and resumes work.

IV. THE SPEAKER

Section 15. Duties and Powers. The Speaker, as the political and administrative head of the House, is responsible for the overall management of the proceedings, activities, resources, facilities and employees of the House.

The Speaker shall:

- a. prepare the legislative agenda for every regular session, establish systems and procedures to ensure full deliberation and swift approval of measures included therein, and may, for the purpose, avail of the assistance of the Deputy Speakers, the Majority Leader, the chairpersons of the standing committees and other Members of the House;
- b. conduct regular monthly caucus of all Members or groups thereof or as often as may be necessary to discuss priority measures and to facilitate dialogue, consensus and action on issues and concerns affecting the House and the performance of its functions;
- c. exercise general supervision over all committees and, in furtherance thereof, conduct regular monthly meetings with the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of all standing and special committees to set legislative targets, review performance in the attainment of targets, ensure that the priority legislative measures of committees are attuned to the legislative agenda of the House, and resolve such other issues and concerns that affect the operations and performance of the committees;
- d. establish, as far as practicable, an efficient information management system in the House utilizing among others, modern digital technology, that can: 1. facilitate access to and dissemination of data and information needed in legislation inclusive of facilitating real time translation of plenary proceedings in the major Philippine dialects and languages; 2. provide a simplified and comprehensive process of gathering, recording, storage and retrieval of data and information relating to activities and proceedings of the House; 3. sustain a public information program that will provide accessible, timely and accurate information relating to the House, its Members and officers, its committees and its legislative concerns inclusive of facilitating, as far as practicable, broadcast coverage of plenary and committee proceedings;
- e. establish an efficient and effective system to monitor and evaluate the performance of legislative tasks and duties of the House, its Members and its committees;
- f. establish coordinative linkages with the Senate of the Philippines to efficiently monitor and facilitate Senate action on House measures pending with the same;
- g. preside over the sessions of the House and decide all questions of order subject to appeal by any Member who may explain the appeal in not more than five (5) minutes: *Provided*, That the appeal shall not be subject to debate, and no explanation of vote shall be allowed in case of nominal voting;

- h. designate a Member as temporary presiding officer after informing the Deputy Speakers: *Provided*, That any such designation shall be effective for one session day only;
- i. take appropriate measures as may be deemed advisable or as the House may direct, to preserve order and decorum in the session hall, the galleries, lobbies, chambers, offices, corridors and premises of the House;
- j. sign all acts, resolutions, memorials, writs, warrants and *subpoenae* that may be issued by or upon order of the House;
- k. perform administrative functions such as, among others:
 1. appointment of personnel of the House with authority to delegate this power;
 2. suspension, dismissal or imposition of other disciplinary measures on House personnel in accordance with Civil Service rules: *Provided*, That the suspension or dismissal of the Secretary General and the Sergeant-at-Arms shall take effect only upon the concurrence of the majority of all the Members;
 3. consolidation or splitting of vacant positions carrying salaries and wages which may be increased or reduced in the process, and/or creation of new positions in accordance with the General Appropriations Act: *Provided*, That the total amount involved shall not exceed the total amount appropriated for the salaries and wages of the personnel of the House;
 4. implementation of merit-based policies and programs on personnel recruitment, training and development, promotions, incentives and benefits to ensure that the House has a corps of competent professionals able to provide needed legislative support services; and
 5. review, approve, and sign contracts entered into by the House of Representatives, with the authority to delegate this power.
- l. prepare the annual budget of the House with the assistance of the Committee on Accounts;
- m. prepare, in consultation with the Committee on Rules, the rules and regulations governing public access to personal data and related information, including statements of assets and liabilities, of Members of the House;
- n. develop through an appropriate entity of the House a system for drug testing in the House of Representatives, which may provide for the testing of any Member, officer, or employee of the House, and otherwise shall be comparable in scope to the system for drug testing in the executive branch, *Provided*, That the expenses of the system may be paid from applicable accounts of the House for official expenses; and
- o. require the submission of performance reports at the end of every regular session and fiscal year from the committee chairpersons, the Secretary General and the Sergeant-at-Arms, and such other reports as may be required from all concerned officers and offices of the House.

Section 16. Representation in International Parliamentary Gatherings and Organizations. The Speaker shall be the permanent head of delegation and representative of the House in all international parliamentary gatherings and

organizations: *Provided*, That the Speaker may designate any Member to be therepresentative of the Speaker. The Speaker shall also determine, upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, in consultation with the chairperson of the Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Diplomacy and the Minority Leader, who shall constitute the House delegation to any international conference or forum of parliamentarians and legislators and the secretariat support staff to be mobilized for the purpose.

V. THE DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Section 17. Duties and Powers. The duties and powers of the Deputy Speakers are:

- a. to assume the duties and powers of the Speaker when so chosen by a majority vote or by lot among themselves, as the case may be, in cases of absence or temporary incapacity of the Speaker, until such time that the Speaker returns to office and resumes work; and, in case of resignation, removal, permanent incapacity or death of the Speaker, until such time that a new Speaker is elected and qualified;
- b. to preside over the session when, even if present, the Speaker does not preside, or has not designated any other Member as temporary presiding officer as provided in *Section 15(h) of Rule IV*;
- c. to monitor, coordinate and facilitate action on measures filed, requests, and other concerns of Members representing constituencies to which they may be assigned by the Speaker;
- d. to recommend to the Speaker appropriate policies, strategies and programs of action to improve the process of legislation and the quality of legislative measures, and to effectively address concerns of Members on matters affecting them, their constituencies, and the overall operations and integrity of the House;
- e. to appoint personnel of the House when so authorized by the Speaker; and
- f. to perform such other duties and functions as may be assigned or delegated to them by the Speaker.

VI. THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Section 18. Duties and Powers. The duties and powers of the Secretary General are:

- a. to call the session to order, to call the roll of Members by provinces, cities and municipalities comprising districts and by party-lists in alphabetical order, to designate an acting Floor Leader, to preserve order and decorum, and to decide all questions of order, as presiding officer pending the election of the Speaker, during the inaugural session of the House;
- b. to prepare the Order of Business for the inaugural session of the House which shall include:
 1. a Resolution informing the President of the Philippines that the House of Representatives has been organized and has elected its Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Secretary General and Sergeant-at-Arms;

2. a Resolution informing the Senate of the Philippines that the House of Representatives has been organized and has elected its Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Secretary General and Sergeant-at-Arms;
 3. a Concurrent Resolution of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines providing for a joint session to hear the State of the Nation Address of the President of the Philippines; and
 4. a Concurrent Resolution authorizing the appointment of a joint committee of both Houses to inform the President of the Philippines that Congress, in joint session, is ready to receive the President for the State of the Nation Address;
- c. to enforce orders and decisions of the House;
 - d. to prepare and distribute copies of the Order of Business of the House to all House Members;
 - e. to attend all sessions of the House, call the roll of the Members and read bills, resolutions, messages, communications, memorials, petitions and other documents which should be reported to the House or the reading of which is required by the House or the Speaker;
 - f. to note all questions of order and the decisions thereon, the records of which shall be printed at the close of each session for the use of the Members as appendix to the Journal of such session;
 - g. to keep and to certify the Journal of each session which shall be a clear and succinct account of the business conducted and actions taken by the House: *Provided*, That Journals of executive sessions shall be recorded in a separate book and kept confidential;
 - h. to provide the House with information on approved bills to be transmitted to the President for action;
 - i. to print and distribute to Members, within six (6) months after the close of a regular session, copies of the Record of the House for a regular session and the acts and resolutions passed and adopted during the same;
 - j. to transmit, within six (6) months after the close of a regular session, printed copies of the Record of the House to the President of the Philippines, the Cabinet members, and to other persons or entities as the House may authorize;
 - k. to print and deliver or mail to each Member, at the commencement of every regular session, a list of the reports submitted to the House by each head of department of the Executive and Judicial Departments;
 - l. to procure and retain sufficient copies of books, records and documents for the use of the Members and the officers of the House in the library of the House and in the office of the Secretary General;
 - m. to attest to and affix the seal of the House on all writs, warrants and *subpoenae* issued by or upon order of the House or the Speaker;
 - n. to certify and affix the seal of the House on all approved measures, orders, acts and resolutions;
 - o. to submit to the Speaker all contracts and agreements for approval;
 - p. to ensure that the employees of the House perform their duties competently, efficiently and effectively, and in furtherance thereof, to impose necessary disciplinary measures and recommend dismissal of erring employees to the

- Speaker in accordance with Civil Service rules, and to recommend to the Speaker policies and programs on recruitment and hiring of competent professionals, the improvement of the capabilities of House personnel to provide needed technical and other support services to the Members, and the acquisition, improvement and upgrading of necessary facilities and equipment;
- q. to appoint personnel of the House when authorized by the Speaker;
 - r. to serve as custodian of the property and records of the House and all government property within the House premises, and to make an inventory of all these property and records at the beginning and end of each regular session;
 - s. to cause the quarterly publication of the attendance record of Members in sessions of the House and, as far as practicable, their voting records on bills of national application in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation in accordance with rules and regulations to be issued by the Speaker; and
 - t. to perform other duties that may be assigned or ordered by the House or by the Speaker.

Section 19. Reports. The Secretary General shall prepare and submit to the House, through the Speaker, at the end of each fiscal year, a comprehensive report on the performance of the House Secretariat and the expenditures incurred in the operations thereof.

VII. THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Section 20. Duties and Powers. The duties and powers of the Sergeant-at-Arms are:

- a. to attend all sessions of the House unless excused by the Speaker or the Presiding Officer, and personally or through his designee(s), all meetings of the committees;
- b. to strictly enforce rules relating to admission to the session hall, the galleries, offices, corridors and premises of the House building;
- c. to ensure that employees under the office of the Sergeant-at-Arms observe proper behavior and faithfully perform their duties;
- d. to implement orders and serve all processes issued by authority of the House or by the Speaker;
- e. to secure and maintain order in the session hall, galleries, offices, corridors and premises of the House building during sessions, during the conduct of meetings of committees and during such other proceedings or activities of the House whether or not the House is in session;
- f. to secure the safety of the Members while in the House premises or in any other place as the Speaker may direct;
- g. to secure the properties of the House;
- h. to recommend and implement upon the direction of the Speaker, security management systems, policies and programs that will ensure the maintenance of order in the House and its premises, protect the safety of the Members and employees, visitors and other persons who are within the premises of the House on official business, and the preservation of properties, equipment, facilities, documents and records of the House; and

- i. to act as custodian of the Mace, which shall be the symbol of authority and shall be borne by the Sergeant-at-Arms while enforcing order on the floor.

Section 21. Reports of the Sergeant-at-Arms. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall prepare and submit to the House, through the Speaker, at the end of every fiscal year, a performance report relative to programs and activities relating to the security and maintenance of order in the House.

VIII. THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL AND THE COMMISSION ON APPOINTMENTS

Section 22. Representation of the House. The House contingent in the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal and the Commission on Appointments composed of six (6) and twelve (12) Members respectively, who shall be chosen on the basis of proportional representation of the political parties and parties or organizations registered under the party-list system represented therein, shall be constituted within thirty (30) days after the election of the Speaker.

Section 23. Election of Members. The motion or resolution to elect Members to the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal and Commission on Appointments shall not be subject to a division of the House.

Section 24. Vacancy. Any vacancy in the House contingent in the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal and the Commission on Appointments shall be filled through a motion or resolution presented to the House in accordance with *Sections 22 and 23* hereof. In case a vacancy occurs during a recess of Congress, the Speaker may fill the vacancy temporarily with a Member belonging to the same party or organization as the former incumbent upon nomination of the parties or organizations concerned.

Section 25. Rules and Regulations. The House recognizes the power of the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal and the Commission on Appointments to adopt their own rules and regulations.

IX. THE COMMITTEES

Section 26. Duties and Functions. Committees shall study, deliberate on and act upon all measures referred to them inclusive of bills, resolutions and petitions, and shall recommend for approval or adoption by the House those that, in their judgment, advance the interests and promote the welfare of the people.

In furtherance thereof, committees shall establish appropriate systems and procedures to ensure that constituencies, sectors and groups whose interests are affected by any pending measure are given sufficient opportunities to be heard. Committees shall pursue dialogues and consultations with affected sectors and constituencies, conduct researches, and engage the services and assistance of experts and professionals from the public or private sectors as may be needed in the performance of their functions.

Committees shall have oversight responsibilities to determine whether or not laws and programs addressing subjects within their jurisdictions are being implemented and carried out in accordance with the intent of Congress and whether or not they should be continued, curtailed, or eliminated. In the performance of these responsibilities, committees shall review and study on a continuing basis, or upon order of the House:

- a. the application, administration, execution, and effectiveness of laws and programs addressing subjects within their respective jurisdictions;
- b. the organization and operation of national agencies and entities having responsibilities for the administration and execution of laws and programs addressing subjects within their respective jurisdictions; and
- c. any conditions or circumstances that may indicate the necessity or desirability of enacting new or additional legislation addressing subjects within their respective jurisdictions.

Each committee may establish an oversight sub-committee, or require its sub-committees to conduct oversight within their respective jurisdictions, to assist in carrying out its oversight function.

The Speaker, with the approval of the House, may create ad hoc oversight committees for the purpose of reviewing specific matters within the jurisdictions of more than two (2) committees.

Committees may also, *motu proprio*, upon a majority vote of all their Members, conduct hearings and inquiries on issues and concerns within their respective jurisdictions.

Section 27. Kinds. The House shall have standing and special committees that shall be organized, except for the Committee on Rules, on the basis of proportional representation of the Majority and the Minority.

Standing committees shall have jurisdiction over measures relating to needs, concerns, issues and interests affecting the general welfare and which require continuing or comprehensive legislative study, attention and action. Special committees are intended to address measures relating to special or urgent needs, concerns, issues and interests of certain sectors or constituencies requiring immediate legislative action, or to such needs, concerns, issues and interests that may fall within the scope of the jurisdiction of a standing committee, but which the standing committee concerned is unable to act upon with needed dispatch.

Section 28. Standing Committees. The House shall, upon the recommendation of the Committee on Rules, organize the following standing committees, the membership and jurisdictions of which shall be as hereinafter stated:

- a. **Accounts, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the internal budget of the House including budget preparation, submission and approval, disbursements, accounting and financial operations.

b. **Agrarian Reform, 40 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to agrarian reform, the resettlement of and other support services for agrarian reform beneficiaries, and the implementation and amendment of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.

c. **Agriculture and Food, 65 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to food and agricultural production, agribusiness, agri-economics, agricultural research and technology, agricultural education including extension services, soil conservation, soil survey and research, irrigation, farm credit and security, animal industry and quarantine, and crop and livestock production, insurance, and guarantee programs.

d. **Appropriations, 125 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the expenditures of the national government including payment of public indebtedness, creation or abolition and classification of positions in government, and the determination of salaries, allowances and benefits of government personnel.

e. **Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to aquaculture and fisheries production and development, the business of aquaculture, use of aquatic resources, fresh water and fisheries culture research and technology applications, aquaculture and fisheries education and training including extension services, conservation of streams, rivers, lakes and other fisheries resources, and fishpond and fisheries culture production and development including related technical, financial and guarantee assistance programs.

f. **Banks and Financial Intermediaries, 45 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to banking and currency, government-owned or controlled banks and financial institutions, non-government banks and financial institutions, insurance, securities and securities exchange.

g. **Basic Education and Culture, 65 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to pre-school, kindergarten, primary and secondary education, science high schools except the Philippine Science High School System, teachers and students' welfare, alternative learning systems, special education and community adult education, the national language, libraries and museums, and the preservation and enrichment of Filipino arts and culture.

h. **Civil Service and Professional Regulation, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the organization, operation, management, rules and regulations of the civil service; the status, welfare and benefits of government officers and employees; and the regulation of admission to and the practice of professions.

i. **Constitutional Amendments, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to amendments or revisions of the Constitution.

j. **Cooperatives Development, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to cooperatives inclusive of cooperative movements and organizations; urban and rural-based credit, consumer, producers, marketing, service and multi-purpose

cooperatives; electric cooperatives registered with the Cooperative Development Authority; and the implementation or amendment of the Cooperative Code of the Philippines.

k. **Dangerous Drugs, 45 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to illegal or prohibited drugs, controlled precursors and essential chemicals, the production, manufacture, use and trafficking thereof, as well as the rehabilitation and treatment of drug dependents.

l. **Ecology, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to ecosystem management including pollution control.

m. **Economic Affairs, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to economic development planning and programs inclusive of economic and socio-economic studies and development policies and strategies.

n. **Energy, 65 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the exploration, development, utilization or conservation of energy resources, including the development and utilization of alternative and renewable energy resources and the entities involved in energy or power generation, transmission, distribution and supply.

o. **Ethics and Privileges, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the duties, conduct, rights, privileges and immunities, dignity, integrity and reputation of the House and its Members.

p. **Foreign Affairs, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the relations of the Philippines with other countries, diplomatic and consular services, the United Nations and its agencies, and other international organizations and agencies.

q. **Games and Amusements, 65 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to all forms and places of gaming and amusements.

r. **Good Government and Public Accountability, 45 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to malfeasance, misfeasance and nonfeasance in office committed by officers and employees of the government and its political subdivisions and instrumentalities inclusive of investigations of any matter of public interest on its own initiative or upon order of the House.

s. **Government Enterprises and Privatization, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the creation, organization, operation, reorganization and amendments of charters of government-owned or controlled corporations including the Government Service Insurance System, the Social Security System and similar institutions, but excluding government-owned or controlled banks and financial institutions.

t. **Government Reorganization, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the reorganization of the government or any of its branches, departments

and instrumentalities, excluding government-owned or controlled corporations, and the creation, abolition or change of the principal functions or nature of any government department, agency, commission or board.

u. **Health, 65 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to public health and hygiene, and quarantine, medical, hospital and other health facilities and services.

v. **Higher and Technical Education, 65 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to post-secondary and tertiary education, technical education, distance education, students and teachers' welfare, and centers of excellence.

w. **Housing and Urban Development, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to shelter delivery including services, agencies and instrumentalities of government related thereto, and the management of urbanization issues and concerns such as, among others, urban planning and development, urban land reform and welfare of the urban poor in the overall context of enhancing housing and shelter services delivery.

x. **Human Rights, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the protection and enhancement of human rights, assistance to victims of human rights violations and their families, the prevention of violations of human rights and the punishment of perpetrators of such violations.

y. **Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples and the development of their communities.

z. **Information and Communications Technology, 55 Members.** All matters relating to postal, telegraph, radio, broadcast, cable and satellite television, telephone, mobile cellular networks, convergence, computers and telecommunications technologies including but not limited to broadband access to wired and wireless connectivity to the internet such as voice over internet protocol (VOIP), video conferencing, and audio/video/data streaming; any and all other public and private electronic means of capturing, processing, storing and transmitting information for information technology; information systems inclusive of hardware, software and content applications; mobile short messaging system (SMS) applications affecting upstream and downstream business applications; and networks that enable access to online technology.

aa. **Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Diplomacy, 45 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to inter-parliamentary relations and linkages with international parliamentary organizations such as but not limited to the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), Asian-Pacific Parliamentarians' Union (APPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); establishment of inter-parliamentary friendship societies; and visits of parliamentary delegations as well as other foreign dignitaries.

- bb. **Justice, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the administration of justice, the Judiciary, the practice of law and integration of the Bar, legal aid, penitentiaries and reform schools, adult probation, impeachment proceedings, registration of land titles, immigration, deportation, naturalization, and the definition of crimes and other offenses punishable by law and their penalties.
- cc. **Labor and Employment, 40 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to labor, the advancement and protection of the rights and welfare of workers, employment and manpower development inclusive of the promotion of industrial peace and employer-employee cooperation, labor education, labor standards and statistics, and the organization and development of the labor market including the recruitment, training and placement of manpower.
- dd. **Legislative Franchises, 45 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the grant, amendment, extension or revocation of franchises.
- ee. **Local Government, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to autonomous regions, provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays including their revenues and expenditures.
- ff. **Metro Manila Development, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs to promote and enhance the development of the Metro Manila area.
- gg. **Mindanao Affairs, 60 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the development of Mindanao including the preparation of a comprehensive and integrated development plan for Mindanao.
- hh. **Muslim Affairs, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to Muslim affairs inclusive of the welfare of Muslim Filipinos and the development of predominantly Muslim areas.
- ii. **National Defense and Security, 65 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to national defense and national security, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, citizens army, selective services, forts and arsenals, military bases, reservations and yards, coast and geodetic surveys, and disaster relief and rescue.
- jj. **Natural Resources, 65 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to natural resources, except energy and fisheries resources, and their exploration, conservation, management and utilization, lands of the public domain, mines and minerals, forests, parks and wildlife, and marine resources.
- kk. **Overseas Workers Affairs, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs on the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of overseas Filipino workers and their families.

ll. **People's Participation, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the role, rights and responsibilities of people's organizations, non-government and civic organizations, and other similar groups, and the establishment of mechanisms for consultation with and participation of the people in governance and in legislation including the establishment and maintenance of a databank on all such organizations.

mm. **Population and Family Relations, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to population growth and family planning, population census and statistics, family relations and care of the elderly.

nn. **Poverty Alleviation, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs to address the poverty situation in the country and other actions to alleviate the plight of the poor and promote their right to equal access to opportunities for a better quality of life.

oo. **Public Information, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the production and dissemination of information to the public through all forms of mass communications and media such as print and broadcast media, movie and television, video, advertising, cable television and the internet, including the regulation thereof, and the rights and responsibilities of persons and entities engaged therein.

pp. **Public Order and Safety, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the suppression of criminality including those on illegal gambling, private armies, terrorism, organized crime and illegal drugs, regulation of firearms, firecrackers and pyrotechnics, civil defense, private security agencies, and the Philippine National Police.

qq. **Public Works and Highways, 95 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the planning, construction, maintenance, improvement and repair of public infrastructure inclusive of buildings, highways, bridges, roads, parks, drainage, flood control and protection, water utilities and utilization of waters of the public domain.

rr. **Revision of Laws, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the revision and codification of laws.

ss. **Rules, 30 Members.** All matters relating to the Rules of the House, Rules of Procedure Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, Rules of Procedure in Impeachment Proceedings, Order of Business, Calendar of Business, the referral of bills, resolutions, speeches, committee reports, messages, memorials and petitions, and the creation of committees inclusive of determining their respective jurisdictions. The Majority Leader shall be the chairperson, the Deputy Majority Leaders shall be the vice-chairpersons, and the Minority Leader and the Deputy Minority Leaders shall be Members of the committee: *Provided*, That, the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives of the immediately preceding Congress who is still a Member of the present House of Representatives shall be an *ex-officio* Member of the Committee on Rules.

tt. **Rural Development, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the development of rural areas and islands through policies, programs, support services and other interventions to include livelihood and enterprise development, microfinancing, community mobilization and development, area development planning, and access to rural project funding and financing.

uu. **Science and Technology, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to science and technology including scientific and technological research and development, technology transfer, science and technology education including the Philippine Science High School System, intellectual property rights on biotechnology, and climate and weather forecasting.

vv. **Small Business and Entrepreneurship Development, 25 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs on entrepreneurship development including the promotion of entrepreneurship, support to entrepreneurs, and the establishment and continuing viability and growth of small and medium-scale enterprises.

ww. **Social Services, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to social development and social services and interventions that develop and enhance the quality of individual and community life, including welfare of persons with disabilities and special needs.

xx. **Suffrage and Electoral Reforms, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the protection and advancement of the right of suffrage and the conduct of elections, plebiscites, initiatives, recalls and referenda.

yy. **Tourism, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the development and promotion of tourism both domestic and international.

zz. **Trade and Industry, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to domestic and foreign trade, intellectual property rights, patents, trade names and trademarks, standards, weights and measures, designs, quality control, consumer protection, prices and marketing of commodities, handicrafts and cottage industries, and the development, regulation and diversification of industry and investments.

aaa. **Transportation, 85 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to land, sea, and air transportation and all public utilities and services connected thereto, as well as the establishment, operation, management and regulation of airports, seaports and other mass transportation systems including light and heavy rail systems and roll on-roll off systems (RO-RO), civil aviation, air transport agreements, transportation safety standards, air transport security, maritime security, ballast water management, ship financing, ship mortgage, maritime liens and transportation related insurance.

bbb. **Veterans Affairs and Welfare, 30 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the welfare of war veterans, veterans of military campaigns, military retirees, and their surviving spouses and other beneficiaries.

ccc. **Ways and Means, 75 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the fiscal, monetary and financial affairs of the national government including tariff, taxation, revenues, borrowing, credit and bonded indebtedness.

ddd. **Welfare of Children, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the needs and overall welfare of Filipino children, including children with special needs, and all actions to ensure the availability of and their continuing access to affordable and appropriate programs and resources that facilitate and contribute to the attainment of their welfare.

eee. **Women and Gender Equality, 55 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the rights and welfare of women and female children and youth, inclusive of their education, employment, working conditions, and their role in nation building, and all concerns relating to gender equality.

fff. **Youth and Sports Development, 35 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to youth development including the development of their leadership potentials and the promotion of their moral, physical, intellectual and social well-being, and sports development.

Section 29. Sub-committees. Each standing committee may create such sub-committees as may be necessary for the efficient and effective performance of its functions.

Section 30. Members and Officers. Members of each committee constituting the Majority and the Minority therein shall be chosen by the Majority and Minority, respectively. Their membership shall be affirmed in plenary session upon motion of the Majority Leader and Minority Leader, as the case may be, and shall not be subject to a division of the House. As far as practicable, each region shall be represented in every committee.

The Speaker, the six (6) Deputy Speakers, the Majority Leader, the eight (8) Deputy Majority Leaders, the Minority Leader and the five (5) Deputy Minority Leaders and the chairperson of the Committee on Accounts or a Member deputized by any of the aforementioned officials shall have voice and vote in all committees.

Every standing committee shall have a chairperson and at least two (2) vice-chairpersons. The Member elected whose name appears first on the list of committee Members shall be the chairperson and the Members whose names appear successively thereafter shall be the vice-chairpersons which number shall be determined in accordance with the following:

Except the Committee on Rules, a committee of twenty (20) to thirty-five (35) Members shall have four (4) vice-chairpersons; a committee of forty (40) to fifty-five (55) Members shall have six (6) vice-chairpersons; a committee of sixty (60) to seventy-five (75) Members shall have eight (8) vice-chairpersons; a committee of eighty (80) to one hundred (100) Members shall have ten (10) vice-chairpersons; and a committee with more than one hundred (100) Members shall have no more than twenty (20) vice-chairpersons.

A Member who is the author of a bill or a resolution referred to a committee or, if there be several authors, the first two authors named in the bill or resolution, or their duly designated co-authors, as the case may be, shall be considered as members of the committee of referral for the purpose and throughout the duration of the consideration of said bill or resolution, but shall have no vote in the committee.

Section 31. Vacancy and Succession. A vacancy in any committee shall be filled upon motion of the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader, as the case may be, and by affirmation of such action by the House in plenary session: *Provided*, That the proportional representation of the Majority and the Minority in the committee is maintained.

In case of absence or temporary incapacity of the committee chairperson, the highest ranking vice-chairperson or the Member whose name appears next to the name of the chairperson in the list of committee Members shall automatically assume the duties of the chairperson until such time that the latter returns to office and resumes work. In case of absence or temporary incapacity of the highest ranking vice-chairperson, the Member next in succession in the list of committee Members shall automatically assume the duties of the chairperson and so on.

In case of vacancy in the position of committee chairperson by reason of death, resignation, permanent disability or removal, the vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as when the chairperson is absent or temporarily incapacitated. The Member who succeeds shall perform the duties of the chairperson only until such time that a new chairperson is chosen and assumes office in accordance with *Section 30* hereof.

Section 32. Limitations. A Member of the House cannot serve as chairperson of more than one (1) committee. A Member of the House contingent in the House Electoral Tribunal or the Commission on Appointments cannot serve as chairperson of any committee.

A Member of a committee shall not participate in committee deliberations or vote on any matter that directly or indirectly affects the Member's business, financial or pecuniary interest.

Section 33. Special Committees. The Committee on Rules may, *motu proprio* or upon request of any Member, recommend to the House, for its approval, the organization of special committees on the basis of proportional representation of the Majority and the Minority, and shall determine their membership and jurisdictions.

Their Members shall be chosen and their membership affirmed in the same manner as those of standing committees and they shall exercise the same powers as standing committees.

The House shall, upon the recommendation of the Committee on Rules, organize the following special committees the membership and jurisdictions of which shall be as hereinafter stated:

a. **Special Committee on Bases Conversion, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs relating to bases conversion, the operation of special economic zones in former military bases, sale of military camps, and disposition of proceeds thereof, relocation of military camps and personnel and the construction of new military camps.

b. **Special Committee on Bicol Recovery and Economic Development, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs to promote and enhance the development of the Bicol area inclusive of developmental projects, care programs and the Bicol river basin project.

c. **Special Committee on Climate Change, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs to mitigate the impact of climate change to the environment, as characterized by global warming, greenhouse effect, rising of sea levels and shifts in meteorological patterns.

d. **Special Committee on East ASEAN Growth Area, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to social, political and economic policies affecting the countries within the area, and the promotion of trade and investment among these countries.

e. **Special Committee on Food Security, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to programs and policies on food production and distribution, including the factors affecting food supply in the country, and other actions intended to achieve sustained growth and self-reliance in the production of basic food commodities, the availability and accessibility of these commodities to the people, and long-term food security for the nation.

f. **Special Committee on Globalization and WTO, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to the effects on various social sectors of WTO policies and other actions to harness opportunities offered by globalization for economic development.

g. **Special Committee on Land Use, 20 Members.** All matters directly and principally relating to land use issues inclusive of the enhancement of resource use and management of indigenous cultural communities, land valuation regulation, preservation of historical and cultural heritage sites, and public-private partnership as well as linkages among national and local agencies and stakeholders in land resource management.

h. Special Committee on Millennium Development Goals, 20 Members. All matters directly and principally relating to the achievement of the country's commitment to the millennium development goals by 2015 including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnership for development.

i. Special Committee on the North Luzon Growth Quadrangle, 20 Members. All matters directly and principally relating to all policies and programs concerning the development of municipalities, cities, provinces and other local communities in the northwest Luzon area, and other actions to promote growth and expand avenues of economic cooperation with contiguous areas.

j. Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, 20 Members. All matters directly and principally relating to negotiations and other policy and program initiatives in pursuit of the peace process and national reconciliation, the cessation of hostilities generated by internal armed conflicts, and the welfare of rebel-returnees.

k. Special Committee on Reforestation, 20 Members. All matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs on reforestation including the effects of forest denudation, and other actions to ensure the implementation of a sustained community-based nationwide reforestation program.

l. Special Committee on Southern Tagalog Development, 20 Members. All matters directly and principally relating to the development of the Southern Tagalog area inclusive of those affecting agricultural areas, tourism, economic and industrial estates, and processing areas therein.

m. Special Committee on Visayas Development, 20 Members. All matters directly and principally relating to policies, programs and related initiatives affecting the economic, social, political and cultural development of municipalities, cities and provinces in the Visayas regions including needs, concerns and issues that impact on the welfare of constituencies therein.

n. Special Committee on the XXXI Summer Olympic Games, 35 Members. All matters directly and principally relating to policies, plans, programs, projects and related activities and engagements in connection with preparations for and participation of Filipino athletes in the 2016 Summer Olympic Games to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on August 5 - 21, 2016.

Section 34. Rules of Committees. Standing and special committees may adopt their own rules by a majority vote of all their Members: *Provided*, That these rules are consistent with the Rules of the House and will not expand or in any way alter their jurisdictions as provided herein. The committees shall furnish the Committee on Rules with a copy of their rules.

Section 35. Place, Time and Notice of Meetings. All committees and sub-committees shall conduct their meetings, conferences or hearings at such time they may determine in any of the conference rooms within the House premises or, whenever necessary, in any other place when so authorized by the Speaker. Only the Committee on Rules and such committees to which it has granted permission, may meet while the House is in plenary session, has adjourned, or is in recess.

Members shall be notified in writing and, as far as practicable, through electronic mail three (3) calendar days before a regularly scheduled committee or sub-committee meeting, conference or hearing. Such notices shall specify the date, time and place of the meeting, the measures and other matters to be taken up and the names of the resource persons invited. It shall include, as far as practicable, copies of the measures together with fact sheets, research data and other information materials related thereto.

The committees or sub-committees, through their respective committee secretariats, shall undertake measures to ensure that public notices or announcements regarding the conduct of any of its meetings or public hearings are issued in writing at least three (3) days before said meeting, conference or hearing and, as far as practicable, through electronic mail or through posting in the House of Representatives website. They shall undertake measures and establish systems to ensure that constituencies, sectors or groups whose welfare and interests are directly affected by measures to be discussed are enabled to participate in these meetings or public hearings. Meetings and public hearings shall be open to the public subject to reasonable regulations in the interest of security, order, and the safety of persons in attendance.

A bill, resolution or petition shall be set for hearing only after it has been referred in plenary session to an appropriate committee. Members of a committee or sub-committee shall be notified in writing and, as far as practicable, through electronic mail at least five (5) calendar days before the initial hearing on any bill, resolution or petition.

The committees and sub-committees, as far as practicable, shall schedule bills, resolutions or petitions on similar or related subject matters for the same meeting or hearing.

Section 36. Attendance in Meetings. Every Member of a committee shall be present in all the committee meetings and public hearings unless prevented from doing so by sickness and other unavoidable circumstances duly reported to the concerned committee through the committee secretary. A Member of a committee who incurs three (3) consecutive unexplained absences within a regular session shall forfeit membership in that committee.

Section 37. Regular and Special Meetings. The committees shall hold regular meetings at least twice a month. Special meetings may be held by the committee which may be called by the chairperson or by one-fourth (1/4) of all its Members; *Provided*, that the Members shall be notified in writing and, as far as

practicable, through electronic mail indicating therein the date, time, place and agenda of the meeting.

One-fifth (1/5) of all the Members of a committee or sub-committee shall constitute a quorum. However, a committee or sub-committee may authorize a smaller number to conduct public hearings on measures pending before it.

The Speaker, the Deputy Speakers, the Majority Leader, the Deputy Majority Leaders, the Minority Leader, the Deputy Minority Leaders and the chairperson of the Committee on Accounts or any Member deputized by any of the aforementioned officials shall be included in the total number of committee Members for purposes of determining the existence of a quorum if they are present in a meeting.

In cases of joint meetings, a quorum must be present in each of the committees concerned.

When a committee decides to hold an executive meeting, only those persons specifically authorized by the committee shall be admitted to the meeting. They shall preserve the confidentiality of everything read or discussed in the meeting.

Section 38. Public Hearings. Committees and sub-committees may hold public hearings on any measure: *Provided*, That the measure is made available to the public and notices are issued in writing and, as far as practicable, through electronic mail or through the House website three (3) days before the scheduled date of the hearing.

Section 39. Committee Reports and Orders. Committee reports or orders on any bill, resolution, speech, message, memorial or petition shall be considered in formal meetings and approved by a majority of the Members present, there being a quorum. A committee report, once approved, shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee.

In cases of joint referrals, committee reports shall be approved in the joint meeting by a majority of the Members present in each committee, there being a quorum. The committee report shall be signed by the chairpersons of the committees concerned.

Once a committee report is approved, the report and the corresponding measure it covers shall no longer be subject to any change, amendment or alteration, except correction(s) of typographical error(s).

Technical working groups may be created and tasked to ensure that measures and their corresponding committee reports are carefully crafted and faithfully express the ideas, sentiments and consensus of the committee relative to said measures and reports.

When a committee submits a report, a Member thereof shall be presumed to have concurred with the report and shall be precluded from opposing the same during plenary debate unless the Member files an objection or dissenting vote in writing with

the Secretary General within seven (7) calendar days from the inclusion thereof in the Order of Business, or is allowed to do so by the Speaker upon satisfactory explanation in writing made by the Member within the same period. Dissenting opinion(s), if any, shall, as far as practicable, be attached to the committee report.

Section 40. Reconsideration. When a measure is adopted or lost, a Member of the committee who voted with the majority may move for its reconsideration during the same meeting or on the same or succeeding day after the meeting, in which case the motion for reconsideration shall be made in writing. Only one (1) motion for reconsideration shall be allowed.

Section 41. Reports of the Committee on Rules. The Committee on Rules may meet any time and report on any matter within its jurisdiction or referred to it by the House for its determination. The consideration of its reports shall always be in order.

X. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS, MESSAGES, MEMORIALS AND PETITIONS

Section 42. Bills and Resolutions. Bills and resolutions shall be signed by their author(s) and, together with an electronic copy thereof, filed with the Secretary General, who shall assign a number to each bill or resolution. The Secretary General shall not receive a bill or resolution unless it is accompanied by an electronic copy thereof. In case of any discrepancy between the printed and the electronic copies of the bill or resolution, the printed copy shall be followed.

The Secretary General shall thereafter transmit the bill or resolution to the Committee on Rules which shall, through the Majority Leader, determine the appropriate committee(s) to which the bill or resolution shall be referred: *Provided*, That at the opening of a Congress, pending the organization of the Committee on Rules, the acting Floor Leader shall determine the appropriate committees to which measures shall be referred.

Members who are refiling bills and resolutions that were filed in previous Congresses by other Members of the House shall acknowledge and recognize the latter as prior authors thereof in the explanatory notes of the refiled bills and resolutions.

A bill or resolution shall have only one (1) subject matter that shall be expressed in the title thereof. In case a bill or resolution has more than one (1) subject matter, the Committee on Rules, through the Majority Leader, shall immediately inform the author(s) thereof so that appropriate changes or amendments can be made.

In cases of bills of local application seeking the establishment of the same kind of facilities or the delivery of the same services or the grant of the same assistance and privileges to various local government units within the same legislative district or province filed by the same author(s), the Secretary General, for the purpose of reporting these bills for First Reading, may make a summary statement on the titles thereof citing such similar facilities, services, assistance or privileges sought to be

provided to various recipients, and the numbers assigned thereto proceeding from the number assigned to the bill first filed up to the number assigned to the bill last filed.

Measures submitted to the House through people's initiative shall be referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action.

Section 43. First Reading. The Secretary General shall report all bills and resolutions to the House for First Reading within three (3) session days from receipt thereof. The First Reading shall involve only the reading of the number, title and author of the bill or resolution, followed by the referral thereof by the Speaker to the appropriate committee. During the First Reading, the principal author may propose the inclusion of additional authors by submitting their names to the Secretary General or by making appropriate motions in plenary session.

In case of measures reported out by a committee after conducting, *motu proprio*, hearings or inquiries on issues and concerns within its jurisdiction in accordance with *Section 26* hereof, the referral thereof to the Committee on Rules shall be considered its First Reading.

Section 44. Referral to Committee. As a general rule, a bill or resolution shall be referred to only one (1) committee.

Whenever a bill or resolution covers a subject matter that relates to the jurisdiction of more than one (1) committee, it shall be referred to the committee whose jurisdiction the subject matter directly and principally relates to: *Provided*, That if the bill or joint resolution entails the appropriation of public funds or contains tax or revenue proposals, the committee to which the bill or joint resolution is referred shall transmit the same to the Committee on Appropriations and/or the Committee on Ways and Means, as the case may be, for comments relative to the appropriation or tax or revenue aspects only. The committee to which the bill or joint resolution is referred shall be principally responsible for submitting a report to the House. It may incorporate therein the recommendations of the Committee on Appropriations and/or the Committee on Ways and Means, as the case may be. In case of bills of local application transmitted to the Committee on Appropriations for comments relative to the funding provision, the chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations may act on the same: *Provided*, That the chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations shall furnish the Members of the committee a list of these bills.

A committee to which a bill or resolution is referred may request, through its chairperson, another committee, through its chairperson, for comments on a bill or resolution pending before it and, subject to the consent of the latter, await such comments within a period mutually agreed upon before preparing the committee report on the bill or resolution.

Section 45. Change of Referral. The chairperson of a committee to which a bill or resolution is referred may make a written request to the Committee on Rules for a

change of referral of such bill or resolution. The Committee on Rules shall decide on the request within a reasonable time from receipt thereof.

Section 46. Consolidation or Substitution. A committee may decide to approve a bill or resolution with or without amendments, a substitute bill or resolution, or a consolidated bill or resolution. A substitute measure of a bill or resolution shall have as author/s the author/s of the original bill or resolution. A consolidated bill or resolution or a substitute measure covering two (2) or more bills or resolutions shall have as authors those of the original bills or resolutions in the order in which their names appear in the bills or resolutions and according to the dates of filing of the bills and resolutions or the numbers assigned to them. The names of the committee chairpersons, other Members of the committee and other Members of the House may, thereafter, be listed as co-authors of the measure if they so desire.

In case of two (2) or more bills or resolutions on the same subject matter with conflicting provisions, the author of the measure which provisions are substantially adopted in the consolidated or substitute measure shall be considered as the principal author thereof.

Section 47. Status of Measures. The Committees shall provide periodic updates to Members on the status of measures referred to them by posting the same in the House website and, as far as practicable, through electronic mail.

Section 48. Bills and Resolutions Favorably Acted Upon. When a committee action on a bill or resolution is favorable, the bill or resolution and the corresponding report together with other supporting documents and information materials shall, together with electronic copies thereof, be filed with the Secretary General, who shall assign a number to the report. Thereafter, the sponsoring committee shall transmit the same to the Committee on Rules in such number of copies as required by said committee together with the electronic copy thereof.

In case of bills or resolutions previously filed in the immediately preceding Congress which have been considered and reported out by a particular committee, the same may be disposed of as matters already reported upon the approval of majority of the Members of the committee present, there being a quorum.

The committee secretary shall immediately prepare the necessary committee reports on said measures for inclusion in the Calendar of Business.

Section 49. Bills Unfavorably Acted Upon. When a committee action on a bill or resolution is unfavorable, the bill or resolution shall be laid on the table. The author(s) shall be notified in writing and, as far as practicable, through electronic mail of the action within five (5) days after the bill or resolution has been laid on the table, stating the reason(s) therefor.

Section 50. Discharge of Committees. Any Member may present to the Secretary General a motion in writing to discharge a committee from the consideration of a bill

or resolution referred to it if such committee fails to act thereon after more than thirty (30) session days from its referral. The motion shall be placed in the custody of the Secretary General who shall arrange a convenient place where Members can affix their signatures. A signature may be withdrawn by a Member in writing at any time before the motion is entered in the Journal. When one-fifth (1/5) of all the Members sign the motion, it shall be included in the Calendar of Business and reported in the next session of the House.

Section 51. Consideration of Motion to Discharge. After the Privilege Hour on any Monday, except during the last fifteen (15) days of a regular session, any Member who signed a motion to discharge may demand its consideration. The House shall proceed to vote on the motion after debate thereon for a period not exceeding thirty (30) minutes.

If a motion to discharge is adopted, a motion to proceed to the immediate consideration of such bill or resolution shall be in order; and if such motion prevails, the bill or resolution shall be considered immediately. If a motion to discharge is lost, it shall not be in order to entertain any other motion to discharge the same committee or any other committee from the consideration of the same bill or any other bill with substantially the same subject matter during the same session year. After the House acts on the motion to discharge, all other motions to discharge relating to bills or resolutions with similar subject matter which are pending in the Calendar of Business shall be stricken off the Calendar and shall not be acted upon for the remainder of the same session year.

Section 52. Urgent Bills and Resolutions. The Committee on Rules, through the Majority Leader, may, at any time declare a bill or resolution urgent. It shall prepare a timetable which shall fix the date when the bill or resolution must be reported by the committee concerned, the number of days or hours to be allotted for the consideration of the bill or resolution in plenary session, and the date and hour debate must be concluded and final vote taken.

Section 53. Second Reading and Debate. A bill or joint resolution on Second Reading shall be read in full unless copies thereof have been distributed to the Members. The bill or joint resolution shall be subject to debate and pertinent motions. Debate shall begin with the sponsorship speech of the chairperson of the sponsoring committee or by any duly designated Member thereof, followed by those of the authors of the measure, if they desire to do so.

Section 54. Motion to Close Debate. A motion to close the debate on a measure shall be in order after three (3) speeches in favor and two (2) against, or after only one (1) speech in favor and none against: *Provided*, That within the last fifteen (15) days before adjournment, a motion to close debate on a measure shall be in order after two (2) speeches in favor and one (1) against, or after only one (1) speech in favor and none against.

Section 55. Cloture. When a matter under consideration has been sufficiently discussed by a Member who has the floor and there are several Members who have signified their intention to speak on the same matter, the Speaker may, *motu proprio* or upon motion of a Member, order the Member having the floor to desist from speaking further so that other Members may be given the opportunity to speak.

Section 56. Amendments. After the close of debate, the House shall proceed to the consideration of committee amendments subject to the five-minute rule. A Member who desires to speak against a committee amendment shall also have five (5) minutes.

After the committee amendments, individual amendments shall be considered and shall likewise be subject to the five-minute rule. The five-minute rule shall also apply in the consideration of an amendment to an amendment, or of an amendment by substitution.

Section 57. Approval of Bill or Joint Resolution on Second Reading; Adoption of Resolution. After the amendments are acted upon and the period of amendments is closed, the House shall vote on the bill or joint resolution on Second Reading or vote on the adoption of a resolution, as the case may be.

Bills of local application under the Calendar of Business may be summarily approved on Second Reading through an omnibus motion of the Majority Leader citing the numbers assigned thereto and the page(s) of the Calendar of Business on which they are listed.

Section 58. Third Reading. A bill or joint resolution approved on Second Reading shall be included in the Calendar of Bills and Joint Resolutions for Third Reading. On the Third Reading of a bill or joint resolution, no amendment thereto shall be allowed. Nominal voting thereon shall be done immediately and the result shall be entered in the Journal. Explanation of votes shall be allowed only after the announcement by the Secretary General of the results of the nominal voting: *Provided*, That no other motions shall be considered until after the explanation of votes, if any.

No bill or joint resolution shall become law unless it passes three (3) readings on separate days and printed copies thereof in its final form are distributed to the Members three (3) days before its passage except when the President certifies to the necessity of its immediate enactment to meet a public calamity or emergency.

Section 59. Recommitment of Measure. A bill and joint resolution reported out may be recommitted to the originating committee before its approval on Second Reading.

Section 60. Transmittal to the Senate. The Secretary General shall transmit to the Senate for its concurrence all bills and joint or concurrent resolutions approved by the House and the amendments of the House to the bills or resolutions of the Senate. If the measures approved without amendment are bills or resolutions of the Senate, or if amendments of the Senate to bills of the House are accepted, the Secretary

General shall forthwith notify the Senate of the actions taken: *Provided*, That such transmittal by the Secretary General to the Senate of measures passed by the House shall be made only after the lapse of the reglamentary period within which a Member can file a motion for reconsideration.

Section 61. Measures from the Senate. Bills and resolutions from the Senate shall be referred to and shall be acted upon by the appropriate committee in the same manner as bills and resolutions presented by Members of the House.

In cases where the Senate bills and resolutions are substantially the same as House bills or resolutions previously reported by a House committee, these may be disposed of as such measures entered in the record of matters already reported.

If the House bill or resolution is on Second Reading, the House may, during the period of amendments, adopt the provisions of the Senate measure as an amendment to the House bill or resolution.

If the House bill or resolution is on Third Reading, the House may reconsider its approval on Second Reading. Thereafter, the House may, during the period of amendments, adopt the provisions of the Senate measure as an amendment to the House Bill or resolution.

Bills or resolutions of the House with the amendments of the Senate, as well as Senate bills or resolutions which are substantially the same as House bills or resolutions previously approved, may be disposed of immediately as pending matters. The House may concur with the Senate amendments to the House bill or resolution or adopt the Senate bill or resolution as the House version of the measure.

Section 62. Conference Committee. In cases where the House does not agree with the Senate on any amendment to any House bill or joint resolution, or where the Senate has approved a similar bill to a House-approved bill, and these measures have conflicting provisions, differences may be settled by conference committees composed of representatives from both chambers.

In resolving the differences between the two measures, the House panel shall, as much as possible, adhere to and support the House bill or joint resolution. If the differences with the Senate bill or joint resolution are so substantial that they materially impair the House bill or joint resolution, the panel shall report such fact to the House for the latter's appropriate action.

The Speaker shall appoint the Members of the House panel in a conference committee whose names shall be manifested in open session and entered in the Journal: *Provided*, That the chairperson of the committee that reported out the bill or joint resolution under consideration and the principal author(s) thereof shall be Members of the House panel; and *Provided, further*, That equitable representation of the Majority and the Minority in the panel shall be ensured.

Section 63. Conference Committee Reports. The conference committee shall finalize a report within sixty (60) session days from the date of its organization. Otherwise, the Members of the House panel shall submit a report to the House explaining why the conference committee is unable to prepare a report.

A conference committee report shall be signed by a majority of the Members of both panels on the last page and every page thereof. The report shall contain a clear and detailed statement of the changes in or amendments to the subject measures. Copies of the original measures approved by the House and the Senate shall be attached to the report. The report shall be filed with the Secretary General together with an electronic copy thereof.

The consideration of conference committee reports shall always be in order, except when the Journal is being read, while the roll is being called, or the House is dividing on any question.

The consideration of the conference committee report shall not be in order unless copies thereof are distributed to the Members: *Provided*, That in the last fifteen (15) days of each session period, it shall be deemed sufficient that three (3) copies of the report, together with an electronic copy thereof, are filed with the office of the Secretary General.

A conference committee report shall be ratified by a majority vote of the Members of the House present, there being a quorum.

Section 64. Enrollment of Bills and Joint Resolutions. The Speaker shall order the enrollment of approved bills or joint resolutions within three (3) days after final approval by both Houses. The Bills and Index Service and the secretariat of the committee(s) that reported out the bill shall ensure that the bill is in the correct form and contains the provisions approved by both Houses.

The enrolled bill or joint resolution shall be signed within five (5) working days by the Speaker and the Secretary General. The Secretary General shall report to the House the time of presentation of the bill or joint resolution to the President and the record thereof shall be entered in the Journal.

Upon the lapse of thirty (30) days from receipt of the bill or joint resolution by the Office of the President, and no communication of a veto made thereon by the President is received by the House within the same period, the Secretary General shall certify to this fact which shall be recorded in the Journal.

Section 65. Action by the President. Every bill or joint resolution passed by Congress shall be presented to the President for approval. If the President approves the bill or joint resolution, the President shall sign it; otherwise, the President shall veto it and return the same to the House together with the specific objections. The President shall communicate the veto on any bill or joint resolution to the House

within thirty (30) days after receipt thereof, otherwise, it shall become a law as if it was signed.

Section 66. Procedure on Vetoed Bills. If the President vetoes a bill or any part thereof, the House shall record the objections of the President in the Journal and may proceed to reconsider the bill or item(s) thereof that were vetoed. During reconsideration, the House shall proceed to nominal voting on the bill or the vetoed item(s) thereof. The affirmative and negative votes with the names of the Members voting shall be recorded in the Journal. If the bill or vetoed item is passed by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all Members of each House, the bill including item(s) thereof vetoed by the President shall become law.

Section 67. Procedure for Resolutions. Resolutions shall be subject to the same procedure as bills regarding introduction, reference to the appropriate committee, and consideration: *Provided*, That the Committee on Rules may calendar any resolution for immediate consideration by the House for reasons of urgency.

Section 68. Messages. Messages from the President of the Philippines and the Senate shall be reported to the House and when necessary, referred to the appropriate committees.

Section 69. Memorials and Petitions. Communications from heads of departments of the Executive and the Judiciary, memorials and petitions shall be reported to the House and, when necessary, referred to the appropriate committee(s).

XI. THE SESSION

Section 70. Commencement of Daily Sessions. Daily sessions shall commence at four o'clock (4:00) in the afternoon on Mondays through Thursdays and at ten o'clock (10:00) in the morning on Fridays unless the House decides otherwise.

Section 71. Attendance in Sessions. Every Member shall be present in all sessions of the House unless prevented from doing so by sickness or other unavoidable circumstances duly reported to the House through the Secretary General.

While the House is in session, the following shall be deemed present:

- a. Members who are attending committee meetings as authorized by the Committee on Rules, in accordance with *Section 35* hereof, upon written notification to the Secretary General by the concerned committee secretary;
- b. Members who are attending meetings of:
 - b.1. The Commission on Appointments;
 - b.2. The House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal; and
 - b.3. Bicameral Conference Committees

- c. Members who are on official mission as approved by the Speaker.

Section 72. Order of Business. The daily Order of Business shall be as follows:

- a. Roll call;
- b. Approval of the Journal of the previous session;
- c. First reading of bills and resolutions;
- d. Referral of committee reports, messages, communications, petitions and memorials;
- e. Unfinished Business;
- f. Business for the Day;
- g. Business for a Certain Date;
- h. Business for Thursday and Friday;
- i. Bills and Joint Resolutions for Third Reading; and
- j. Unassigned Business.

The daily Order of Business shall be posted in the House website and, as far as practicable, sent through electronic mail to the Members one (1) hour before the commencement of session.

Section 73. Call to Order. The Speaker shall call the House to order. After calling the House to order, the National Anthem shall be sung followed by an invocation by a Member designated by the Speaker or by a silent prayer.

Section 74. Roll Call. The names of Members shall be called by surnames alphabetically. When two (2) or more Members have the same surnames, the full name of each shall be called. If there are two (2) or more Members with the same names and surnames, their legislative districts or party-list affiliations shall also be called.

Section 75. Quorum. A majority of all the Members of the House shall constitute a quorum. The House shall not transact business without a quorum. A Member who questions the existence of a quorum shall not leave the session hall until the question is resolved or acted upon, otherwise, the question shall be deemed abandoned.

Section 76. Absence of Quorum. In the absence of a quorum after the roll call, the Members present may compel the attendance of absent Members.

In all calls of the House, the doors shall be closed. Except those who are excused from attendance in accordance with *Section 71* hereof, the absent Members, by order of a majority of those present, shall be sent for and arrested wherever they may be found and conducted to the session hall in custody in order to secure their attendance at the session. The order shall be executed by the Sergeant-at-Arms and by such officers as the Speaker may designate. After the presence of the Members arrested is secured at the session hall, the Speaker shall determine the conditions for their discharge. Members who voluntarily appear shall be admitted immediately to the session hall and shall report to the Secretary General to have their presence recorded.

Section 77. Automatic Call of The House. When results of the voting on a question shows the absence of a quorum and a Member calls the attention of the House to this fact, there shall be a call of the House to compel attendance of absent Members who shall be given the opportunity to vote unless the House adjourns.

If those voting on the question and those who are present but abstain from or do not participate in the voting should, together, constitute a majority of the House, the Speaker shall declare that a quorum is present, and pending questions shall be resolved as the majority of those voting shall decide. Thereupon, further proceedings under the call shall be dispensed with.

Section 78. Motion to Adjourn Vacates Call. At any time after the roll call is completed, a motion to adjourn shall be in order and, if approved by a majority of those present, all proceedings under the preceding section shall be vacated.

Section 79. Approval of the Journal. The Journal shall be submitted to the House for approval. Prior to approval, the Journal shall be read in full unless copies thereof have been distributed to the Members. Upon approval, the Journal shall be posted in the House website and, as far as practicable, sent to the Members through electronic mail. The Journal for the last day of a regular or special session shall be approved in the manner determined by the House.

Section 80. Calendar of Business. The Calendar of Business shall consist of the following:

- a. **Unfinished Business.** This is business being considered by the House at the time of its last adjournment. Its consideration shall be resumed until it is disposed of.

The Unfinished Business at the end of a session shall be resumed at the commencement of the next session as if no adjournment has taken place. At the end of the term of a Congress, all unfinished business are deemed terminated.

- b. **Business for the Day.** These are bills, resolutions and other measures set on the Calendar of Business for the Day by the Committee on Rules. They shall be considered, as far as practicable, in the order in which they are listed in the Calendar of Business and after the Unfinished Business.
- c. **Business for a Certain Date.** This is business set for consideration on a certain date. Measures shall be considered in chronological order until disposed of on the date set and on subsequent days unless the continuation of the consideration of any business therein included is set for another day. No business in this Calendar of Business shall be set for consideration unless it has been placed therein two (2) session days prior to such consideration.
- d. **Business for Thursday and Friday.** These are bills, resolutions and other measures of local application set on the Calendar for Thursday and Friday. Such bills and resolutions shall be arranged and considered in the order set by the Committee on Rules. No local bill or resolution shall be set for

consideration unless it has been placed in this Calendar one (1) session day prior to such consideration.

- e. **Bills and Joint Resolutions on Third Reading.** Bills and Joint Resolutions shall be submitted to final vote by nominal voting after printed copies thereof in final form have been distributed to the Members at least three (3) days prior to the final vote thereon except when the President certifies to the necessity of their immediate enactment to meet a public calamity or emergency.
- f. **Unassigned Business.** Bills, resolutions, and other measures reported out by the committees but not calendared for Second Reading by the Committee on Rules may be included in the Calendar of Unassigned Business. Any business included in this Calendar may be set for consideration on motion of a Member with the unanimous approval of the House: *Provided*, That it shall be included in the Calendar of Business at least two (2) days prior to such consideration.

The Calendar of Business shall be distributed each day of session, posted in the House website and, as far as practicable, sent through electronic mail to the Members before the commencement of session unless there is no addition to the one previously distributed, in which case a note to this effect on the Order of Business shall be sufficient.

Section 81. Voting. Every Member present shall vote on every question unless a Member inhibits from voting on account of personal or pecuniary interest therein. The names of Members who abstain, inhibit themselves or opt not to vote shall be entered in the Journal of the House.

Section 82. Sessions Open to the Public. Sessions shall be open to the public. However, when the security of the State or the dignity of the House or any of its Members are affected by any motion or petition being considered, the House may hold executive sessions.

Guests and visitors in the galleries are prohibited from using their cameras and video recorders. Cellular phones and other similar electronic devices shall be put in silent mode.

Section 83. Executive Sessions. When the House decides to hold an executive session, the Speaker shall direct the galleries and hallways to be cleared and the doors closed. Only the Secretary General, the Sergeant-at-Arms and other persons specifically authorized by the House shall be admitted to the executive session. They shall preserve the confidentiality of everything read or discussed in the session.

Section 84. Confidential Documents. The contents of confidential documents transmitted by the President or a head of a department of the Executive Department, as requested by the House, which require consideration in an executive session, shall not be revealed without leave of the House.

Section 85. Suspension, Adjournment and Cancellation of Sessions. Sessions shall not be adjourned except by direction of the House. The Speaker may declare a suspension or recess of short interval at any time.

In cases of natural calamities and other fortuitous events of such nature as to render the attendance of Members to sessions of the House or the conduct of such sessions extremely difficult or impossible, the Speaker may declare the cancellation of the conduct of sessions on any given period of time.

Section 86. Emergency Session. The House, if not in session, shall convene without need of a call within twenty-four (24) hours following the proclamation of martial law or the suspension of the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* or the occurrence of any national emergency.

Section 87. Convening of the House During a Recess. The Speaker, in consultation with the Majority and Minority Leaders and their Senate counterparts, may convene the House in session at any time during a recess or between sessions to consider urgent legislative matters or concerns.

Section 88. Opening and Adjournment of Sessions. The exact hour of opening and adjournment of a session shall be entered in the Journal.

XII. DECORUM AND DEBATE

Section 89. Manner of Addressing the Chair. When any Member desires to speak or deliver any matter to the House, such Member shall rise and respectfully address the Chair as “Mister Speaker” or “Madam Speaker”, as the case may be.

Section 90. Recognition of Member. The Chair shall recognize a Member who rises to speak. When two (2) or more Members rise at the same time, the Chair shall recognize who shall speak first: *Provided*, That as far as practicable, Members of the Majority and the Minority shall be allowed to speak alternately on the floor.

Section 91. Time Limit. A Member shall not be allowed to speak for more than one (1) hour in debate on any question. No Member shall speak more than once on the same question without leave of the House, unless the Member is the proponent of the motion or has introduced the question or the matter pending, in which case the Member shall be permitted to speak in reply, but not until every Member who chooses to speak on the pending question or matter shall have spoken.

Section 92. Sponsor to Open and Close Debate. The Member sponsoring a measure shall open and close the debate. If the debate extends beyond one (1) day without being closed, the Member shall be entitled to an additional thirty (30) minutes to close the debate.

Section 93. Decorum. A Member who has the floor shall speak only on the question under debate, avoid personalities in all cases and refrain from indecorous words or

acts. The Chair may, *motu proprio*, or as the House may direct, declare statements, remarks or words unparliamentary, and order that these be stricken off the record. A Member who calls to order another Member for words spoken in debate, shall indicate the words objected to. The Secretary General shall note and read aloud such words. However, the Member who is called to order shall not be held to answer nor be subject to censure by the House if further debate or other business intervenes.

Debate may include references to actions taken by the Senate or by committees thereof which are a matter of public record, references to the pendency or sponsorship in the Senate of bills, resolutions, and amendments, factual descriptions relating to Senate action or inaction concerning a measure then under debate in the House, and quotations from Senate proceedings on a measure then under debate in the House and which are relevant to the making of legislative history establishing the meaning of that measure, but may not include characterizations of Senate action or inaction, other references to individual members of the Senate, or other quotations from senate proceedings.

Section 94. Conduct and Attire During Sessions and Committee

Meetings. Members shall wear proper attire which is *barong filipino* or coat and tie for men, and Filipina dress or business suit for women, and observe proper decorum during sessions and committee meetings. During Monday sessions, female Members are encouraged to wear traditional Filipina dress and male Members are encouraged to wear *barong filipino*. Members who are not in proper attire shall be considered absent. Officers and members of the Secretariat shall also wear proper attire which is the prescribed official uniform during sessions and committee meetings. Other persons occupying the first gallery of the session hall shall, at all times, wear proper attire which is smart casual or business attire.

Members shall not be allowed to stand near the Secretary General's desk during roll call or counting of votes, pass between the Chair and another Member who has the floor, walk out or walk across the session hall while the Speaker is addressing the House or putting a question. Cellular phones and other similar electronic devices shall be put in silent mode so as not to disrupt the proceedings.

Section 95. Smoking Prohibited. Smoking is prohibited inside the session hall, conference rooms and other enclosed areas except in smoking areas designated as such by the Secretary General.

XIII. MOTIONS AND THEIR PRECEDENCE

Section 96. Recording of Motions. Every motion shall be entered in the Journal with the name of the Member making it unless it is withdrawn on the same day.

Section 97. Reading and Withdrawal of Motions. The Speaker shall state the motion or, if in writing, shall direct the Secretary General to read the motion before being debated upon. A motion may be withdrawn any time before it is put to a vote.

Section 98. Precedence of Motions During Debate. When a question is before the body, the following motions shall be entertained and, subject to *Sections 58 and 118* of these Rules, shall take precedence in the following order:

- First Motion to Adjourn;
- Second Motion to Raise a Point of Order;
- Third Motion to Raise a Question of Privilege;
- Fourth Motion to Declare a Recess;
- Fifth Motion for Reconsideration;
- Sixth Motion to Lay on the Table;
- Seventh Motion to Postpone to a Day Certain;
- Eighth Motion to Refer to or to Re-Refer;
- Ninth Motion to Amend; and
- Tenth Motion to Postpone Indefinitely

The first seven (7) motions shall be decided without debate, while the last three (3) motions shall be decided subject to the five-minute rule; *Provided*, That, during the last five (5) days before adjournment of every session period or during the last fifteen (15) days before adjournment of a regular session, a question of privilege shall only be entertained after the consideration of urgent measures pending in the Calendar of Business as determined by the Committee on Rules.

Section 99. Prohibition of Riders. A motion on a subject matter that is different from that under consideration shall not be allowed under the guise of amendment.

Section 100. One Motion for One Subject Matter. A motion shall cover only one (1) subject matter.

Section 101. Point of Order. A Point of Order is a privileged question that raises a violation of the Rules in relation to the matter under discussion on the floor. A motion to read any part of the Rules is equivalent to a Point of Order and takes precedence over any motion other than a motion to adjourn.

Section 102. Questions of Privilege. Questions of privilege are urgent matters directly and principally affecting the duties, conduct, rights, privileges, dignity, integrity or reputation of the House or of its Members, individually or collectively. Subject to the ten-minute rule, every Member has the right to raise a question of personal or collective privilege. However, prior to availing of this right, a Member shall seek the permission of the Chair which shall, in turn, allow the Member to proceed upon a determination that the request is in order.

The presiding officer shall declare out of order a Member who, having previously registered for the Privilege Hour to speak on a specific subject matter, rises on a question of personal and collective privilege on the same subject matter. The presiding officer shall also declare out of order a Member who rises on a question of personal or collective privilege to speak on concerns that are principally and directly

related to the subject matter of measures pending in any committee or in plenary session.

Section 103. Reconsideration. When a measure, report or motion is approved, adopted or lost, a Member who voted with the majority may move for its reconsideration on the same or succeeding session day. Only one (1) motion for reconsideration shall be allowed. The motion for reconsideration shall take precedence over all other questions, except a motion to adjourn, a point of order, a question of privilege, and a motion to declare a recess. A bill, resolution, memorial or petition recommitted to a committee or ordered to be printed shall not be brought back to the House on a motion to reconsider.

Section 104. Amendments. When any matter is under consideration, a motion to amend and a further motion to amend the amendatory motion shall be in order. When an amendment is rejected by the proponent of the original motion, the proponent of the amendment may appeal to the body. The proponent of the original motion and the proponent of the amendment may explain their positions, on appeal, subject to the five-minute rule. It shall also be in order to move for amendment by substitution of a specific provision, but said motion shall not be voted upon until the text of the original measure is perfected.

A motion by the Majority Leader to amend by substitution of the entire bill or joint resolution shall precede consideration of individual amendments to the bill or joint resolution under consideration.

Any amendment may be withdrawn any time before a vote is taken thereon.

Section 105. Amendment of Title. Amendment(s) to the title of a bill or resolution shall be in order only after amendment(s) to the text thereof have been completed. Amendment(s) to the title shall be decided without debate.

Section 106. Motion to Strike and Insert. A motion to strike and insert is indivisible. The loss of a pure motion to strike shall not preclude an amendment or a motion to strike and insert.

Section 107. Motion to Postpone. After a motion to postpone to any day certain or to postpone indefinitely is lost, such motion shall not again be allowed on the same day.

Section 108. Vote on Paper Objected To. A vote shall be taken without debate on a motion to read a paper other than that which the House is called to vote upon.

Section 109. Appeal From Ruling of the Chair. Any Member may appeal from the ruling of the Chair and may be recognized by the Chair, even though another Member has the floor. No appeal is in order when another appeal is pending. The Member making the appeal shall state the reasons for the appeal subject to the five-minute rule. The Chair shall state the reasons for the ruling and forthwith submit the question to the body. An appeal cannot be amended and

shall yield only to a motion to adjourn, to a point of order, to a question of personal privilege or to recess. A majority vote of the Members present and voting, there being a quorum, shall decide any appeal. In case of a tie vote, the appeal is lost. If an appeal is laid on the table, the ruling of the Chair remains in effect.

Section 110. Recording of Motions. Every motion and the name of the proponent thereof shall be entered in the Journal unless the motion is withdrawn on the same day.

XIV. SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

Section 111. Authority to Move. Only the Committee on Rules can move for the suspension of the rules.

Section 112. Vote Requirement. A vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Members present, there being a quorum, is required to suspend any rule.

Section 113. Interruption of Motion. When a motion to suspend the rules is pending, one (1) motion to adjourn may be entertained. If the latter is lost, no similar motion shall be entertained until the vote is taken on the motion to suspend the rules.

Section 114. Debate; Effect of Suspension. A motion to suspend the rules for the passage of a measure may be debated on for one (1) hour, which shall be divided equally between those in favor and those against.

The House shall proceed to consider the measure after voting to suspend the rules. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present, there being a quorum, shall be necessary for the passage of said measure.

XV. VOTING

Section 115. Manner of Voting. The Speaker shall rise and state the motion or question that is being put to a vote in clear, precise and simple language. The Speaker shall say “as many as are in favor, (*as the question may be*) say ‘aye’”. After the affirmative vote is counted, the Speaker shall say “as many as are opposed, (*as the question may be*) say ‘nay’”.

If the Speaker doubts the result of the voting or a motion to divide the House is carried, the House shall divide. The Speaker shall ask those in favor to rise, to be followed by those against. If still in doubt of the outcome or a count by tellers is demanded, the Speaker shall name one (1) Member from each side of the question to count the Members in the affirmative and those in the negative. After the count is reported, the Speaker shall announce the result.

An abstention shall not be counted as a vote. Unless otherwise provided by the Constitution or by these rules, a majority of those voting, there being a quorum, shall decide the issue.

Section 116. Nominal Voting. Upon motion of a Member, duly approved by one-fifth (1/5) of the Members present, there being a quorum, nominal voting on any question may be called. In case of nominal voting, the Secretary General shall call, in alphabetical order, the names of the Members who shall state their vote as their names are called.

Section 117. Second Call on Nominal Voting. A second call on nominal voting shall be made to allow Members who did not vote during the first call to vote. Members who fail to vote during the second call shall no longer be allowed to vote.

Section 118. Explanation of Vote. During nominal voting, the vote made may be explained by the concerned Member in not more than three (3) minutes: *Provided*, That in case of approval on Third Reading of bills and joint resolutions, explanation of vote shall be allowed only after the announcement by the Secretary General of the results of nominal voting thereon; *Provided further*, That no other motions shall be considered until after the explanation of votes, if any.

Section 119. No Interruption During Voting. The voting shall not be interrupted by any other business or question.

Section 120. Tie Vote. The Speaker shall vote only in case of a tie. A tie on an appeal from the ruling of the Chair sustains the decision of the Chair.

Section 121. Recording of Results of Nominal Voting. The affirmative and negative votes on any question subject to nominal voting shall be entered in the Journal.

XVI. PRIVILEGE HOUR

Section 122. Day for Privilege Hour. On Mondays, after the First Reading and referral to committees of bills, proposed resolutions, messages, communications, petitions and memorials, there shall be, without extension, a Privilege Hour which shall not be interrupted by any question or motion except a point of order or a motion to adjourn: *Provided*, That in exceptional circumstances where the person or integrity of a Member or the integrity of the House is in clear danger of, or has been inflicted with, such grave harm or injury, a question of personal or collective privilege may be allowed to interrupt the Privilege Hour.

Upon the unanimous consent of the House, the Privilege Hour, having expired, may be continued after the consideration of the Business for the Day. On any other day, upon the unanimous consent of the House, there shall be a Privilege Hour after the consideration of the Business for the Day.

During the last five (5) days before adjournment of every session period or during the last fifteen (15) days before adjournment of a regular session, the availment of the Privilege Hour shall be suspended upon motion of the Majority Leader to ensure the consideration of urgent measures pending in the Calendar of Business as determined by the Committee on Rules.

Any Member may speak on any matter of general interest. If more than one (1) Member desires to make use of this privilege, the first to register, either in writing with the Committee on Rules or verbally in open session, shall be given precedence. If sufficient time is left of the hour after a Member finished speaking, the next Member who registered to speak may do so, and so on until the full hour is consumed. If requests to make use of the Privilege Hour remain recorded at the expiration of the hour, they shall be recorded in the same order for the next Monday, or for such other day that a Privilege Hour is conducted, as the case may be.

Members shall not avail of the Privilege Hour to speak on concerns that are principally and directly related to the subject matter of measures already pending in any committee or in plenary session.

Any Member availing of the Privilege Hour who wishes to make audio-visual presentation in the course of the Member's privilege speech, shall submit an electronic copy of the audio-visual presentation to the Majority Leader before the intended date of availment of the Privilege Hour.

XVII. QUESTION HOUR

Section 123. Appearance Upon Initiative of Department Head of the Executive Department. When a department head desires to appear before the House on any matter pertaining to the concerned department, the department head may, with the consent of the President of the Philippines, notify the House through the Speaker, who, with the concurrence of the House, may set the date and hour of the appearance.

Section 124. Appearance Upon Request of the House. A department head may be requested to appear before the House and be heard on any matter pertaining to the concerned department. The request shall state specifically the questions to be answered and the date and hour for the appearance of the department head. Such appearance shall be scheduled at least three (3) days from receipt of the request.

The Order of Business shall specify the subject of the questions, the department head requested to answer them, and the proponent(s) thereof.

Section 125. Day of Appearance. The appearance of department heads shall be scheduled on any Wednesday or on such other day(s) as may be determined by the Speaker or a majority of the Members of the House. The department head may answer the questions of the House Members either verbally or in writing. Interpellations of Members shall not be limited to the written questions but may cover matters related thereto. Such interpellations shall conform with the standards for questions herein provided. The questions and answers shall be recorded in the Journal.

Section 126. Appearance in Executive Session. The appearance of a department head shall be conducted in an executive session when the security of the State or the public interest require and the President so states in writing.

Section 127. Questions. Written questions shall be submitted to the Speaker in triplicate. Questions of an urgent nature or those relating to current issues shall be given priority. Questions may be withdrawn by the proponent when no answer has yet been made. The withdrawal shall be in writing, addressed to the Speaker, and submitted before the day of the scheduled appearance.

Section 128. Standards Set for Questions. Questions shall be based on facts, and asked to obtain information or press for action. No question shall:

- a. be argumentative;
- b. suggest its own answer;
- c. include offensive or unparliamentary language or expressions;
- d. pertain to *sub judice* matters;
- e. seek an opinion on a question of law;
- f. include names or statements other than what is strictly necessary to make the question intelligible;
- g. relate to matters directly under the responsibility of another department head;
- h. refer to an item of the agenda of the current month's session or to proceedings of a committee not yet reported;
- i. suggest amendments to bills before the House of Representatives; or
- j. repeat a question previously asked and answered.

Section 129. Form of Questions and Answers. In form, questions and answers of excessive length are not in order.

Section 130. Questions Not Conforming With Standards. If the questions do not conform with the foregoing standards, the Speaker shall return them to the Member concerned and the latter may modify or restate the questions to make them conform with the said standards or appeal the action of the Speaker to the House. Said appeal shall be resolved like all other appeals from the rulings of the chair.

Section 131. Classification and Disposition of Questions. Questions may be classified and grouped together by subject matter by the Speaker who shall decide the order in which the said questions are to be dealt with. During the appearance of the department head, the Speaker shall direct the Secretary General to read the questions according to their precedence, the name of the proponent and the department head to whom the question is directed.

Section 132. Standards for Answers. Answers should be directly related to the questions propounded without need for discussing general policies or programs, concise, responsive and should not be argumentative. They should conform with the standards set for questions, where these are applicable.

Section 133. Questions of Local Significance. The Speaker may direct that questions of local significance be answered in writing only.

Section 134. Unanswered Questions. Questions that are left unanswered may be answered in writing or, where necessary, during a day set aside by the Speaker before the next Question Hour or at any succeeding Question Hour. Questions not taken due to the absence of both the proponent and the department head shall be taken at any other day.

Section 135. Interpellations and Comments of Proponents of Original Questions. At the end of every Question Hour, it shall be in order for any proponent of the original questions to interpellate the department head concerned and make comments, observations and statements relative to the answers given. The interpellations and comments of the proponent shall be subject to the ten-minute rule.

Section 136. Service Unit. A Service Unit shall be organized in the Committee on Rules to facilitate, coordinate and expedite all matters relative to the conduct of the Question Hour.

XVIII. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

Section 137. Constituting the Committee. The House may constitute itself into a Committee of the Whole on motion of the Majority Leader to act upon a bill or resolution. When the House constitutes itself into a Committee of the Whole, it functions as one committee acting upon a bill or resolution, and conducting its proceedings like a regular committee with its membership composed of all the Members of the House.

If a motion to constitute the House into a Committee of the Whole is lost, a similar motion shall not be presented within the same session day.

Section 138. Proceedings. The Speaker shall appoint a Chairperson to preside over the Committee.

The committee shall conduct business only when there is a quorum. If there is no quorum, the chairperson shall report the same and move that the committee immediately suspend its proceedings. The Speaker may take part in the proceedings. The Speaker and all the Members shall vote on all questions before the committee.

Documents and papers in the possession of the House may be called for by any Member and read by the Secretary General for the information of the committee unless the committee orders otherwise. Resource persons and/or technical assistants may be invited to attend the proceedings, and upon permission of the chairperson, may directly answer questions and inquiries propounded by Members.

The chairperson shall have the power to clear the session hall and the galleries in case of disturbance. The committee, however, cannot punish disorderly conduct of its Members but must report the same to the House for appropriate action.

The committee may, at any time during its proceedings, report to the House its desire to close the debate or to limit the time allowed for Members to speak.

The committee may, on motion, suspend consideration of any matter and to reconvene at any time to resume its proceedings. The motion shall take precedence over all motions and shall be immediately decided without debate. If the committee, for want of time, fails to complete deliberations on any matter under consideration, it may, on motion and at any time, recess and reconvene. A motion that the committee suspend its proceedings, reports progress and reconvenes, may be made at any time, and shall take precedence over all other motions. The motion shall be decided without debate.

When the Committee has disposed of bills, resolutions and other measures before it, on motion, it shall rise and the chairperson shall be instructed to report the action of the committee to the House. At this point, the Speaker shall reassume the chair, and the chairperson shall, thereafter, make a report to the House. Matters reported shall then be presented before the House for action as though reported by any other committee.

XIX. CODE OF CONDUCT

Section 139. Code of Conduct. There is hereby established in the House the following Code of Conduct:

a.

a. A Member shall act at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House;

1.

b. A Member shall adhere to the spirit and the letter of the Rules of the House and to the rules of the committees;

c. A Member may not receive compensation or any pecuniary interest and may not permit compensation or any pecuniary interest to accrue to the Member's beneficial interest from any source, the receipt of which would occur by virtue of influence improperly exerted from the Member's position in Congress;

d.

A Member shall not hold any other office or employment in the government, or any subdivision, agency or instrumentality thereof, including government-owned or controlled corporations or subsidiaries, during the Member's term without forfeiting the Member's seat in the House;

e. A Member shall not also be appointed to any office created or the emoluments thereof increased during the Member's term;

f. A Member shall not personally appear as counsel before any court of justice, the electoral tribunals, or any quasi-judicial or administrative body or be directly or indirectly financially interested in any contract with, or in any franchise or special privilege granted by the government, or any subdivision, agency or instrumentality thereof, including any government-owned or controlled corporation, or its subsidiaries, during the Member's term of office;

g. A Member shall not intervene in any matter before any office of the government for personal pecuniary benefit or where the Member may be called upon to act on account of the Member's office;

h. A Member shall not acquire or receive any personal pecuniary interest in any specific business enterprise which will be directly and particularly favored or benefited by any law or resolution authored by the Member that is approved or adopted by Congress during the Member's term. It shall be unlawful for the Member to continue to retain such interest thirty (30) days after such approval;

i. A Member may not authorize or allow an individual, group or organization not under the direction and control of the House to use the words "Congress of the Philippines", "House of Representatives" or "Official Business", or any combination of these words, or the seal of the House of Representatives, or any other representation thereof on any letterhead or envelope or for any other purpose; and

j. A Member shall not disclose any classified information received in the course of the service with the House of Representatives, except as authorized by the House of Representatives or in accordance with its Rules.

The House may, upon the recommendation of the Committee on Ethics, punish its Members for any violation of this Code of Conduct and for disorderly behavior.

Section 140. Vote Requirement. The House may censure or reprimand an erring Member with the concurrence of the majority of all its Members. It may suspend or expel

an erring Member with the concurrence of two-thirds (2/3) of all its Members: *Provided*, That a penalty of suspension shall not exceed sixty (60) days.

XX. PROPOSALS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION

Section 141. Proposals. The Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of all its Members, may propose amendment(s) to or revision of the Constitution.

Section 142. Form of Proposals and Procedure for Adoption. Proposals to amend or revise the Constitution shall be by resolution which may be filed at any time by any Member. The adoption of resolutions proposing amendments to or revision of the Constitution shall follow the procedure for the enactment of bills.

Section 143. Constitutional Convention. The Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all its Members, call a constitutional convention or, by a majority vote of all its Members, submit to the electorate the question of calling such a convention.

XXI. PAPERS, BOOKS AND RECORDS

Section 144. Congressional Record. The Congressional Record shall be a substantially verbatim account of remarks made during the proceedings of the House, subject only to technical, grammatical, and typographical corrections authorized by the Member involved.

Section 145. Delivery of Papers to Archives. All papers and records relating to the completed business of the House shall be delivered to, kept by and preserved in the Archives. All pending matters and proceedings shall terminate upon the expiration of the term of a Congress and the records pertaining thereto delivered to the Archives within fifteen (15) days after such expiration.

Section 146. Duty of Committee Secretaries. Committee Secretaries shall, within seven (7) days after the enactment of bills or joint resolutions, and fifteen (15) days after final adjournment of Congress, deliver to the Archives all bills, resolutions, petitions and other papers referred to their respective committees including all records of proceedings, reports of investigations conducted, and all evidences taken

by such committees together with the electronic copies thereof.

Upon neglect or failure of the Committee Secretaries to comply with this rule, the Secretary General shall, within seven (7) days thereafter, take custody of all such papers and may impose appropriate disciplinary action on concerned Committee Secretaries.

Section 147. Records and Books Open to the Public. The records and books of accounts of the House including plenary records shall be preserved and be open to the public in accordance with law. Books of accounts of the House shall be available for audit by the Commission on Audit.

XXII. BROADCASTING THE HOUSE

Section 148. Closed-Circuit Viewing of Floor Proceedings. The House shall establish a system for closed-circuit viewing of floor proceedings of the House in the offices of all Members and in such other places in the House as the Speaker considers appropriate. Such system may include other telecommunications functions subject to rules and regulations issued by the Speaker.

Section 149. Public Broadcasting and Recording of Floor Proceedings. (a) The House shall administer a system for complete and unedited audio and visual broadcasting, recording, and live streaming through the internet of the proceedings of the House. The system shall include the distribution of such broadcasts and recordings to news media, for the storage of audio and video recordings of the proceedings, and for the closed-captioning of the proceedings for hearing-impaired persons. Any such public broadcasting and system of recording of floor proceedings shall be subject to rules and regulations issued by the Speaker;

(b) All television and radio broadcasting stations, networks, services, and systems including cable television systems that are accredited to the House radio and television correspondents' galleries, and all radio and television correspondents who are so accredited, shall be provided access to the live coverage of the House; and

(c) Coverage made available under this section, including any recording may not be:

- (1) used for any political purpose;
- (2) used in any commercial advertisement; and
- (3) broadcast with commercial sponsorship except as part of a *bona fide* news program or public affairs documentary program.

XXIII. RESPONSE TO SUBPOENAS

Section 150. Compliance to Subpoenas. When a Member, officer, or employee of the House is properly served with a judicial or administrative subpoena or judicial order directing appearance as a witness relating to the official functions of the House or for the production or disclosure of any document relating to the official functions of the House, such Member, officer, or employee shall comply, consistently with the privileges and rights of the House, with the judicial or administrative subpoena or judicial order as hereinafter provided, unless otherwise determined under this Rule.

Section 151. Notification of the House. Upon receipt of a properly served judicial or administrative subpoena or judicial order described in *Section 150* hereof, a Member, officer, or employee of the House shall promptly notify the Speaker of its receipt in writing. Such notification shall promptly be laid before the House by the Speaker. During a period of recess or adjournment of longer than three (3) days, notification to the House is not required until the reconvening of the House, when the notification shall promptly be laid before the House by the Speaker.

Section 152. Determination of Proper Exercise of Jurisdiction. Once notification has been laid before the House, the Member, officer, or employee of the House shall determine whether the issuance of the judicial or administrative subpoena or judicial order described in *Section 150* hereof is a proper exercise of jurisdiction by the court, is material and relevant, and is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House. Such Member, officer, or employee shall notify the Speaker before seeking judicial determination of these matters.

Upon determination whether a judicial or administrative subpoena or judicial order described in *Section 150* hereof

is a proper exercise of jurisdiction by the court, is material and relevant, and is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House, the Member, officer, or employee of the House shall immediately notify the Speaker of the determination in writing.

Section 153. Notification of the House of Proper Exercise of Jurisdiction. The Speaker shall inform the House of a determination whether a judicial or administrative subpoena or judicial order described in *Section 150* hereof is a proper exercise of jurisdiction by the court, is material and relevant, and is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House. In so informing the House, the Speaker shall generally describe the records or information sought. During a period of recess or adjournment of longer than three (3) days, such notification is not required until the reconvening of the House, when the notification shall promptly be laid before the House by the Speaker.

Section 154. Submission of Documents.

(a) Except as specified in *paragraph (b)* hereunder or otherwise ordered by the House, upon notification to the House that a judicial or administrative subpoena or judicial order described in *Section 150* hereof is a proper exercise of jurisdiction by the court, is material and relevant, and is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House, the Member, officer, or employee of the House shall comply with the judicial or administrative subpoena or judicial order by supplying certified copies;

(b) Under no circumstances may minutes or transcripts of executive sessions, or evidence of witnesses in respect thereto, be disclosed or copied; and

(c) During a period of recess or adjournment of longer than three (3) days, the Speaker may authorize compliance or take such other action as the Speaker considers appropriate under the circumstances. Upon the reconvening of the House, all matters that transpired under this clause shall promptly be laid before the House by the Speaker.

Section 155. Transmittal of Rules to Court. A copy of this rule shall be transmitted by the Secretary General to the court when a judicial or administrative subpoena or

judicial order described in *Section 150* hereof is issued and served on a Member, officer, or employee of the House.

Section 156. Guarantee of Rights and

Privileges. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to deprive, condition, or waive the constitutional or legal privileges or rights applicable or available at any time to a Member, officer, or employee of the House, or of the House itself, or the right of such Member, officer, or employee, or of the House itself, to assert such privileges or rights before any court.

XXIV. SESSION HALL, CONFERENCE ROOMS, LOUNGES, LOBBIES AND ROOMS

Section 157. Use of the Session Hall, Conference Rooms, Lounges and Lobbies. The session hall shall be used only for plenary sessions. Conference rooms and all building lobbies shall be used only for committee meetings, caucuses and meetings of Members in the performance of legislative functions except when the House directs otherwise. The south lounge shall be for exclusive use of Members. The north lounge may be used by Members and their guests upon approval by the Speaker. The entire premises of the House of Representatives shall also be used only for the official functions of the House of Representatives.

The Philippine flag and the seal of the House of Representatives shall be displayed at all times in a conspicuous place in all offices and conference rooms inside the House premises.

Communications, documents, publications and other information materials written by or prepared under the direction of a Member, may be distributed in the session hall by such Member, personally or through facilities or employees of the House: *Provided*, That the author or source thereof is properly identified in such communications, documents, publications and other information materials.

Any Member who wishes to make audio-visual presentation in the course of the Member's speech, shall submit an electronic copy of the audio-visual presentation to the Majority Leader before the intended date of the Member's speech.

Section 158. Assignment of Seats in the Session Hall and the Gallery. Seats of House Members in the session hall shall be assigned in accordance with the instructions of the Speaker. Seats in the VIP gallery shall be reserved for cabinet officials, dignitaries and members of the diplomatic corps. Seats in the first gallery shall be reserved for the members of the family of House Members, and those officials and staff of the House secretariat and congressional staff members and other persons authorized by the Secretary General. The second and third galleries shall be open to the public subject to the rules of procedure prescribed by the Secretary General.

The Sergeant-at-Arms shall not permit persons other than Members and authorized House personnel to enter or stay within the space designated in the session hall for Members and House personnel needed therein while the House is in session. Fifteen (15) minutes before the session, the Sergeant-at-Arms shall clear said space of all other persons and it shall be so kept until recess or adjournment. This section shall not be suspended, except with respect to resource person(s) or technical assistant(s) needed by the reporting committee or by the proponent of a motion under consideration.

Section 159. Assignment of Rooms to House Members. Assignment of rooms to House Members shall be done, as far as practicable, by lot to be drawn upon submission to the Secretary General of complete documentary requirements for assumption of office. Re-elected Members may choose to retain the rooms previously assigned to them.

XXV. PRECEDENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

Section 160. Rulings as Precedents. Rulings on questions raised by Members shall form part of the parliamentary practice of the House.

Section 161. Supplementary Provisions. The parliamentary practices of the Philippine Assembly, the House of Representatives, the Senate of the Philippines and the Batasang Pambansa shall be supplementary to these rules.

XXVI. THE MACE AND THE OFFICIAL SEAL

Section 162. The Mace. The Mace shall be the symbol of authority of the House and shall be displayed at the Speaker's rostrum when the House is in session. It shall serve as the warrant of the Sergeant-at-Arms in enforcing order in the House.

Section 163. Official Seal. The House shall adopt its official seal. Use of the official seal shall be restricted to official documents, transactions and other related official legislative purposes unless otherwise permitted or directed by the House through the Speaker or his duly authorized representative.

XXVII. AMENDMENTS

Section 164. Amendments to the Rules. Any provision of these Rules, except those that are also embodied in the Constitution, may be amended by a majority vote of all the Members of the House.

XXVIII. EFFECTIVITY

Section 165. Effectivity. These rules shall take effect on the date of adoption.