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House Rules Changes Affecting Floor Proceedings in the 119th Congress (2025-2026)

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As agreed to in the House, H.Res. 5, adopting the rules of the House of Representatives for the 119th Congress (2025-2026), provided amendments to the standing rules that affect floor proceedings. In addition, the H.Res. 5 rules package included separate orders, which operate like standing rules for the duration of a Congress (or another specified period within a Congress) but are not incorporated into the standing rules.

H.Res. 5:

- Amended clause 1(a) of Rule XV to provide that the Speaker may not entertain a motion to suspend the rules except on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. This provision reestablished a restriction that was removed from House rules by H.Res. 1230 in the 117th Congress (2021-2022).
- Altered when privilege is afforded to a resolution that would cause a vacancy in the Office of the Speaker. Under clause 2 of Rule IX, a resolution declaring a vacancy in the Office of the Speaker is not privileged for consideration in the 119th Congress unless it is offered by a member of the majority party and has accumulated eight cosponsors from the majority party at the time of its offering. In the 118th Congress, such a resolution was privileged if offered by a single Member, subject to certain notice requirements.
- Clarified the counting of legislative days and procedure for considering certain special rules. Pursuant to clause 6(d) of Rule XIII, if a member of the Committee on Rules files a report on a special rule that is assigned to the House Calendar and that committee member does not call up the special rule on the House floor within seven legislative days thereafter, another committee member may call up the special rule as a privileged question.
- Codified into House rules two separate orders from previous Congresses. One concerned the effect of the Speaker's designation of district work periods on certain timelines contained in House rules. The other reserved the first 10 numbered bills (H.R. 1 through H.R. 10) for assignment by the Speaker and the second 10 bills (H.R. 11 through H.R. 20) for assignment by the minority leader.
- Included three separate orders that govern floor procedure for the duration of the 119th Congress. One separate order relates to the "question of consideration" for special rules that waive the House germaneness requirement, another explicitly states that motions to discharge a measure introduced pursuant to the War Powers Resolution (P.L. 93-148) shall not be subject to a motion to table, and the third separate order directs the majority leader to submit a statement to the *Congressional Record* if a measure placed on the Consensus Calendar contradicts any legislative protocols announced by the majority leader.

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Introduction

On January 3, 2025, the House agreed to H.Res. 5, a resolution adopting the standing rules for the 119th Congress (2025-2026).¹ As is customary, the resolution provided that the rules of the prior Congress be readopted with specific amendments. The rules package also contained separate orders that affect House procedure for the duration of the 119th Congress.²

This report identifies changes to House rules and separate orders related to floor proceedings, including the consideration of legislation and procedures concerning the designation of district work periods.³ The report compares the text of these provisions to procedures in force in earlier Congresses.

Privileged Measures and Motions

Motions to Suspend the Rules

The suspension of the rules procedure allows the House to consider broadly supported legislation in an expedited manner.⁴ H.Res. 5 amended clause 1(a) of Rule XV to provide that the Speaker may not entertain a motion to suspend the rules except on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. On these days, the Speaker may, at the Speaker's discretion, recognize a Member who seeks to make the motion.⁵

The privileged status of motions to suspend the rules has changed over time. Most recently, in the 118th Congress (2023-2024) and part of the 117th Congress (2021-2022), House rules permitted the Speaker to entertain suspension motions on any day.

In 1822, the House first agreed to a rule allowing the suspension of its rules by a two-thirds supermajority vote. In subsequent Congresses, the offering of the motion was restricted to Mondays and later amended to permit suspensions on Mondays and Tuesdays and during the last six days of a Congress. The House amended its rules in the 109th Congress (2005-2006) to make

¹ The House has agreed to its standing rules as one of the first orders of business at the start of each new Congress, following the election of the Speaker. Generally, as in H.Res. 5, the House agrees to the same rules as in the previous Congress, with amendments to those rules (as well as separate orders) packaged as a simple House resolution and presented to the House. Separate orders have the force and effect of rules but are not codified in the standing rules of the House. They remain in effect for the duration of the Congress (or another specified period within a Congress) unless a subsequent resolution provides for their adjustment.

² See H.Res. 5; U.S. Congress, House, *Rules of the House of Representatives, One Hundred Nineteenth Congress*, prepared by Kevin F. McCumber, Clerk of the House of Representatives, 119th Cong., 1st sess., 2025; U.S. Congress, House, *Constitution, Jefferson's Manual and the Rules of the House of Representatives of the United States One Hundred Eighteenth Congress* (hereinafter *House Manual*), 117th Cong., 2nd sess., 2023 (Washington: GPO, 2023); John V. Sullivan et al., *House Practice: A Guide to the Rules, Precedents, and Procedures of the House* (Washington: GPO, 2024). For information on changes to floor procedure in the 118th Congress, see CRS Report R47490, *House Rules Changes Affecting Floor Proceedings in the 118th Congress (2023-2024)*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

³ This report does not discuss changes related to the budget process, committee procedure, or the administration of Congress (i.e., salaries, staff training, and membership requirements on boards and commissions). For information about changes in House rules affecting committee procedure, see CRS Report R48466, *House Rules Changes Affecting Committee Procedure in the 119th Congress (2025-2026)*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

⁴ See CRS Report 98-314, *Suspension of the Rules in the House: Principal Features*, by Elizabeth Rybicki.

⁵ In practice, the presiding officer generally recognizes Members to make motions to suspend the rules and pass those bills and resolutions that the majority party leadership has announced in advance will be considered on the floor and whose text has been posted in the House Document Repository. For more information about the suspension of the rules procedure, see CRS Report 98-314, *Suspension of the Rules in the House: Principal Features*, by Elizabeth Rybicki.

motions to suspend the rules in order on Wednesdays in addition to the previously mentioned days.⁶

In the second session of the 117th Congress (2021-2022), the House agreed to H.Res. 1230, which among its provisions, struck the provision then in clause 1(a) of House Rule XV that limited the Speaker's ability to recognize motions to suspend the rules to Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and the last six days of a Congress.

The 119th Congress rules package restored the Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday limitation but did not reinstate the earlier language making the motion in order during the last six days of a Congress. As in earlier Congresses, however, in the 119th Congress, the Speaker may entertain a motion to suspend the rules on days other than Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays pursuant to the terms of a special rule agreed to by the House or by unanimous consent.

Resolution Raising a “Question of the Privileges of the House” Causing a Vacancy in the Office of the Speaker

H.Res. 5 amended clause 2 of Rule IX to that limit the privilege of resolutions that declare a vacancy in the Office of the Speaker. The new provision provides that such resolutions are not privileged for consideration in the House unless they are offered by members of the majority party and, at the time that they are offered, have accumulated eight cosponsors from the majority party. Thus, in order for such a resolution to be privileged under the rule, nine majority-party members must act in concert. In the 118th Congress, one Member, without cosponsors, could offer such a privileged resolution after the Member gave advance notice to the House.

Resolutions raising a question of the privileges of the House are those that affect the “rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings.”⁷ Under circumstances specified in the rule, resolutions raising valid questions of the privileges of the House are privileged, a designation that affords them a higher precedence for floor consideration than non-privileged legislative motions or measures.⁸ If reported by a committee or offered from the floor by the majority leader or the minority leader, questions of privilege are considered immediately. When offered by other Members, such a question has the same privilege but only at a time scheduled by the Speaker within two legislative days after the proponent announces to the House an intention to offer the resolution.⁹

At the start of the 116th Congress (2019-2020), the House amended Rule IX to insert a new clause 2(a)(3), which provided that resolutions declaring a vacancy in the Office of the Speaker would be privileged only if offered by direction of a party caucus or conference. The 118th Congress's rules package struck this restriction, restoring the rule to its form in earlier Congresses and enabling any Member to offer a privileged resolution to declare the Office of the Speaker vacant.¹⁰

⁶ The Speaker entertained motions to suspend the rules on Wednesdays during the 108th Congress using authority granted by House resolution and by unanimous consent. See *House Manual*, §885.

⁷ Clause 1 of House Rule IX. For more information about “questions of the privileges of the House,” see CRS Report R44005, *Questions of the Privileges of the House: An Analysis*, by Megan S. Lynch.

⁸ See CRS Report 98-315, *Privileged Business on the House Floor*, by James V. Saturno.

⁹ Under long-standing House precedents, a resolution declaring a vacancy in the Office of the Speaker is considered to raise a valid question of privilege. See clause 2(a)(1) of House Rule IX.

¹⁰ In the 118th Congress, on October 3, 2023, the House agreed to H.Res. 757, declaring the Office of Speaker of the House of Representatives vacant. For more information about actions that may occur in the event of a vacancy, see (continued...)

Special Rules Reported by the Committee on Rules

The Committee on Rules generally reports special rules drafted by the committee, rather than special rules introduced and referred to the committee. Less commonly, for procedural reasons, the committee may report a special rule that was referred to the committee without intending for its consideration by the House, and the special rule is placed on the House Calendar.¹¹ However, if the committee member who files the report does not call up the special rule on the House floor within seven legislative days after its referral to the calendar, any member of the Rules Committee may do so pursuant to clause 6(d) of Rule XIII.

The rules package made a technical correction to clause 6(d) of Rule XIII to clarify the calculation of the time period between a reported special rule's placement on the House Calendar and when the special rule may be called up in the House. With the addition of the word *thereafter*, the provision now states, "If such a report on the calendar is not called up by the member of the committee who filed the report within seven legislative days thereafter, any member of the committee may call it up as a privileged question on the day after the calendar day on which the member announces to the House intention to do so."

Codification of Previous Separate Orders

Designation of District Work Periods

H.Res. 5 established clause 13 of House Rule I, enabling the Speaker to designate "district work periods" and providing "recess instructions" for such periods.¹² Recess instructions state how certain administrative tasks are to be completed during extended periods when the House is not expected to conduct legislative business.¹³

The rules package for the 118th Congress, H.Res. 5, contained the text of the "district work period" provision in a separate order.¹⁴ In earlier Congresses, the House agreed to recess instructions via separate House resolutions.¹⁵

CRS Report R44243, *Electing the Speaker of the House of Representatives: Frequently Asked Questions*, by Valerie Heitshusen.

¹¹ Pursuant to clause 2 of Rule XV, a bill or resolution cannot be the target of a discharge petition after it has been reported by a committee. Thus, the Committee on Rules may report an introduced and referred special rule to avoid subjecting the special rule to discharge procedure. For more information about the consideration of special rules pursuant to discharge procedure, see CRS Report R45920, *Discharge Procedure in the House*, by Mark J. Oleszek.

¹² According to the Rules Committee's majority staff report, "it is expected that the designation of a district work period will be satisfied by a letter submitted by the Speaker that is laid before the House." See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Rules, *Adopting the Rules for the 119th Congress, Section-by-Section Analysis* (118th Cong., 1st sess., 2025).

¹³ For a discussion on the formal and informal use of the word *recess*, see CRS Report R42977, *Sessions, Adjournments, and Recesses of Congress*, by Valerie Heitshusen.

¹⁴ For more information about the designation of district work periods, see CRS Report R47490, *House Rules Changes Affecting Floor Proceedings in the 118th Congress (2023-2024)*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

¹⁵ H.Res. 891 (116th Congress) is an example of recess instructions approved in earlier Congresses before the designation of district work periods. Among its provisions, this special rule provided that on any legislative day between March 13, 2020, and March 22, 2020, the *House Journal* would be considered approved; the chair could declare the House adjourned to meet at a stated date and time within the limits specified in Article I, Section 5, clause 4, of the Constitution; the Speaker could appoint Members to perform the duties of the chair; and meeting days would not count as legislative days for purposes of clause 7 of Rule XV (the Consensus Calendar).

As was commonly enabled by previous recess instructions, pursuant to clause 13 of House Rule I, on any legislative day within a Speaker-designated district work period, the *Journal of the House of Representatives*, containing the previous legislative day's proceedings, will be deemed approved by the Speaker. Thus, a demand for a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the *House Journal* will not be in order.¹⁶ The chair is given the authority to declare the House adjourned and to determine a date and time to reconvene within the limits specified in Article I, Section 5, clause 4, of the Constitution.¹⁷ Additionally, the Speaker may appoint Members to carry out the duties of the chair, as permitted under clause 8(a) of Rule I.¹⁸

Clause 13 also specifies that each day within a designated district work period will not count as either a calendar day or a legislative day¹⁹ for certain procedures outlined in House rules.²⁰ These procedures require or allow an action to take place within a specified number of days or after a specified number of days have passed.

During a district work period, the counting of calendar or legislative days is paused for purposes of

- Section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (P.L. 93-148), which requires the House Foreign Affairs Committee to report a referred concurrent resolution directing the President to withdraw U.S. troops from foreign hostilities, under specified circumstances, within 15 calendar days or be subject to a discharge process and for the House to vote on the concurrent resolution within three calendar days after the committee's report has been filed;²¹
- clause 7 of Rule XIII, which requires a committee to report a referred resolution of inquiry within 14 legislative days after its introduction;²²

¹⁶ For more information about the *House Journal*, see CRS Report R45209, *The House Journal: Origin, Purpose, and Approval*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

¹⁷ “Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without the Consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting” (U.S. Const., art. I, § 5, cl. 4). For more information about the Speaker's ability to adjourn and reconvene the House within the limits specified in Article I, Section 5, clause 4, of the Constitution, see CRS Report R42977, *Sessions, Adjournments, and Recesses of Congress*, by Valerie Heitshusen.

¹⁸ Clause 8(a) of Rule I states, “The Speaker may appoint a Member to perform the duties of the Chair. Except as specified in paragraph (b), such an appointment may not extend beyond three legislative days.” Paragraph (b) allows an extension of up to 10 days in the case of illness. See *House Manual*, §632.

¹⁹ A calendar day is the normal 24-hour period that comprises a day of the week. A legislative day begins when the House meets after an adjournment and ends when the House again adjourns. Generally, in the House, a legislative day takes place on one calendar day. However, it is possible for the House to adjourn and meet again in the same calendar day, creating two legislative days, or have a legislative day that spans more than one calendar day. See CRS Report R42977, *Sessions, Adjournments, and Recesses of Congress*, by Valerie Heitshusen.

²⁰ The district work period designation does not affect other procedures, such as the introduction of bills and resolutions that are otherwise in order when the House is in pro forma session. Pro forma sessions, though brief, count as legislative days.

²¹ Section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution (P.L. 93-148) contemplates that Congress, by concurrent resolution, can direct the President to withdraw U.S. troops from foreign hostilities if there is not a specific statutory authorization for committing the troops or a declaration of war. Pursuant to Section 7 of the War Powers Resolution, any such concurrent resolution introduced shall be referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which shall report the resolution within 15 calendar days. For more information about the War Powers Resolution, including questions concerning the constitutionality of Section 5(c), see CRS Report R42699, *The War Powers Resolution: Concepts and Practice*, by Matthew C. Weed. For more information about procedure related to the War Powers Resolution, see CRS Report R47603, *War Powers Resolution: Expedited Procedures in the House and Senate*, by Michael Greene.

²² Resolutions of inquiry are formal requests by Congress for information in the possession of the President or (continued...)

- clause 7(c)(1) of Rule XXII, which allows a Member, subject to notice requirements, to offer a privileged motion to instruct or discharge conferees of a conference committee if the committee has been appointed for at least 45 calendar days and 25 legislative days and has not reported a conference report;²³ and
- clause 7 of Rule XV, which requires a measure, in order to be placed on the Consensus Calendar, to maintain at least 290 cosponsors for a 25-legislative-day period after a motion is filed with the Clerk to place the measure on the calendar.²⁴

Reservation of Bill Numbers

The rules package codified in clause 7 of Rule XII a long-standing separate order renewed in each recent Congress that reserves certain bill numbers for assignment by the Speaker and the minority leader. Under the rule, the Speaker is to assign the first 10 numbered bills (H.R. 1 through H.R. 10), and the minority leader is to assign the second 10 bills (H.R. 11 through H.R. 20). This numbering system enables the Speaker and the minority leader to highlight certain bills proposed by members of their party conferences or caucuses.

Separate Orders

The rules package contained three separate orders that govern floor procedure for the duration of the 119th Congress but are not incorporated into the standing rules of the House. H.Res. 5 altered the operation of a prior separate order concerning the question of consideration that might be raised against a special rule that waives the germaneness point of order against an amendment. In the 119th Congress, one motion to adjourn the House is in order prior to the vote on the question of consideration.

Two additional separate orders contain identical text from earlier Congresses. One explicitly states that a motion to discharge a measure introduced pursuant to the War Powers Resolution (P.L. 93-148) shall not be subject to a motion to table.²⁵ The other directs the majority leader to

executive branch departments. If the committee of jurisdiction reports the referred resolution within the 14-legislative-day time frame, the resolution may be called up only by a Member designated by the committee. For that reason, a committee may report a resolution of inquiry (favorably, unfavorably, or without recommendation) in order to preserve control over the resolution's consideration. See CRS Insight IN10661, *Resolutions of Inquiry in the House*, by Christopher M. Davis.

²³ The House and Senate may form a conference committee to resolve differences in legislative text before agreeing to the same version of a bill, joint resolution, or concurrent resolution. In the House, motions to instruct managers provide nonbinding guidance to House conferees, such as to insist on a House position, to accept a Senate position, or to reach an agreement between the House and Senate positions. See CRS Report 98-381, *Instructing House Conferees*, by Elizabeth Rybicki.

²⁴ The Consensus Calendar provides an alternative route to the floor for certain unreported House bills and resolutions that enjoy broad bipartisan support. See CRS Report R46485, *The House Consensus Calendar: Establishment, Principal Features, and Practice in the 116th Congress (2019-2020)*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

²⁵ For more information about the War Powers Resolution separate order, see CRS Report R45787, *House Rules Changes Affecting Floor Proceedings in the 116th Congress (2019-2020)*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

submit a statement to the *Congressional Record* if a measure placed on the Consensus Calendar contradicts any legislative protocols announced by the majority leader.²⁶

Question of Consideration

As in the previous Congress, for the duration of the 119th Congress, if a special rule reported by the Rules Committee contains a waiver that would allow for the consideration of a nongermane amendment,²⁷ a Member may make a point of order against the special rule. Such germaneness waivers make in order amendments that might otherwise be in violation of clause 7 of Rule XVI, which states, “No motion or proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be admitted under color of amendment.”²⁸

The presiding officer shall dispose of the point of order by putting a “question of consideration” of the special rule before the House, enabling the House to debate the question for 20 minutes (split equally between the Member raising the point of order and an opponent) before a vote is conducted on whether to consider the special rule notwithstanding the waiver. The question of consideration does not determine whether the special rule waives germaneness but whether the House will consider the special rule regardless of any waivers it might contain. If the House approves the question of consideration, the special rule will be considered. If the House rejects it, the special rule will not be considered.

The 118th Congress separate order provided that such questions of consideration shall be debatable for the 20-minute time period but shall otherwise be decided without intervening motion. In the 119th Congress, the question of consideration shall be debatable for the same time period but shall otherwise be decided without intervening motion “except one that the House adjourn.”²⁹

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²⁶ The majority leader’s protocols provide guidance regarding the scheduling and consideration of legislation in the House. They represent leadership priorities but are not rules of the House and are not enforced by points of order on the floor. The 119th Congress protocols include the use of “sunset requirements” in joint resolutions and bills, discretionary authorizations, the suspension of the rules procedure, commemorative legislation, and major amendments made in order by special rules reported by the Committee on Rules. The majority leader provides the complete list of 119th Congress floor protocols at <https://www.majorityleader.gov/schedule/floor-protocols.htm>. For more information about the Consensus Calendar separate order, see CRS Report R45787, *House Rules Changes Affecting Floor Proceedings in the 116th Congress (2019-2020)*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

²⁷ For more information about the germaneness requirement, see CRS Report 98-995, *The Amending Process in the House of Representatives*, by Christopher M. Davis.

²⁸ Among the considerations the presiding officer weighs when ruling on a germaneness point of order is whether the amendment adds a new subject to the text, the fundamental purpose of the amendment, and its committee jurisdiction. *House Manual*, §928; Sullivan et al., *House Practice*, ch. 26, pp. 543-602.

²⁹ The motion to adjourn is optional. The question of consideration may be decided without a Member moving to adjourn.

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