



Dear Conferee,

Common Cause has a long history of being active in rules reform debates. Our mission to promote openness and accountability in government dovetails with legislative rules that encourage public participation, information sharing, and political accountability. We believe that there are rules changes pending before this conference committee that would further these goals, and we urge you to adopt them. Specifically:

Joint Rule 11D: We support the Senate's inclusion of a requirement that all standing committees provide committee members a minimum of 4 hours to review committee polls prior to submitting their vote. While a longer timeframe before a closing of a poll would be appropriate, the Senate's inclusion of a minimum is a step in the right direction.

Joint Rule 4: Similarly, we support the Senate's inclusion of a requirement of having roll calls posted on the website of the General Court in a clear and conspicuous manner within 48 hours of the vote. Ideally, roll calls would be available even sooner, and as close to real time as possible, but this is an important addition. Roll calls are critical information for many citizens and currently they can be difficult to find.

Joint Rule 4: The Senate's amendments also contain the ability to have minority committee reports and to require both majority and minority reports to be available on the website for public inspection. This provision will add more information to public debates on controversial issues and deserves adoption.

Joint Rule 10: We support moving the deadline for committee reports up to earlier in the session along the lines of the Senate proposal. The proposed date in January was one we had suggested many years ago when the rule was changed from the previous year. As we predicted at the time, having a Joint Rule 10 date in March pushes too much legislation late in the session. We hope that the new deadline will help alleviate, at least to some extent, the log-jam at the end of the session.

Joint Rule 21: We are concerned about the Senate's deletion of the requirement to post legislation on the Internet. We think that more information, rather than less, should be available on the web. Hence we urge you to reject this amendment.

Thank you for your time and attention to these issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pamela H. Wilmot", written in a cursive style.

Pamela H. Wilmot

Executive Director