

olution of the General Assembly, shall take effect and have the force of law as of the beginning of the term of office of the next General Assembly. Rates of compensation and pensions shall be uniform for all members of the General Assembly, except that the officers of the Senate and the House of Delegates may receive higher compensation as determined by the General Assembly Compensation Commission. The provisions of the Compensation Commission resolution shall continue in force until superseded by any succeeding resolution.

(4) In no event shall the compensation and allowances be less than they were prior to the establishment of the Compensation Commission.

**SEC. 16.** No book, or other printed matter not appertaining to the business of the session, shall be purchased, or subscribed for, for the use of the members of the General Assembly, or be distributed among them, at the public expense.

**SEC. 17.** No Senator or Delegate, after qualifying as such, notwithstanding he may thereafter resign, shall during the whole period of time, for which he was elected, be eligible to any office, which shall have been created, or the salary, or profits of which shall have been increased, during such term.

**SEC. 18.** No Senator or Delegate shall be liable in any civil action, or criminal prosecution, whatever, for words spoken in debate.

**SEC. 19.**<sup>51</sup> Each House shall be judge of the qualifications and elections of its members, as prescribed by the Constitution and Laws of the State, and shall appoint its own officers, determine the rules of its own proceedings, punish a member for disorderly or disrespectful behaviour and with the consent of two-thirds of its whole number of members elected, expel a member; but no member shall be expelled a second time for the same offence.

**SEC. 20.** A majority of the whole number of members elected to each House shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and compel the attendance of absent members, in such manner, and under such penalties, as each House may prescribe.

**SEC. 21.** The doors of each House, and of the Committee of the Whole, shall be open, except when the business is such as ought to be kept secret.

**SEC. 22.** Each House shall keep a Journal of its proceedings, and cause the same to be published. The yeas and nays of members on any question, shall at the call of any five of them in the House of Delegates, or one in the Senate, be entered on the Journal.

**SEC. 23.** Each House may punish by imprisonment, during the session of the General Assembly, any person, not a member, for disrespectful, or disorderly behavior in its presence, or for obstructing any of its proceedings, or any of its officers in the execution of their duties; provided, such imprisonment shall not, at any one time, exceed ten days.

**SEC. 24.** The House of Delegates may inquire, on the oath of witnesses, into all complaints, grievances and offences, as the grand inquest of the State, and may commit any person, for any crime, to the public jail, there to remain, until discharged by due course of Law. They may examine and pass all accounts of the State, relating either to the collection or expenditure of the revenue, and appoint auditors to state and adjust the same. They may call for all public, or official papers and records, and send for persons, whom they may judge necessary in the course of their inquiries, concerning affairs relating to the public interest, and may direct all office bonds which shall be made payable to the State, to be sued for any breach thereof; and with a view to the more certain prevention, or correction of the abuses in the expenditures of the money of the State, the General Assembly shall create, at every session thereof, a Joint Standing Committee of the Senate and House of Delegates, who shall have power to send for persons, and examine them on oath, and call for Public, or Official Papers and Records, and whose duty it shall be to examine and report upon all contracts made for printing stationery, and purchases for the Public offices, and the Library, and all expenditures therein, and upon all matters of alleged abuse in expenditures, to which their attention may be called by Resolution of either House of the General Assembly.

**SEC. 25.** Neither House shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, at any one time, nor adjourn to any other place, than that in which the House shall be sitting, without the concurrent vote of two-thirds of the members present.

**SEC. 26.** The House of Delegates shall have the sole power of impeachment in all cases; but a majority of all the members elected must concur in the impeachment. All impeachments shall be tried by the Senate, and when sitting for that purpose, the Senators shall be on oath, or affirmation, to do justice according to the law and evidence; but no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of all the Senators elected.

**SEC. 27.**<sup>52</sup> Any bill may originate in either House of the General Assembly and be altered, amended or rejected by the other. No bill shall originate in either House during the last thirty-five calendar days of a regular session, unless two-thirds of the members elected thereto shall so determine by yeas and nays, and in addition the two Houses by joint and similar rule may further regulate the right to introduce bills during this period; nor shall any bill become a law until it be read on three different days of the session in each House, unless two-thirds of the members elected to the House where such bill is pending shall so determine by yeas and nays, and no bill shall be read a third time until it shall have been actually engrossed or printed for a third reading.

Each House may adopt by rule a consent calendar procedure permitting bills to be read and voted upon as a single group on both second and third readings, pro-

<sup>51</sup> Thus amended by Chapter 681, Acts of 1977, ratified November 7, 1978.

<sup>52</sup> Thus amended by Chapter 369, Acts of 1972, ratified November 7, 1972.