

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
JOINT RULES COMMITTEE

April 16, 1985

Senator Van Valkenburg called the Joint Rules Committee meeting to order at 11:35 a.m., deeming a quorum to be present.

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: Authority of Conference Committees

Senator Van Valkenburg stated that the Joint Rules Committee was being called upon to determine the exact authority of Conference Committees, in light of Representative John Vincent's ruling the previous day. The Speaker's ruling stated that a Conference Committee was not confined to accepting or rejecting each disputed amendment, but could "open" the bill to other changes.

Representative Ramirez stated that basically the question concerned authority of what a Conference Committee could do versus what a Free Conference Committee had the ability to do. He stated that in his opinion a Conference Committee is mandated to consider amendments in question only, and that said amendments must be accepted or rejected in their entirety. He claimed that Mason's clearly indicated the same. Additionally, Representative Ramirez stated that it was a consensus in the House Rules Committee that a Conference Committee should be confined to rejecting or accepting disputed amendments only.

Representative Vincent stated that his ruling had been based upon his interpretation of the Joint Rules 7-8. He suggested that if the Joint Rules Committee determines the interpretation to properly be as stated by Representative Ramirez, then the Joint Rule 7-8 should be amended to read as follows:

"A Conference Committee shall confine itself to accepting or rejecting each disputed amendment in its entirety."

Senator Norman noted that the reason the rule is ambiguous is that the Legislature is ambiguous. He added that Representative Vincent's original ruling might ultimately serve to place an entire bill in jeopardy and result in too many Free Conference Committees.

Representative Addy suggested that if the Joint Rules Committee adopted the ruling of the Speaker, he would want to see the House abide by the more limited reading of the Joint Rule.

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Representative Quilici stated that sometimes only one word in an amendment needs to be changed.

Senator Van Valkenburg stated that in his opinion a Conference Committee is confined to accepting or rejecting said amendment, and that this is the way the Senate interprets the Joint Rule.

Representative Marks stated that he felt the Joint Rules Committee should adopt a ruling to state its interpretation of Joint Rule 7-8, and that in his opinion the interpretation should be consistent with the Senate's interpretation of the rule.

MOTION: Representative Marks made a motion that the Joint Rules Committee rule that the function of a Conference Committee shall be limited to accepting or rejecting the disputed amendment(s) without amending them.

Representative Vincent stated that he preferred to amend the Joint Rule.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Representative Vincent made a substitute motion that the Joint Rule 7-8 be amended to read as follows:
"A Conference Committee shall confine itself to accepting or rejecting each disputed amendment in its entirety."

Representative Vincent stated that in accordance with Joint Rule 8-5, the amended Joint Rule 7-8 could be concurred in by both houses under order of business number 6 of that day.

Representative Ramirez stated that the problem with Representative Vincent's suggestion was that Senate Rules require the Senate to observe one day's wait, therefore it would be better to adopt the interpretation as suggested by Representative Marks until the Joint Rule could be formally amended.

Representative Vincent stated that his motion was a "better and cleaner" way to go.

Representative Marks restated his motion and stated that it could be done in addition to Representative Vincent's suggested amending of the Joint Rules.

MOTION: Representative Marks moved that the Joint Rules Committee rule that its interpretation of the function of a Conference Committee shall be limited to accepting or rejecting disputed amendment(s) without amending them.

The question was called.

MOTION FAILED: The motion failed on the following vote:

Representative Addy	No	Senator Van Valkenburg	No
Representative Harper	No	Senator Norman	No
Representative Marks	Aye	Senator Christiaens	No
Representative Ramirez	Aye	Senator Stephens	Aye
Representative Brown	No	Senator Crippen	Aye
Representative Vincent	No		
Representative Moore	Aye		
Representative Quilici	No		
Representative Schultz	Aye		

MOTION: Representative Vincent moved that his previously stated motion be accepted.

Representative Ramirez stated that he was disappointed in the Speaker's "stancing" and that he didn't think sacrificing the expedient administration of the House could be justified simply because, in his opinion, the Speaker needed to "save face".

Senator Norman stated that enough time had been spent quibbling about this matter.

Senator Van Valkenburg questioned if perhaps the Speaker might simply withdraw the ruling of the chair.

The question was called.

MOTION PASSED: The motion passed with all members voting aye except for Representative Brown voting no, and Senator Norman voting no.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Senator Christiaens moved to adjourn the meeting. The question was called, the motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.



Van Valkenburg, Chairman

Secretary