THE STATE CONSTITUTION OF RHODE ISLAND. PREAMBLE We, the people of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, grateful to Almighty God for the civil and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing upon our endeavors to secure and to transmit the same, unimpaired, to succeeding generations, do ordain and establish this Constitution of government. ARTICLE I DECLARATION OF CERTAIN CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND PRINCIPLES In order effectually to secure the religious and political freedom established by our venerated ancestors, and to preserve the same for our posterity, we do declare that the essential and unquestionable rights and principles hereinafter mentioned shall be established, maintained, and preserved, and shall be of paramount obligation in all legislative, judicial and executive proceedings. ARTICLE I Section 1. Right to make and alter Constitution obligatory upon all. In the words of the Father of his Country, we declare that "the basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and alter their constitutions of government; but that the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all." Section 2. Laws for good of whole Burdens to be equally distributed Due process Equal protection Discrimination No right to abortion granted. All free governments are instituted for the protection, safety, and happiness of the people. All laws, therefore, should be made for the good of the whole; and the burdens of the state ought to be fairly distributed among its citizens. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied equal protection of the laws. No otherwise qualified person shall, solely by reason of race, gender or handicap be subject to discrimination by the state, its agents or any person or entity doing business with the state. Nothing in this section shall be construed to grant or secure any right relating to abortion or the funding thereof. Section 3. Freedom of religion. Whereas Almighty God hath created the mind free; and all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or by civil incapacitations, tend to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness; and whereas a principal object of our venerable ancestors, in their migration to this country and their settlement of this state, was, as they expressed it, to hold forth a lively experiment that a flourishing civil state may stand and be best maintained with full liberty in religious concernments; we, therefore, declare that no person shall be compelled to frequent or to support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatever, except in fulfillment of such person's voluntary contract; nor enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in body or goods; nor disqualified from holding any office; nor otherwise suffer on account of such person's religious belief; and that every person shall be free to worship God according to the dictates of such person's conscience, and to profess and by argument to maintain such person's opinion in matters of religion; and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect the civil capacity of any person. Section 4. Slavery prohibited. Slavery shall not be permitted in this state. Section 5. Entitlement to remedies for injuries and wrongs Right to justice. Every person within this state ought to find a certain remedy, by having recourse to the laws, for all injuries or wrongs which may be received in one's person, property, or character. Every person ought to obtain right and justice freely, and without purchase, completely and without denial; promptly and without delay; conformably to the laws. Section 6. Search and seizure. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, papers and possessions, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated; and no warrant shall issue, but on complaint in writing, upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and describing as nearly as may be, the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized. Section 7. Requirement of presentment or indictment Information by attorney general Grand juries Double jeopardy. Except in cases of impeachment, or in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger, no person shall be held to answer for any offense which is punishable by death or by imprisonment for life unless on presentment or indictment by a grand jury, and no person shall be held to answer for any other felony unless on presentment or indictment by a grand jury or on information in writing signed by the attorney general or one of the attorney general's designated assistants, as the general assembly may provide and in accordance with procedures enacted by the general assembly. The general assembly may authorize the impaneling of grand juries with authority to indict for offenses committed any place within the state and it may provide that more than one grand jury may sit simultaneously within a county. No person shall be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy. Nothing contained in this article shall be construed as in any wise impairing the inherent common law powers of the grand jury. Section 8. Bail, fines and punishments. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel punishments inflicted; and all punishments ought to be proportioned to the offense. Section 9. Right to bail Habeas corpus. All persons imprisoned ought to be bailed by sufficient surety, unless for offenses punishable by imprisonment for life, or for offenses involving the use or threat of use of a dangerous weapon by one already convicted of such an offense or already convicted of an offense punishable by imprisonment for life or for an offense involving the unlawful sale, distribution, manufacture, or delivery of any controlled substance punishable by imprisonment for ten years or more, when the proof of guilt is evident or the presumption great. Nothing in this section shall be construed to confer a right to bail, pending appeal of a conviction. The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety shall require it; nor ever without the authority of the general assembly. Section 10. Rights of accused persons in criminal proceedings. In all criminal prosecutions, accused persons shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury; to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation, to be confronted with the witnesses against them, to have compulsory process for obtaining them in their favor, to have the assistance of counsel in their defense, and shall be at liberty to speak for themselves; nor shall they be deprived of life, liberty, or property, unless by the judgment of their peers, or the law of the land. Section 11. Relief of debtors from prison. The person of a debtor, when there is not strong presumption of fraud, ought not to be continued in prison, after such person shall have delivered up property for the benefit of said person's creditors, in such manner as shall be prescribed by law. Section 12. Ex post facto laws, Laws impairing obligation of contract. No ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, shall be passed. Section 13. Self-incrimination. No person in a court of common law shall be compelled to give self-criminating evidence. [Although the meaning of this seems to be self-incriminating, several versions of the constitution print this as "self-criminating"] Section 14. Presumption of innocence Securing accused persons. Every person being presumed innocent, until pronounced guilty by the law, no act of severity which is not necessary to secure an accused person shall be permitted. Section 15. Trial by jury. The right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate. In civil cases the general assembly may fix the size of the petit jury at less than twelve but not less than six. Section 16. Compensation for taking of private property for public use Regulation of fishery rights and shore privileges not public taking. Private property shall not be taken for public uses, without just compensation. The powers of the state and of its municipalities to regulate and control the use of land and waters in furtherance of the preservation, regeneration, and restoration of the natural environment, and in furtherance of the protection of the rights of the people to enjoy and freely exercise the rights of fishery and the privileges of the shore, as those rights and duties are set forth in Section 17, shall be an exercise of the police powers of the state, shall be liberally construed, and shall not be deemed to be a public use of private property. Section 17. Fishery rights Shore privileges Preservation of natural resources. The people shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all the rights of fishery, and the privileges of the shore, to which they have been heretofore entitled under the charter and usages of this state, including but not limited to fishing from the shore, the gathering of seaweed, leaving the shore to swim in the sea and passage along the shore; and they shall be secure in their rights to the use and enjoyment of the natural resources of the state with due regard for the preservation of their values; and it shall be the duty of the general assembly to provide for the conservation of the air, land, water, plant, animal, mineral and other natural resources of the state, and to adopt all means necessary and proper by law to protect the natural environment of the people of the state by providing adequate resource planning for the control and regulation of the use of the natural resources of the state and for the preservation, regeneration and restoration of the natural environment of the state. Section 18. Subordination of military to civil authority Martial law. The military shall be held in strict subordination to the civil authority. And the law martial shall be used and exercised in such cases only as occasion shall necessarily require. Section 19. Quartering of soldiers. No soldier shall be quartered in any house in time of peace, without the consent of the owner; nor, in time of war, but in manner to be prescribed by law. Section 20. Freedom of press. The liberty of the press being essential to the security of freedom in a state, any person may publish sentiments on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty; and in all trials for libel, both civil and criminal, the truth, unless published from malicious motives, shall be sufficient defense to the person charged. Section 21. Right to assemble Redress of grievances Freedom of speech. The citizens have a right in a peaceable manner to assemble for their common good, and to apply to those invested with the powers of government, for redress of grievances, or for other purposes, by petition, address, or remonstrance. No law abridging the freedom of speech shall be enacted. Section 22. Right to bear arms. The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. Section 23. Rights of victims of crime. A victim of crime shall, as a matter of right, be treated by agents of the state with dignity, respect and sensitivity during all phases of the criminal justice process. Such person shall be entitled to receive, from the perpetrator of the crime, financial compensation for any injury or loss caused by the perpetrator of the crime, and shall receive such other compensation as the state may provide. Before sentencing, a victim shall have the right to address the court regarding the impact which the perpetrator's conduct has had upon the victim. Section 24. Rights not enumerated State rights not dependent on federal rights. The enumeration of the foregoing rights shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the people. The rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The rights guaranteed by this Constitution are not dependent on those guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. ARTICLE II OF SUFFRAGE Section 1. Persons entitled to vote. Every citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen years or over who has had residence and home in this state for thirty days next preceding the time of voting, who has resided thirty days in the town or city from which such citizen desires to vote, and whose name shall be registered at least thirty days next preceding the time of voting as provided by law, shall have the right to vote for all offices to be elected and on all questions submitted to the electors, except that no person who has been lawfully adjudicated to be non compos mentis shall be permitted to vote. No felon shall be permitted to vote until completion of such felon's sentence, served or suspended, and of parole or probation regardless of a nolo contendere plea. Upon such completion, such person's right to vote shall be restored. The general assembly may provide by law for shorter state and local residence requirements to vote for electors for president and vice president of the United States. Section 2. Nomination of candidates Voter registration Absentee voting Conduct of elections Residency. The general assembly shall provide by law for the nomination of candidates; for a uniform system of permanent registration of voters; for the exemption from such registration of persons in the active service of the nation and their families absent from the state because of such service, and, in time of war, members of the Merchant Marine; for absentee and shut in voting; for the time, manner and place of conducting elections; for the prevention of abuse, corruption and fraud in voting; and may define by law residence for voting purposes, but no person shall acquire such residence merely by being stationed or assigned in this state in the active service of the United States. ARTICLE III OF QUALIFICATION FOR OFFICE Section 1. Qualified electors. No person shall hold any civil office unless that person be a qualified elector for such office. Section 2. Disqualification upon conviction or plea of nolo contendere Requalification following sentence, probation or parole. An elector shall be disqualified as a candidate for elective or appointive state or local office or from holding such office if such elector has been convicted of or plead nolo contendere to a felony or if such elector has been convicted or plead nolo contendere to a misdemeanor resulting in a jail sentence of six months or more, either suspended or to be served. Such elector shall not, once so convicted, attain or return to any office until three years after the date of completion of such sentence and of probation or parole. Section 3. Oath of general officers. All general officers shall take the following engagement before they act in their respective offices, to wit: You being by the free vote of the electors of this state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, elected unto the place of do solemnly swear (or, affirm) to be true and faithful unto this state, and to support the Constitution of this state and of the United States; that you will faithfully and impartially discharge all the duties of your aforesaid office to the best of your abilities, according to law: So help you God. [Or: This affirmation you make and give upon the peril of the penalty of perjury.] Section 4. Oath of general assembly members, judges and other officers. The members of the general assembly, the judges of all the courts, and all other officers, both civil and military, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution, and the Constitution of the United States. Section 5. Administration of oaths. The oath or affirmation to support this Constitution, and the Constitution of the United States, shall be administered to the governor, lieutenant governor, senators, and representatives by the secretary of state, or, in the absence of the secretary of state by the attorney general. The secretary of state, attorney general, and general treasurer shall be engaged by the governor, or by a justice of the supreme court. Section 6. Holding of offices under other governments. No person holding any office under the government of the United States, or of any other state or country, shall act as a general officer or as a member of the general assembly, unless at the time of taking such engagement that person shall have resigned the office under such government; and if any general officer, senator, representative, or judge shall, after election and engagement, accept a appointment under any other government, the office under this shall be immediately vacated; but this restriction shall not apply to any person appointed to take depositions or acknowledgment of deeds, or other legal instruments, by the authority of any other state or country. Section 7. Ethical conduct. The people of the State of Rhode Island believe that public officials and employees must adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, respect the public trust and the rights of all persons, be open, accountable and responsive, avoid the appearance of impropriety and not use their position for private gain or advantage. Such persons shall hold their positions during good behavior. Section 8. Ethics commission Code of ethics. The general assembly shall establish an independent nonpartisan ethics commission which shall adopt a code of ethics including, but not limited to, provisions on conflicts of interest, confidential information, use of position, contracts with government agencies and financial disclosure. All elected and appointed officials and employees of state and local government, of boards, commissions and agencies shall be subject to the code of ethics. The ethics commission shall have the authority to investigate violations of the code of ethics and to impose penalties, as provided by law; and the commission shall have the power to remove from office officials who are not subject to impeachment. ARTICLE IV OF ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE Section 1. Election and terms of governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, treasurer, and general assembly members. The general, general treasurer, and senators and representatives in the general assembly shall be elected, governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney-general, generally in even numbered years, and shall severally hold their offices for two (2) years from the first Tuesday of January next succeeding their election and until their successors are elected and qualified. Section 2. Election by plurality. In all elections held by the people for state, city, town, ward or district officers, the person receiving the largest number of votes cast shall be declared elected. Section 3. Filling vacancy caused by death, removal, removal from office or otherwise incapacitated, the lieutenant governor, or be otherwise incapacitated, the lieutenant governor-elect shall become governor- elect shall die, remove from the state, refuse to serve; become insane, or be otherwise incapacitated, the lieutenant governor-elect shall be qualified as governor at the beginning of the term for which the governor was elected. When both the governor and lieutenant governor-elect, or either the lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, or general treasurer-elect, are so incapacitated, or when there has been a failure to elect any one or more of the officers mentioned in this section, the general assembly shall upon its organization meet in grand committee and elect such person or persons to fill the office or offices, as the case may be, for which such incapacity exists or as to which such failure to elect occurred. When the general assembly shall elect any of said officers because of the failure of any person to receive a plurality of the votes cast, the election in each case shall be made from the persons who received the same and largest number of votes. Section 4. Temporary appointment to fill vacancies in office of secretary of state, attorney general, treasurer from any cause, the general assembly in grand committee shall elect some person to fill the same; provided, that if such vacancy occurs when the general assembly is not in session the governor shall appoint some person to fill such vacancy until a successor is elected and qualified. Section 5. Special elections to fill general assembly vacancies. When a senator or representative-elect shall die, remove from the state, refuse to serve, become insane, or be otherwise incapacitated, or when at an election for any senator or representative no person shall receive a plurality of the votes cast, a new election shall be held. A vacancy in the senate or house of representatives shall be filled at a new election. The general assembly shall provide by general law for the holding of such elections at such times as to insure that each town and city shall be fully represented in the general assembly during the whole of every session thereof so far as is practicable. Every person elected in accordance with this section shall hold office for the remainder of the term or for the full term, as the case may be, of the office which that person is elected to fill, and until a successor is elected and qualified. Section 6. Elections in grand committee Majority vote Term of office. In elections by the general assembly in grand committee Majority vote Term of office. In elections by the general assembly in grand committee the person receiving a majority of the votes shall be elected by the general assembly to fill a vacancy, or pursuant to Section 3 of this article, shall hold office for the full term, as the case may be, and until a successor is elected and qualified. Section 7. Elections in committee Quorum Permitted activities. A quorum of the grand committee shall consist of a majority of all the members of the house of representatives; elections duly assembled pursuant to an invitation from one of said bodies other, and the acceptance of which has been communicated by message to the body in which such invitation shall be acted upon by the secretaries and clerks. No act or business of any kind shall be done in grand committee other than that which is necessary to organize the grand committee by virtue of which such grand committee is assembled, except to take a recess or to dissolve; provided, that the grand committee of its own members to count any ballots delivered to it and report the result of such count. Section 8. Voting registration records. The general assembly shall provide for the town or ward clerks to keep and transmit to the general assembly a list or register of all persons voting for general officers. The general assembly shall have power to pass such laws on the subject as it may deem expedient. Section 9. Reports of campaign contributions and expenses. The general assembly shall require each candidate for general office in any primary, general or special election to report to the secretary of state all contributions and expenditures made by any person to or on behalf of such candidate, provided however, that the general assembly may limit such disclosure to contributions or expenditures in excess of such an amount as the general assembly shall specify. Section 10. Limitations on campaign contributions Public financing of campaign expenditures of general officers. The general assembly shall adopt limitations on all contributions to candidates for election to state and local office in any primary, general or special election and shall provide for the adoption of a plan of voluntary public financing and limitations on total campaign expenditures of campaigns for governor and such other general officers as the general assembly shall specify. ARTICLE V OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS The powers of the government shall be distributed into three departments: the legislative, executive and judicial. ARTICLE VI OF THE LEGISLATIVE POWER Section 1. Constitution supreme law of the state. This Constitution shall be the supreme law of the state, and any law inconsistent therewith shall be void. The general assembly shall pass all laws necessary to carry this Constitution into effect. Section 2. Power vested in general Assembly Concurrence of houses required to enact laws Style of law. The legislative power, under this Constitution, shall be vested in two houses, the one to be called the senate, the other the house of representatives; and both together the general assembly. The concurrence of the two houses shall be necessary to the enactment of laws. The style of their laws shall be, It is enacted by the general assembly as follows: Section 3. Sessions of general assembly members and officers. There shall be a session of the general assembly at Providence commencing on the first Tuesday of January in each year. The senators and representatives shall severally receive the sum of five dollars, and the speaker of the house of representatives ten dollars, for every day of actual attendance, and eight cents per mile for traveling expenses in going to and returning from the general assembly; provided that no compensation or mileage shall be allowed any senator or representative for more than sixty days attendance in any calender year. The general assembly shall regulate the compensation of the governor and of all other officers, subject to the limitations contained in the Constitution. Section 4. Restrictions on general assembly members' activities as counsel. No member of the general assembly shall take any fee, or be of counsel in any case pending before either house of the general assembly, under penalty of forfeiture of seat, upon proof thereof to the satisfaction of the house in which the member sits. Section 5. Immunities of general assembly members The persons of all members of the general assembly shall be exempt from arrest and their estates from attachment in any civil action, during the session of the general assembly, and two days before the commencement and two days after the termination thereof, and all process served contrary hereto shall be void. For any speech in debate in either house, no member shall be questioned in any other place. Section 6. Election and qualification of general assembly members Quorum and organization of houses. Each house shall be the judge of the elections and qualifications of its members; and a majority shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and may compel the attendance of absent members in such manner, and under such penalties, as may be prescribed by such house or by law. The organization of the two houses may be regulated by law, subject to the limitations contained in this Constitution. Section 7. Rules of houses Contempt. Each house may determine its rules of proceeding, punish contempts, punish its members for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a member; but not a second time for the same cause. Section 8. Houses journals. Each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings. The yeas and nays of the members of either house shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal. Section 9. Adjournment of houses. Neither house shall, during a session, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than two days, nor to any other place than that in which it may be sitting. Section 10. Continuation of previous powers. The general assembly shall continue to exercise the powers it has heretofore exercised, unless prohibited in this Constitution. Section 11. Vote required to pass local or private appropriations. The assent of two-thirds of the members elected to each house of the general assembly shall be required to every bill appropriating the public money or property for local or private purposes. Section 12. Property valuations for tax assessments. The general assembly shall, from time to time, provide for making new valuations of property, for the assessment of taxes, in such manner as it may deem best. Section 13. Continuance in office until successors qualify. The general assembly may provide by law for the continuance in office of any officers of election or appointment, until other persons are qualified to take their places. Section 14. General corporation laws. The general assembly may provide by general law for the creation and control of corporations; provided, however, that no corporation shall be created with the power to exercise the right of eminent domain, or to acquire franchises in the streets and highways of towns and cities, except by special act of the general assembly upon a petition for the same, the pendency whereof shall be notified as may be required by law. Section 15. Lotteries. All lotteries shall be prohibited in the state except lotteries operated by the state and except those previously permitted by the general assembly prior to the adoption of this section, and all shall be subject to the prescription and regulation of the general assembly. Section 16. Borrowing power of general assembly. The general assembly shall have no powers, without the express consent of the people, to incur state debts to an amount exceeding fifty thousand dollars, except in time of war, or in case of insurrection or invasion; nor shall it in any case, without such consent, pledge the faith of the state for the payment of the obligations of others. This section shall not be construed to refer to any money that may be deposited with the state by the government of the United States. Section 17. Borrowing in anticipation of receipts. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 16 of this article the general assembly may provide by law for the state to borrow in any fiscal year, in anticipation of receipts from taxes, sums of money not exceeding twenty percent of the receipts from taxes during the next prior fiscal year, and, in anticipation of receipts from other sources, additional sums of money, not exceeding ten percent of the receipts from such other sources during the said next prior fiscal year; provided, that the aggregate of all such borrowings shall not exceed a sum equal to thirty percent of the actual receipts from taxes during the said next prior fiscal year. Any money so borrowed in anticipation of such receipts shall be repaid within the fiscal year of the state in which such borrowings take place. No money shall be so borrowed in anticipation of such receipts in any fiscal year until all money so borrowed in all previous fiscal years shall have been repaid. Section 18. Redevelopment powers. The clearance, replanning, redevelopment, rehabilitation and improvement of blighted and substandard areas shall be a public use and purpose for which the power of eminent domain may be exercised, tax moneys and other public funds expended and public credit pledged. The general assembly may authorize cities, towns, or local redevelopment agencies to undertake and carry out projects approved by the local legislative body for such uses and purposes including the acquisition in such areas of such properties as the local legislative body may deem necessary or proper to effectuate any of the purposes of this article, although temporarily not required for such purposes, and the sale or other disposition of any such properties to private persons for private uses or to public bodies for public uses. Section 19. Taking of property for highways, streets, places, parks or parkways. The general assembly may authorize the acquiring or taking in fee by the state, or by any cities or towns, of more land and property than is needed for actual construction in the establishing, laying out, widening, extending or relocating of public highways, streets, places, parks or parkways; provided, however, that the additional land and property so authorized to be acquired or taken shall be no more in extent than would be sufficient to form suitable building sites abutting on such public highway, street, place, park or parkway. After so much of the land and property has been appropriated for such public highway, street, place, park or parkway as is needed therefor, the remainder may be held and improved for any public purpose or purposes, or may be sold or leased for value with or without suitable restrictions, and in case of any such sale or lease, the person or persons from whom such remainder was taken shall have the first right to purchase or lease the same upon such terms as the state or city or town is willing to sell or lease the same. Section 20. Local off-street parking facilities. The general assembly may authorize cities and towns to acquire property by eminent domain, or otherwise for the establishment and construction of off-street parking facilities and to maintain and operate or lease the same. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, any of the powers or authorities consistent with the provisions of this article for the provision of off-street parking now vested in public bodies by law, shall continue in existence and may be exercised by said public bodies, except as such powers and authorities may be modified, or repealed by the general assembly. Section 21. Emergency powers in case of enemy attack. The general assembly, in order to insure continuity of state and local governmental operations, including the judicial functions, in periods of emergency resulting from disasters caused by enemy attack, shall have the power and the immediate duty to provide for prompt and temporary succession to the powers and duties of public offices, of whatever nature and whether filled by election or appointment, the incumbents of which may become unavailable for carrying on the powers and duties of such offices, to enact legislation permitting the convening of the general assembly at any place within or without the State of Rhode Island, and to adopt such other measures as may be necessary and proper for insuring the continuity of governmental operations during the period of said emergency. Any law enacted under this section shall apply to all cities and towns regardless of their form of charter. During said period of emergency the general assembly shall have the power to incur state debts exceeding the limitation set forth in Sections 16 and 17 of this article. The powers granted and the laws enacted under this section shall not be effective after two years following the inception of an enemy attack. ARTICLE VII OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Section 1. Composition. The house of representatives shall never exceed one hundred members, and shall be constituted on the basis of population. The general assembly may, after any new census taken by the authority of the United States or this state, reapportion the representation. The representative district shall be as nearly equal in population and as compact in territory as possible. Section 2. Officers Presiding member during organization. The house of representatives shall have authority to elect its speaker, clerks, and other officers. The senior member from the City of Newport, if any be present, shall preside in the organization of the house. ARTICLE VIII OF THE SENATE Section 1. Composition. The senate shall consist of the lieutenant governor and from the senatorial districts in the state. The general assembly may after any presidential election reapportion the state. Such districts shall be as nearly equal in population and as compact in territory as possible. Section 2. The lieutenant governor shall preside in the senate and in grand committee. The presiding officer of the senate and grand committee shall have a right to vote in ca