

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE TIPS

The more we learn about parliamentary procedure, the more efficient and smoother our meetings will be conducted.

MAIN MOTION

Member states:

I move to

Chair:

Is there a second to the motion? Second the motion.

(If there is no second, the motion dies.)

It has been moved and seconded to

Is there any discussion?

Put to vote:

It has been moved and seconded to

All in favor, yes/aye.

Opposed, no.

Aye vote: Motion is carried.

No vote: Motion is defeated.

AMENDMENTS

First Amendment of a Main Motion

The reason to make an amendment to a main motion is to modify or change the motion.

Member states:

I move that we amend the motion by (adding, striking out, inserting, strike out and insert, substitute, or divide) the words -----.

Second to motion.

Chair:

It is moved and seconded that we amend the motion by (state the amendment), so that the motion, if amended, will read (state the motion as it would be changed by the amendment). Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Put to Vote:

The vote is on the amendment that we (state the amendment). Those in favor of the amendment say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'.

Aye vote: The 'Ayes' have it and the amendment is carried. The next business is the motion as amended which reads that (state motion as amended). Is there any discussion on the motion as amended?

The vote is on the motion as amended that we (state the motion). Those in favor say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'. If the 'Ayes' have it, motion is carried. If the 'Noes' have it, the motion is lost.

No vote: The 'Noes' have it and the amendment is lost. Is there any further discussion on the original motion? The original motion is open to further amendment.

When no additional amendments are submitted for consideration - The vote is on the motion that we (state the motion). Those in favor say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'. If the 'Ayes' have it, motion is carried. If the 'Noes' have it, the motion is lost.

Second Amendment of a Main Motion

A member may amend an amendment. The reason to amend the first amendment is to modify or change the first amendment.

Third Amendment of a Main Motion

Amendments of the second amendment are not permitted as it would make the parliamentary situation too complicated. (Thank goodness!)

REFER TO A COMMITTEE

There are times when it would be beneficial to refer the motion or resolution to a committee for study or redrafting before it is considered further. Such action can be proposed by moving to refer the main question to a committee.

Motion:

Member: I move that we refer this question (or resolution) to (state the committee or person to which it is being referred).

Second is obtained.

Chair: It is moved and seconded that we refer this pending motion (or motions) to (state the committee or person to which it is being referred). Is there any discussion on the motion to refer?

Those in favor of the motion to refer say, Aye.

Those opposed say, No.

Aye vote: The Ayes have it, and the motion to refer is carried.

No vote: The Noes have it, and the motion to refer is lost. Is there any further discussion on the pending question which is (state the original motion or the amendment that is immediately pending)?

A motion to refer may be amended.

LAY ON THE TABLE / TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE

Lay on the Table

If there is a reason for the assembly to lay the main motion aside temporarily without setting a time for resuming its consideration, but with the provision that it can be taken up again whenever a majority so decides, this can be proposed by the motion to *Lay on the Table*.

Member:

I move that we table the main motion. Second obtained.

Chair: It is moved and seconded that we table the motion. Those in favor of the motion to table say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'.

Aye vote: The 'Ayes' have it and the motion (state the motion) is tabled. Is there any other business?

No vote: The 'Noes' have it and the motion to table is lost. Is there any further discussion on the motion (state the motion immediately pending)?

To Take From the Table

Member: I move that we take from the table the motion to (state the motion that was tabled). Second obtained.

Chair: It is moved and seconded that we take from the table the motion to (state motion that was tabled). Those in favor of taking this motion from the table say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'.

Aye vote: The 'Ayes' have it, and the motion to take from the table is carried. You now have before you the motion to (state the motion taken from the table). Is there any discussion on this motion? Put to vote the motion.

No vote: The 'Noes' have it and the motion to take from the table is lost. Is there any other business?

DO PARLIAMENTARIANS MAKE RULINGS?

Do parliamentarians make rulings?

No. The parliamentarian gives advice and renders opinions to the president and speaker of the house. The president and speaker of the house make the rulings. Decisions are governed by the bylaws of the society/chapter and by *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

Minutes

The purpose of keeping minutes of meetings is to provide a permanent record of an accurate account of the action taken. The minutes must be approved by the body for which the minutes are written.

Is it necessary to read minutes at a meeting?

No, it is not necessary to read the minutes at a meeting if they have been circulated to the membership. The chair states, "The minutes have been distributed to you for review. Are there any corrections to the minutes?" After the request for corrections, the chair entertains a motion to accept the minutes as corrected (or printed).

Does the presiding officer vote?

If the presiding officer is a member of the assembly, he/she can vote as any other member when the vote is by ballot. In all other cases the presiding officer, if a member of the assembly, can (but is not obliged to) vote whenever his/her vote will affect the result. That is, he/she can vote either to break or cause a tie; or, in a case where a two-thirds vote is required, he/she can vote either to cause or to block the attainment of the necessary two thirds.

On a tie vote, a motion requiring a majority vote for adoption is lost, since a tie is not a majority. If there is a tie without the chair's vote, the presiding officer can, if he/she is a member, vote in the affirmative, thereby causing the motion to be adopted; or, if there is one more in the affirmative than in the negative without the chair's vote (for example if there are 32 votes in favor and 31 opposed), he/she can vote in the negative to create a tie causing the motion to be rejected.

In the case of a motion requiring a two-thirds vote, if, without the chair's vote, the number in the affirmative is one less than twice the number in the negative (for example, if there are 59 in the affirmative and 30 in the negative), the chair, if a member, can vote in the affirmative and cause the motion to be adopted. Or, if there are exactly two-thirds in the affirmative without his/her vote (for example, if there are 60 in the affirmative and 30 in the negative), the chair can vote in the negative, with the result that the motion is rejected. The chair's vote might affect the result in cases where a *majority of the members* can decide a question.

A presiding officer can speak on any motion by asking someone to preside while he/she takes the floor.

A wise presiding officer does not vote when his/her vote would not be decisive simply because as the umpire of the contest between the proponents and the opponents his/her task is easier when he/she refuses to take sides in the controversy.

Call for the Question

When members call out informally, “Question! Question!” or “Call for the question!” it means only that they as individuals are ready to vote on the pending question or motion. It is their informal answer to the chairman’s query, “Are you ready for the question?” This informal “call for the question” by members of the assembly must be clearly differentiated from the formal motion “to close debate and vote immediately on the pending question,” or the formal “I move the Previous Question.”

Close Debate

“I move the Previous Question” is the old, brief way of moving to close debate. To close debate takes precedence of all debatable questions and all subsidiary motions except “to lay on the table.” It requires a two-thirds vote to pass. Its effect is confined to the immediately pending motion be it subsidiary motion, amendment, or main motion unless it specifically indicates otherwise, as, “close debate on all pending questions, or all subsidiary motions, or all motions except the main question.” The motion cannot be debated nor amended. The motion cannot have any subsidiary motion applied to it, nor to the main question while it is pending except the motion to lay on the table.

Member

I move that we close debate and vote immediately on the pending question. (Note: If there are several motions pending a member may “move to close debate and vote immediately on all pending questions.”) Seconded.

Chair

It is moved and seconded that we close debate and vote immediately on the pending question. Those in favor of closing debate say ‘Aye’. Those opposed say ‘No’.

Aye vote

The Ayes have it by a two-thirds vote, and the motion to close debate is carried. The next business is the vote on the original motion or amendment or whatever the motion is, which reads that we (read the immediately pending motion). Those in favor of the say ‘Aye’. Those opposed say ‘No’.

No vote

The Noes have it by more than a one-third vote and the motion to close debate is lost. Is there any further discussion on the original motion, amendment or whatever is immediately pending?

To Limit Debate

The rules are the same as a motion to close debate except it may be amended and does not cut off other subsidiary motions.

Member

I move that debate be limited (to twenty minutes or to five minutes for each speaker or to three speakers on each side) or (that debate close at ten o'clock). Seconded.

Chair

It is moved and seconded that debate be limited to . . . Those in favor say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'.

Aye vote

The Ayes have it by a two-thirds vote, and the motion to limit debate to . . . is carried.

Discussion is now on the original motion, amendment, etc.

No vote

The Noes have it by more than a one-third vote and the motion to limit debate is lost. Is there any discussion on the original motion, amendment, or etc.?

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Put to vote:

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All in favor, yes/aye.

Opposed, no.

Aye vote: Motion is carried.

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Member states:

I move that we amend the motion by (adding, striking out, inserting, strike out and insert, substitute, or divide) the words -----.

Second to motion.

Chair:

It is moved and seconded that we amend the motion by (state the amendment), so that the motion, if amended, will read (state the motion as it would be changed by the amendment). Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Put to Vote:

The vote is on the amendment that we (state the amendment). Those in favor of the amendment say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'.

Aye vote: The 'Ayes' have it and the amendment is carried. The next business is the motion as amended which reads that (state motion as amended). Is there any discussion on the motion as amended?

The vote is on the motion as amended that we (state the motion). Those in favor say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'. If the 'Ayes' have it, motion is carried. If the 'Noes' have it, the motion is lost.

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Second is obtained.

Chair: It is moved and seconded that we refer this pending motion (or motions) to (state the committee or person to which it is being referred). Is there any discussion on the motion to refer?

Those in favor of the motion to refer say, Aye.

Those opposed say, No.

Aye vote: The Ayes have it, and the motion to refer is carried.

No vote: The Noes have it, and the motion to refer is lost. Is there any further discussion on the pending question which is (state the original motion or the amendment that is immediately pending)?

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Aye vote: The 'Ayes' have it and the motion (state the motion) is tabled. Is there any other business?

No vote: The 'Noes' have it and the motion to table is lost. Is there any further discussion on the motion (state the motion immediately pending)?

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Aye vote: The 'Ayes' have it, and the motion to take from the table is carried. You now have before you the motion to (state the motion taken from the table). Is there any discussion on this motion? Put to vote the motion.

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Put to Vote:

The vote is on the amendment that we (state the amendment). Those in favor of the amendment say 'Aye'. Those opposed say 'No'.

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Second is obtained.

Chair: It is moved and seconded that we refer this pending motion (or motions) to (state the committee or person to which it is being referred). Is there any discussion on the motion to refer?

Those in favor of the motion to refer say, Aye.

Those opposed say, No.

Aye vote: The Ayes have it, and the motion to refer is carried.

No vote: The Noes have it, and the motion to refer is lost. Is there any further discussion on the pending question which is (state the original motion or the amendment that is immediately pending)?

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Aye vote: The 'Ayes' have it and the motion (state the motion) is tabled. Is there any other business?

No vote: The 'Noes' have it and the motion to table is lost. Is there any further discussion on the motion (state the motion immediately pending)?

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