

A SUMMARY OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

*Originally prepared by Arthur C. Hastings, October 22, 1968;
modified by the Steering Committee of the
Senate of the Academic Council, September 11, 1974, so as to accord with
the SENATE RULES (SenD#1140)*

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A SUMMARY OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

1. THE BASIC PROCEDURE IN MAKING A MOTION IS AS FOLLOWS:

- a. A member seeks and obtains recognition by the Chair. He then has the floor.
- b. The member proposes a motion: "Madam Chair, I move that..."
- c. The motion is seconded.¹
- d. The Chair states the motion to indicate that it is in order and open for discussion.
- e. The motion is discussed.²
- f. The motion is put to a vote and the result of the vote is announced by the Chair.

A motion made in this manner is a MAIN MOTION. It states the proposal and should do so as simply and specifically as possible. Whenever possible, the motion should be written and handed to the Chair.

2. ONCE A MOTION IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION, THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS OF DISPOSING OF IT.

- a. VOTING A MOTION UP OR DOWN.³
- b. INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT. The member obtains recognition by the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move that this motion be postponed indefinitely."

The motion to postpone indefinitely requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to postpone indefinitely may be debated. A motion to postpone indefinitely is used when the Senate wishes neither to pass nor reject a proposal; it is a way of dropping that proposal without commitment on the issue. If a main motion is postponed indefinitely, it may not be brought up again at the same meeting, though it may be reintroduced at a subsequent meeting.

¹ A motion introduced by a Committee of the Academic Council or Senate is deemed to be moved and seconded.

² Under Senate Rule II, 4, a, items on the Action Calendar must be debated and voted on within the time limit specified by the Steering Committee.

³ Voting procedures are specified in Senate Rule IV, 7, a, b and c.

- c. DEFINITE POSTPONEMENT. The member obtains recognition by the Chair:
"Mr. Chair, I move to postpone the motion until
i) Later in this meeting
ii) A specified time in this meeting (e.g. 4:30 p.m.)
iii) A later meeting (e.g. December 14)."

A motion to postpone to a definite time requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to postpone definitely may be debated, but such is strictly limited to a discussion of the propriety or wisdom of postponing the motion: the merits of the main motion may not be debated. This action may be used when a motion would be better considered at another time, e.g. because of the attendance of necessary resource persons. A motion to postpone definitely must state specifically when the original main motion is to be reintroduced. If the definite time is during the same meeting, then other business stops at that time, or reasonably close thereto, and the original main motion is back on the floor. If the definite time is at a later meeting, the main motion which has been postponed automatically falls into the category of Unfinished Business and must be taken up at the specified meeting unless the Senate by a two-thirds vote rejects its consideration.

- d. TABLING A MOTION.⁴ The member should obtain recognition by the Chair:
"Madam Chair, I move that the motion be tabled."

A motion to table requires:

- i) A second
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to table may not be debated. This action is used when more urgent business must be taken up by the Senate. A main motion which has been tabled may be raised later at the same meeting, and when so taken up has precedence over any other main motion before the Senate. However, if a motion which has been tabled is not taken up later at the same meeting, it is treated as having been dropped from the agenda and does not recur under the heading of Unfinished Business at a subsequent meeting, though it may be raised anew at a subsequent meeting.

- e. AMENDING A MAIN MOTION. The member should obtain recognition by the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move to amend the motion by (e.g. adding the words ...)"

A motion to amend properly includes motions

- i) To strike out words, phrases or paragraphs within a main motion or a primary amendment.
- ii) To add the same.

⁴ Under Senate Rule II, 6, a matter placed on the agenda by the Steering Committee may not be tabled; though a motion may properly be made to postpone definitely or indefinitely, or to refer to committee any such item.

- iii) To substitute new language for specified language in the original main motion or a primary amendment.

However, if an entirely new text is proposed as a substitute for a main motion, such a motion to substitute the new text may not be introduced while an amendment is pending. A motion to amend requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to amend may be debated. This action is intended to bring the main motion into closer agreement with the wishes of the Senate, and it should be carefully phrased so as to achieve that purpose. On matters on which there is general agreement, debate on an amendment may be shortened if the proposers (the mover and seconder) of the original main motion indicate, by "accepting the amendment," that they are in sympathy with the suggested change. While an amendment to a main motion is under debate, it is proper to move an amendment to a primary amendment. However, third order amendments may not be moved.⁵ Prior to a vote on a primary or secondary amendment the proposers of such amendments may withdraw them. It should be noted that items on the Action Calendar may be voted up or down, or removed, but they may not be amended.⁶

- f. REFERRING A MOTION TO COMMITTEE. The member should obtain recognition by the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move to refer the motion to a (or to a specific) Committee."

A motion referred to committee requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to refer to committee may be debated but such debate is limited to the question of referring a main motion to a committee: the merits of the main motion itself may not be debated. A motion to refer to committee may properly embrace instructions to the committee, details as to the composition of the committee, and the date on which the committee is required to report.

- g. DIVIDING A QUESTION. The member should obtain recognition by the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move to divide the question into (a specified number of) parts."

A motion to divide a question requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to divide a question may not be debated. Division of a main motion is commonly effected by general consent rather than by a formal motion to do so. It is desirable to move the division of a question when the motion is first

⁵ Senate Rule IV, 6.

⁶ Senate Rule II, 4, a, explicitly prohibits amendment of items on the Action Calendar.

introduced, but this action is in order at any time except when an amendment to the main motion is pending.

- h. A SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS. The member should obtain recognition from the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move that the Senate take up a special order of business, namely..."

A motion to take up a special order of business requires

- i) A second.
- ii) A two-thirds vote in order to carry.

A motion to take up a special order of business may not be debated. Such a motion must specify the topic which it is proposed to take up and it may specify the time period within which discussion of the special business must be confined.

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- i. LIMITING DEBATE.⁷ The member should obtain recognition by the Chair: "Madam. Chair, I move that debate of the pending business be limited (e.g. to more speakers, or e.g. until 4:30 p.m.)"

A motion to limit debate requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A two-thirds vote in order to carry.

A motion to limit debate may be debated, but such debate must be confined to the merits of the time-limitation: the merits of the main motion may not be debated. A motion to limit debate is open to amendment of the time limits specified by the mover and seconder to limit debate.

- j. CLOSING A DEBATE. The member should obtain recognition by the Chair: "Madam. Chair, I move the previous question."

Motion of the previous question requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A two-thirds vote in order to carry.

Motion of the previous question may not be debated. If a motion of the previous question carries when put to the vote, all debate on the pending question ceases, and the pending question is put to vote immediately. Strictly speaking, pending questions may embrace (a) a main motion and (b) amendments to a main motion; on a successful vote of previous question, all pending questions must be voted on in order, i.e. pending amendments and then the main motion. However, it should be noted that the Senate has regularly entertained and passed motions to close debate on an amendment without closing debate on the main motion.

⁷ Under Senate Rule II, 4, a, the Steering Committee is empowered to specify the time allotted for discussion of items on the Action Calendar, and there is no appeal against these announced time limits except by a motion to suspend the Rules supported by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

- k. CLAIMING THAT AN ITEM IS IMPROPER BUSINESS.⁸ The member should obtain recognition from the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move that the matter under discussion is not the proper business of the Senate."

A motion that an item is not the proper business of the Senate requires:

- i) A second
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion that an item is not the proper business of the Senate may not be debated. When moved and seconded, this motion takes precedence over all other motions concerning the pending item.

- l. RECONSIDERING A MOTION. The member should obtain recognition from the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move that the Senate reconsider the motion that..."

A motion to reconsider business previously transacted requires:

- i) That the proposer of this motion must previously have voted with the prevailing side on the earlier item.
- ii) A second.
- iii) That the motion be made at the same meeting at which the item was earlier considered and acted on.
- iv) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to reconsider may be debated. Such a motion ordinarily arises when, during the course of a meeting, information bearing on an earlier item of business becomes available to the Senate for the first time.

- m. MOVING A REPEAL. The member should obtain recognition by the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move that the (specified) motion passed (at our previous meeting or earlier in this meeting be repealed."

A motion to repeal requires:

- i) That no other motion is pending.
- ii) A second.
- iii) A two-thirds vote in order to carry.

A motion to repeal may be debated and it may be amended. An exception to the requirement for a two-thirds carrying vote arises when a member gives due advance notice, either orally at a meeting of the Senate or in the call for a meeting of the Senate, that a motion to repeal will be made. It may be noted that so far the only Senate actions that can be described as having been in any sense repealed have, in fact, been actions that were superseded by subsequent Senate actions.

⁸ Under Senate Rule II, 4, a, a member may, at any time during the debate of an action, move that the item is not the proper business of the Senate.

- n. REMOVING AN ITEM FROM THE ACTION CALENDAR.⁹ The member should obtain recognition from the Chair: "Mr. Chair, I move that the (specified) item on the Action Calendar be placed at the end of Unfinished Business."

This motion requires:

- i) That the action item is being considered.
- ii) A second.
- iii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to remove an item from the Action Calendar may not be debated.

- o. INVOKING THE TWO-STAGE PROCESS.¹⁰ The member should obtain recognition from the Chair: "Madam Chair, I move that we deal with the (specified) motion under the two-stage process."

A motion to invoke the two-stage process requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

This motion may be debated with respect to the merits of applying the two-stage process to the pending motion, but the main motion may not be debated at this stage. A motion to involve the two-stage process is in order (a) in the introduction of the main motion, (b) at any time during the debate of a main motion: this action takes precedence over all other motions concerning the pending matter except a motion that the pending matter is not the proper business of the Senate.

The two-stage process is useful in dealing with difficult or lengthy items of business, permitting the mover and seconder of a main motion to gain a "Sense of the Senate." The following restrictions apply when the two-stage process is invoked:

- i) During the first stage, i.e. at the meeting in which the motion is introduced, a vote on the main motion or the main motion as amended shall not be binding on the Senate;
- ii) A roll call vote is out of order during the first stage;
- iii) A final vote on the main motion or the main motion as amended is out of order at the meeting in which it is introduced.
- iv) The pending matter must be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting so as to ensure its being considered at that meeting.

⁹ Under Senate Rule II, 4, d, a matter may be removed from the Action Calendar only by a motion to place the matter on the agenda of that meeting at the end of Unfinished Business.

¹⁰ Senate Rule II, 10.

- p. MOVING TO RECESS. The member should obtain recognition by the Chair:
"Mr. Chair, I move that the Senate recess until (specified time)"

A motion to recess requires:

- i) A second.
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to recess may not be debated if there is other business before the Senate, but in the absence of other business it may be debated. If there is general agreement to recess it may not be necessary to put this motion to vote, the house has sometimes gone into recess while ballots are counted.

- q. MOVING TO ADJOURN. The member should obtain recognition by the Chair:
"Madam Chair, I move we adjourn."

A motion to adjourn requires:

- i) A Second.
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

A motion to adjourn is a privileged motion which takes precedence over all other motions, including pending questions: it may not be debated.

3. APPEAL FROM A DECISION OF CHAIR.

Provided the appeal from a decision made by the Chair is lodged immediately after the ruling has been stated, any member may appeal the decision by rising and saying: "I appeal from the decision of the Chair." This appeal may be lodged even if to do so involves interrupting another member who is seeking recognition. An appeal from a decision of the Chair requires:

- i) A second
- ii) A majority vote in order to carry.

Such an appeal may not be debated. On putting the question following an appeal, the Chair must first determine the number of members in favor of sustaining the Chair and then the number of members opposed to the Chair's decision. Only if the number of votes opposing the Chair's decision exceeds the number of votes favoring the Chair's decision it that decision overturned.

4. POINT OF ORDER (Privilege, Information, etc.).

A member may rise at any time and address the Chair: "Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order (Privilege, etc.)" The Chair responds by asking: "What is your point of order?" before the member may then proceed to state his point of order.

5. VOTING PROCEDURES.

These are specified in Senate Rule IV, 7, a, b and c, and state that voting shall be by voice vote, show of hands, roll call, or secret written ballot. Under Charter Article III, E, the secret written ballot was commonly used only in the selection of the Chair and Steering Committee by the Senate-elect.