

Basic Parliamentary Procedure Guide

Putting A Motion on the Floor

To make a motion or amend a motion, a delegate must go to the microphone, be recognized by the presiding officer, state his/her name and local League, then state the motion (or amendment to the motion). The motion (or amendment) is seconded from the floor. The presiding officer then places the motion before the assembly for discussion. The delegate may speak to the motion (or amendment) first. Note: Once a motion is placed before the assembly by the presiding officer, it is under the control of the assembly and does not belong to the delegate making the motion. For example, it cannot be withdrawn later without permission of the assembly.

Seconds to Motions

It is not necessary to agree with a motion to second it. A second only implies that there is more than one person who wishes to discuss the motion. Therefore, if a motion is coming from the Board or committee, it does not need a second from the floor.

Amendments to Motions

A motion that is on the floor may have two amendments pending at one time. However, the first amendment must relate to the main motion and the second amendment must relate to the first amendment to the motion.

Refer or Postpone

A motion to postpone or refer to a committee can be made while a main motion or an amendment to a main motion is pending.

Close Debate

A delegate must go to a microphone and move to close debate (call previous question). The motion needs a second. There is no discussion, and it takes a two-third (2/3) vote of the delegates present and voting to pass. After the motion to close debate is approved, there will be an immediate vote on the pending motion.

Table a Motion

A motion to table ("lay on the table") should not be used to kill the motion on the floor and should not be used to postpone consideration of the motion.

Point of Order

If a delegate believes there was a breach of parliamentary procedure, she/he may rise to a point of order. If the point of order refers to an action made by someone other than the presiding officer, the delegate should give the presiding officer time to correct the problem before interrupting with the point of order. If a delegate wishes to make a motion and is not sure how to proceed, the delegate should ask the presiding officer.

To Limit or Extend Debate (debatable, two thirds vote [2/3])

This motion is used when debate needs to be limited as to time or number who wish to be heard, or extended in time, etc.

I move that debate: be limited to one minute per speaker, be limited to five speakers pro and five speakers con, be extended to ten more speakers, one minute each etc.

Miscellaneous Motions

The following motions have no rank and are usually "incidental" to the business pending or to Convention operations. Some may interrupt other business. There is no debate or vote, and motions are usually ruled upon by the chair.

Question of Privilege - this motion relates to the comfort of the delegates or operation of the assembly.

Parliamentary Inquiry - this motion is used to ask for direction or procedure to accomplish a parliamentary maneuver.

Point of information - this motion is used to seek urgent information necessary before decisions can be made

Division of the Assembly- This requires a standing vote if the voice vote seems inconclusive. A single delegate "calls for a division" and does not need to use a microphone but must be heard. If a counted vote seems necessary, the delegate makes such a motion, which requires a second and a majority vote.

To Reconsider a Vote - This motion can be made only by a delegate who voted on the prevailing side and on the same or next day as the vote it proposes to reconsider. The motion can be moved within the time limits, although the vote on the motion may be delayed until a more appropriate time if other business is pending. This motion is usually debatable and requires a majority vote. If the motion to reconsider is adopted, the original motion is again before the delegate body as though a decision had not been reached. A vote can only be reconsidered once. Approved bylaw amendments may not be reconsidered.

The Principles of Parliamentary Law

Justice to all
Courtesy to all
One thing at a time
The rule of the majority
The rights of the minority