

A Parliamentarian's Role

Silent Leadership; Limitless Gratification



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Parliamentary Workshop

Sacramento City College --- November 7, 2012



Why Parliamentary Procedure?

Principles Underlying Parliamentary Procedure are constructed upon a careful balance of the rights:

- ✓ Of the majority,
- ✓ Of the minority,
- ✓ Of the individual members,
- ✓ Of the absentees, and
- ✓ Of all of these groups together.

Parliamentary Procedure enables the membership:

- ✓ To express its will through its membership,
- ✓ To empower an effective leadership, and
- ✓ To retain direct control of its affairs.

A majority decides the will of the assembly through a deliberative process of full and free discussion.

Every member has the same right to make the maximum effort to have his position declared the will of assembly.

Parliamentary procedure (**effective meeting management**) allows an assembly to arrive at the will of the majority for the greatest number of questions in the shortest amount of time. This is accomplished regardless of whether the assembly is in total harmony or impassionate division of opinion.

Hierarchy of Governance

- ✚ Federal Statutes (regulatory guidelines)
- ✚ State Laws:
 - ✓ Brown Act of 1953
 - ✓ Corporations Code – Board of Directors, Quorum, Voting
- ✚ City and Local Statutes
- ✚ Constitution: Name; Object
- ✚ Bylaws: A Society's Business Defined
- ✚ Rules of Order (Robert's): Everything else
- ✚ Standing Rules: Maintenance rules and operational policies
- ✚ Customs: Scary part

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Debate Protocol (Similar to a trial in front of a judge.)

- ✎ Only one person speaks at a time.
- ✎ A speaker must be recognized before speaking.
- ✎ All comments are made through the chair.
- ✎ Comments are confined to the current issue.
- ✎ Discussion should alternate between Pro and Con.
- ✎ No reading of lengthy papers.
- ✎ No cross conversations; no interruptions.
- ✎ No verbal attacks of other members.
- ✎ If proper decorum cannot be maintained – call a recess.
- ✎ The bylaws or the parliamentary authority specify the debate time limits.
- ✎ Decisions are null and void in the absence of a quorum.
- ✎ The vote required to adopt a motion should always be very clear – majority or 2/3.
- ✎ All decisions are binding on all members regardless of how a member voted.
- ✎ All rules must be respected and obeyed – who can move, debate, vote.

Problem motions during debate

- Request for Information
- Question of Privilege
- Point of Order

[**Temporary Disposition** of a motion means that a motion is not adopted or defeated, yet.

There are a few motions that will accomplish this delay of a final decision:

1. *Move to Lay the motion on the Table.*
This requires a temporary emergency. You probably have never seen this motion applied correctly especially in the movies.
2. *Move to Postpone the motion.*
One may postpone the motion to later in the session or to the next meeting.
3. *Move to Refer the motion.*
One may refer the motion to an ad hoc or a standing committee, and have the committee report at the next meeting or later.]

Purpose and Form for Each Motion

(Beware of Order of Precedence)

Purpose	The Motion and its Form
Propose some action	<p>Main Motion I move to donate \$50 to preserve the habitat of the Clay Pigeon.</p>
Improve a proposal	<p>Amend I move to amend the motion by striking \$50 and inserting \$75.</p>
Change the amount of time for discussion	<p>Limit or Extend Debate I move to limit debate to 1 minute per speaker.</p>
Stop discussion and vote now	<p>Close Debate I call the previous question.</p>
Delay a decision	<p>Refer I move to refer the motion to the bylaws committee</p> <p>Postpone to a Certain Time I move to postpone the motion until after the break.</p> <p>Recess I move to recess for 5 minutes.</p>
Kill a motion	<p>Postpone Indefinitely I move to postpone the motion indefinitely.</p>
Deal with an emergency	<p>Lay on the Table I move to lay the motion on the table.</p> <p>Suspend the Rules (Not Suspend the Orders of the Day) I move to suspend the rules that prohibit us from taking up the new business now.</p>
Obtain information	<p>Parliamentary Inquiry Mr. Chair, if we adopt this motion can we rescind it tomorrow?</p> <p>Request for Information Mr. Chair, can the treasurer tell us if we have enough money for this motion?</p>
Challenge the ruling of the chair	<p>Point of Order Point of Order. We cannot vote on this motion. There is already another motion on the floor.</p> <p>Appeal I appeal from the decision of the chair.</p>
Assure the accuracy of the voice vote	<p>Division Division. Division.</p>
Close the meeting	<p>Adjourn I move to adjourn.</p>



Strategy through Parliamentary Procedure

(Beware of Order of Precedence)

You support the motion	You oppose the motion
Second it promptly and enthusiastically.	Do not second it. Distract the seconder.
Speak in favor of it as soon as possible.	Speak against it as soon as possible. Ask questions that put the proponents on the defensive.
Move to amend it to make it more acceptable. Speak against any amendment that makes the motion less acceptable to you.	Move to amend it, to encumber it adversely. Move to amend it so as to remove what displeases you, or adds what pleases you.
Vote against postponement unless it will strengthen your motion.	Move to postpone to a time when your friends will be there or when others will forget about the motion.
Vote against referring to a committee unless you can vote your friends as committee members. Vote to refer to a committee if defeat appears likely.	Move to refer to a committee and fill the committee with your friends. Vote against referring to a committee if defeat is likely.
Vote against a recess unless you can use it to bring in more of your friends or more facts.	Move to recess so that you can convince some more voters or bring in more friends or more facts.
Make sure your friends do not leave to assure that you have a quorum .	Question the presence of a quorum .
On a voice vote , vote emphatically.	On a voice vote , vote emphatically.
Move to divide the motion if it will strengthen the motion.	Move to divide the motion if it will weaken the motion.
Review your parliamentary authority before the motion comes up.	Review your parliamentary authority before the motion comes up.
Use Point of Order as a shield.	Use Point of Order as a sword.
Beware of the timing on the agenda to assure that the motion is not abandoned.	Use the timing on the agenda to terminate consideration of the motion.
Vote against adjournment in order to continue discussing the motion and to reach a vote.	Move to adjourn to prevent further discussion or a vote.

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Ranking of Selected Motions

	Interrupt	Second	Debate	Amend	Vote
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS					
13. Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn		S		A	M
12. Adjourn		S			M
11. Take a Recess		S		A	M
10. Raise a Question of Privilege	I				C
9. Call for the Orders of the Day	I				C**
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS					
8. Lay on the Table		S			M
7. Previous Question		S			2/3
6. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate		S		A	2/3
5. Postpone to a Certain Time		S	D	A	M**
4. Commit (Refer)		S	D	A	M
3. Amend		S	D**	A	M
2. Postpone Indefinitely		S	D		M
1. MAIN MOTION		S	D	A	M
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (No Ranking)					
Appeal	I	S	D		M
Division of Assembly	I				**
Point of Order	I				C**
Request for Information					C
Suspend the Rules (that prohibit)		S			2/3
BRING AGAIN BEFORE ASSEMBLY					
Rescind/Amend Something Prev Adopted		S	D**	A	**
Reconsider		S	D		M
Discharge a Committee		S	D**	A	**
Take from the Table		S			M

** See Robert's Rules
 C Chair Decides
 I Can Interrupt

S
 A, D
 M or 2/3

Requires a Second
 May be Amended, Debated
 Vote Required to Adopt