



2009-2011 Communications Committee
National Association of Parliamentarians
Lorenzo Cuesta, PRP
May 4, 2011

Incidental Motion to Suspend the Rules

This script illustrates the difference between suspending a standing rule vs suspending any other rule. The script contains 7 speaking parts.

The camera must be ready to capture the next speaker. The participants should be seated in a classroom arrangement. The topic should be handled with casual seriousness. [Comments in square brackets are voting instructions and not to be read aloud.]

This script seeks to illustrate

1. That the incidental motion to suspend the rules must be seconded, but may not be debated or amended;
2. That a standing rule may be suspended with a majority vote; and
3. That all other rules may be suspended with a 2/3 vote if their suspension is legal.

We join the monthly meeting of the San Diego Bird Watchers Society, during the 'Special Committee Report' section of their agenda.

Ch: Now that you have heard their report, are there any questions for the Bird Photograph Contest Committee?

A: (Rises and is recognized) Mr. Chair.

A: I move that my photograph of the duck from the Affleck commercials be admitted into tonight's club contest.

Z: Second

B: Penalty. Penalty.

Z: What? What penalty?

Ch: Does member B wish to raise a point of order?

B: Yes. That's what I said.

Ch: Please state your point.

B: This society has very clear Standing Rules. Before a photograph may be entered in our monthly meetings contests, the photograph has to have been submitted to the secretary 24 hours before the contest. I'm the secretary, and I did not receive the photograph in question.

Ch: Point well taken.



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B: What are you saying? What is correct, ...the violation of our standing rule or your industrious secretary?

Ch: Neither. The point that is well taken is that an existing rule makes the motion not in order. The photograph shall not be accepted in tonight's contest.

A: Are you saying that my photograph is rejected without viewing just because of a rule?

Ch: Exactly.

A: Mr. Chair, I move that we suspend Robert's Rules of Order.

Z: Second.

Ch: This society may adopt a motion to suspend the rules and allow the photograph into tonight's contest, but you cannot suspend a specifically named rule, and you cannot suspend the entire book. Let me rephrase your motion.

Ch: It is moved and seconded to suspend the rules and allow this member's photograph into tonight's contest. Is this what the member intended?

A: Yes. That's what I said.

C: (Rises and is recognized) Mr. Chair.

C: Let me say the following about ...

Ch: Mister C. The motion to suspend the rules is not debatable.

C: I knew that. So, I move to amend the motion by ...

Ch: Mr. C. The motion to suspend the rules is not amendable.

C: I knew that.

Ch: This motion requires a majority vote for adoption.

All in favor of suspending the rules and allowing this member's photograph into tonight's contest, indicate by saying, 'Aye'. [All say 'Aye', except the secretary.]

All opposed, please indicate by saying, 'No'. [Only the secretary votes.]

The 'Ayes' have it. The motion to suspend the rules is adopted.

The photograph will be included in tonight's contest.

Ch: We will now hear the report from the ...

D: (Rises and is recognized) Mr. Chair.

Ch: For what reason does the member seek recognition?

D: I believe we need to settle the issue related to the preservation of the Clay Pigeon's habitat. The motion has been postponed twice already, and...

Ch: Mr. D. That motion is important, and we should ...

E: Point of violation.

Ch: Mr. E. Are you raising a point of order? What is your point of order?



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E: We adopted an agenda. The next item of business is the report from the Bird List Committee, not a postponed motion towards the end of the agenda.

Ch: Point well taken. Our next item of business is the report from the ...

D: (Rises and is recognized) Mr. Chair.

Ch: For what reason does the member seek recognition?

D: I move to suspend the rules that prevent us from dealing with the motion on the Clay Pigeon habitat.

Z: Second.

Ch: It is moved and seconded to suspend the rules that prevent us from dealing with the motion on the Clay Pigeon habitat.

Ch: This motion requires a 2/3 vote for adoption.

D: 2/3s? 2/3s? The last motion to suspend required merely a majority vote. I knew it all along. You are a cat lover.

Ch: The suspension of any rule, except an ordinary standing rule, requires a 2/3 vote for adoption. The last motion to suspend was related to a standing rule. We will decide on whether or not to suspend a motion relating to an adopted agenda.

Ch: Let us vote. All in favor of the motion to suspend, please stand. [All stand]

Thank you, please sit down. All opposed, please stand. [No one stands].

There are 2/3s in the affirmative, and the rules are suspended allowing us to take up the motion on the Clay Pigeon habitat.

Ch: The chair recognizes the Mr. D.