

# The Majority Rules

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But Why Let Them?



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# Parliamentary Workshop

California School Nutrition Association - February 8, 2014



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

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

## Problem motions during debate

- Request for Information
- Question of Privilege (also, Adjourn, Recess)
- Point of Order (also, Previous Question, Division)

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[**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.]

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**Script F: Debate Protocol.** We are under New Business.  
We need 7 speaking roles (Ch, A, B, C, D, E, and Z)

## Poor Situation 1:

**Ch:** Our next item under New Business is what instructions to give the delegates.  
Do we have a motion?

**A:** We should advise them to think of our district, exclusively.  
**B:** No, we should tell them to think of all special districts in California.  
**A:** Member B, you are too inexperienced and narrow minded to advise any delegate.  
**B:** Inexperienced? When I was in the Boys Scouts, I ran the entire Regional Convention.  
Of course I know about conventions.  
**C:** Put a cork in it. Neither one of you knows the difference between changing a light bulb  
and changing a diaper.  
**B:** What do you know, Member C? You have never had to control 500 eager scouts.  
Of course I know how to run a convention.  
**A:** It does not take brains to handle a group whose ideas are still lost in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.  
**B:** Lost? You don't even know how to text with your thumbs. Your mama still dresses you.  
**C:** Mr. Chair, what is the current agenda item?  
The delegates, the Boys Scouts, or Member B's dressing skills?

## Poor Situation 2:

**Ch:** Our next item under New Business is what instructions to give the delegates.  
Do we have a motion?

**A:** We should advise them to think of our district, exclusively.  
**B:** No, we should tell them to think of all special districts in California.

**Ch:** Please wait to be recognized.  
Which of you is ready to make a motion?

**A:** Shouldn't we discuss the topic for 45 minutes so that we can explore everyone's thoughts  
on what the motion should be?

**Ch:** No. All discussion is limited to the motion on the floor. We cannot discuss aimlessly  
fishing for inspiration.

**Ch:** Member A, are you ready to make a motion?  
**A:** **I move that** we advise the delegates to vote only for motions that favor us.  
**Z:** Second  
**B:** But, that means that ...  
**Ch:** Please wait, Member B.  
I need to state the motion so that all know what the discussion is limited to.

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**It is moved and seconded** to advise the delegates to vote only for motions that favor us.  
Are you ready for the question? *[Or, Is there any discussion?]*

**B:** So, does that mean that ...

**Ch:** Member B. You must wait to be recognized before speaking.  
And anyway, the mover of the motion has the right to speak first on the motion.  
The mover of the motion, Member, A has the floor.

**A:** That's OK. I want to hear what others have to say.

**Ch:** Member B, do you wish to speak on the motion?

**B:** Why can't the delegates just meet on their own and decide on their own? Isn't that what delegates are supposed to do? Why do we have to spoon-feed them?

*[Member E raises his hand to seek recognition.]*

**Ch:** Thank you for your comments. Member C has just raised his hand.

**B:** Wait a minute I did not get any answers to my questions.

**Ch:** Member B, you were recognized to discuss, not to make rhetorical questions, or argumentative statements. You did not seek recognition to move, "Request for Information." We listened with respect, and now it is Member C's turn to discuss.

**B:** *[Member B Turns to the Member D who is sitting next to him and asks.]*

Don't you think my questions are valid?

**D:** Shhh. I want to hear Member C's comments. He is always either laughable or profound.

**Ch:** Please no private conversations. Cross talk prevents others from hearing the discussion.

**B:** Can't I take Member D to the back of the room to plan our debate?

**Ch:** The only way your private conversation will not be a distraction to this board is if you quietly take it out in the hallway.

*[Member E and Member B raise their hands to seek recognition.]*

**Ch:** Member C, did you wish to address this board?

**C:** What is the registration fee?

**Ch:** Member C, please confine your comments to the current motion.  
If you have no comments on the current motion, Member B is our next speaker.

**E:** Point of Order, Mr. Chair.

**Ch:** State your Point of Order, Member E.

**E:** I have been seeking recognition for 10 minutes. You keep ignoring me. Actually, you even recognize members who have already spoken and then ignored me. I have not had an opportunity to be heard.

**Ch:** Your Point of Order is well taken. I apologize for that.  
Members who have already spoken will not be recognized again until those who have not spoken have had an opportunity to be heard. You have the floor, Member E.

**E:** I forgot what I was going to say.

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## Six Steps to Handling a Motion

A motion is a formal proposal by a member during a meeting that the assembly take certain action. The basic form of the motion is the Main Motion.

### A Main Motion is brought before an assembly:

1. **Motion is moved:** While no motion is pending, a member rises and seeks recognition. Once she is recognized she has the exclusive right to be heard at that time. Member makes the motion, “***I move*** we allocate \$300 to repair the computers.”
2. **Motion is seconded:** Someone without needing to be recognized, seconds the motion. The seconder is not claiming to agree with motion. The seconder is stating that the motion should be discussed and voted by the organization.
3. **Motion is stated:** The chair states the question, “It is moved and seconded to allocate \$300 to repair the computers.” As the chair turns to the maker of the motion, she states, “Are you ready for the question?” The motion no longer belongs to the mover; it belongs to the assembly.

### A Main Motion is considered by the assembly:

4. **Motion is debated:** All remarks by the members are made to the chair, never to or about another member. Debate can be closed only by a 2/3 vote by the assembly.
5. **Motion is put:** The chair says, “The motion is to allocate \$300 to repair the computers. All in favor of the motion indicate by saying, ‘Aye’.  
All opposed to the motion indicate by saying, ‘No’.”  
The wording of the motion when the question is put is the way it goes into effect.  
A voice vote is the regular method when a majority vote is required for adoption.  
A rising vote is the normal method when a 2/3 vote is required for adoption.  
A ‘show of hands’ is intended for small assemblies or after an inconclusive voice vote.
6. **Vote is announced:** The chair makes the following 4 statements.
  - “The ‘ayes’ have it. Or, the ‘Noes’ have it.”
  - “The motion is adopted. Or, the motion is lost.”
  - The chair states the effect of the vote or orders its execution.
  - “The next item of business is ...”

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## **Script A: Handling a Motion**

**We join the regular monthly meeting during the 'New Business' part of the agenda.**

*[Six speaking roles – CH, A, B, C, D, Z]*

**CH:** The first item under New Business is the purchase of the council's printer system.

*[Step 1]*

**A:** Madam Chair *[Rises and is recognized]*

I move that the council purchase a printer system at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.

*[Step 2]*

**Z:** Second

*[Step 3]*

**CH:** It is moved and seconded that the council purchase a printer system at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.

*[Step 4]*

Are you ready for the question? *[Or, - Is there any debate? Are you ready to vote?]*

**A: and B:** *[Simultaneously]* Madam Chair. *[Both rise seeking recognition]*

**A:** I have distributed several documents illustrating the specifications and benefits of the best printer model under \$1,500. That is the one I suggest we purchase.

**B:** Madam Chair. Shouldn't we buy a new screen instead? Why can't we replace the microphone system instead? I know, let's buy an iPad for each officer, instead.

**CH:** Thank you for your comments. Are you ready for the question?

**A:** *[Is recognized and begins to speak for the second time.]*

**C:** Madam Chair, Point of Order.

**CH:** What is your Point of Order?

**C:** Member A has already spoken once and there are others seeking to speak. Member A should not be recognized again yet.

**CH:** Your point is well taken. Member A will please sit down.

**D:** Madam Chair, Request for Information.

**CH:** What is your question Member D?

**D:** Do we have the right to spend up to \$1,500 on a printer system?

**CH:** The council has already been authorized to spend a certain amount of money on business equipment as long as it is for the benefit of the student body. Are you ready for the question?



*[Step 5]*

**CH:** The question before you is shall the council purchase a printer system at a cost not to exceed \$1,500?

All in favor of the motion indicate by saying, 'Aye'. *[Half say, 'Aye'.]*

All opposed to the motion indicate by saying, 'No'. *[Half say, 'No'.]*

*[Step 6]*

The 'Ayes' have it. The motion is adopted.

**Z:** Division. Division.

**Ch:** Division has been call for.

We need to retake the vote, but by rising.

All in favor of the motion indicate by rising. *[Most do so.]*

All opposed to the motion indicate by rising. *[Few do so.]*

The 'Ayes' have it. The motion is adopted.

The council will purchase a printer system at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.

The next item under New Business is ...

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## Amendments

### 1° Amendment (Form 1) – Insert or Add

1. Original Main Motion

I move to create a president appointed committee to study the Clay Pigeon habitat.

2. What you really wanted was ...

I want it to be a committee of three.

3. You need to move to amend

I move to amend by inserting “**of 3 members**” after the word “committee”.

4. If the amendment is adopted the main motion will read

I move to create a president appointed committee **of 3 members** to study the Clay Pigeon habitat.

### DRILL: Primary Amendment (Form 1)

**Ch:** The motion is to purchase a printer system at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.

Are you ready for the question?

**A:** Madam Chair, I move **to amend** the motion by inserting ...

**Z:** ...

**CH:** It is moved and seconded to amend by inserting ...

Are you ready for the question?

[Assume some debate]

**CH:** The motion before you is to amend by inserting ...

All in favor ...

All opposed ...

The .... have it.

The motion to amend by inserting ... is ...

We are back to the main motion (as amended).

Are you ready for the question?



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## 1° Amendment (Form 2) – Strike

### 1. Original Main Motion

I move to create a president appointed committee to study the Clay Pigeon habitat.

### 2. What you really wanted was ...

I want the members to create the committee, not the president.

### 3. You need to move to amend

I move to amend by striking “**president appointed**” before the word “committee”.

### 4. If the amendment is adopted the main motion will read

I move to create a committee to study the Clay Pigeon habitat.

## DRILL: Primary Amendment (Form 2)

**Ch:** The motion is to purchase a printer system at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.

Are you ready for the question?

**A:** Madam Chair, I move **to amend** the motion by striking ...

**Z:** ...

**CH:** It is moved and seconded to amend by striking ...

Are you ready for the question?

[Assume some debate]

**CH:** The motion before you is to amend by striking ...

All in favor ...

All opposed ...

The .... have it.

The motion to amend by striking ... is ...

We are back to the main motion (as amended).

Are you ready for the question?

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## 1° Amendment (Form 3) – Strike and Insert

### 1. Original Main Motion

I move to create a president appointed committee to study the Clay Pigeon habitat.

### 2. What you really wanted was ...

I want to study Lawn Flamingos, not the Clay Pigeons.

### 3. You need to move to amend

I move to amend by striking “**Clay Pigeon**” before the word “habitat” and inserting “**Lawn Flamingo**”.

### 4. If the amendment is adopted the main motion will read

I move to create a president appointed committee to study the **Lawn Flamingo** habitat.

## DRILL: Primary Amendment (Form 3)

**Ch:** The motion is to purchase a printer system at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.

Are you ready for the question?

**A:** Madam Chair, I move **to amend** the motion by striking ... and inserting ...

**Z:** ...

**CH:** It is moved and seconded to amend by striking ... and inserting ...

Are you ready for the question?

[Assume some debate]

**CH:** The motion before you is to amend by striking ... and inserting ...

All in favor ...

All opposed ...

The .... have it.

The motion to amend by striking ... and inserting ... is ...

We are back to the main motion (as amended).

Are you ready for the question?

## Purpose and Form for Each Motion

(Beware of Order of Precedence)



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

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## Ranking of Selected Motions

	Interrupt	Second	Debate	Amend	Vote
<b>PRIVILEGED MOTIONS</b>					
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**
<b>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</b>					
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
<b>INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (No Ranking)</b>					
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
<b>BRING AGAIN BEFORE ASSEMBLY</b>					
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