

The Majority Rules

But Why Let Them?



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Parliamentary Workshop

Sacramento City College - January 31, 2014



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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

1. Federal Statutes (regulatory guidelines)
2. State Laws:
 - a. Brown Act of 1953
 - b. Corporations Code – Board of Directors, Quorum, Voting
 - c. California Public Records Act
3. City and Local Statutes
4. Constitution: Name; Object
5. Bylaws: A Society's Business Defined
6. Rules of Order (Robert's): Everything else
7. Standing Rules: Maintenance rules and operational policies
8. Customs: Scary part

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Origins of a Motion

1. **Item on an agenda:**
 - a. The chair introduces the item briefly
 - b. A member moves a motion (seconded)
 - c. Debate/Vote.
2. **Item not on an agenda (bylaws allow 'New Business'):**
 - a. A member moves a motion (seconded) related to and during any time on the agenda, or during 'New Business'
 - b. Debate/Vote.
3. **Committee is charged with returning a recommendation:**
 - a. Committee Chair presents a report
 - b. Committee Chair states the committee's recommendations
[Resolutions committees are not charged with moving a motion. They are asked for a recommendation. A member must then move a motion.]
 - c. Any member moves the recommendation as a motion (no second required), or
 - d. Any member moves a slightly different motion (second required), or
 - e. Any member moves a completely different motion (second required)
 - f. Debate/Vote.
4. **Committee is charged with returning a motion (or has the power):**
 - a. Committee Chair presents a report
 - b. Committee Chair moves the committee's motion (no second required)
[A chair may read this expected resolution in the form of a motion and handle it as an assumed motion. Debate would follow without a second required. It is wiser to allow the committee to make its own motion.]
 - c. Debate/Vote.
5. **Chair assumes a routine motion:**
 - a. Chair states, "If there is no objection, a motion to ... will be adopted."
 - b. If there is no objection the motion has been properly adopted without a second, debate, or voting.
 - c. If there is an objection, the chair handles the motion according to Robert's Rules' 6 formal steps.

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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)

[**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 18th 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.

Script F Page 1

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?

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Script B: Postpone to a Certain Time vs. Lay on the Table

[During a regular meeting a Main Motion is temporarily disposed of with a motion to Lay on the Table and then with a motion to Postpone to a Certain Time.] [7 speakers – CH, A, B, C, D, E, Z]

Ch: The motion before you is to hold the next retreat on a cruise ship.
Are you ready for the question?

A: Mr. Chair.

Ch: Yes, Member A.

[As Member A starts to speak, he notices that a high official from our Administrative Office has entered the room signaling a request for a few minutes of the board's time.]

A: I notice that the board's attention is requested by our administration.
I move to Lay the current motion on the Table.

Ch: If there is no objection, the pending question is Laid on the Table.

[No one objects.]

[Notice. No time limit is ever given with the motion to Lay on the Table!]

[The official delivers information on an upcoming fundraiser and leaves.]

B: Mr. Chair.

Ch: Yes, Member B.

B: I move that this board supports the upcoming fundraiser.

Ch: If there is no objection, this board will support the upcoming fundraiser.

[No one objects.]

C: Mr. Chair.

Ch: Yes, Member C.

C: I move to Take from the Table the motion related to our retreat on a cruise ship.

Ch: If there is no objection, the motion related to our retreat on a cruise ship will be Taken from the Table.

[No one objects.]

[Member A speaks, but too much.]

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D: Mr. Chair.

Ch: Yes, Member D.

D: I move to Postpone the pending question until after the break.

Z: Second

Ch: If there is no objection, the pending question will be Postponed until after the break.

E: I object

[Since Member E objected, he is Seconding the motion to Postpone which is now ready for debate, amendments, and voting.]

Ch: Member E, you have the floor.

E: Our schedule for today is already full. We will need more time than expected for this motion. I move to amend the motion by striking the phrase "until after the break".

Z: Second

Ch: If there is no objection, the pending question will be amended by striking the phrase "until after the break".

[No one objects.]

Ch: The motion to Amend the Postpone motion ...is adopted by unanimous consent.

We are now back on the motion to Postpone. Except now as amended.

Are you ready for the question?

Ch: If there is no objection, the motion to Postpone the Main Motion will be adopted.

[No one objects.]

Ch: The motion related to our next retreat is Postponed until our next meeting.

Ch: The next item of business is ...

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Script C: Refer a Main Motion to a Committee

[6 speaking roles: Chair, Sect, A, B, C, and Z]

The subsidiary motion to commit or to refer requires several elements:

Refer to a Standing Committee	Refer to a Special (Ad Hoc) Committee
1. Instructions on the task 2. Date of when to report back 3. Which existing Standing Committee	1. Instructions on the task 2. Date of when to report back 3. Number of Committee members 4. Names of Committee members 5. Name of Committee Chair

Ch: Is there any new business?

A: *(Rises and is recognized)* I move we hold our next Annual Meeting at the Hilton Hotel

Z: Second

A: *(Rises and is recognized)* Everyone loves a big hotel when away from work.

B: *(Rises and is recognized)* We cannot decide this right now without more information. This question should be studied by a special committee.

Ch: Is that a motion?

B: Yes. I move we create a special committee of 3 members with me as the chair. I think member C and member D should be committee members.

Z: Second

Ch: What would you have this committee do?

B: The committee should explore the costs associated with renting a meeting hall in the top three hotels in downtown Sacramento, CA. and report at the next meeting.

Z: Second

Ch: The secretary will please read the motion.

Sect: "That we create a special committee of 3 members with member B as the chair, and with member C and member D as committee members. The committee should explore the costs associated with renting a meeting hall in the top three hotels in downtown Sacramento, CA. and report at the next meeting."

Ch: The motion, as read by the secretary, is moved and seconded.
Are you ready for the question?

C: *(Rises and is recognized)* I move to postpone the main motion to 4:00 p.m. this afternoon.

Z: Second

Ch: It is moved and seconded to postpone the main motion to 4:00 p.m. this afternoon.
Are you ready for the question?

If there is no objection, the main motion will be postponed to 4:00 p.m. this afternoon.

Purpose and Form for Each Motion

(Beware of Order of Precedence)



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

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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