



COLORADO YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

1. The majority rules (on most votes)
2. Free debate on issues. A 2/3 vote is required to end debate.
3. Equal treatment of all members.
4. Each person must be recognized by the Chair before they speak.

How to Figure Out Which Rule Decides a Situation

Delegates make “motions” which are verbal suggestions. The committee chair must recognize a member before a motion is properly made, with few exceptions.

How to Rank Motions

Rank is critical. Motions have a “rank” in relation to each other. This is to determine which motion will be considered first when there’s more than one to be considered.

Keep in mind three categories: Main Motions, Subsidiary Motions, and Privileged Motions.

1. **Main Motions** have the lowest rank and amount to nothing more than the basic proposal that is before the group. Usually for Youth in Government, this means a motion to pass a particular bill or concerning a veto.
2. **Subsidiary Motions** have a middle rank and settle details regarding the main motion under consideration.
3. **Privileged Motions** are the highest rank and don’t really have anything to do with the main motion that is being considered, but relate to situations like not being able to hear and parliamentary rules not being followed.

The Significance of Rank

Rule: A motion is out of order if a motion of higher rank is pending (already under consideration).

The main motion, like a motion to pass Senate Bill 22, is the first item that would be discussed. While this decision is being discussed, a person recognized by the chair makes a motion to send this bill back to committee to change some wording in the bill (motion to refer to committee, a subsidiary motion). Now the discussion changes from the Bill to deciding whether or not to send the Bill back to committee for some changes. This is all that can be discussed, not the Bill or its ideas. If the motion passes, that is all the discussion on this Bill until the committee looks at it again and sends it back to chamber. If the motion to refer fails, the group will go back to what it was doing before the motion was made - discussing the Bill and its passage.

MAIN MOTIONS

Rule: Only one main motion under consideration at a time.

A main motion does not always have to deal with a Bill - it can be any basic decision.

Rules That Apply to Main Motions

1. A second is required. A second is indicated merely by calling out the word loudly enough for the Presiding Officer to hear. Recognition by the Chair is not needed.
2. They are debatable, the Presiding Officer decides who speaks.
3. During debate, members recognized by the Chair may make subsidiary motions that will affect the main motion.
4. Unless otherwise designated, a majority vote decides all motions.
5. Once decided, the vote on a main motion must stand unless a motion to reconsider is passed.
6. Main motions never get voted on if a subsidiary motion somehow stops such a vote, such as postponing consideration for 20 years.

Types of Main Motions

1. To pass a Bill.
2. To reconsider, or bring something back into consideration after it has been voted on, whether or not it applies to a main motion.
3. To rescind, or simply erase earlier action on something.
4. To establish a rule of the chamber.
5. To do anything when there is not another motion on the floor, a motion to adjourn usually is classified as a privileged motion, but that is if a main motion is already pending. Also, to make announcements, to take from the table, or consider a veto.

Motion to Reconsider

1. Can be made only once as to a given vote.
2. If passed, restores the meeting to where it was just before the previous vote was taken. If information on this has been lost, it will be reconsidered from scratch.
3. Needs a second.
4. Majority vote.
5. Debatable only if the motion to be reconsidered was debatable in the first place.
6. Does not apply to a motion to adjourn or table.
7. May be laid on the table or postponed to a definite time or have a motion which concerns debate applied to it, but no other motions apply to the motion to reconsider.
8. May be only made by a person who voted on the side that won the first vote.
9. Person making the motion may interrupt a member who has the floor if taking the vote immediately truly would be more efficient for the chamber; this will not be often.

Motions to Rescind or Repeal

1. If passed, a motion to rescind, which is the same as repeal, takes back an earlier vote without calling for a second vote on the question.
2. Needs a second.
3. Majority vote.
4. Debatable.
5. Applies to: Main motions, questions or privilege and appeals of a decision of the chair.
6. All subsidiary motions may apply to it.
7. Can be made by any member, regardless of how the movant voted on the motion to be rescinded.

Motions Regarding Rules of the Chamber

1. Standing Youth in Government rules cannot be changed.
2. To establish or change a rule, a majority vote is needed.
3. To SUSPEND, or temporarily change a rule, requires a 2/3 vote.

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

Definition: A subsidiary motion "does" something to the main motion that is pending.

A bill that never passes often is derailed by a subsidiary motion, postponement, or lay on the table. For example, a Bill that might not pass but for an amendment can also trace its fate to subsidiary motions.

Rules That Apply to Subsidiary Motions

1. A subsidiary motion is out of order unless there is a main motion pending that the subsidiary motion applies to.
2. Subsidiary motions are made during the course of debate.
3. A person cannot argue about the Bill and then make a subsidiary motion: other than for brief accompanying remarks, a person recognized during debate must either debate or make a motion.
4. Needs a second.
5. Not all subsidiary motions are debatable.
6. Some subsidiaries that are pending may not get voted on if a higher ranked motion is made and adopted that disposes of the need to vote on the lower ranking motions.
7. A vote on the main motion never is taken until all pending subsidiary motions have been voted on.
8. All subsidiary motions require a majority vote for approval, except for motions to limit, end, or extend debate, which require a 2/3 vote for approval.
9. Some subsidiary motions apply only to certain types of motions. For example, a motion to lay on the table applies only to main motions and any other pending motions that attach to it; the motion to table cannot be applied just to a

subsidiary motion.

List and Rank of Subsidiary Motions

1. Table a Bill – Highest rank
2. End debate
3. Limit or extend debate
4. Postpone to a certain time
5. Refer to committee
6. Amend
7. Postpone indefinitely – Lowest Rank

Motions to Table (“I move to table Bill ###”)

1. May be presented at any time, since a privileged motion usually is disposed of without affecting the deliberations on the main motion and this motion is in order when any other subsidiary motion is pending.
2. The effect of adoption by majority vote is to place the main motion and all pending subsidiary motions into a sort of limbo that ends only when a motion to “take from the table” is passed by a majority vote; treated like a main motion.
3. Applies only to the main motion and any subsidiary motions; cannot apply to just a subsidiary motion.
4. Subsidiary motions cannot apply to it; for example, it cannot be amended.
5. Out of order if an objection to consideration has just been defeated.

CANNOT BE RECONSIDERED – JUST MOVE TO TAKE FROM TABLE

Motion to End Debate

Also known as: The Previous Question (“I move previous question”)

1. Not in order if motion to table is pending.
2. Effect of adoption is to end debate on whatever is being debated and vote on the pending motion.
3. The maker of this motion can move to end all debate on anything that is debatable which would mean voting right down the line to the main motion without any debate. This intent will not be presumed unless the maker of the motion states it that way. Also, the Author or Sponsor of the action pending cannot make this motion; it must be made by some else.
4. Requires a 2/3 vote for passage.
5. Cannot be debated or amended.
6. This motion can be reconsidered in cases where there was confusion such as how to vote.
7. In Committee, keep in mind that a motion to amend may be the subject of debate when this motion is passed. After taking a vote on the amendment, the floor will be open for debate on the main motion or another amendment unless the Previous Question motion included the main motion in its statement.

Motion to Limit or Extend Debate

Debate can be extended when a motion is made to lift the existing time limit on debate. The motion can specify a time limit or can extend debate until no one has anything else to say on the subject, or a motion to end debate is carried.

USE THIS MOTION SPARINGLY

1. Not in order if motion to table or end debate is pending.
2. Can be amended as to the time involved.
3. Debatable as to the merits of limiting or extending debate.

Officers have complete discretion to determine if a committee needs to limit debate; otherwise equal time should be distributed over the docket.

Motion to Postpone to a Certain Time

Rule applies only to the main motion.

1. Not in order if motion to lay on the table, end debate, or limit or extend debate is pending.
2. Requires majority for passage.
3. May be made as a main motion if no other motion already is pending.
4. Debatable, but only as to the time of postponement.
5. Amendable, but only as to the time of postponement.
6. Can be reconsidered.
7. Effect of passage is to insert the matter to be postponed into the agenda for the time specified.

Motions to Refer to Committee

When to use: When it becomes clear on the floor of the Legislative Chamber that the Bill needs an amendment or if the Bill just is not ready for passage.

1. Requires a majority vote for passage.
2. Debatable as to wisdom of referral.

The Effect of Passage: Bill is sent to the committee named in the motion or the committee it came from originally if none is specified in the motion where the committee presumably will do whatever the chamber said needs to be done. That is still the committee's choice.

3. If referred to committee, the Bill keeps its priority and "Do Pass" committee vote.
4. Applies only to the main motion.
5. May be reconsidered.
6. May be amended only as to which committee or instructions to the committee.
7. Subsidiary motions do not apply to this motion; for example, you cannot lay it on the table.

Motion to Amend

1. Requires a majority vote for approval.
2. Amendments, at least theoretically, are unlimited, although they must be made in Committee or a Committee of the Whole.
3. Debatable, but on the amendments, not the main motion.
4. Amendable, but only once. That is, an amendment may be changed once. This is different from multiple motions to amend the bill.
5. Can be reconsidered, but not tabled, postponed, or referred apart from the main motion.
6. Amendments must be germane to the Bill's purpose.
7. Amendments can be to delete part of a bill.

Motion to Postpone Indefinitely

1. Requires a majority vote for passage.
2. Not in order when anything other than a main motion is pending.
3. Debatable as to the wisdom of postponement.
4. Cannot be amended or referred.
5. Only subsidiary motion that can apply to it is one concerning debate: even then, such a motion is of quite dubious value.
6. Effect of passage: Matter postponed indefinitely cannot be brought up again until the chambers or committee's next meeting. If the chamber or committee is in the last meeting of this year's session, the Bill is killed unless action is rescinded or successfully reconsidered.
7. Has no effect on priority assigned by committee.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

Definition: A privileged motion, rather than directly affecting a Bill, addresses some important decision by the Chamber that is more important than any main motion that is pending.

For example, if a Legislator cannot hear because of the noise on the floor, he/she might raise to the presiding Officer a question regarding personal privilege such as the personal privilege of being able to hear the debate of a Bill. The chair can dispose of this matter and then get back to the main motion and its consideration.

Type of Privileged Motions

1. Adjourn – always in order.
2. Recess – almost always in order.
3. Question of Privilege
 - a. Point of Order
 - b. Point of Inquiry
 - c. General Questions of Privilege
 - d. Appeal a Decision of the Chair

e. Objection to Consideration

Motion to Adjourn

In Youth in Government terms, to stop the current meeting for a short time. For example: To stop for lunch, for committee meetings, or for the evening.

1. Requires a majority vote.
2. Can be amended regarding time.
3. Requires a second.
4. Cannot be reconsidered.
5. Not debatable, except as to the time to which the recess is made.
6. This motion applies to no other motions, and the only motion that applies to it is one to amend as discussed in number 2 above.

Point of Order/Parliamentary Procedure

Purpose: To correct a mistake in procedure that apparently had been missed by the Presiding Officer.

1. No vote is taken on this so in this sense, it is not a “motion”. It is simply a member of the legislature calling attention to a suspected error.
2. Speaker does not have to wait for recognition: just rise and call out “Point of Order” or “Point of Parliamentary Procedure.”
3. Presiding Officer must recognize and inquire into the point, although the Chair may finish what it is doing first if it is appropriate to do so.
4. Presiding Officer may or may not agree with the Point of Order. If not, the only recourse is to appeal the Chair’s decision to the Parliamentarian or to the Chamber.

As any Youth in Government participant quickly learns, this is a very popular parliamentary maneuver. It is also abused and the chamber spends its time debating fine points of parliamentary procedure rather than legislation.

Point of Inquiry

Purpose: To satisfy an urgent need for information such as what vote is being taken at that moment.

1. Like a point of order, no vote is taken: it is just a request for clarification.
2. Speaker does not have to wait for recognition: just rise and call out “Point of Inquiry.”
3. Presiding Officer must recognize and find out what the problem is, although the chair is expected to use good judgment as to when to interrupt something else such as counting votes.
4. Once the answer is received, that is it on this particular maneuver.
5. This is not the opportunity for someone to state their opinion or give an argument for or against the bill under discussion.

THIS IS SUBJECT TO MUCH ABUSE

General Questions of Privilege

Purpose: To correct a problem of decorum in the chamber.

1. Rise and call out "I rise to a Question of Privilege".
2. This is to ask for the correction of a problem affecting a person or a group such as asking the speaker to talk louder or asking for quiet.

Appeal the Decision of the Chair

Purpose: To overrule some decision by the chamber's Presiding Officer.

Obviously, this should be used only in an extreme situation. NOTE: Presiding Officers may not be removed from office, nor can any other officer except for non-compliance with the Code of Conduct, Bylaws, or Board Policy; this is done by the State Director or Co-Director.

1. Speaker, without being recognized, should rise and call out, "I appeal the Decision of the Chair."
2. The chair must recognize this maneuver and ask for the necessary second if not already made.
3. Requires a majority vote to successfully appeal the chair's decision. A tie vote sustains the chair. This would be a counted vote.
4. Must be made immediately following the decision to be appealed.
5. Not debatable if it relates to rules of decorum.
6. Not debatable if made while a non-debatable motion is pending.
7. Chair may always explain ruling being appealed.
8. Not in order if another appeal is pending.
9. Cannot be amended.
10. Can be tabled or regulated as to debate, but other subsidiary motion can apply to it.
11. Can be reconsidered.

Objection to Consideration

Purpose: To quickly dispose of a business item that should not be placed before the legislature.

1. Must be made before debate has started.
2. Maker needs not be recognized. Rise and proclaim: "I object to considering this matter."
3. Takes a 2/3 vote to agree not to consider the matter objected to.
4. Presiding Officer must recognize objection properly made.
5. If the objection fails, a motion to lay the matter on the table is not in order until some debate has taken place.
6. Not debatable. If it is so bad that you do not even want to talk about it, this

should be apparent without debate on the matter.

Withdraw a Motion

Definition: To withdraw or modify a motion. This can only be made by the person who made the original motion.

1. Does not need a second, but if the first motion received a second, the person who seconds, needs to agree.
2. It is not debatable or amendable.
3. Needs a majority vote to pass.
4. After being recognized, say: "I wish to ... modify my motion by ... (or) withdraw my motion to..."

Concerning Dividing the Chamber of Votes

Although not listed as a motion, a member has the right to request a "division of the chamber." This means the member disagrees with the presiding Officer's wish to decide the vote by listening to the "ayes" and "nays" and wants a specific count, usually by a show of standing.

The Basic Rule: If the chair announces a vote and bangs the gavel, the ruling is final. If "division" is called out before the gavel strikes, the chair should respect the call for a division unless made irresponsibly.

The chair always may divide the chamber when in doubt on a voice vote, and often will.

NOTE: As an adaptation of Parliamentary Procedure, this manual presentation may differ with other sources. PLEASE USE THIS ONE!