

YOUTH & GOVERNMENT™

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The Debate Process

PRINCIPLE MOTIONS

“Previous Question” – To force an immediate Vote.

(Requires 2/3 majority; non-debatable; may not interrupt speaker.)

- Example: *“Mr. Speaker (President), I move the previous question,”*.
- This has the effect of cutting off all debate and brings the membership to a direct vote on the main question. The usual reason for calling for the previous question is to cut off debate that is repetitive or unproductive. After the adoption of the previous question, the bill sponsor shall have the right to close the debate.

Suspend Rules/Extend Debate – To modify the time limits for debate or the number of speakers for and against

a bill specified in the rules.

(Requires 2/3 majority; debatable; may not interrupt speaker.)

- Example: *“Mr. Speaker (President), I would like to make a motion to suspend the rules and extend debate by one round.”*
- It is possible to extend debate when many questions about the bill remain after the time limit is up. A specific length of time must be specified in this motion. The number of speakers on a bill may only be extended once and no more than 2 additional speakers for and against may be added.

To Recess – To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time.

(Requires vote majority; debatable; may not interrupt speaker.)

- Example: *“Mr. Speaker, I would like to make to motion to recess for lunch.”*
- This can be used to excuse all members for lunch.

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Indianapolis, IN 46204
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www.indymca.org

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To Adjourn – To dismiss the meeting.

(Requires vote majority; non-debatable; may not interrupt speaker.)

- Example: *“Mr. Speaker, I would like to make to motion to recess for lunch.”*
- This officially ends the meeting. A specific time for adjournment must be included in the motion.

Time For Reassembling – To arrange time of next meeting.

(Requires vote majority; debatable; may interrupt speaker.)

- This informs members of the time they must return to the Chamber.

BILL PRESENTATIONS AND DEBATE PROCEDURE

Bill Sponsors Opening Statement (3 minutes)

- Sponsor may use all three minutes.
- Sponsor may use part and yield rest to co-sponsor.
- Sponsor can reserve rest of time to closing – this must be stated in remarks.

Technical Questions (2 minutes)

- Sponsor may use all two minutes and any remaining time from opening statements.
- If time remains, sponsor can:
 - A. Yield to questions;
 - B. Waive remaining time;
 - C. Add time to closing.
 - D. To a Co-sponsor of the bill

Opponent Time and Proponent Time (3 minutes)

- Opponent time and proponent time will alternate. Opponents will be recognized by the presiding officer may yield time to questions, another legislator, the sponsor, or the chair after speaking. This opponent and proponent time will continue for a total of three rounds, unless the number of speakers is extended by vote.

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Bill Sponsor Closing Statement (2 minutes)

- Time may be yielded to co-sponsor.

Final Reading of Bill and Vote

- If Presiding Officer is in doubt he/she can call for a standing vote.
- If legislators feel the vote is too close to call, they may call “division” in which case the presiding officer will be required to call for a standing vote.

PROPER VERBAL COMMUNICATION ON THE FLOOR

Speaker (President)
only?”

“Will the clerk (secretary) please read Bill #__ by title

(Bill Sponsor goes to front of chamber.)

Clerk (Secretary)

Read the bill by title only (noting any changes made during the committee hearing i.e. additions, deletions). This is referred to as the third reading of the Bill. (The first reading was on the floor, second was in committee.)

Speaker (President)

“The Sponsor has three minutes to present the bill and two minutes for technical questions.”

Sponsor/Co-Sponsor

Begins presentation of bill by **stating name and delegation**. The sponsor may yield the floor to the Co-Sponsor BUT NOT TO ANYONE ELSE. When the opening statement is finished, the Sponsor will say: ***“I move the passage of this Bill.”***

Speaker (President)

“Technical questions are now in order. The chair recognized (State Legislator’s name).” Legislators stand to be recognized. If not called on, be seated until further recognitions are called.

Legislator

States name and delegation from seat and immediately addresses the technical question to the sponsor. *After the Sponsor’s/Co-Sponsor(s) reply, the chair continues to recognize other legislators until time is called (after 2 minutes).

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Speaker (President) ***“Is there anyone who wishes to speak in opposition to this bill?”***
(The presiding officer recognizes a Legislator.)

Legislator **States name and Delegation. “I wish to speak in opposition to this bill.”**

Speaker (President) ***“You may have three minutes.”***

Legislator Moves to the front of the Chamber, **states name and delegation** again. Within the three-minute time limit, the legislator can:

1. Use all of the time.
2. Use part of the time and yield the remaining time to another legislator by stating *“I yield the remaining time to (name).”*
3. Use part of the time and yield the remaining time to questions from the floor by stating: *“I yield the rest of my time to questions”* or responding *“yes”* when asked *“Will the speaker yield to a question?”*
4. Use part of the time and waive the remaining time by stating *“I waive the rest of my time.”*
5. Use part of time and yield remaining time to sponsor of bill.

NOTE: This process continues until a total of 3 opponent and 3 proponent speaking times have been heard. Debate takes place on alternating basis (opponent / proponent / opponent / proponent / opponent / proponent) each with three minutes to make their presentation. Number of speakers may be extended to a maximum of 2 for and against and only by 2/3 vote of the members. Upon conclusion of the last proponent’s remarks, the Presiding Officer continues...

Speaker (President) ***“The Sponsor of the Bill now has two minutes to summarize.”***

Sponsor/Co-sponsor **State Name and delegation. Begin the summation.** Time may be yielded only to Co-Sponsor; no questions allowed.

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- Speaker (President)** *“Bill #___ will now be read for a third time by title only and placed on final passage.”*
- Clerk (Secretary)** **Reads the Bill by title.**
- Speaker (President)** *“We will now move to a vote on Bill #___. All those in favor signify by saying ‘Aye.’ All those opposed, signify by saying ‘Nay’.”*
- Please Note** If presiding Officer is in doubt, he/she can call for a standing vote. If Legislators feel the voice vote is too close to call, they should call out “*division*” and the presiding officer will be required to call for a standing vote.
- Speaker (President)** *“We will now have a standing vote. All those in favor please stand.” -COUNT - “All those opposed, please stand.” - COUNT – “By your vote of ___ for and ___ against this bill does pass/fail.”*
RAP GAVEL.
- Speaker (President)** RAPS GAVEL and announces outcome of vote – *“By your vote, you have passed (failed bill #___.)”*

PROCEDURE FOR GOVERNORS OFFICE

As soon as a Bill is passed by both houses, it is taken to the Secretary of State. In this office, the time of arrival is stamped on the Bill and it is sent to the Governor for consideration. If this bill is signed, it is then taken to the State Director and prepared for the Report Book. If vetoed, it is also returned to the State Director.

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Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

To Do This:	You Say This:	May you interrupt the Speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
Adjourn Meeting	"I move that we adjourn."	NO	YES	NO	NO	Majority	NO
Call an Intermission	"I move that we recess for..."	NO	YES	NO	YES	Majority	NO
Complain about heat, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege."	YES	NO	NO	NO	No Vote	NO (usually)
Temporarily suspend consideration of an issue	"I move to table the motion."	NO	YES	NO	NO	Majority	NO
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question."	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO (1)
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	Majority	YES
Give closer study of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	NO	YES	YES	YES	Majority	YES (2)
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	NO	YES	YES (2)	YES	Majority	YES

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To Do This:	You Say This:	May you interrupt the Speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	YES	NO	NO	NO	No Vote (4)	NO
Vote on ruling of the Chair	"I appeal from the chair's decisions."	YES	YES	YES	NO	Majority (5)	YES
Suspend rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion."	YES	NO	NO	NO	2/3 (6)	(7)
Verify a voice vote by having members stand	"I call for a division or Division!"	YES	NO	NO	NO	No Vote	NO
Request information	"Point of information"	YES	NO	NO	NO	No Vote	NO
Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move to take from the table..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	Majority	NO
Reconsider a hasty action	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	YES	YES	(8)	NO	Majority	NO

NOTES:

1. Unless vote on question is not yet taken.
2. Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.
3. Only if the motion to be amended is debatable.
4. Except in doubtful cases.
5. A majority vote in negative needed to reverse the ruling of chair.
6. A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion.
7. Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact considered.
8. Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.

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