

Parliamentary Tools for the Convention Delegate

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Parliamentary procedure is a tool designed to allow organizations to complete business in a limited amount of time while allowing everyone to have a chance to participate in the decision making process. Some people look at parliamentary procedure with dread. They fear that someone is going to use this collection of strange words and arcane rules as a weapon to confuse and confound them. Well, that is not the case. Parliamentary procedure is nothing more than a way to make sure that discussion is relevant, that everyone has a fair chance to talk, and that when the group is done talking a decision is made.

Preparation for being a delegate.

Congratulations on being chosen to represent your unit back home. Before you sit down in the convention hall for the first business session, you have some homework to do.

1. Read and review all the materials you have received regarding the topics to be voted on at the meeting.
2. Review the program book so you will know when to be at the business sessions.
3. Plan on attending the hearings on proposed bylaw amendments and proposed resolutions .
 - a. Ask questions at the hearings , it is the best opportunity for clarification of the issues at hand.
 - b. Consider whether to offer an amendment to the proposed motion and if you decide to go forward, let the author of the motion or the committee know of your intention.

4. Take note of the agenda for each business session so you will know approximately when each item will come up for discussion and vote.

The time for the meeting has arrived. The President calls the meeting to order and taps the gavel once. Now the fun begins.

Handling of a Motion

Parliamentary Procedure prescribes a very definite, formal way in which a motion should be handled by the Chair. It doesn't matter if it is a main motion or a secondary motion; all motions must be handled with these steps.

1. RECOGNITION - A member rises, addresses the chair, and waits to be recognized.
2. PROPOSAL - Member makes the motion: "I MOVE THAT" or "I MOVE TO"
3. SECOND - Without waiting for recognition, any member may call out "SECOND" or "I SECOND THE MOTION". Seconding only means that two members feel it is worth discussing. The person who seconds a motion does not necessarily support it, and can speak or vote against it.
4. STATING THE QUESTION - The Chair then restates the motion, indicating in so doing, that it is in order, and asks for any discussion. Until the Chair states the question it is not before the assembly. Once the Chair states the question, the motion is the property of the assembly, and cannot be withdrawn without the assembly's permission.
5. DEBATE - The Chair then asks for discussion. The maker of the motion has the right to speak first. Secondary motions may also be in order at this time.
6. PUTTING THE QUESTION (THE VOTE) - The Chair restates the motion ("IT HAS BEEN MOVED AND SECONDED"), in it's final form after any agreed upon amendments, asks for those in favor and then for those opposed. Both sides must be voted on, even if it appears unanimous. You do not ask for abstentions.
7. ANNOUNCE RESULT - No vote is considered final until the Chair

announces the result of the vote and the effect of the motion, e.g., "The motion is adopted and the events committee will arrange for the anniversary party."

There are 86 motions listed in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. I will simplify things and discuss only the most commonly used ones. At the end of this booklet you will find a discussion of the different classes of motions as well as a table listing all the privileged, subsidiary and most of the incidental motions.

Let's practice some common parliamentary scenarios.

Practice #1

Amend a Pending Motion

(The motion before you is to have the State PTA purchase a laptop computer for every member of the State Board of Managers).

Member A: I move to amend the pending motion by INSERTING THE WORDS: **and a portable printer** AFTER THE WORD computer and BEFORE THE WORD for.

[second required]

Chair 1: It is moved and seconded to amend the pending motion by inserting the words **and a portable printer** after the word computer and before the word for.

If adopted, the motion would read "The state PTA purchase a laptop computer and a portable printer for every member of the state board of managers."

The question before you is on adopting the amendment. Is there any discussion?

[after debate]

Are you ready for the question?

The question before you is on adopting the amendment to insert the words “and a portable printer after the word computer and before the word for”

All those in favor of the amendment to **insert the words AND A PORTABLE PRINTER after the word computer and before the word for** Please say “AYE”

[pause]

All those opposed say “No”

[MAJORITY – required]

CHAIR 2 There is not a majority in favor and the amendment fails. The motion before you is for the State PTA to purchase a laptop computer for each member of the State Board of Managers.

MEMBER B I move to amend the motion by striking the word purchase and inserting the word lease.
(second required)

CHAIR 2 It is moved and seconded to amend the motion by striking the word purchase and inserting the word lease. If amended, the motion would read “The State PTA shall lease a laptop computer for each member of the State Board of Managers”.

(call for debate)

The motion before you is to amend the main motion by striking the word **purchase** and inserting the word **lease**. Are you ready for the question? All those in favor please say “Aye”.

(Pause)

All those opposed please say “No”

The Noes have it and the amendment is not adopted.

MEMBER C I move to amend the motion by adding “**at a cost not to exceed \$800 per computer**”

(second required)

CHAIR 3 It is moved and seconded to amend the pending motion by adding the words “ **at a cost not to exceed \$800 per computer**” If amended the motion would read “**The state PTA shall purchase a laptop computer for each member of the State Board of Managers at a cost not to exceed \$800 per computer**” Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of the amendment to add “at a cost not to exceed \$800 per computer” Please say “Aye”

[pause]

If you are opposed, please say “No”.

The Ayes have it. The amendment is adopted. The question before you now is Shall the State PTA purchase a laptop computer for each member of the Board of Managers at a cost not to exceed \$800 per computer?”

How much time did all these amendments take? How much time was spent debating the actual motion before time expired?

Practice #2

Secondary Amendment- Amend a motion to Insert

(Motion before you is to have the State PTA purchase a laptop computer for every member of the State Board of Managers).

Member D: I move to amend the pending motion by INSERTING THE WORDS: **and a portable printer** AFTER THE WORD computer and BEFORE THE WORD for.

[second required]

Chair 4:

It is moved and seconded to amend the pending motion by inserting the words **and a portable printer** after the word computer and before the word for.

If adopted, the motion would read “The state PTA purchase a laptop computer and a portable printer for every member of the state board of managers.”

The question before you is on adopting the amendment. Is there any discussion?

[after debate]

Member E:

I move to amend the pending amendment by inserting the word “**inkjet**” Between portable and printer.

[second required]

Chair 4:

It is moved and seconded to amend the pending amendment by Inserting the word “**inkjet** “ after the word portable and before the word printer. If adopted, the amendment would read “**and a portable inkjet printer**”.

Is there any discussion?

The motion before you is on the amendment to the proposed amendment to the motion to purchase a laptop computer for every member of the State Board of Managers.

Are you ready to vote? We are voting only on the insertion of the word “**Inkjet**”.

All in favor please say “Aye” *[pause]*

All opposed please say “No”

The ayes have it and the word inkjet has been inserted into the amendment.

The question before you now is the adoption of the amendment to insert the

words “**and a portable inkjet printer**” into the motion.

If adopted the motion would read

“ PTA shall purchase a laptop computer and a portable inkjet printer for every member of the State Board of Managers”.

We are voting on the amendment.

Are you ready for the question?

All those in favor please say “Aye”

The ayes have it, the amendment is adopted . The motion before you now is “Shall the PTA purchase a laptop computer and a portable inkjet printer for every member of the State Board of Managers?”

Practice #3

Using Blanks

(Motion before you is to have the State PTA purchase a laptop computer for each member of the Board of Managers at a cost not to exceed \$800

Member F I move to amend the motion by changing \$800 to \$1500.
[*second required*]

Chair 5 It is moved and seconded to change the maximum cost of the laptop from \$800 to \$1500.

Member G I move to change the maximum price to \$1200.
[*Second required*]

Chair 5 It is moved and seconded to amend the amendment by striking \$1500 and inserting \$1200. At this point I suggest we resolve this issue by creating a blank so we can vote on several choices at the same time. All in favor of creating a blank for the dollar amount in the motion to purchase a laptop computer for each member of the board of directors please say “Aye”. [*pause*]
All those opposed, please say “No”. The Ayes have it and we will

Use the method of filling the blank to amend the motion to purchase the laptops. Currently we have suggestions for \$1500, \$1200 and \$800. Are there any other suggestions?

Member H

I think a maximum of \$1000 is a good number

Member I

I think a maximum of \$2000 is a good idea because the computers will be more powerful and last longer as technology changes.

Chair 5

As we are filling the blank with suggestions, no second is required. Are there any other suggestions? *[pause]*
Hearing none, suggestions are now closed and we will proceed to vote.

The motion before you is to fill the blank with one of the following amounts. We will start with the largest amount and vote on each amount. The first amount which receives a majority vote will be inserted into the motion.

All those in favor of \$2000 as a maximum cost for a laptop please say "Aye". *[pause]* Those opposed please say "No"

The motion does not pass. All those in favor of \$1500 as a maximum cost for a laptop please say "Aye" *[pause]*
Those opposed please say "No"

The motion does not pass. All those in favor of \$1200 as a maximum cost for a laptop please say "Aye". *[pause]*
Those opposed say "No"

The Ayes have it and we have filled the blank with \$1200. The motion before you is "Shall the PTA purchase a laptop for each member of the Board of Managers at a cost not to exceed \$1200."

Are you ready to vote?

Practice # 4

Point of Order and Appeal

Chair 6

Is there any further business? Member J.

Member J

I move that the State PTA purchase a laptop computer for each

Member of the Board of Managers.

[second received]

Chair 6

It is moved and seconded that the State PTA purchase a Laptop Computer for each member of the Board of Managers. Is There any Discussion? Member K.

Member K

I move to amend by inserting “and a copier” after computer.

[second received]

Chair 6

It has been moved and seconded that the pending motion be Amended by inserting “and a copier” after “computer. If adopted The motion would read that the “State PTA purchase a laptop Computer and a copier for each member of the Board of Managers”. Is there any discussion?

[Member L stands, and without waiting for recognition speaks]

Member L

Point of Order, Madam Chairman. The amendment is not Germane.

Chair 6

Your point is not well taken. Both a laptop computer and A copier are office equipment that will be used by individual Members of the Board.

<without waiting for recognition>

Member L

I appeal from the ruling of the Chair.

[second required]

Chair 6:

An appeal has been made and seconded. The question before you is “Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?” This motion is debatable. The Chair has the right to speak first. After that, the maker of the motion to appeal may speak, and then anyone else may speak. You may be recognized only once. The Chair will then have the opportunity to speak once more to explain her ruling prior to the vote. Do you understand how an appeal is handled?

Chair 6:

The chair has ruled that the amendment is germane in that both a lap top computer and a copier are office equipment that will be used

by individual members of the Board. Is there any further discussion.
Member L.

Member L

A copier is not the same type of equipment as a computer, and a laptop is portable but a copy machine is not. Therefore the amendment is not germane. The two questions should be two motions.

CHAIR 6

Any further discussion? Member M.

Member M

I agree that the amendment is not germane. You don't need a copier to use a laptop. They should be voted on in two motions.

CHAIR 6:

Any further discussion? Hearing none, the Chair will now respond. "To be germane, an amendment must in some way involve the same question that is raised by the motion to which it is applied." A copier clearly involves the same question as a lap top.

CHAIR 6:

Are you ready for the question? The question before you is "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?" If you agree with the Chair vote in the affirmative, if not vote in the negative. A majority in the negative is necessary to overrule the Chair. All those who agree with the decision of the Chair say "Aye". Those who disagree with the Chair say "NO". The Noes have it, the ruling of the Chair is not sustained. The amendment is not germane. The amendment is out of order. The question before you is "Shall the state PTA purchase a laptop computer for each member of the board of managers?" Is there any further discussion?

END OF PRACTICE.

Proposed agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Opening ceremonies: Color Guard, Pledge of Allegiance, National anthem etc..
3. Determination of quorum (A majority of the registered delegates)
4. Approval of the Agenda (Requires a majority vote to adopt, 2/3 to amend)
5. Approval of the Minutes
6. Reports of Officers in the order they are listed in the Bylaws.
7. Special Guest speakers may be scheduled throughout the business sessions
8. Reports of Boards and Standing Committees in the order listed in the bylaws.
 - a. Proposed bylaw amendments will be brought forward by the Chair of the bylaws committee.
 - b. Proposed resolutions will be brought forward by the Chair of the Resolutions committee
9. Reports of Special (ad hoc) Committees
10. New Business -- This is where all new items of business are considered. Even if a topic has been discussed before, if there is no action pending from a previous meeting, the item is considered New Business.
11. Announcements
12. Closing ceremonies.

Motions

Well, now that you have an agenda you can start doing business. Before any assembly can take an action a **motion** must be made. A motion is simply a formal statement that something should be done. There are two main types of motions: Main motions and Secondary Motions. Main Motions bring business before the assembly when nothing else is pending. Motions made while other business is on the floor are called

Secondary Motions.

If a member can make secondary motions while either the main motion or other secondary motions are pending it sounds like we would have chaos. Once again, parliamentary procedure provides us with a tool we can use to allow us to deal with a lot of information fairly and orderly.

Precedence (pronounced **pre-SEED-ens**) is the order in which motions can be proposed, discussed and acted upon. The rules which determine which motion has precedence have evolved over time. Twelve secondary motions fall into a defined order with a specified rank. The Main Motion is always ranked lowest. A motion of higher rank than the immediate pending question is always in order. The most recently proposed motion must be dealt with first. There are three types of Secondary Motions: Privileged, Subsidiary and Incidental.

Incidental motions relate to how the assembly is dealing with a motion, but they have no effect on the motion itself. They do not have an order of precedence. Incidental motions must be decided immediately before business can resume. Examples of Incidental Motions: Point of Order, Suspend the Rules, Parliamentary Inquiry.

Privileged motions do not deal directly with the motion under discussion, rather they deal with the welfare and comfort of the assembly and/or the delegates. A privileged motion may be made while a main motion, a subsidiary motion, or a lower ranking privileged motion is being considered. If there is more than one motion pending, a vote is taken on the highest ranking motion first.

Subsidiary Motions deal directly with the motion under discussion without accepting or rejecting it.

There is one other class of motions. **Restoratory motions** allow the assembly to change previous decisions. They do not have an order of precedence. The Restoratory Motions are: Reconsider, Rescind, Amend Something Previously Adopted, Take from the Table, and Discharge a Committee.

Privileged Motions

	<u>Second</u>	<u>Debate</u>	<u>Amend</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Fix Time to Adjourn	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Q of Privilege	No	No	No	None
Orders of the Day	No	No	No	None

Subsidiary Motions

	<u>Second</u>	<u>Debate</u>	<u>Amend</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Table	Yes	No	No	Majority
Prev.Question	Yes	No	No	2/3
Change Debate	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone Definitely	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to Committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

Incidental Motions

	<u>Second</u>	<u>Debate</u>	<u>Amend</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Point of Order	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Appeal	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Suspend the Rules	Yes	No	No	2/3
Parliamentary Inquiry	No	No	No	None
Division of Assembly	No	No	No	None
Modify/Withdraw Motion	No	No	No	Majority
Divide a Motion	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Request Information	No	No	No	None
Create a Blank	Yes	No	No	Majority
Object to Consideration	No	No	No	2/3

Restoratory Motions

	<u>Second</u>	<u>Debate</u>	<u>Amend</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Reconsider	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Take from Table	Yes	No	No	Majority
Amend something Previously Adopted	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority with notice
Rescind	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority with Notice 2/3 without Notice

Discharge Committee **Yes** **Yes** **Yes** **2/3**

Some Common Motions

Fix the Time to Adjourn: This motion does not do what it sounds like it should do. It does not set the time when the meeting will end. When this motion is passed it stops the current meeting from ever really ending. The motion sets a time and place when the current meeting will continue as if it never ended

Adjourn: This one is easy. It stops the meeting. It is a privileged motion EXCEPT in the following cases: (1) It is qualified in any way (e.g. to adjourn in one hour) (2) A time to adjourn is already established (3) If adjourning would dissolve the assembly. When privileged it cannot be debated. When it is not privileged it is debatable.

Recess: Take a short break. Not debatable but is amendable.

Question of Privilege: A member can interrupt the meeting if he feels that something is affecting the safety, health, integrity or protection of either himself or the assembly. (e.g. "It's too hot" "I can't hear" "He insulted me.")

Call for the Orders of the Day It means: "Mr Chairman, stick to the agenda!" Any one member can order it and the Chair must comply

Lay on the Table: Table should only be used to set business aside temporarily when something else urgent must be dealt with. You cannot “Table this until tomorrow” See the script to learn what to say when someone makes that motion.

Previous Question: This is a motion to close debate. Someone cannot just yell out “I call the question” Before a member can make the motion he or she must be recognized by the Chair. It requires a second. It is not debatable. A 2/3 affirmative vote is needed to close debate.

Limit or Extend Debate: If there is no rule established by the Assembly everyone can speak for ten minutes, no one can speak more than twice, and no one can speak a second time until everyone who wanted to speak once has done so. This motion can change those limits. It is not debatable and it requires a 2/3 affirmative vote.

Postpone to a certain time: Let’s deal with it later. Unlike the motion to table, the motion to postpone is debatable.

Commit or Refer Let’s let a committee or board discuss this.

Amend The most common and sometimes the most confusing secondary motion. Simply put, you can take words or sentences out, you can put them in, or you can do both. It is debatable and no matter what vote is required to pass the motion that is being amended, the amendment only requires a majority vote. A pending amendment to an amendment cannot be amended.

Postpone Indefinitely	Disposes of the motion without accepting it or rejecting it.
Point of Order	A member feels the chair is doing something wrong. It can interrupt, does not require a second and is not voted on. The Chair decides.
Appeal	Any two members can challenge a ruling of the Chair that they disagree with. A majority vote in the negative is needed to overrule the Chair. Review the script for the specific wording that is needed.
Object to Consideration	If adopted by a 2/3 negative vote without debate the question is never discussed. It can only be made BEFORE any discussion takes place.
Request for Information	To GET information (i.e. ask a question) not to give information.
Division of the Assembly	Any one member, without being recognized, can yell out "Division". This requires that the Chair order a standing vote after having taken a voice vote. This does not mandate a counted vote. A majority vote is required to order a counted vote.

Previous Question
Close of Debate

Member:

[All the following are equivalent and acceptable. Member MUST be recognized. Cannot just call out. Requires second]

I move to close debate.

I move we vote now.

I move the previous question.

Call the question.

I demand the previous question.

[Unqualified as above applies only to the immediate pending question. Can be applied to all pending questions or to other questions in the order they are pending.]

Chair:

The previous question has been called for *[if it applies to more than one motion list them all]*

[Not Debatable - pause]

All those in favor of closing debate and voting immediately on ___*[list motions]*___ please rise . . . Be seated

All those who do not wish to close debate and vote immediately please rise . . . Be seated

[2/3 – announce results as follows:]

IF PASSES

There are 2/3 in the affirmative and the previous question is ordered. Debate is closed and we will now vote. *[state the motion and take the appropriate vote]*

IF FAILS

There is less than 2/3 in the affirmative and the previous question is not ordered. Debate will not be closed. Is there any further discussion?

Postpone to a Certain Time
Postpone Definitely

Member: I move to postpone the question until _____.
[second required]

Chair: It has been moved to postpone the question until _____.
[RESTRICTIONS:
[If the next meeting occurs within the next 3 months: Question can postpone until but not beyond the next meeting].
[If the next meeting does not occur within the next 3 month: Question cannot be postponed beyond the end of the current session.]

Is there any discussion?

[after debate and/or amendments]

Are you ready for the question?

The question before you is to postpone the question until _____.

All those in favor of postponing further consideration of the motion until _____
say "Aye"

[pause]

All those opposed say "No"

[MAJORITY unless it is made a special order, then 2/3 – announce results as follows:]

IF PASSES The Ayes have it and the question is postponed until ____

IF FAILS The Noes have it and the motion to postpone further consideration of the question is lost. Is there any further discussion on the motion.

Commit or Refer

Member: I move to refer the motion to _____.
[second required]

Chair: It has been moved and seconded to refer the motion to _____.

[Must have the following information. If the maker of the motion does not specify the information the chair may ask for it. (a) Which committee? (b) If special committee the number of members and method of selection of members or the names of members. (c) Instructions to committee]

Is there any discussion?
[after debate and/or amendments]
Are you ready for the question?

The question before you is to refer the motion to _____ (with instructions to _____).

All those in favor of referring the motion say "Aye"
[pause]
All those opposed say "No"
[MAJORITY – announce results as follows:]

IF PASSES The Ayes have it and the motion is referred to _____ (with instructions to _____).

IF FAILS The Noes have it and the motion to refer the motion to _____ is lost. The question before you is on the motion.

Postpone Indefinitely

Member:

I move to postpone the motion indefinitely.

[second required]

Chair:

It has been moved and seconded to postpone the motion indefinitely.

If adopted, the effect would be to stop further consideration of the motion without specifically rejecting it.

Is there any discussion?

[after debate]

Are you ready for the question?

The question before you is to postpone the motion indefinitely.

All those in favor of postponing the motion indefinitely say "Aye"

[pause]

All those opposed say "No"

[MAJORITY – announce results as follows:]

IF PASSES

The Ayes have it and the motion is postponed indefinitely.

IF FAILS

The Noes have it and the motion to postpone indefinitely is lost. The question before you is on the motion to _____.

Object to Consideration

Member:

I object to consideration of the question.

[NO second required, can interrupt speaker, need not be recognized]

Chair:

The consideration of the question is objected to. This is not debatable. The question before you is "Shall the question be considered?"

All those in favor of considering the question please rise . . . be seated.

All those opposed to considering the question please rise . . . be seated.

[2/3 in the NEGATIVE required to sustain the objection.]

IF PASSES

There are 2/3 opposed and the question will not be considered.

IF FAILS

There are less than 2/3 opposed and the objection is not sustained. The question is on the motion to _____.

Thank You. Have a great Convention!