

PARLIAMENTARY LAW

Parliamentary law or procedure originated with the British Parliament. They are designed to maintain order, ensure justice and equality, expedite business, and enable an organization to accomplish the objectives for which it was formed. These rules are based on logic, good sense, and fair play. It is democracy in action. Every member should understand at least the fundamentals or correct procedures. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised is the parliamentary authority adopted by all levels of PTA.

Parliamentary procedure requires all to accept the will of the majority and respect the opinion of the minority. The President, as the elected leader, is to carry out the will of the assembly, not bend the will of the assembly to their own. Remember, authority is vested in the office, not in the person.

All members are equal. An established number of voting members must be present to conduct business, or quorum. Only one main motion may be before the assembly at a time and only one member may have the floor at any one time. A two-thirds vote is necessary when a motion limits or interferes with the privileges of a member or of the assembly Bylaws, cutting off debate, closing nominations, and rescinding action without notice.

Quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present to conduct business at a meeting. The number of General Membership members constituting a quorum is indicated in the unit Bylaws.

A motion formally proposes that the organization take a certain action or express certain views. A motion introduces business in a meeting. A main motion brings a subject before the organization for its consideration and action. There are eight steps to a motion:

- 1) **Obtaining the floor:** member rises and addresses the chair by proper title.
- 2) **Assigning the floor:** the chair recognizes the member.
- 3) **Member states his motion:** member says, "I move . . ."
- 4) **Seconding the motion:** another member must second the motion letting the chair know that more than one person has an interest in the subject of the motion by saying, "I second the motion."
- 5) **Stating the motion:** chair restates the motion thereby formally placing the motion before the assembly. After the chair has stated the motion and before a vote is taken, it may be desirable to change or amend the motion in some way.
- 6) **Discussion (or debate):** must be addressed to the chair and continues until no one wishes to speak or until someone moves to close debate. To close debate, a member says, I move the previous question. The motion requires a second, is not debatable and requires a 2/3 vote. If the motion to close debate is adopted, the chair immediately takes the vote on the motion pending.
- 7) **Putting the question (or taking the vote):** The chair restates the motion, states the method of voting, and calls for both affirmative and negative votes.
- 8) **Announcing the vote:** the chair announces the result of the vote and states the action the assembly will take.

Motions must be expressed in a clear, concise statement containing only one main idea. The correct language is "I move that" or "I move to." The maker of the motion should be allowed, if he wishes, to begin discussion. A motion that does not come from a committee must be seconded. On rare occasions, the presiding officer may enter a discussion. He must relinquish the chair for the duration of the discussion and the vote. The President may vote on a pending question when their vote would change the outcome to break a tie. The President may also vote when voting is by ballot so as to keep their opinion private and not sway the members.

Rules of Conduct

No one has the right to do anything that prevents others from seeing or hearing the presiding officer or speaker. No one has the right to converse, move about or stand, except to address the presiding officer. If several members rise at the same time to claim the floor, the chair recognizes one and the others shall be seated immediately. The chair calls upon the others as soon as possible.