



# Presiding Officer Overview

## Order of Procedure

1. If you give a candidacy speech for election, state that you will be fair and work to make sure time is best spent giving speeches.
2. After you are elected, say "this chamber will come to order." State that you will use your best effort to recognize speakers around the chamber in a fair and balanced manner. Describe gavel time signals. Explain procedures clearly: i.e., how you will recognize speakers, etc., that you **will not call for motions at any time** (speakers should seek your attention when they wish to rise to move something), and that when it is clear that debate has exhausted on a bill/resolution, you will ask the chamber if they are ready for the question, rather than waiting for the *previous question* (which should be reserved for forcing end to debate that has become one-sided or repetitive in arguments). Always stand when addressing the chamber (to project authority). Use a calm, controlled and caring voice to show a genuine interest in the chamber's business.
3. When you are ready to begin, say "Who would like to sponsor the first legislation?" When you recognize speakers, use the third person: "The chair recognizes..."
4. When a speaker concludes, say "That speech was \_\_\_ minutes and \_\_\_ seconds; questioners, please rise." *Call on one legislator at a time, until the questioning period is over. You should keep track of questions to allow a fair distribution.*
5. *You may gesture for questioners to sit down when it is apparent time is running out. Afterwards, say "The questioning period has concluded, and the speaker may be seated."*
6. "Those wishing to speak in opposition, please rise." *Call on a speaker, using **recency** and balancing areas of the room as much as possible.*
7. "That speech was 2 minutes and 15 seconds; questioners, please rise."
8. When you have called on the last person who wishes to speak on a bill/resolution, say "since this is the last senator/representative who wishes to speak on this issue, if no one objects following his/her speech, we will immediately move the question following his/her speech." (That way, a separate vote to call *previous question* is unnecessary).
9. When it is time to debate the next legislation, say "The next item of business is —" (say the legislation's title).

## Gavel Signals:

A suggested set of gavel procedures follows for presiding officers. It is recommended that the PO review their gavel procedures after starting the session.

- 1 strong tap = call meeting to order; also used to end questioning time (presiding officer also may gesture a cue to questioners to be seated as the speaker finishes answering the final question)

### Speech time signals:

- 1 tap = 1 minute remaining
- 2 taps = 30 seconds remaining
- 3 taps = time has lapsed
- Multiple taps (until speaker stops talking) = grace period has ended (speech should not exceed 3 minutes, 10 seconds)

## General Notes

Legislators should refer to you as: Mr./Madam chair, *Speaker*, or *President*. Legislators may not approach the front table without rising to a point of personal privilege.

## Handling Motions

- **Recognizing Members:** "The chair recognizes..." or "State your point/question." Say their title (Representative or Senator) and last name.
- **Second:** (if the chamber is silent) "Is there a second?" ➤ **Stating Motions:** "It is moved and seconded that..."

## Taking Votes

- **Negative votes and abstentions** are **only** counted for *recorded votes* (such as the main motion, i.e., legislation); votes taken where a fraction of members are needed are based on those casting a vote each time.
- **Voice Vote** - "On the motion to [read the motion title] those in favor, say aye. (Pause) Those opposed, say no." *If the result is not clear, especially evidenced by particularly loud members, **or** if a member moves for a **Division** of the vote, then a standing vote is taken. Do not call for abstentions, since a voice vote is not recorded.*
- **Rising Vote** (*You may substitute "raise hands"*) "Those in favor of the motion to [read the motion title] will rise [or, "stand"]." [Count vote.] "Be seated. Those opposed will rise." [Count vote.] "Be seated." Calling for abstentions is unnecessary, except for the main motion (legislation).
- Voting for individuals (presiding officer, awards) is done by **secret ballot**.

## Announcing the Result: "On the motion to..."

- **Voice Vote** - "The ayes have it and the motion is adopted [or "carried"]." Or, "The noes have it and the motion is lost." *If you are unsure of the prevailing side, announce that you will take a rising vote (before someone asks for a division... to save time).*
- **Counted Rising Vote or Show of Hands Vote** - "With a vote of 51 in the affirmative and 23 in the negative, the affirmative has it [or, "there are two-thirds in the affirmative] and the motion is adopted." Or, "There are 29 in the affirmative and 33 in the negative. The negative has it and the motion is lost."

## Discipline

- **Motion Out of Order or Motion Not in Order** "The chair rules that the motion is out of order [or "not in order"] because . . ."
- **Member Out of Order** (serious offense) "The member is out of order and will be seated."

## Presiding Officer: Steps for Opening a Session

1. If you give a candidacy speech for election, state that you will be fair and work to make time is best spent giving speeches.
2. After you are elected, say "this session will come to order." State that you will use your best effort to recognize speakers around the chamber in a fair and balanced manner. If "gaveling" time signals have not been explained previously, demonstrate how you will conduct them. Explain procedures clearly ahead of time to save time later. Always stand when addressing the chamber (to project authority). Use a calm, controlled and caring voice to show a genuine interest in the chamber's business.
3. When you are ready to begin, say "Who would like to sponsor the first item of legislation?" When you recognize speakers, use the third person: "The chair recognizes..."
4. When a speaker concludes, say "Time of that speech was \_\_minutes and \_\_seconds. Questioners, please rise." Call on one legislator at a time, until the questioning period is over. You should keep track of questions to allow a fair distribution.
5. You may gesture for questioners to sit down when it is apparent time is running out. Afterwards, say "The questioning period has concluded, and the speaker may be seated."
6. "Those wishing to speak in opposition, please rise. Call on a speaker, using precedence and equity for all legislators. It is appropriate to first recognize speakers who have consecutively sought to speak earliest.
7. When you call on the last person seeking recognition to speak on a bill/resolution, say "since this is the last senator/representative who wishes to speak on this issue, if no one objects following his/her speech, we will move to the immediate previous question following his/her speech." (That way, a separate vote to call "previous question" is unnecessary).
8. When it is time to debate the next legislation, say "The next item of business is —" (say the legislation's title). Legislation should be considered in the order established on the agenda, unless it is laid on the table. Laying on the table should only be done to allow a legislator time to construct a speech to continue two-sided debate, or introduce new information. It should not be abused to allow another legislator an earlier opportunity to get to a later agenda item. Time and prudence is spent by the entire chamber to set a fair and balanced agenda to give everyone an equal opportunity to debate their own legislation, and attempts to circumvent this should not be allowed.
9. Use of the motion for previous question should be discouraged, particularly when legislators have something new to contribute to discussion. When debate or discussion becomes repetitive, allow the previous question without reservation. When debate becomes one-sided, the previous question may be considered immediately, and should be encouraged.

## Presiding Officer: Motions and Voting

- ✦ *Recognizing Members:* (for speeches) "The chair recognizes [Sen./Rep. last name]" or (for motions) "State your point/question."
- ✦ *Second:* (if the chamber is silent) "Is there a second?"
- ✦ *Stating Motions:* "It is moved and seconded that..."
- ✦ *Taking Votes* (use recorded votes for any votes requiring other than a majority for passage (a specific fraction of members), and for the *main motion* (legislation itself), since legislators' voting records are ostensibly tracked by their constituents). All voting is done only by members present at the time the vote is taken.
  - *Negative votes and abstentions* are counted for *majority* votes; votes taken where a fraction of members are needed are based on those seated in the chamber at the beginning of the session, so counting nay votes and abstentions is unnecessary; however, never should an absentee or abstention be counted as a nay vote.
  - *Voice Vote* - "On the motion to [read the motion title] those in favor, say aye. (Pause) Those opposed, say no." If the result is not clear, especially evidenced by particularly loud members, or if a member moves for a *Division* of the vote, then a standing vote is taken.
  - *Rising Vote* (You may substitute "raise hands") "Those in favor of the motion to [read the motion title] will rise [or, "stand"]." [Count vote.] "Be seated. Those opposed will rise." [Count vote.] "Be seated."
  - Voting for individuals (presiding officer, awards) is done by *secret ballot*.
- ✦ *Announcing the Result:* "On the motion to..."
  - *Voice Vote* - "The ayes have it and the motion is adopted [or "carried"]." Or, "The noes have it and the motion is lost." If you are unsure of the prevailing side, announce that you will take a rising vote (before someone asks for a division... to save time).
  - *Counted Rising Vote or Show of Hands Vote* - "With a vote of 51 in the affirmative and 23 in the negative, the affirmative has it [or, "there are two-thirds in the affirmative] and the motion is adopted."
  - Or, "There are 29 in the affirmative and 33 in the negative. The negative has it and the motion is lost."
- ✦ *Discipline*
  - *Motion Not in Order* "The chair rules that the motion is dilatory [or "not in order"] because..."
  - *Member Out of Order* (serious offense) "The member is out of order and will be seated."

# Table of Parliamentary Motions

Following is the NSDA's motion chart, annotated (non-shaded) to show motions used most often.

Type	Table of Most Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions Adapted for use in NSDA Congressional Debate		Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?		
	Motion	Purpose				Required Vote	May Interrupt?
Privileged	24. <b>Fix time for reassembling</b>	To arrange time of next meeting	Yes	Yes-T	Yes-T	Majority	Yes
	23. <b>Adjourn</b>	To dismiss the meeting	Yes	No	Yes-T	Majority	No
	22. <b>Recess</b>	To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	Majority	No
	21. <b>Rise to a question of privilege</b>	To make a personal request during debate	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	20. <b>Call for orders of the day</b>	To force consideration of a postponed motion	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
Incidental	19. <b>Appeal a decision of the chair</b>	To reverse a decision	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
	18. <b>Rise to a point of order or parliamentary procedure</b>	To correct a parliamentary error or ask a question	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	17. <b>Division of the chamber</b>	To verify a voice vote	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	16. <b>Object to the consideration of a question</b>	To suppress action	No	No	No	2/3	Yes
	15. <b>Divide a motion</b>	To consider its parts separately	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
	14. <b>Leave to modify or withdraw a motion</b>	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No
	13. <b>Suspend the rules</b>	To take action contrary to standing rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Subsidiary	12. <b>Rescind</b>	To repeal previous action	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
	11. <b>Reconsider</b>	To consider a defeated motion again	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	10. <b>Take from the table</b>	To consider tabled motion	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	9. <b>Lay on the table</b>	To defer action	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	8. <b>Previous question</b>	To force an immediate vote	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	7. <b>Limit or extend debate</b>	To modify freedom of debate	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	2/3	No
	6. <b>Postpone to a certain time</b>	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	5. <b>Refer to a committee *</b>	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	4. <b>Amend an amendment °</b>	To modify an amendment	1/3	Yes	No	Majority	No
	3. <b>Amend °</b>	To modify a motion	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
	2. <b>Postpone indefinitely</b>	To suppress action	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
Main	1. <b>Main motion</b>	To introduce a business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No

# Tracking Speaking Order and Recency

Keeping record of who has spoken ensures fairness in speaker recognition, and can be done with a simple table as demonstrated below. When students track recency, documenting the order of speeches also helps with this process. Speaker side is also noted—S (sponsor), N (negative), A (affirmative)—the examples below show where more than one speech on the same side was given.

- In Example 1, speakers' names are snaked from top to bottom, left to right, and crossed out when a speaker is subsequently recognized (the speech numbers are noted in parentheses). This makes it easier to determine who has spoken least and least recently.

**Example 1**

	1	2	3
1	Smith (PO)	Smith (PO)	Wilson (20N)
2	Lincoln (1S)	Jones (7A)	Clinton (22A)
3	Jones (2N)	Clinton (12A)	
4	Washington (3A)	Wilson (14A)	
5	Roosevelt (4N)	Nixon (17N)	
6	Jackson (5A)	Carter (18A)	
7	Reagan (6N)	Lincoln (19N)	
8	Clinton (8N)		
9	Bush (9N)		
10	Wilson (10S)		
11	Harding (11N)		
12	Kennedy (13N)		
13	Carter (15N)		
14	Nixon (16A)		
15	Ford (21N)		

- In Example 2, an alphabetized list is kept. In both examples, the presiding officer serves for two hours, which counts as two speeches.

**Example 2**

	Name	1	2	3
1	Bush	8N		
2	Carter	12A	19A	
3	Clinton	7A	16A	22N
4	Ford	14A		
5	Harding	10S		
6	Jackson	5A		
7	Jones	2N	15N	
8	Kennedy	11N		
9	Lincoln	1S	20N	
10	Nixon	13N	18A	
11	Reagan	6N		
12	Roosevelt	4N		
13	Smith	PO	PO	
14	Washington	3A		
15	Wilson	9N	17N	21A

# Recency Table & Fractions of Voting

1						
2						
3						
4						
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12						
13						
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17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						

# Votes Cast	Majority	Two-Thirds	One-Third
6	4	4	2
7	4	5	3
8	5	6	3
9	5	6	3
10	6	7	4
11	6	8	4
12	7	8	4
13	7	9	5
14	8	10	5
15	8	10	5

# Votes Cast	Majority	Two-Thirds	One-Third
16	9	11	6
17	9	12	6
18	10	12	6
19	10	13	7
20	11	14	7
21	11	14	7
22	12	15	8
23	12	16	8
24	13	16	8
25	13	17	9

# Recency/Precedence Chart

In order to determine precedence, first look at the number of speeches given by the speakers in question, then look at the order in which the speaker spoke last. The speaker who spoke *least recently* gets the speech if there is a tie in the number of speeches. Otherwise, the speaker who has spoken *least* gets the speech.

Legislator Name:	Speech 1	Speech 2	Speech 3	Speech 4	Total
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
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21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					

Quick Sheet Vote Calculator

Number of Votes Cast	Majority	2/3 Vote	1/3 Vote
18	10	12	6
19	11	13	7
20	11	14	7
21	12	14	7
22	12	15	8
23	13	16	8

Number of Votes Cast	Majority	2/3 Vote	1/3 Vote
24	13	16	8
25	14	17	9
26	14	18	9
27	15	18	10
28	15	19	10
29	16	20	10
30	16	20	10