

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 13-21, 1977

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Democratic government is based upon the premise that the majority rules. But the wishes of the majority can be easily thwarted in a meeting, such as the National Women's Conference, through skillful usage of parliamentary maneuvers by a minority of delegates. Since all persons, regardless of their views, must abide by the same rules of order, it is crucial that delegates know how to use motions for strategic purposes to accomplish desired goals. Your advance planning for the Houston Conference should include a thorough knowledge of the rules of order and an understanding of how to use them effectively [Revised Rules, Federal Register, Vol. 42 No. 210, November 1, 1977, 55127].

The following analysis provides a fundamental review of pertinent rules for the Houston Conference, some suggestions for using these rules for strategic advantages, and notations of how they differ from Roberts' Rules of Order Newly Revised.

§ 1905.10 DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

(d) Debate may be limited or terminated by a majority vote of those voting delegates present and voting.

TO TERMINATE DEBATE: Usually requires a 2/3's vote, but only a simple majority is needed here. This is not debatable. Needs a second. It is the same thing as moving the previous question. Use it when you sense that the delegates are "with you."

TO LIMIT DEBATE: The time limitation is already established at 2 minutes per speaker, unless all others who wish to speak have done so. To limit debate also implies to extend debate. Usually accomplished by a 2/3's vote; needs only a majority here. Use this to limit total debate time or the number of speakers on each side. Requires a second.

EX: Pro-change: "Madame Presiding Officer, I move the adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment."

Another Pro-change: "I move to terminate debate (or I move the previous question)." (N.B.: Always have one pro-change person prepared to oppose this as a safeguard in case it loses... if this should lose, immediately vote to reconsider...this can only be done by a delegate who voted on the prevailing side.)

EX: Pro-change: If an outstanding speaker on the ERA is at the microphone... "I move to extend debate to allow this speaker two additional minutes." If this fails, move to limit debate to one speaker, or move that each speaker be allowed to speak only once on the issue.

REMEMBER: Do not allow endless debate by the opposition. Plan ahead; be prepared to support and defend those issues in which you believe.

(b) A majority vote of those voting delegates present and voting shall be required to table, or to postpone indefinitely, or to object to consideration.

TO OBJECT TO CONSIDERATION: Usually requires a 2/3's vote, but only a majority is needed here. May interrupt a speaker on the floor. Needs no second. Keeps the maker of the motion from speaking to it, if moved and carried. Can only be applied to original main motion.

TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY: This is a good test of the opposition's strength, and can be used to check a "surprise attack." Is debatable and requires a second. The customary majority vote is needed. Those opposed to the main motion will vote to postpone indefinitely; those who favor it will vote against this.

TO TABLE (OR TO LAY ON THE TABLE): Needs the usual majority vote and must be seconded. Is not debatable. Be aware that someone can "move to take from the table" on the same day the motion was tabled.

EX: Anti-change: "I move that every woman be encouraged to recognize her husband as the head of the household."

Pro-change: "I object to consideration of this motion."
(If the objection fails for lack of majority support, then the main motion is open for discussion. Continue to use other tactics (move to postpone indefinitely; if that fails, move to table).)

ANOTHER USEFUL TECHNIQUE: MOVE TO RECONSIDER

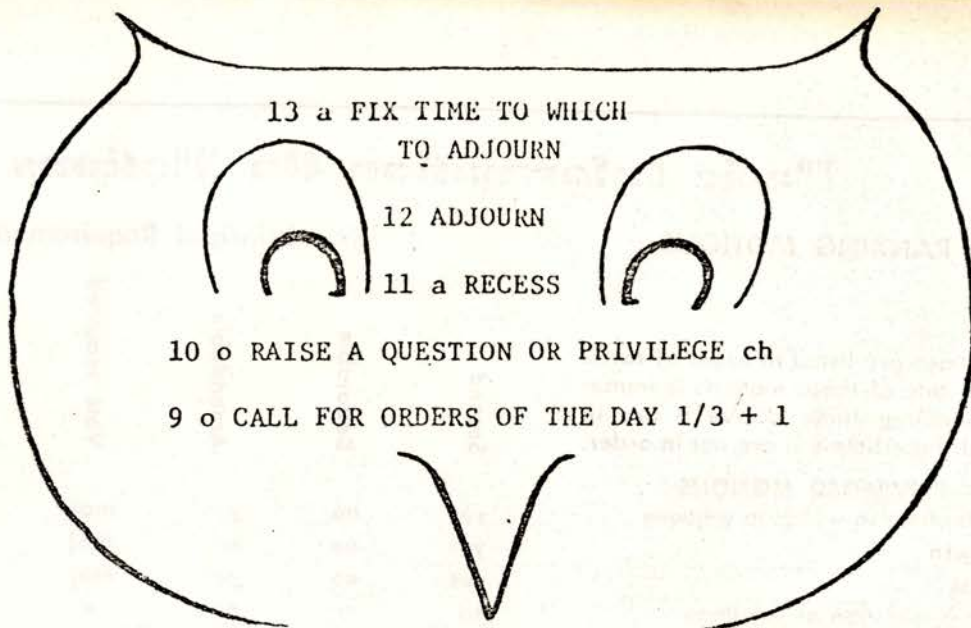
This ordinarily requires only a majority vote and a second. It is an excellent means for securing a victory on an issue since no question can be twice reconsidered. Only use it when you are sure your supporters are present in the conference meeting room. Caution: This must be moved by someone who voted on the prevailing side. If you feel a vote on an issue will be close, have a supporter of your position vote with the opposition to allow this option to reconsider.

GENERAL POINTS TO REMEMBER: If you are against a motion; do not second it. Speak against it. Vote against it. Move to postpone indefinitely to postpone to the next session, to table, to terminate debate, or to limit debate. Move to amend and continue to amend until the motion becomes too cumbersome for passage. Move to recess if you need to solicit more votes. If an objectionable motion still passes, then have someone who voted on the prevailing side move to reconsider. Move to recind, if possible, as a last resort.

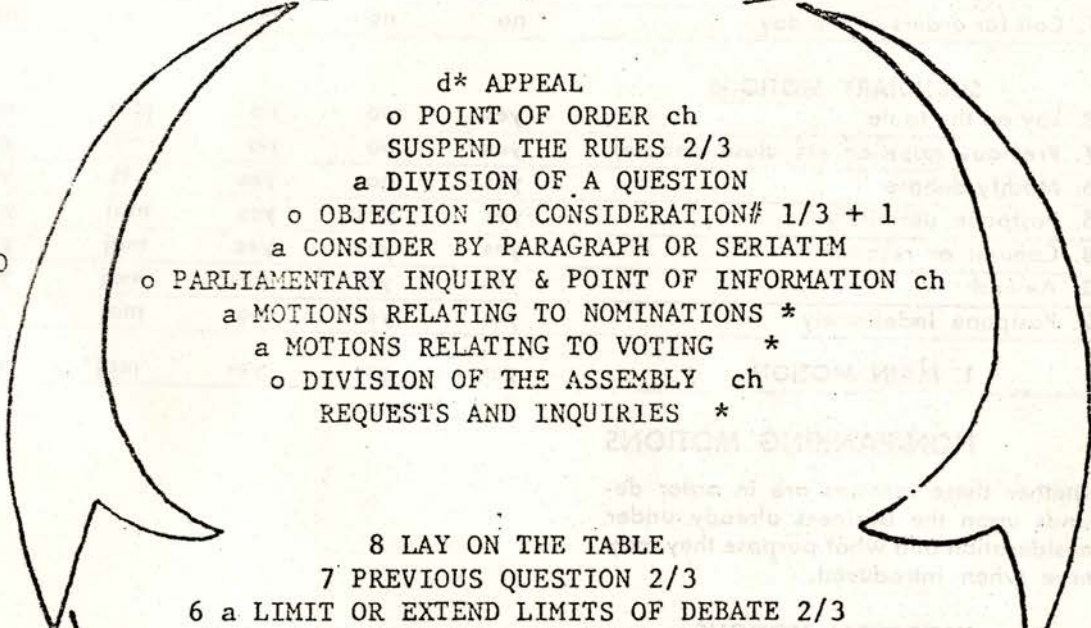
If you favor a motion, you must use the opposite tactics to try to block any of the foregoing moves.

Be courteous at all times, and the Chair will respond with courtesy to you.

PRIVILEGED
MOTIONS
RANK AS SHOWN,
WITH 9 YIELDING
TO ALL ABOVE, etc.



INCIDENTAL
MOTIONS HAVE NO
RANK BUT APPLY TO
OTHER MOTIONS AS
NEEDED

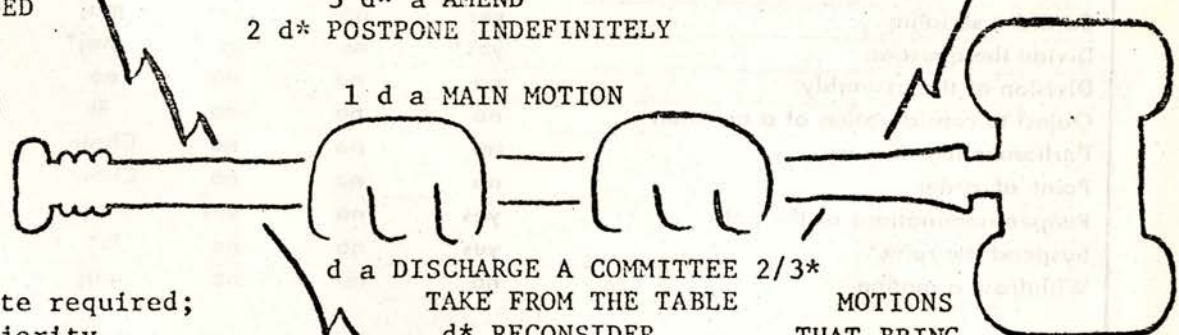


SUBSIDIARY
MOTIONS RANK AS
SHOWN, WITH 2
YIELDING TO ALL
ABOVE, ETC.; ALL
YIELD TO PRIVILEGED

FIRST MOTION MADE

LEGEND:

d Debatable
a Amendable
o No second
2/3 & 1/3 + 1 Vote required;
otherwise majority
ch Chair decides
* One or more exceptions; see text
Applies only to an original main
motion



Parliamentary-Wise

Basic Information On Motions

RANKING MOTIONS

Principal Requirements

These motions are listed in order of rank. When any one of these motions is immediately pending, those above it are in order and those below it are not in order.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote required	Reconsiderable	May interrupt
13. Fix the time to which to adjourn	yes	no	yes	maj	yes	no
12. Adjourn	yes	no	no	maj	no	no
11. Recess	yes	no	yes	maj	no	no
10. Raise a question of privilege	no	no	no	x	no	yes
9. Call for orders of the day	no	no	no	x	no	yes

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

8. Lay on the table	yes	no	no	maj	no	no
7. Previous question (to close debate)	yes	no	no	$\frac{2}{3}$	yes*	no
6. Modify debate	yes	no	yes	$\frac{2}{3}$	yes	no
5. Postpone definitely	yes	yes	yes	maj	yes	no
4. Commit or recommit	yes	yes	yes	maj	yes*	no
3. Amend	yes	yes*	yes*	maj	yes	no
2. Postpone indefinitely	yes	yes	no	maj	+	no
1. MAIN MOTION	yes	yes	yes	maj*	yes	no

NON-RANKING MOTIONS

Whether these motions are in order depends upon the business already under consideration and what purpose they may serve when introduced.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

Appeal	yes	*	no	maj	yes	yes
Close nominations or the polls	yes	no	yes	$\frac{2}{3}$	no	no
Consider seriatim	yes	no	yes	maj	no	no
Divide the question	yes*	no	yes*	maj*	no	no*
Division of the assembly	no	no	no	no	no	yes
Object to consideration of a question	no	no	no	$\frac{2}{3}$	#	yes*
Parliamentary inquiry	no	no	no	Chair	no	yes
Point of order	no	no	no	Chair	no	yes
Reopen nominations or the polls	yes	no	yes	maj	#	no
Suspend the rules*	yes	no	no	$\frac{2}{3}$ *	no	no
Withdraw a motion	no	no	no	maj	#	yes*

MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

Reconsider	yes	=	no	maj	no	no
Take from the table	yes	no	no	maj	no	no

Key to Markings

* - See Robert's Rules of Order for special rules.
 x - Usually no vote taken; Chair rules.
 + - Only an affirmative vote may be reconsidered.

- Only a negative vote may be reconsidered.
 = - Debatable when applied to a debatable motion. See ROBERT'S