

DIOCESAN CONVENTION

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE: BASIC CONCEPTS

The components of parliamentary practices are built on two important concepts so that everyone can speak, but decisions can be made:

- 1) All members have **equal opportunity** to voice opinions (*minority voice*), and;
- 2) There is an **efficiency** necessary to the process (*majority vote*).

As President of the Convention, it is the Bishop's responsibility to see that these two concepts are observed.

HOW TO ACT

Decorum, in a parliamentary context, is behavior or conduct of a Delegate of the Convention. Decorum may be considered "good" or "poor" decorum. Here are some examples:

Examples of good Decorum

- Waiting for the President to call on you before speaking from the microphone.
- Identifying yourself by name and congregation. It is also helpful to identify your position: "I am speaking in favor of the motion."
- Speaking only when you have something substantially new to say about the matter at hand.
- Addressing your comments to the President, not other Delegates.
- Applauding recognition of an individual accomplishment, like after a guest has addressed the convention.
- Speaking no more than twice on the matter at hand and as briefly as possible.
- Making comments directly related to the matter at hand.

Examples of poor Decorum

- Beginning to speak before the President has called on you.
- Interrupting or speaking over the President or another Delegate.
- Making comments that are not directly related to the matter at hand.
- Repeating comments that have already been voiced.
- Applauding the comments made by another Delegate or after a vote is taken.
- Addressing your comments to other Delegates instead of the President.
- Trying to speak more than twice on the matter at hand.

HOW ARE MOTIONS HANDLED?

A motion is a proposal made by a Delegate which requires action. It might be a motion about process, like a motion to end debate ("I move we end debate") or a motion about content, like a motion to amend "I move we amend the resolution by ...").

At anytime a Delegate can ask a question about a specific procedure by being recognized and asking "I have a question about the procedure."

1. **MOVE**

A Delegate makes a motion by saying "I move that..." and then providing details. If the motion is one dealing with content, it should be written on a piece of paper BEFORE making the motion so if it receives a second, it can be given to the Secretary.

2. **SECOND**

Another delegate **seconds the motion**, when required. Making a second does NOT mean you agree with the motion. Making a second means you agree the motion **should come before the Convention**.

3. **STATE**

The President **states the motion** so the entire Convention knows what the motion is. A Standing Rule of the Convention (*Rules of Order, Class C(10)*) that differs from standard practice is: "The mover may withdraw a motion or resolution at any time before decision or amendment, in which case it shall not be entered upon the minutes."

4. **DEBATE**

The Delegates **discuss the motion** keeping comments limited to the matter at hand. There are other motions, such as a motion to amend, that can be made while a main motion is discussed. Delegates should remember that "No member shall speak more than twice on the same question without leave of the house, nor more than once in any case until every member choosing to speak shall have spoken." (*Rules of Order, Class C(4)*). In addition, the President will try to alternate speakers between those who are in favor of a motion and those who are opposed to it.

5. **PRESENT**

When debate has concluded, the President **presents the question**, once again repeating the motion so it is clear to the Delegates what is being voted on. The President then announces a vote will be taken and how it will be taken.

6. **VOTE**

The President **conducts a vote**. The Rules of Order, (*Class C(12)*) state "Every member present shall vote whenever a question is put, unless excused by the Convention on account of his [*sic*] being personally interested in the result, or for other cause." Usually a voice vote is clear and determines the outcome. If unclear, the President may ask for a rising vote where Delegates stand. If that is unclear, then the President may ask the Tellers to count a rising vote.

7. **RESULT**

The Bishop **announces the result**. In most cases only a majority (more than half the votes cast) is needed. In some cases, a two-thirds vote may be needed (at least two thirds of those present and voting). A two-thirds vote is usually needed when the motion will diminish the rights of the Delegates (like closing debate).

It is recommended that Delegates read and review the Constitution and Canons at <http://constitution.episcopalfonddulac.org>.

CLASS C. Parliamentary Rules

- (1) When the President takes the Chair, the members shall be seated, and shall not stand up except to address the Chair.
- (2) No member shall be absent from the house unless having leave, or being unable to attend.
- (3) When any member is about to speak, or deliver any matter to the house, the member shall with due respect address the President, confining comments strictly to the point in debate.
- (4) No member shall speak more than twice on the same question without leave of the house, nor more than once in any case until every member choosing to speak shall have spoken.
- (5) No motion shall be considered as before the Convention unless seconded, and, when required, reduced to writing.
- (6) A question once determined shall not again be brought before the house, unless on a motion of reconsideration made by one of the majority. No question shall be reconsidered more than once.
- (7) When a question is before the Convention, no motion shall be received unless:
 - (A) to lay it on the table;
 - (B) to postpone it to a certain time;
 - (C) to postpone it indefinitely,
 - (D) to commit it; or
 - (E) to amend it; which motions shall have precedence in the order herein named.
- (8) All amendments shall be considered in the order in which they are received. When a postponed amendment is under consideration, a motion to amend the same may be made. No other amendment to such second amendment, shall be in order.
- (9) A motion to lay on the table shall be decided without debate.
- (10) The mover may withdraw a motion or resolution at any time before decision or amendment, in which case it shall not be entered upon the minutes.
- (11) If a question under debate contains several distinct propositions, the same shall be divided at the request of any member, and a vote taken separately.
- (12) Every member present shall vote whenever a question is put, unless excused by the Convention on account of his being personally interested in the result, or for other cause.
- (13) On the requisition of any two members, the yeas and nays shall be called and entered on the Journal. On the requisition of any three members, the vote shall be taken by orders, as provided for in article VII, Section 3, of the Constitution.
- (14) The reports of all committees shall be in writing, and shall be received without motion for acceptance. They shall be entered on the minutes unless otherwise ordered. If recommending or requiring any action or expression of opinion by the Convention they shall be accompanied by a resolution or resolutions for its consideration.
- (15) When a member is called to order by the President, or another member, the member shall immediately sit down, unless permitted to explain. All questions of order shall be determined in the first instance by the President; but any member may appeal from the decision of the Chair, and on such special appeal no member shall speak more than once without leave of the Convention.
- (16) All questions relating to the propriety of business shall be decided without debate.
- (17) The prescribed order of business shall not be departed from nor shall any Rule of Order be suspended unless by a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present.
- (18) When the Convention is about to adjourn each member shall keep his seat until the President leaves his chair.
- (19) The Convention shall not adjourn sine die without such devotions as the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority shall deem proper.
- (20) Miscellaneous Voting and Ballots. Where several persons are to be elected to the same position, a majority of the ballots cast shall elect. A ballot containing several questions or more than one position to be filled which leaves one or more of the choices blank shall be valid.
- (21) No resolution shall be in order at Convention unless it
 - (A) be submitted in writing to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority no later than 45 days prior to the convening of the Convention or
 - (B) be found to be in order by a least a majority vote of the Convention.
- (22) Except when in conflict with the Constitution and Canons, or any Rule herein contained, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the interpretation of these Rules and the procedure to be followed.