

# HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES

Each Senator or Representative shall be assigned to sit on a Senate committee or a House committee. The number of committees will be determined by the Program Staff upon receiving the final number of bills at the conference. Committee appointments shall be determined by the State Board, either randomly or by topic. Committee meetings are held on Thursday evening. Committee time is used to strengthen, combine bills and determine weaknesses. The purpose of Committee is to rank bills by favorable attributes in order to present the best bills on the Floor of the House or the Senate.

All bills in both the House and Senate shall first be scored by their respective committees. Committee Chairs are selected by the State Board and Program Staff between Pre-LEG and the Baton Rouge conference. These Chairs will preside over the proceedings of the committees. Each Senator/Representative on the committee shall present his/her bill to the committee.

## COMMITTEE TIME FRAME

The Committee Chairs will direct the committee to adhere to the following time frame during debate on bills:

- 2 minutes for an Opening Statement by the sponsor(s)
- 2 minutes for Questions
- 8 minutes for Debate (alternating speakers in support of and against the bill)
- 2 minutes for a Closing Statement by the sponsor(s)

Amendments are not permitted in committees.

## COMMITTEE ACTIONS

All bills shall be ranked on a scale of 1-5 for each criterion with 1 being the best ranking and 5 being the worst ranking.

1. State Importance
2. Feasibility
3. Speaker Knowledge/Presentation
4. Originality
5. Degree to which it is debatable

The degree to which it is debatable and originality criteria will be weighted more heavily than the others, each accounting for 30 percent of the total score.

The State Board will use these averaged and weighted rankings from the committees to create each chamber's docket for the following day. The House and Senate chambers will consider all bills presented in the docket. Only a motion to suspend the rules may rearrange it.



# HOUSE & SENATE FLOORS

If a bill receives a favorable average rating from the committee and the Presiding Officers place it on the docket, the sponsor(s) shall present the bill to the appropriate House or Senate body.

## PROCEDURES FOR BILL CONSIDERATION ON THE FLOOR

### BILL SPONSOR'S OPENING STATEMENT

**3 MINUTES**

- Sponsor may use all three (3) minutes.
- Sponsor may use part and yield rest to co-sponsor, questions, closing statements or the chair.

### TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

**2 MINUTES**

- The presiding officer will open the floor to Questions from the floor. The presiding officer will recognize members of the body to question the bill sponsor(s) on any matter relating to the content of the bill in question until time expires. The questions must be technical in nature and only relate to facts or statistics regarding the bill. Any questions deemed debatable or non-technical by the presiding officer will be called out of order.
- The presiding officer has the authority to deem questions germane or not germane.
- Delegates may only ask one question at a time.

### INTENT SPEECHES

**4 MINUTES**

- Candidates for State Board positions are the only delegates allowed to give intent speeches.
- A speaker may sign up with the Secretary of State for an intent speech from the announcement of the docket up until the presiding officer begins the bill consideration process on the bill in question.
- Intent speeches are limited to two minutes each.

### GENERAL DEBATE

**12 MINUTES**

- The presiding officer will open the floor to general debate on the bill in which members of the body may express their opinions on the bill.
- Each delegate may speak for a maximum of two (2) minutes.
- In the event a delegate does not use all two (2) minutes, he/she may yield to another delegate to speak. This delegate may speak for the remainder of the original two (2) minutes given by the chair. Time may not be yielded if it has been yielded once before.
- The presiding officer will alternate between speakers in proposition and speakers in opposition of the bill. If the first speaker recognized supports the bill, the presiding officer will call for a speaker to debate against the bill, and vice versa.
- The speaker may ask the bill sponsor(s) a question or a series of questions upon being recognized by saying "Will the author(s) yield to a question/series of questions?" The speaker may engage in debate before and/or after the question(s).
- Members of the body may also propose amendments upon being recognized by the chair. In the event an amendment is deemed hostile by the bill sponsor(s), the following procedure will take place:

**AMENDMENT DEBATE AND VOTE** **9 MINUTES**

Amendment Sponsor's Opening Statement	2 minutes
Questions	1 minute
General Debate on the Amendment	4 minutes
Original Bill Sponsor's Statements	1 minute
Amendment Sponsor's Closing Statements	1 minute

- For a full explanation of the amendment process, see “Explanations of Parliamentary Motions and Points” further into this document.

**BILL SPONSOR CLOSING STATEMENT** **2 MINUTES**

- Once debate has closed on the bill, the presiding officer will recognize the bill sponsor(s) to deliver the Closing Statement to present the arguments for final passage for the final time.
- In the event the sponsor(s) yielded unused time from the Opening Statement, the total time available to the sponsor(s) will be two (2) minutes plus that time.

**FINAL READING OF BILL AND VOTE**

- The presiding officer will convene a vote for final action on the bill.
- The Clerk will read the bill by title only plus any amendments for the final time.
- The presiding officer will ask for the yeas and nays via a voice vote. A simple majority (1/2) is required for passage.
- In the event the presiding officer is unclear as to which side had the majority, he/she may recognize a Division as called from the floor. When a Division is called or the presiding officer is in doubt of the result, he/she will ask the yeas and nays to stand, respectively.
- When a bill is passed by a House or a Senate, it shall then be transported with the presiding officer's signature to the Bill Tracking station staffed by the Program Staff and routed appropriately.

# EXPLANATIONS OF PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS AND POINTS

Only the following motions and points are allowed during debate.

For all motions save motions to amend legislation, the following procedure will be used:

- A delegate may seek recognition from the presiding officer to make a motion by raising his/her blue placard.
- Once the presiding officer recognizes the delegate, he/she will state the motion.
- If the presiding officer deems the motion appropriate, he/she will call for a second.
- If a second is given, the presiding officer will then ask for objections.
  - If there are no objections, the motion is immediately adopted.
  - If there is an objection or multiple objections, the presiding officer will convene a vote.
- The required majority varies for each motion.

## 1. Amendments to Legislation

- Motions to amend legislation are allowed at any point during the Debate portion of House and Senate floor debates by raising the red placard. They may not interrupt speakers.
- These motions have the effect of changing the verbiage of bills.
- After the committee chair or presiding officer recognizes a delegate's red placard, the delegate will deliver the completed amendment form to the clerk and presiding officer for review.
- The presiding officer is empowered to deem amendments germane or not germane to the legislation in question.
- The presiding officer will then ask the bill sponsor(s) whether they deem the amendment friendly or hostile to the bill.
  - In the event the sponsor(s) deem the bill friendly, the amendment text will be immediately added to the bill without debate or a vote.
  - In the event the sponsor(s) deem the bill hostile, the presiding officer will open debate on the amendment.
    - The amendment sponsor will deliver an opening statement on the amendment for a maximum of two (2) minutes.
    - The presiding officer will open the floor to Technical Questions from the floor for a maximum of one (1) minute.
    - The presiding officer will open the floor to Debate. Each recognized speaker may speak for a maximum of one (1) minute. Upon the conclusion of each speaker's speech, the chair will immediately take back the floor in order to recognize another speaker. The total time for Debate shall not exceed four (4) minutes.
    - The presiding officer will then recognize the bill sponsor(s) to deliver comments on the amendment for a maximum of one (1) minute.

- The presiding officer will then recognize the amendment sponsor for a Closing Statement for a maximum of one (1) minute.
  - The presiding officer will then convene a vote on the amendment. A simple majority (1/2) is required for passage.
- If a hostile amendment is approved by the body, the presiding officer will direct debate back to the general Debate on the bill as amended.
- In the event a delegate wishes to amend the amendment, the above process will take place with the secondary amendment. Tertiary amendments are not allowed.
- All debate must remain relevant to the question at hand, whether it be the general bill, an amendment or a secondary amendment.

## 2. The Previous Question

- Motions for the previous question are allowed at any point during general Debate of bills or amendments. They may not interrupt speakers.
- Moving the previous question cuts off Debate and moves straight to the Closing Statement.
- In the event this motion comes during debate on an amendment, the delegate must specify which question to move:
  - “I move the previous question on the amendment.” This motion cuts off debate on the amendment and moves straight into the comments from the bill sponsor(s).
  - “I move the previous question on the bill.” This motion cuts off debate on both the amendment and the bill and moves straight into the sponsor’s Closing Statement on the bill.
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority is required for passage.

## 3. Table/Remove from the Table

- Motions to table legislation are allowed at any point during convened sessions of Houses and Senates. They may not interrupt speakers.
- Moving to table legislation defers consideration of the instrument.
- There are three (3) possible options with motions to table:
  - General Motion to Table: This motion simply lays the instrument on the table and may be removed from the table at any point.
    - An instrument laid on the table may be removed from the table with a corresponding motion.
    - “I move to remove [insert bill name] from the table.”
    - The instrument will be returned to its original place on the Docket. If the chamber has moved beyond that point on the Docket, a motion to suspend the rules and rearrange the Docket may be used.
  - Motion to table for a specified amount of time: This motion defers consideration of legislation until a specified time.
  - Motion to table indefinitely: This motion effectively kills the instrument.
- A simple majority (1/2) vote is required for passage.

#### 4. Suspension of Rules

- Motions to suspend the rules are allowed at any point during convened sessions of Houses and Senates. They may not interrupt speakers.
- These motions have the effect of adjusting rules in this handbook to satisfy the needs of the floor to properly execute debate.
- The presiding officer is empowered to deem these motions appropriate and admissible.
- The following are common motions to suspend the rules:
  - Extend time: Delegates may use this motion to extend time for questioning or debate.
    - The motion must include a specific amount of time for extension.
    - These motions may only extend the general time for questions or debate; they may not extend times for individual speakers' speeches or subsequent questioning.
    - "I move to suspend the rules and extend the time for questioning by two minutes."
  - Rearrange the Docket: Delegates may use this motion to adjust the order of consideration of bills on the Docket.
    - These motions may move a single bill, move multiple bills, or force immediate consideration of a particular bill.
    - "I move to suspend the rules and rearrange the Docket so that [insert bill number(s)] appear(s) before [insert bill number]."
    - "I move to suspend the rules and immediately consider [insert bill number]."
- All motions to suspend the rules require a two-thirds (2/3) majority for passage.

#### 5. Reconsideration

- Motions to reconsider are allowed at any point during either committee hearings or convened sessions of the Houses and Senates. They may not interrupt speakers.
- Should a bill fail to be reported favorably in committee or pass in a House or a Senate, any delegate who voted against the bill in its initial consideration may move for the committee or chamber to reconsider the bill.
- These motions are only permissible in the body in which the bill failed to proceed. For example, a bill with an unfavorable report in committee may not be reconsidered by a House or Senate.
- "I move to reconsider [insert bill number]."
- If the motion to reconsider passes, the presiding officer will immediately convene consideration of the bill.
- No bill may be reconsidered if it has been reconsidered once before.
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority is required for passage.

#### 6. Recess

- Motions to recess are allowed at any point during either committee hearings or convened sessions of the Houses and Senates. They may not interrupt speakers.
- These motions dismiss the committee meeting or session of a House or Senate for a specific duration of time, including a lunch break.
- The committee chair or presiding officer is empowered to not recognize a motion to recess should he/she feel it unnecessary.
- A specific length of time is required in the motion.
- A simple majority (1/2) is required for passage.

## **7. Adjournment**

- Motions to adjourn are allowed at any point during either committee hearings or convened sessions of the Houses and Senates. They may not interrupt speakers.
- These motions end committee meetings or sessions of a House or Senate.
- The committee chair or presiding officer is empowered to not recognize a motion to adjourn should he/she feel it unnecessary.
- In the event there will be future sessions, a motion to adjourn must include a time to reconvene.
- In the event there are no future sessions, the motion becomes a motion to adjourn sine die.
- A simple majority (1/2) is required for passage.

## **8. Point of Information**

- Points of Information are allowed at any point during either committee hearings or convened sessions of the Houses and Senates. They may interrupt speakers.
- A Point of Information is a statement of a fact or statistic to clarify misinformation on the floor or to provide additional insight relevant to the debate.
- Any delegate may rise and say, "Point of Information!" The presiding officer will acknowledge the point by saying, "Rise and state your point."

## **9. Point of Order**

- Points of Order are allowed at any point during either committee hearings or convened sessions of the Houses and Senates. They may interrupt speakers.
- A Point of Order is used to alert the presiding officer of a perceived error in parliamentary procedure.
- Any delegate may rise and say, "Point of Order!" The presiding officer will acknowledge the point by saying, "Rise and state your point."
- Upon hearing the Point of Order, the presiding officer will either correct the action in question or explain to the delegate how the action in question was in order.

## **10. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry**



- Points of Parliamentary Inquiry are allowed at any point during either committee hearings or convened sessions of the Houses and Senates. They may interrupt speakers.
- A Point of Parliamentary Inquiry is used to ask the presiding officer for clarification on any portion of parliamentary procedure that causes confusion.
- Any delegate may rise and say, “Point of Parliamentary Inquiry!” The presiding officer will acknowledge the point by saying, “Rise and state your point.”
- Upon hearing the Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, the presiding officer will explain the point in question to the delegate.

#### **11. Point of Personal Privilege**

- Points of Personal Privilege are allowed at any point during either committee hearings or convened sessions of the Houses and Senates. They may interrupt speakers.
- A Point of Personal Privilege is used make a personal request during debate, including permission to vacate the chamber for a brief time.
- Any delegate may rise and say, “Point of Personal Privilege!”
- Upon hearing the Point of Personal Privilege, the presiding officer will either grant or deny it.

# Floor Debate Sample Script

CHAIR:	<p><i>"Will the clerk please read Bill #___ by title only."</i></p> <p>(The bill sponsors go to the front of the chamber.)</p>
CLERK:	<p>Reads the bill by title only (noting any changes made during the committee hearing, i.e. additions, deletions). This is referred to as the second reading of the Bill. (The first reading was in committee.)</p>
CHAIR:	<p><i>"The Bill Sponsors have 3 minutes to present the bill in opening statements"</i></p>
BILL SPONSORS	<p>The Bill Sponsors begin by <b>stating their name and school</b>, then delivering an opening speech about their bill. When the Bill Sponsor finishes opening statements, the Sponsor may yield any remaining time to their Bill Co-Sponsor, the chair or to their closing statement and will say:</p> <p><i>"I would like to yield any remaining time to _____ (my Co-Sponsor, the chair, or my closing statements)."</i></p>
CHAIR	<p><i>"We will now move into a three minute round of Questions. The Chair recognizes _____ (state legislator's name)."</i></p>
LEGISLATOR	<p>Once recognized, stand, state name and club and immediately address the technical question to the Sponsor.</p> <p>After the Sponsor's/ Co-Sponsor's reply, the Chair continues to recognize other Legislators until time is called (after 3 minutes).</p>
CHAIR	<p><i>"Are there any intent speakers?"</i></p>
CLERK	<p><i>"Yes/No" If yes, "The intent speaker is _____." If no, "There is no intent speaker."</i></p>

CHAIR	(If there is an intent speaker) <i>"The Chair recognizes _____. You have 2 minutes to speak on this bill."</i>
INTENT SPEAKER	Intent speaker goes to front of chamber. States name, club and position and addresses the chamber.
CHAIR	<i>"We will now move into Debate. This is a twelve minute round. (The presiding officer recognizes a Legislator with their placard raised.)"</i>
LEGISLATOR	Stand, state name and club. Within the two minutes to address the chamber, the Legislator can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use all of the time.</li> <li>2. Use part of the time and yield the remaining time to another legislator by stating <i>"I yield my time to _____ (name)."</i> That legislator will have the remainder of the 2 minutes to speak.</li> <li>3. Use part of the time and yield the remaining time to the Chair by stating, <i>"I yield the remainder of my time to the Chair."</i></li> <li>4. Use part of the time and yield the remaining time to the Bill Sponsor's closing statement by stating, <i>"I yield the remainder of my time to the Sponsor's closing summation"</i>.</li> </ol>

	<p>5. Use part of the time to ask the Bill Sponsor if he will answer a series of questions by stating, <i>“Will the Bill Sponsor yield to a series of questions.”</i> Questions may only be asked if the Bill Sponsor says yes. If the sponsor says no, the recognized legislator may still address the chamber. If the Legislator intends on addressing the floor after the Bill Sponsor answers the questions the Legislator must state, <i>“Will the Bill Sponsor yield to a series of questions. I reserve my right to speak afterwards.”</i> Remaining time must be yielded.</p>
	<p>The debate process continues for the remainder of the twelve minutes. The Chair will alternate between proponents and opponents of the bill as long as there are speakers on each side until time expires. After a proponent speaker addresses the chamber, the Chair will say, “I will not recognize an opponent speaker, are there any such speakers?” The opposite will occur upon the conclusion of an opponent speaker’s address.</p>
CHAIR	<p><i>“The Bill Sponsors now have two minutes (plus any additional time yielded to closing statements during debate) for closing statements.”</i></p>
BILL SPONSORS	<p>State name and club, and give closing statements. Time may be yielded only to Co-Sponsor and the Chair.</p>
CHAIR	<p><i>“Bill # ____ will now be read by title only and placed on final passage.”</i></p>
CLERK	<p>Reads the Bill by title, noting any amendments that passed.</p>
CHAIR	<p><i>“We will now move to a vote on Bill #____. All those in favor of this bill please signify by saying ‘Aye’ in your normal speaking voice. All those opposed signify by saying ‘Nay’ in your normal speaking voice. (If voting machines are available in chambers, vote Aye or Nay through machines) This bill does pass/fail.”</i></p>
	<p>If the Presiding Officer is in doubt, he can call for a standing vote.</p>

	If Legislators feel the voice vote is too close to call, they should call out "division" and the presiding officer will may call for a standing vote.
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## Parliamentary Procedure Guide to Floor Debate on an Amendment

CHAIR	<i>"There is an amendment of the floor. Will the Clerk please read the amendment in its entirety."</i>
CLERK	<p>Reads amendment in entirety.</p> <p>If amendment is deemed hostile by the Bill Sponsors, debate on the amendment only ensues.</p> <p>The Amendment Sponsor goes to the front of the Chamber.</p>
CHAIR	<i>"The Amendment Sponsor has two minutes to present the amendment."</i>
AMENDMENT SPONSOR	State name and club, gives presentation on amendment.
CHAIR	<i>"We will now move into a one minute round of technical questions on the amendment. Are there any such questions on the floor? The Chair recognizes_____."</i>
LEGISLATOR	<p>Once recognized, stand, state name and club and immediately address the technical question to the Amendment Sponsor.</p> <p>After the Amendment Sponsor's reply, the Chair continues to recognize other Legislators until time is called.</p>
CHAIR	<i>"Is there anyone who wishes to speak on this amendment?"</i> (Refer to floor debate procedure. The same order of events takes place for an amendment except the

	<p>word "amendment " is submitted for the word "bill" and the time limit is different- Debate - 4 minutes; Bill Sponsor- 1 minute; Amendment Sponsor- 1 minute.)</p> <p>Following the last speaker's remarks, the Chair continues...</p>
CHAIR	<i>"We will now close debate on the amendment. Bill Sponsor(s) have one minute for comments on the <b>amendment</b>."</i>
BILL SPONSORS	States name and club and presents position on the amendment.
CHAIR	<i>"The Amendment Sponsor has 1 minute for closing statements."</i>
AMENDMENT SPONSOR	States name and club and makes closing remarks.
CHAIR	<i>"Will the Clerk please read the amendment?"</i>
CLERK	Reads the amendment.
CHAIR	<i>"We will now move to a vote on the amendment by _____ (Amendment Sponsor). All those in favor of this amendment signify by saying 'Aye'. All those opposed signify by saying 'Nay'."</i> Raps gavel and announce outcome of vote on amendment.

# SUPREME COURT PROCEDURES

## **OPENING STATEMENTS**

**3 MINUTES (EACH)**

1. The complainant will present a three (3) minute opening statement that introduces the basis for the complaint.
2. The Attorney General will present a three (3) minute opening statement.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE BENCH**

**10 MINUTES**

The Justices will have the opportunity to ask either party questions concerning their arguments for a period of ten (10) minutes.

## **WITNESSES**

**4 MINUTES PER WITNESS**

1. Each party is allowed to bring a total of three (3) witnesses in order to advance their arguments.
2. The complainant will bring forward witnesses in order to question them for a period of two (2) minutes. The defendant will then be allowed to ask the witnesses questions for a period of two (2) minutes as well.
3. The defendant will then bring their witnesses, and proceed with the aforementioned procedure.

## **PRESENTATION OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

**5 MINUTES EACH**

Each party has the opportunity to present any documentary evidence to the court for a period of five (5) minutes.

## **DELIBERATION AND JUDGMENT**

After all proceedings have occurred, the court will enter into deliberation, in which the complainant and Attorney General must vacate the room. The Chief Justice may recall either or both parties to answer further questions brought up in deliberation to allow them the opportunity to rebut new points. As soon as a decision has been reached, both parties will be recalled into the room and the Chief Justice will present the decision.