

SENATE PROCEDURES AND RULES

Relevant rules

Resolutions and Constitutional Amendments

19. Joint, concurrent, and Senate resolutions, and constitutional amendments shall be treated the same as bills under these rules, except that they shall have only one official reading, which reading shall occur after they have been reported by committee.

Parliamentary Rules

20. In all cases not provided for by the Constitution, these rules, the Joint Rules of Senate and Assembly, or statute, the authority shall be the latest edition of Mason's Manual or the custom and usage of the Senate.

Suspension of Rules or Amending of Rules

21. A standing rule of the Senate may not be adopted, amended, or repealed except upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the membership of the Senate, one day's notice being given, except that any rule not requiring more than a majority vote may be temporarily suspended without that notice by a vote of a majority of the membership of the Senate. A rule requiring a two-thirds vote on any question may be amended only by a two-thirds vote on one day's notice, except that a rule requiring a two-thirds vote may be temporarily suspended without that notice by a two-thirds vote.

All proposed amendments to these rules shall, upon presentation, be referred to the Committee on Rules without debate.

Suspension of the Joint Rules

21.1. Pursuant to Joint Rule 33, a joint rule may not be suspended by the Senate except with the concurrence of 27 Members unless a lower vote is prescribed by these rules or the Joint Rules of the Senate and the Assembly.

Permission of Committee on Rules

21.2. Notwithstanding Rule 21 or 21.1, a Senate or Joint Rule may not be suspended unless the Committee on Rules determines that an extraordinary circumstance exists that justifies the suspension.

Rules Governing Standing Committees

21.5. Except as otherwise provided in these rules, standing committees of the Senate shall be governed as follows:

- (a) The officers of each Senate committee shall be a chair, vice chair, and secretary.

(b) The chair shall preside at meetings when present except when the committee is considering a bill of which he or she is the sole author or the lead author. Whenever the chair is not presiding, the vice chair shall assume the duties of the chair. In the absence of both, a member designated by the chair shall preside.

(c) The secretary shall keep a complete record of the meetings and actions taken by the committee. Bills and other measures favorably acted upon shall be reported to the Senate as expeditiously as the reports can be prepared.

(d) The committee shall meet in regular session on the day and hour designated by the Committee on Rules. Adjourned meetings or special meetings shall be held at the time fixed in the adjourning motion, or, for a special meeting, on the call of the chair.

(e) A special meeting may be called by the chair, with the approval of the Committee on Rules, by giving reasonable notice to all members of the committee, either in writing or by telephone, specifying the purpose of the meeting, the time and place thereof, and the matters to be considered at the meeting. Notice of hearing of bills as required by subdivision (a) of Joint Rule 62 may also be given in the Daily File. A matter may not be considered at the special meeting unless specified in the notice.

A special meeting shall be scheduled so as to permit all members of the committee to attend without conflict with other scheduled committee meetings.

(f) A majority of the membership of the committee shall constitute a quorum. A vote of a majority of the membership of the committee shall be required to table a bill, remove it from the table, or reconsider a vote on a bill.

(g) Action may not be taken on any measure outside of a duly constituted committee meeting.

(h) The chair shall set the hearings of bills and arrange the calendar for committee hearings. Notice of hearing of any bill shall be given to the author and other persons requiring notice. A bill may not be considered in the absence of the author without his or her consent, except that a bill may be presented by the author's representative who is authorized in writing.

(i) A committee or a subcommittee thereof, by a majority vote of the membership of the committee, may meet in executive session for any purpose authorized by Section 9029 of the Government Code. Otherwise, all meetings shall be open and public.

(j) The chair shall direct the order of presentation of the arguments for and against matters for consideration by the committee, and shall permit questions to be asked by members of the committee in an orderly fashion and in keeping with proper decorum.

(k) Further consideration of a bill that has been voted out of a committee or defeated shall be by reconsideration only, as follows:

(1) A motion to reconsider a vote by which a bill is voted out shall be in order, and shall be voted upon at the same meeting. If the motion is carried by a vote of a majority of the membership of the committee, the bill may be considered at that meeting, provided the author is present, or at a subsequent meeting.

(2) The procedure for reconsideration of a bill that has been defeated shall conform to the requirements of subdivision (a) of Joint Rule 62. Any bill as to which reconsideration has been granted pursuant to this paragraph may not be heard again until a subsequent meeting of the committee, after being calendared in the Daily File.

(l) Any bill that has been laid on the table and is removed from the table at a later meeting may not be heard again until a subsequent meeting of the committee, after being calendared in the Daily File and after notice.

(m) When a committee adopts proposed amendments to a bill, the bill may be taken up for vote at that meeting or, if the committee or author requests, sent out to print before final action. If the amendments are not in proper form, they shall be prepared and submitted to the chair for approval before being reported to the Desk. Amendments submitted by the author that, in the opinion of the committee chair, are major or substantial shall be submitted to the committee at least two legislative days before the bill is scheduled for hearing.

(n) A bill may not be set for hearing, nor may any notice thereof be published, by a Senate committee until the bill has been referred to the committee by the Committee on Rules.

(o) The chair may appoint, with the permission of the Committee on Rules, subcommittees of one or more members to consider and recommend to the full committee action on matters as may be assigned to the subcommittee for consideration from time to time by the chair. The chair may assign and reassign members of, and matters to, the various subcommittees. The recommendation of a subcommittee may be accepted by a vote of a majority of the members of the committee.

(p) In all cases not provided for by this rule, the Senate Rules, the Joint Rules of the Senate and Assembly, or statute, the authority shall be the latest edition of Mason's Manual.

Additional Rules

21.6. Committees may adopt additional rules that are not in conflict with Rule 21.5 or other rules.

Reporting Measures Out of Committee

21.7. The vote of a majority of the membership of a standing committee shall be required to report a bill, constitutional amendment, concurrent resolution, or joint resolution out of committee.

A vote of a majority of all members of a standing committee who are present and voting shall be required to report a Senate resolution out of committee.

DEBATE

Statement of Motion

34. A motion may not be debated until it is distinctly announced by he or she who is presiding, and it shall be reduced to writing if desired by any Senator, and read by the Secretary, before it is debated.

Regulations as to Speaking

35. (a) When a Senator desires to address the Senate, he or she shall rise in his or her place, address he or she who is presiding, and, when recognized, proceed to speak through the public address system.

(b) A Senator may not speak more than twice in any one debate on the same day, and at the same stage of the bill, without leave; Senators who have once spoken are not again entitled to the floor (except for explanation) so long as any Senator who has not spoken desires to speak.

(c) When two or more Senators arise at the same time to address the Senate, he or she who is presiding shall designate the Senator who is entitled to the floor.

(d) A Senator may not be interrupted when speaking, and no question may be asked of him or her except through he or she who is presiding.

(e) The author of a bill, motion, or resolution shall have the privilege of closing the debate.

Order in Debate

36. When a Senator is called to order he or she shall sit down until he or she who is presiding has determined whether or not he or she is in order. Every question of order shall be decided by he or she who is presiding, subject to an appeal to the Senate by any Senator. If a Senator is called to order for words spoken, the objectionable language shall immediately be taken down in writing by the Secretary of the Senate.

Right to Address the Senate

37. A person other than a Member of the Senate may not address the Senate while it is in session, except that the Senate may resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole and, while sitting as a Committee of the Whole, may be addressed by persons other than Members.

QUESTIONS AND MOTIONS

Amendments to Measures

38. When amendments to a measure are reported by a committee or offered from the floor, the amendments shall be submitted in writing.

Adoption of amendments to any measure in the Senate prior to third reading, other than by rollcall, shall not preclude subsequent consideration in committee or on the third reading of the measure, of the amendments or any part thereof by the Senate.

Amendments to Be Germane

38.5. Every amendment proposed must be germane. In order to be germane, an amendment must relate to the same subject as the original bill, resolution, or other question under consideration.

A point of order may be raised that the proposed amendment or an amendment now in the bill, resolution, or other question under consideration is not germane, so long as the question is within control of the body. In that case the President pro Tempore shall decide whether the point of order is well taken. In the absence of the President pro Tempore, the Vice Chair of the Committee on Rules shall decide whether the point of order is well taken. If, in the opinion of the President pro Tempore or the Vice Chair of the Committee on Rules, the point of order is well

taken, the question of germaneness shall on his or her motion be referred to the Committee on Rules for determination. The Committee on Rules shall make its determination by the following legislative day. If the point of order is raised and referral is made on the last legislative day preceding a joint recess, the Committee on Rules shall make its determination before adjourning for the recess.

The proposition shall remain on file until the determination is made. If, upon consideration of the matter, the Committee on Rules determines that the amendment is not germane, the bill, resolution, or other question shall be stricken from the file and may not be acted upon during the remainder of the session, provided that the author of a bill, resolution, or other question shall be given the opportunity to amend the bill, resolution, or other question to delete the portions that are not germane, in which case the bill, resolution, or other question may continue to be acted upon. If the Committee on Rules determines that the amendment is germane, the bill, resolution, or other question may thereafter be acted upon by the house.

Notwithstanding Rule 21, this rule may not be suspended unless the Committee on Rules determines that an extraordinary circumstance and overwhelming public interest exist that justify the suspension.

Amendments From the Floor

38.6. Amendments to a bill, constitutional amendment, concurrent resolution, joint resolution, or Senate resolution offered from the floor, except committee amendments reported with measures or amendments offered with a motion to amend and rerefer to committee, are not in order unless and until a copy of the proposed amendments provided by the author has been placed upon the desks of the Members.

Motion to Lay on the Table

39. When an amendment proposed to any pending measure is laid on the table, it may not carry with it or prejudice the measure.

Division of a Question

40. If a question in debate contains more than one distinct proposition, any Senator may have the same divided.

The Previous Question

41. The previous question shall be put in the following form: "Shall the question be now put?" It shall require a majority vote of the Senators present, and its effect shall be to put an end to all the debate except that the author of the bill or the amendment shall have the right to close, and the question under discussion shall thereupon be immediately put to a vote.

Call of the Senate

42. Upon a motion being carried for a call of the Senate, he or she who is presiding shall immediately order the doors to be closed, and shall direct the Secretary to call the names of the

absentees as disclosed by the last previous rollcall. Thereupon, a Member may not be permitted to leave the Senate Chamber except by written permission of the President pro Tempore or, in his or her absence, of the Assistant President pro Tempore or of the Vice Chair of the Committee on Rules, or, in their absence of another member of the Committee on Rules designated for that purpose by the President pro Tempore or the Vice Chair of the Committee on Rules. Those Members who are found to be absent and for whom no excuse or insufficient excuses are made may, by order of those present, be taken into custody, as they appear, or may be sent for and then taken into custody by the Sergeant at Arms whenever found, or by special messenger to be appointed for that purpose. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Members present may order a rollcall of the Senate and compel the attendance of absentees in the manner above provided.

A call of the Senate may be ordered after the roll has been called and prior to the announcement of the vote. A call of the Senate may be dispensed with at any time upon a majority vote of the Senators present, that action to become effective upon completion of the rollcall and the announcement of the vote upon the matter for which the call was ordered.

A recess may not be taken during a call of the Senate. During any call, the call may be made to apply also to other items of business by a motion made and adopted by a majority vote of the Members present. Under those circumstances, when the call of the Senate is dispensed with as to any item of business, the call is deemed to be continued in effect until other items of business that have been made subject to the call by a majority of the Members present have been acted upon. When a call of the Senate is ordered, pending the announcement of the vote upon the completion of a rollcall, the pending rollcall shall become unfinished business, the consideration of which shall be continued until further proceedings under the call of the Senate are dispensed with, when it will forthwith become the order of business before the Senate.

A motion to adjourn is not in order during a call of the Senate.

Reconsideration

43. On the day on which a vote has been taken on any question, a motion to reconsider the vote may be made by any Member. Reconsideration may be granted only once.

The motion may be considered on the day made or on the succeeding legislative day, but may not be further postponed without the concurrence of 30 Members.

A vote by which a bill was passed may not be reconsidered on the last legislative day preceding the interim study joint recess or the final recess, and a vote by which the bill was passed may not be reconsidered on a Senate bill introduced during the first year of the biennium of the legislative session on January 31, or on the last legislative day immediately preceding January 31, of an even-numbered year.

When reconsideration of the vote by which any bill has passed has been demanded, the Secretary may not transmit it to the Assembly until the demand has been disposed of or the time for reconsideration has expired, but if the bill has already been transmitted to the Assembly the demand for reconsideration shall be preceded by a motion to request the Assembly to return the bill. The motion shall be put to a vote immediately without debate and, if not adopted, shall preclude a demand for reconsideration.

A demand to reconsider the vote on any debatable question opens the main question to debate, and the vote on the reconsideration shall be on the merits of the main question.