

**Pocket Guide to Floor Procedure!**

(print as landscape, one page)

faculty.washington.edu/jwilker/353/353Assignments/Pocket Rules.xls

**Things to know**

**Rules matter only if they are enforced!** You snooze, you lose! These rules are abbreviated, and do not fully capture the complexity of House and Senate procedure. Although House and Senate rules are similar to Roberts Rules of Order, there are not the same.

<b>Decorum</b>	Members always address their remarks to the chair, not to other members	Always refer to other members by the states they represent, not by their names	<i>"Mr. Chairman (e.g.), the distinguished gentleman from Arkansas is mistaken."</i>			
<b>Speaking</b>	Legislative debate time is usually equally divided between two Floor Managers for a bill	These managers give opening statements and allocate time to proponents and opponents of the bill	Typically, a member who wishes to speak requests time (from one of the managers) before the debate commences	A member who has the floor cannot be interrupted without permission (unless time has expired)		
<b>Order of recognition</b>	In the absence of floor managers, the Chair is required to recognize the first member to stand (etc.) <i>"Mr. Chairman!" (e.g.)</i>	A member who wishes to speak stands and waits to be recognized by the chair	Members are recognized for specific amounts of time, strictly controlled	A member can request additional time by unanimous consent		
<b>Quorum</b>	The legislature cannot officially do business without a majority of members present	A quorum is assumed to be present until someone objects	<i>"Mr Chairman (e.g.), I object on the grounds that a quorum is not present"</i>	<i>"The gentlelady from Missouri is recognized for one minute"</i> <i>"The clerk shall call the roll"</i>	A quorum call can be suspended at any time by unanimous consent	
<b>Voting</b> (Voice, Division, Roll Call)	Be sure to clearly state the question before the chamber so that people know what they are voting on. Votes cannot be interrupted once they have begun.	Recorded votes occur only upon request, and the request must be made <u>before</u> the chair has announced/gaveled the final result	<i>"Mr. Chairman (e.g.), I demand a recorded vote"</i>	<i>"Is there a sufficient second?"</i>	1/5th of the members present must stand in support of the motion (this could be a small number if a quorum is not present!)	A vote to pass a bill can be brought up for reconsideration at a later date by someone on the losing side. To prevent this from happening, a member will often 'move to reconsider the vote.' If the <b>motion to reconsider</b> fails, the outcome cannot be revisited. <i>"Mr. Chairman, I appeal from the decision of the chair"</i>
<b>Point of order</b>	Objection that some parliamentary procedure is being violated. Other than during a vote, the chair recognize and resolve the point of order	<i>"Mr. Chairman (e.g.), point of order!"</i>	<i>"For what purpose does the gentlelady from Texas rise?"</i>	<i>"Mr Chairman (e.g.), (state the point of order)"</i>	Chair immediately decides and announces whether to sustain or deny the point of order. Any member can then appeal the chair's ruling to the chamber	<i>"Is there a second? If there is, a vote to affirm the chair's ruling occurs"</i>

**House of Representatives**

<b>Motion to end debate</b>	If approved by a majority, brings the current motion to an immediate vote				
<b>Motion for the previous question</b>	If approved by a majority, ends debate and brings the bill (and all amendments in order) to a final vote				
<b>Non-germane amendment</b>	If agreed to by chair, defeats amendment on procedural grounds	<i>"I rise to make a point of order that the amendment is not germane to the bill"</i>	<i>"It is the chair's opinion that the amendment is germane"</i>	<i>"Mr. Chairman (e.g.), I appeal the chair's ruling to the floor"</i>	
<b>Special Rules</b>	A special rule proposed by the Rules Committee and adopted by the House can do just about anything, including allowing for non-germane amendments; no amendments; limited debate time etc.				

**Senate**

Ordinary procedure in the Senate provides for unlimited debate and amendments. There is no motion to end debate, motion for the previous question, or point of order that an amendment is not germane to the bill in ordinary Senate procedure. Amendments need NOT be germane. Bills come to the floor after the Senate passes a 'motion to proceed' (MTP) proposed by the majority leader. The MTP can propose limits on debate and amendments, but is subject to filibuster, as is the bill and amendments unless adopted by Unanimous Consent. The majority leader can also propose a Cloture motion (see the tutorials).