

# Robert's Rules in Plain English

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## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE --- at a glance.

### THE MOTIONS LISTED BELOW ARE IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE...

To Do This:	You Say This:	May You Interrupt The Speaker?	Do You Need A Second?	Is It Debatable?	Can It Be Amended?	What Vote Is Needed?	Can It Be Reconsidered?
Adjourn meeting	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Call an intermission	"I move that we recess for..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Complain about heat, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No (usually)
Temporarily suspend consideration of an issue	"I move to table the motion."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No (1)
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Give closer study of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes (2)
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	No	Yes	Yes (3)	Yes	Majority	Yes
Introduce business	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

### THE MOTIONS LISTED BELOW ARE IN NO ORDER OF PRECEDENCE...

Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote (4)	No
Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal from the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority (5)	Yes
Suspend rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 (6)	(7)
Verify a voice vote by having members stand	"I call for a division" or "Division!"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Request a voice vote by having members stand	"Point of Information."	Yes	No	Yes	No	No vote	No
Request information	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
Reconsider a hasty action	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	Yes	Yes	(8)	No	Majority	No

#### NOTES:

- 1) Unless vote on question is not yet taken.
- 2) Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.
- 3) Only if the motion to be amended is debatable.
- 4) Except in doubtful cases.
- 5) A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chair.

- 6) A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion.
- 7) Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered.
- 8) Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.

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## Subsidiary Motions and Rank

Subsidiary motions have **rank** among each other. They are arranged in a specific order in which they must be considered and acted upon, some motions taking precedence over others. The purpose is to avoid confusion when they are applied to a main motion.

Rank means that a motion of **higher rank** can be made at the time that a motion of **lower rank** is on the floor or **pending**. A motion of higher rank **takes precedence** over a motion of lower rank.

Common sense dictates this rule. It is a waste of time to discuss an amendment to a motion if the group may decide to send that motion to a committee for study. Consequently, the motion to commit has precedence over the motion to amend.

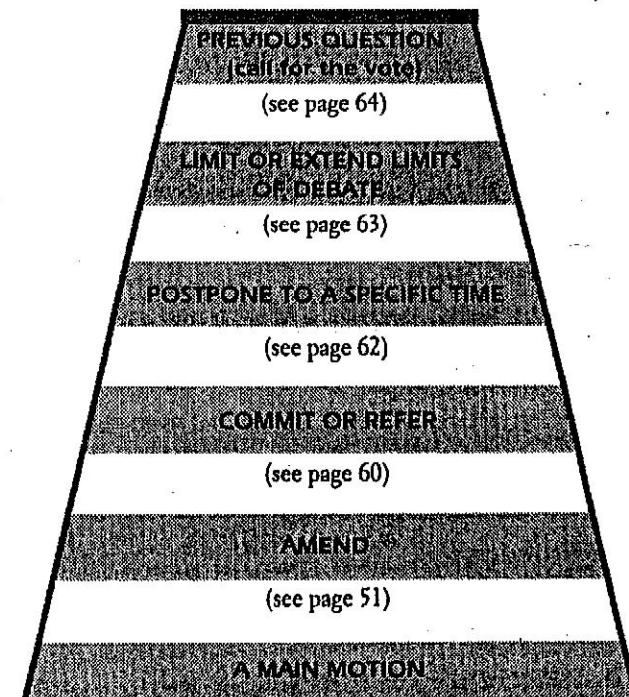
There is a common misconception that a group cannot have two motions on the floor at the same time. More than one motion can be on the floor but only one question. All of the pending motions must relate to the main motion on the floor. No new business may be introduced.

For example, the motion that the Association construct a playground is on the floor. Subsidiary motions to amend the motion, send it to a committee for study, or postpone it are in order. All of these motions relate to the main motion about constructing a playground and they all have rank among themselves.

No new motion that does not directly relate to the question of the playground construction can be considered. For example, a motion to plant a perennial garden at the entrance introduces an entirely new question. It is a **main motion** and takes precedence over nothing. Main motions occupy the bottom rung of the ladder.

The simplest way to understand rank is to imagine the subsidiary motions making up the rungs of a stepladder.

### THE RANKS OF MOTIONS IS LIKE A STEPLADDER



der. Those motions on the lower rungs must yield to the motions on the rung or rungs above. For instance, **previous question** (to call for an immediate vote) is near the top rung of the ladder. This motion takes precedence over all the motions that are lower on the ladder. This means that previous question can be made even if there are motions to amend, commit, etc. attached to the main motion regarding the construction of a playground. Previous question has the highest rank and is decided first.

Please study Chart 1 below for the ranking or order of precedence of the subsidiary motions.

**CHART 1****WHAT DO I SAY?**

A Chart of Motions Arranged from Lowest to Highest Rank

To Do This	Motion	You Say This	Vote
Introduce Business	Main	"I MOVE THAT..."	Majority
<b>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</b>			
Change Wording of a Motion	Amend	"I MOVE TO AMEND THE MOTION BY..." (Adding, Striking Out, Substituting)	Majority
Send to Committee	Commit	"I MOVE THAT THE MOTION BE REFERRED TO..."	Majority
Postpone Action	Postpone Definitely	"I MOVE THAT THE MOTION BE POSTPONED TO..."	Majority

To Do This	Motion	You Say This	Vote
Limit Debate	Limit Debate	"I MOVE THAT DEBATE BE LIMITED TO (ONE) SPEECH OF (TWO) MINUTES FOR EACH MEMBER."	Two-thirds
End Debate	Previous Question	"I MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION."	Two-thirds

**PRIVILEGED MOTIONS**

Take Care of Noise or Temperature	Personal Privilege	"WE CANNOT HEAR IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM."	Chair Rules
Take Intermission	Recess	"I MOVE THAT WE RECESS FOR..."	Majority
Close Meeting	Adjourn	"I MOVE THAT WE ADJOURN."	Majority

**AMEND**

Amend is the most frequently used and most important of the subsidiary motions. Amend can also cause the most confusion in groups.

- To amend a motion means to change the wording of a motion to make it clearer, more complete, or more acceptable *before* the motion is voted upon.



The amending process allows the group to change the proposed motion to more clearly represent the will of the group. Robert calls this "perfecting the motion."

- There are three ways to amend a motion.
  - I. To add words or phrases.
  - II. To strike out words or phrases.
  - III. To substitute by:
    - A. striking out and inserting words;
    - B. substituting an entire motion or paragraph.
- An amendment must be **germane** to the motion on the floor to be in order. Germane means that the amendment must relate to the pending motion. No new business may be introduced under the pretext of an amendment. (Congressional rules do allow unrelated amendments to be attached to bills which accounts for some of the confusion.)

#### Example

A motion has been made that a playground be constructed in the Association park. It would be germane for a member to move to amend the motion by adding the word "landscaped" as both the motion and the amendment relate to the playground. However, an amendment to add "and a perennial garden be planted at the entrance" is not in order as it is not germane. The second amendment relates to the entrance gate rather than to the playground and must be a separate question.

- A frequent point of confusion in the amending

process is the misconception that there can be only one motion on the floor at a time. The rule is: There can be only *one question* on the floor at a time.

- Adoption of the amendment *does not adopt the motion*. The group has simply changed the motion on the floor. The motion may be amended further.
  - I. If the group votes "no" on the amendment, the motion is on the floor as it was originally worded.

#### Example

The motion on the floor of the Green Acres Association is that a playground be constructed in the community park. Mrs. G rises and moves "THAT THE MOTION BE AMENDED BY ADDING THE WORDS 'IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER' AFTER THE WORD 'CONSTRUCTED.'" The amendment is seconded and discussed. The presiding officer puts the question on the amendment. "THE QUESTION IS ON THE AMENDMENT TO ADD THE WORDS 'IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER' AFTER THE WORD 'CONSTRUCTED.' AS MANY AS ARE IN FAVOR SAY AYE. THOSE OPPOSED SAY NO. THE NOS HAVE IT AND THE AMENDMENT IS LOST. THE QUESTION IS SHALL THE ASSOCIATION CONSTRUCT A PLAYGROUND IN THE COMMUNITY PARK."

- An amendment may also be amended.
- The first amendment is called a **primary** amendment and the amendment to the amendment is called a **secondary** amendment.

- Only two amendments may be pending at any one time. In other words, an amendment to an amendment to an amendment is not in order; otherwise, the group would become hopelessly confused.
- The presiding officer is like a referee. He must know the rules and be able to guide the group so that the members know what is going on, where they are, and what they may properly do.

### The Process of Amending an Amendment

#### FIRST VOTE ON:

The amendment to the amendment (the secondary amendment).

#### NEXT VOTE ON:

The original amendment (the primary amendment).

#### FINALLY VOTE ON:

The main motion (which may or may not have been amended).

#### Example

There is a motion on the floor of the Green Acres Association that "A PLAYGROUND BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE COMMUNITY PARK WITH THE SURPLUS IN THE MAINTENANCE FUND."

An amendment has been offered to insert the word "FENCED" before the word "PLAYGROUND." The amendment is seconded and is discussed.

An amendment to the amendment is offered to strike out the word "FENCED" and insert the word

"LANDSCAPED." The amendment is seconded and discussed.

The presiding officer takes the following action:

1. "THE QUESTION IS ON THE AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT, TO STRIKE OUT THE WORD 'FENCED' AND INSERT THE WORD 'LANDSCAPED.' AS MANY ARE IN FAVOR OF THE AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT, SAY AYE. THOSE OPPOSED SAY NO. THE AYES HAVE IT."
2. "THE QUESTION NOW ON THE FLOOR IS THAT THE WORD 'LANDSCAPED' BE INSERTED BEFORE THE WORD 'PLAYGROUND' IN THE MOTION THAT A PLAYGROUND BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE COMMUNITY PARK WITH THE SURPLUS IN THE MAINTENANCE FUND. AS MANY AS ARE IN FAVOR OF THE AMENDMENT SAY AYE; THOSE OPPOSED, NO. THE AYES HAVE IT."
3. "THE QUESTION NOW ON THE FLOOR IS THAT THE ASSOCIATION CONSTRUCT A LANDSCAPED PLAYGROUND IN THE COMMUNITY PARK WITH THE SURPLUS IN THE MAINTENANCE FUND."
4. The motion may be further amended at this point.
5. A member may move to further amend the motion by adding the words, "IN THE SOUTH-

EAST CORNER" before the words "COMMUNITY PARK." The presiding officer follows the same process, stating the question, allowing debate, and taking the vote on the amendment. If this amendment is adopted, the motion on the floor now is, "THAT A LANDSCAPED PLAYGROUND BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE COMMUNITY PARK WITH THE SURPLUS IN THE MAINTENANCE FUND."

- A motion may also be amended by substituting an entirely new motion for the motion on the floor, provided that it is germane. This can be a valuable tool in offering an acceptable compromise to an unacceptable motion on the floor.

#### **Example**

Mr. K rises and says, "I MOVE TO AMEND THE MOTION BY SUBSTITUTING 'THAT CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS BE HIRED TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL WITH COST ESTIMATES' FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PLAYGROUND."

- There are special rules the presiding officer must know to handle a substitute amendment.

A = MAIN MOTION

B = SUBSTITUTE MOTION

1. Motion A is stated and is allowed to be further amended.
2. Motion B is next stated and amendments are also allowed.

3. The vote is taken on whether Motion B will be substituted for Motion A.

#### **Example**

The presiding officer states that the motion has been made to substitute "THAT CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS BE HIRED TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL WITH COST ESTIMATES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PLAYGROUND" for the motion, "THAT A LANDSCAPED PLAYGROUND BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE COMMUNITY PARK WITH THE SURPLUS IN THE MAINTENANCE FUND."

(The presiding officer needs to explain to the group the process of amending.)

"OUR PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY, ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, STATES THAT WHEN A MOTION IS MADE TO AMEND BY SUBSTITUTION, WE FIRST GO BACK TO THE ORIGINAL MOTION AND ALLOW THE FRIENDS OF IT TO FURTHER AMEND IT. NEXT WE TAKE THE SUBSTITUTE AND OPEN IT UP FOR DISCUSSION AND AMENDMENT. THE LAST STEP IS THE VOTE ON WHETHER YOU WISH TO SUBSTITUTE OR NOT."

1. "THE ORIGINAL MOTION IS THAT A LANDSCAPED PLAYGROUND BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE COMMUNITY PARK WITH

THE SURPLUS IN THE MAINTENANCE FUND. IS THERE ANY FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT?"

2. "THE QUESTION IS NOW ON THE SUBSTITUTE, THAT CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS BE HIRED TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL WITH COST ESTIMATES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PLAYGROUND. IS THERE ANY DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT?"

3. "THE QUESTION IS NOW ON SUBSTITUTING THE MOTION THAT CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS BE HIRED TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL WITH COST ESTIMATES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PLAYGROUND FOR THE MOTION THAT A LANDSCAPED PLAYGROUND BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE COMMUNITY PARK WITH THE SURPLUS IN THE MAINTENANCE FUND.

"AS MANY AS ARE IN FAVOR OF SUBSTITUTING SAY AYE. THOSE OPPOSED SAY NO. THE AYES HAVE IT AND THE MOTION IS SUBSTITUTED."

- The reader will be happy to learn that the substitute motion may only be further amended by adding at the end. It must still be voted on by the group. They have only voted to *substitute* and not to *adopt*.

## Parliamentary Rules of an Amendment

- A member must obtain the floor to offer an amendment; a speaker cannot be interrupted.
- An amendment must be seconded.
- It is debatable, if the amendment is made to a debatable motion.
- It can be amended. (A secondary amendment *cannot* be amended.)
- It requires a majority vote even if it is applied to a motion that requires a two-thirds vote.

### A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT

A friendly amendment may be defined as a change in the wording that enhances and strengthens the original motion. When such a change is proposed and no one objects, the amendment is adopted by general consent.

### A HOSTILE AMENDMENT

A hostile amendment may be defined as one which gives a very different meaning to a motion. The amendment may defeat the intent of the main motion.

### Example

A motion is on the floor to commend the president. It may be amended by striking out "commend" and inserting "censure." The amendment is *germane* because both commend and censure refer to the opinion the group has of the president.

### AMENDMENTS WHICH ARE OUT OF ORDER

Those amendments are out of order which:

- do not relate to the motion (are not germane);

- are the same as a negative vote on the motion;
- are dilatory or foolish;
- would make the motion incoherent.

## COMMIT

To **commit** or **refer** a motion sends the question on the floor to a small number of people so that it can be carefully studied and put into proper form for the group to consider.

This is a very useful motion when all of the facts may not be known. It prevents long and pointless debate and protects the group from making a poor decision.

For example, in the case of constructing a playground in the park of the Green Acres Association a committee might:

- survey the members to determine the need;
- discover whether the city would provide matching funds;
- obtain cost estimates, etc.

## Give Direction to the Motion

The motion should include specific directions as to where the question ought to go and should address the following questions:

- A. A standing committee or a new special committee?
- B. What size committee?
- C. How shall the committee be selected?
- D. Will the committee have authority?
- E. When shall the committee report?

## Example

"I MOVE THAT THE QUESTION OF CONSTRUCTING A PLAYGROUND BE REFERRED TO A COMMITTEE OF FIVE, TO BE APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO REPORT BACK AT OUR NEXT MEETING."

The presiding officer is often faced with an incomplete motion such as, "I MOVE THAT WE REFER THE MOTION TO A COMMITTEE."

He should help the member complete the motion by asking the member:

"TO WHAT COMMITTEE SHALL THE MATTER BE REFERRED?" If the answer is "A SPECIAL OR AD HOC COMMITTEE," he proceeds to ask how many members will the committee have, how they are to be selected, and when the committee should report.

## Parliamentary Rules of Commit

- The motion to commit can be applied to any main motion *with any amendments* that may be pending. The amendments go *with* the motion to the committee.
- It must be seconded.
- It can be debated. However, *debate can only go into the desirability of committing and not into the main question*. For example, the advisability of constructing the playground cannot be debated.
- It can be amended as to which committee, what size committee, the instructions, etc.
- It requires a majority vote.



## POSTPONE

The motion to **postpone** delays action on a question until later in the same meeting or until the next meeting. A motion *cannot* be postponed further than the next regular meeting.

### How the Motion Is Used

Postpone is useful when:

- the invited speaker/dignitary has arrived;
- information regarding the pending motion will be available later in the meeting;
- a member realizes his delegation is not present for the vote;
- it is time for a recess or adjournment.

### Parliamentary Rules of Postpone

- Postpone can be applied to all main motions.
- It must be seconded.
- It cannot interrupt a speaker.
- It can be debated; however debate can only go into the desirability of postponing and not into the main question.
- It can be amended as to the time of the postponement; however, it cannot be postponed beyond the next regular business meeting or the end of the session in an annual convention.
- It requires a majority vote.

The motion is called up automatically when the time to which it was postponed arrives. If the motion was postponed until the next meeting, the presiding officer will schedule the motion on the agenda under **unfinished business**.

### Example

At the meeting of the Green Acres Association, Mr. B rises and says, "AS THE HOUR IS LATE, I MOVE THAT THE MOTION REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PLAYGROUND BE POSTPONED UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING." If the motion is seconded and adopted, the president will schedule the motion and any amendments adhering to it under unfinished business for the next meeting.

## LIMIT DEBATE

Limit debate is the motion by which the group can exercise special control over debate by:

- Reducing the number and length of speeches allowed.

### Example

"I MOVE THAT DEBATE ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PLAYGROUND BE LIMITED TO ONE SPEECH OF TWO MINUTES FOR EACH MEMBER."

- Requiring that debate be limited to a period of time, at the end of which, the vote must be taken.

### Example

"I MOVE THAT AT 9:00 P.M. DEBATE BE CLOSED AND THE QUESTION OF THE PLAYGROUND BE PUT TO A VOTE."

This motion is seldom used in regular meetings. It is helpful where the size of the group or the volume of business indicates that the meeting will be too lengthy.



## Parliamentary Rules of Limit Debate

- Limit debate can be used with any motion.
- It must be seconded.
- It cannot interrupt a speaker.
- It is not debatable.
- It can be amended, but only as to the length of speeches or when the vote will be taken.
- It requires a two-thirds vote because it takes away the rights of members.
- The vote may not be taken by voice but must be taken by a show of hands in a small group or a rising vote in a large group.

### HINT

A timekeeper and a timer are necessary if speeches have a time limit. After the motion is adopted, the presiding officer appoints a member to keep time. "THE MOTION TO LIMIT SPEECHES TO TWO MINUTES HAS BEEN ADOPTED. THE CHAIR APPOINTS MRS. X TO SERVE AS TIMEKEEPER."

An electronic timer makes a nice little noise to alert the speaker and presiding officer that the time is up. It may be necessary for the presiding officer to politely remind the speaker, "YOUR TIME IS UP."

## PREVIOUS QUESTION

Previous question is the motion used to cut off debate and to bring the group to an immediate vote on the pending motion. (The motion on the floor that was stated last.)

### Example

"I MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION."

- It is rude to call out "QUESTION!" and the presiding officer should ignore such calls.
- Previous question can be ruled out of order if the motion is debatable and has not received debate.
- The presiding officer should explain the effect of the motion to the members and clarify whether the motion is to apply to all the motions on the floor.

### Example

"THE PREVIOUS QUESTION HAS BEEN MOVED. THIS IS A MOTION TO STOP DEBATE AND VOTE IMMEDIATELY. THIS MOTION REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS VOTE. AS MANY AS ARE IN FAVOR WILL PLEASE RISE. THANK YOU. THOSE OPPOSED WILL PLEASE RISE. THANK YOU. THERE BEING TWO-THIRDS IN FAVOR, WE WILL VOTE ON THE MOTION TO CONSTRUCT A PLAYGROUND IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE COMMUNITY PARK."

## Parliamentary Rules of Previous Question

- Previous question can be applied to any pending question.
- It is out of order when a member has the floor.
- It cannot be debated.
- It requires a two-thirds vote because the right of members to debate is being curtailed.
- Because it requires a two-thirds vote, the vote must be taken by a show of hands in a small group or a rising vote in a large group.

## CONCLUSION OF SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

Subsidiary motions are always considered in order of their rank or order of precedence. Review the *stepladder chart*. When a subsidiary motion is pending, any motion above it in rank is in order; any motion below it in rank is out of order.

### Example

- It has been moved that the motion regarding the construction of a playground be referred to an ad hoc committee of five to be appointed by the president and to report back at the next meeting.
- The motion to amend is out of order. It is of lower rank than commit. Practically speaking, why should the group waste time amending a motion that is going to a committee for study?
- The motion to postpone is in order. It is of higher rank than commit. It might serve the interests of the group to postpone the entire question until the next meeting. (Perhaps tempers are hot and the group hopelessly divided. Time can often soften and heal.)

## POSTPONE INDEFINITELY AND LAY ON THE TABLE

The careful reader or student of Robert will have noticed that the lowest-ranked subsidiary motion, *postpone indefinitely*, and the highest-ranked subsidiary motion, *lay on the table*, have been omitted from the chart on page 49 and the subsequent discussion.

The author has omitted these motions deliberately. This book is designed as a practical and elementary guide to the commonly used and essential motions. The

rarely used *postpone indefinitely* and usually misused *lay on the table* were considered unsuitable for this work.

Briefly, *postpone indefinitely*, the lowest-ranked subsidiary motion, is a motion to *kill* a main motion. It avoids a direct vote on the question on the floor. I call it the "straw vote" motion. It can be used to test the strength of a motion that a faction opposes. It was designed as a courtesy motion, to prevent a direct vote on a question that might be embarrassing to the group. I have never seen it used in a group other than a parliamentary organization.

Conversely, *lay on the table*, the highest-ranked subsidiary motion, is generally misunderstood and misused by the public. The motion is frequently made that the group "table the motion" with the intent that the group clear the floor and "get rid of" the motion.

*Lay on the table* was also designed as a courtesy motion, allowing a group to set aside a question for something more important, such as the arrival of a speaker. Because this motion has the highest rank, it cannot be amended or debated.

*Lay on the table* is *out of order* when used to "kill or avoid dealing with a measure." (*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, p. 208.)

### Example

Back at the Green Acres Association, during discussion of the proposal to construct a playground, a member rises and says, "I MOVE TO TABLE THE MOTION."

The presiding officer should ask, "IS IT YOUR INTENT TO KILL OR DISPOSE OF THE MOTION REGARDING THE PLAYGROUND?"

If the answer is "YES," the presiding states, "THAT MOTION IS OUT OF ORDER."

Had the member moved to "TABLE THE MOTION UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING," the presiding officer would have realized that the member's intent was to use the motion to postpone and would have handled it accordingly.

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# Privileged Motions

Privileged motions are not related to the business on the floor, but to the rights of members and the organization. They are of such importance that they have the right to interrupt business. Because of their high privilege, they are *undebatable*.

Privileged motions have rank among themselves and take precedence over all other motions.

## Order of Rank from Lowest to Highest

Questions of privilege

Recess

Adjourn

## QUESTIONS OF PRIVILEGE

Questions of privilege relate to the rights of the organization or any of its members. The motion enables a member to interrupt business on the floor to state an urgent request. It is in order only when the comfort dia-

## Restorative Motions or Motions That Bring Back a Question

Restorative motions allow a group to change its mind. They are a separate category because of their contradiction to the parliamentary rule that once a question has been decided it cannot be brought up again at the same meeting.

Robert says that, *within limits*, members have the right to rethink a situation if they feel their decision has been made too quickly or without enough information.

The two most commonly used restorative motions are rescind and reconsider.

### RESCIND

Rescind is the motion to use to quash or nullify a previously adopted motion. It may strike out an entire motion, resolution, bylaw, etc.

### Special Parliamentary Rules

- Rescind is *not in order* when any action has already been taken as a result of the vote, such as any kind

of contract when the other party has been notified.

- It must be seconded.
- It requires a *two-thirds* vote unless *notice has been given* at the previous meeting, either verbally or in writing. If notice has been given, the motion requires only a *majority* vote.

### Example

Member: "I MOVE TO RESCIND THE MOTION REGARDING CONSTRUCTION OF A PLAYGROUND DUE TO THE FINANCIAL IMPACT ON THE GREEN ACRES ASSOCIATION."

Chair: "OUR PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY, ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, STATES THAT THE MOTION TO RESCIND IS NOT IN ORDER WHEN ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THE ORIGINAL VOTE. AS NO CONTRACTS HAVE BEEN LET FOR THE PLAYGROUND, THE MOTION IS IN ORDER."

"THE MOTION TO RESCIND REQUIRES A SECOND, IS OPEN TO DEBATE, AND REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS VOTE FOR ITS ADOPTION. IS THERE ANY DISCUSSION? [Debate ensues.] THE QUESTION IS ON RESCINDING THE MOTION TO CONSTRUCT A PLAYGROUND, AS MANY AS ARE IN FAVOR WILL PLEASE RISE. THOSE OPPOSED, PLEASE RISE. THE MOTION TO RESCIND IS LOST. THE MOTION TO CONSTRUCT A PLAYGROUND STANDS AS THE WILL OF THE GROUP."

## RECONSIDER

Reconsider is the motion which allows a group to reconsider the *vote* on a motion. It is a strictly American motion that can be useful. It enables a majority of the members, within a limited time, to bring back a motion for further consideration after it has been acted upon. Its purpose is to prevent hasty or ill-advised action.

Reconsider has special rules to prevent its *abuse* by a disgruntled minority, since it allows a question already decided to be brought up again.

### Special Parliamentary Rules

- Rules limit who can make the motion. It can only be made by someone who voted on the *prevailing* (winning) side.
- It has a *time limit*. It must be made on the *same day* that the vote to be reconsidered was taken. In a convention, it may be made on the *next succeeding calendar day*, but no later.
- It requires a second.
- It may be debated and it opens up the motion to which it is applied to debate.
- It requires only a majority vote.
- It may be made and seconded while other business is pending because of its time limit. However, it is not debated and voted on until the business on the floor is completed.
- All action that might come out of the original motion is stopped at the time that reconsider is made and seconded. This is the main value of the motion, and it should be made as quickly as the situation calling for it is recognized.

### Example

Chair: "THE MOTION HAS BEEN MADE TO RECONSIDER THE VOTE ON HIRING CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL WITH COST ESTIMATES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PLAYGROUND."

"OUR PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY STATES THAT THE MOTION IS ONLY IN ORDER IF MADE ON THE SAME DAY THE ORIGINAL VOTE WAS TAKEN OR THE NEXT SUCCEEDING CALENDAR DAY IN CONVENTION. THEREFORE, THE TIME LIMIT OF THE MOTION HAS BEEN MET."

"ROBERT FURTHER STATES THAT THE MOTION MUST BE MADE BY ONE WHO VOTED ON THE PREVAILING OR WINNING SIDE. HOW DID YOU VOTE?"

Member: "I VOTED FOR HIRING CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS."

Chair: "THE MOTION IS IN ORDER. IS THERE A SECOND? [Motion is seconded.] THE MOTION HAS BEEN MADE AND SECONDED TO RECONSIDER THE VOTE ON HIRING CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL AND COST ESTIMATES FOR THE PLAYGROUND. IS THERE ANY DISCUSSION?"

(Perhaps it has come to light that Creative Playgrounds has just filed for bankruptcy.)

Chair: "AS MANY ARE IN FAVOR OF RECONSIDERING THE VOTE ON HIRING CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS TO PRESENT A PRO-



POSAL SAY AYE. THOSE OPPOSED SAY NO. THE AYES HAVE IT AND THE MOTION NOW ON THE FLOOR IS THAT CREATIVE PLAYGROUNDS BE HIRED TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A PLAYGROUND WITH COST ESTIMATES."

The original motion is now back on the floor. It may be amended, etc., before it is again put to a vote.

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## Resolutions

A **resolution** is nothing more than a main motion submitted in writing. Resolutions are generally used when an organization wishes to publish policy, principles, and sentiments or when more formality is desired.

There are two parts to a resolution. The first part is known as the **preamble** and begins with "Whereas." The preamble should be limited to providing the reasons for the resolution and any background information that might strengthen it. The second part of the resolution, known as the **resolves**, begins with "RESOLVED" and contains the motion to be adopted.

A brief, well-written resolution is more effective than a long, windy one. A preamble is not a parliamentary requirement, and should not be used merely for the sake of form.

### Example

Whereas, The use of parliamentary procedure safeguards the democratic process; and