

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES – A PRIMER

Purpose of Parliamentary Law and Procedure

Parliamentary procedure assists a deliberative and decision-making assembly in carrying out its purpose and aims in an orderly, fair, and expeditious manner.

It is not the purpose of parliamentary procedure to make the conduct of business in an assembly difficult, to entangle an assembly in technicalities, or to provide a channel for individuals to flaunt their parliamentary knowledge.

Parliamentary law protects six basic rights:

- 1) The right of the majority to make a decision;
- 2) The right of the minority to be heard in hopes that it may become the majority;
- 3) The right of absentees to be protected;
- 4) The right of the assembly to be comfortable and to hear;
- 5) The right of the individual member to be honored;
- 6) And the orderly consideration of one subject at a time.

Basic Steps of Handling a Motion

The chairman and members of the assembly should be acquainted with and observe eight basic parliamentary steps to take care of convention business in an orderly and fair manner. They are:

MEMBERS:

- 1) *Address the Chair.* “Mr. Chairman” (or Mr. President)
- 2) *Await recognition by the Chair.*
- 3) *Make the motion.* “I move that...”
- 4) *Second the motion.* (Unless not required)

CHAIR:

- 5) *States the motion.* (Or rules it out of order)
- 6) *Calls for discussion.* (Unless motion is un-debatable)
“Is there any discussion?” or “Are there any remarks?”
Ample opportunity must always be given for expression of opinion and for discussion.

7) *Takes the vote.* (Or “Puts the question”)

First calls for the affirmative vote, then the negative. “Those in favor of the motion say ‘aye’; those opposed say ‘no’.” (A tie vote defeats the motion, since a majority is required to adopt unless the motion requires a 2/3 vote.)

8) *States the results.*

“The ‘ayes’ have it and the motion is carried.” Or, “The ‘no’s’ have it and the motion is lost.” The vote does not go into effect until the results are announced.

Basic Parliamentary Principles for the SED Convention

1. A district delegate convention is a parliamentary assembly called to deliberate and to make decisions. It receives the reports of the District President and the Board of Directors. In addition, the convention deliberates and makes decisions on recommended resolutions of designated floor committees which have considered proposed resolutions (overtures) from congregations.
2. All voting delegates have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
3. The vote of the majority decides. The will of a district convention is determined by the taking of a vote.
4. Free discussion of every proposition or resolution presented for decision is an established right for all delegates, voting and advisory. To accomplish the closure of debate a delegate must gain the recognition of the chair and, without any comment for or against the pending resolution, say, “I move the previous question.” If seconded, this motion is put to an immediate vote. If adopted by a two-thirds vote, discussion is finished and the pending resolution is put to the assembly without further debate. The convention has the right to decide when it has heard sufficient discussion. This right, however, should be exercised with restraint.
5. Both proponents and opponents of the given proposal have rights which must be safeguarded. The decision belongs to the majority, but the right to discuss, the right to be heard, and the right to oppose should be upheld. A member of the majority on one question is often a member of the minority on another.
6. The simplest and most direct parliamentary procedure for accomplishing a purpose should be followed rather than taking devious routes and multiplying technicalities.
7. Every delegate has the right to know what question is before the convention and what its effect will be, for every action taken by a deliberative body should be taken knowledgeably.
8. Voting delegates are not bound and are not to be bound by previous instructions of their home or neighboring congregations.

PROPOSED STANDING RULES

1. Members of the Convention asking for the floor shall state their names. They also shall state the name of the congregation or the administrative unit they represent.
2. Instead of only a voice vote on motions before the convention, the chair shall ordinarily also call for the raising of the right hand, or the use of an electronic audience response system.
3. Questions of privilege shall ordinarily be addressed in writing to the chair, or its appointee, instead of consuming convention time.
4. Resolutions prepared by the floor committees which are not acted upon by the convention before adjournment die. The subject matter may be reintroduced at the next convention by means of an overture.
5. Unless covered by these standing rules of the convention, parliamentary procedure shall be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.
6. When speaking to the question on the floor, a delegate shall attempt to speak directly for or against the question. When the chair notes that there are many delegates waiting to speak to a given question, the chair may, at his discretion, invoke a two-minute speaking rule. The chair shall notify the assembly when this rule becomes effective.
7. Lay Members of the Southeastern District Board of Directors and the Lay Executives shall be accorded the privilege of voice on the floor of the Convention.
8. Delegates may use the Convention APP on their cellular phones and other communication devices. Other forms of communication, whether verbal or text, are not to be accessed.
9. The Floor Committee Chairperson or representative may be given opportunity to provide background information or rationale for the respective Floor Committee's work on resolutions prior to presenting the resolution for consideration by the delegates.
10. If a substitute motion is offered and seconded, the presenter shall be offered two minutes to provide the rationale for offering it, after which the convention shall decide by majority vote without debate whether or not to consider the substitute. If the decision is in the affirmative and if the substitute motion is subsequently adopted, the original motion fails. If the substitute motion does not receive favorable action either to consider or to adopt, the original motion is again considered. (This is the so-called "Behnken Rule" for addressing substitute motions.)

11. Nominations from the Floor: A nomination may be made from the floor during specific time periods of the Convention as outlined in the Agenda. Unless the convention decides to do otherwise by majority vote, only names submitted for each elected office prior to the published deadline for submission of names (December 18, 2021) will be eligible for nomination from the floor for that specific office. At the time of nomination, completed consent and biographical data forms must be submitted to the Secretary of the District.

ELECTRONIC VOTING INFORMATION

VOTING DELEGATES PLEASE NOTE...

Electronic Voting Keypads

All voting delegates will be assigned a keypad for the purpose of voting electronically. Delegates will need their keypads beginning with the Call to Order on Thursday, May 12.

When you check in at the SED registration table, you will receive instructions on where to obtain your keypad.

Please keep in mind that these keypads have a replacement value of \$100.00 and the District will be responsible for replacing any lost units. Please use care not to misplace the unit while the keypad is in your possession. Each keypad has a distinctive identifying number. This number will be signed out under your name.

We will review these and the voting procedures thoroughly once the convention has convened on May 12.

(At the conclusion of the Convention, please return your keypad to the collection boxes at the Convention registration area or the boxes near the exits to the Convention hall.)