

## THE BASIC RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

1. THE RIGHTS OF THE ORGANIZATION SUPERSEDE THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS - The organization has the right to make its own rules which then must be observed by all members. Should a conflict arise between the rights of a member and the right of the organization to do its business, the rights of the organization prevail.

2. ALL MEMBERS ARE EQUAL AND THEIR RIGHTS ARE EQUAL - Those rights are:

- to attend meetings;
- to make motions and speak in debate;
- to nominate;
- to vote;
- to hold office.

3. A QUORUM MUST BE PRESENT TO DO BUSINESS - A quorum is the number of members who must be present to legally transact business. The number is usually stated in the bylaws. In a committee or a small board, the quorum is the majority of its members. The purpose of a quorum is to prevent an unrepresentative group from taking action in the name of the organization.

4. THE MAJORITY RULES - This rule is basic to the democratic process. The minority has the right to be heard, but once a decision has been reached by a majority of the members present and voting, the minority must then respect and abide by the decision.

5. SILENCE IS CONSENT - Those members who do not vote agree to go along with the decision of the majority by their silence.

6. TWO-THIRDS VOTE RULE - A two-thirds vote is necessary whenever you are limiting or taking away the rights of members or whenever you are changing something that has already been decided.

7. ONE QUESTION AT A TIME AND ONE SPEAKER AT A TIME - No motion is in order which does not directly relate to the question under consideration. In addition, once a member has been recognized, he has been granted "the floor" and another member may not interrupt him.

8. DEBATABLE MOTIONS MUST RECEIVE FULL DEBATE - The presiding officer may not put a debatable motion to vote as long as members wish to debate it. Debate can only be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

9. ONCE A QUESTION IS DECIDED, IT IS NOT IN ORDER TO BRING UP THE SAME MOTION OR ONE ESSENTIALLY LIKE IT AT THE SAME MEETING - Such motions should be ruled out of order. (Note: There is a special class of motions which do bring a motion back to the group, called restorative motions.)

10. PERSONAL REMARKS IN DEBATE ARE ALWAYS OUT OF ORDER - The presiding officer must rule all personal remarks out of order.

Debate must be directed to motions and not motives; principles and not personalities.

\*\*\*Note: This excerpt is from, "ROBERT'S RULES IN PLAIN ENGLISH" Copyright 1997, DORIS P. ZIMMERMAN, Professional Registered Parliamentarian

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