
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION { CONVENED JULY 17, 2023 }
SECOND SESSION { }

HOUSE PROCEDURE



Debate

There are generally no time limits on debate, unless established by a special rule or a motion to limit debate. Generally, debate is done on a first come, first served method. When operating under a time limit, either the Speaker or the Clerk is responsible for tracking time used. Also, when under a time limit, there will usually be one member of each party that will control the time for his or her side. That Member will yield a specific amount of time to another Member. Once the time yielded has expired, or that Member "yields back the balance of his/her time," the Member controlling debate for the other party can yield time to a Member. This process continues until all time for debate has expired. The "previous question" can be used to end debate on any question, unless it is under a special rule.

Unanimous Consent

A Member: Mr. Speaker, I as unanimous consent that _____.

THE SPEAKER: Is there objection?

No objection

THE SPEAKER: Without objection, so ordered.

If there is objection

THE SPEAKER: Objection is heard, the request falls.

PREVIOUS QUESTION

A REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. Speaker, I move the previous question.

THE SPEAKER: The previous question has been moved and seconded.

** Move to voting section**

Voting

Voice Vote:

THE SPEAKER: All in favor say "aye." Those opposed say "no." In the opinion of the Chair, the "ayes" ("noes") appear to have it. The "ayes" ("noes") have it, and the:

Bill – is passed or not passed

Joint Resolution – is passed or not passed

Resolution – is agreed to or not agreed to

Motion – is agreed to or not agreed to

Amendment – is adopted or not adopted

Amendment of the other House to a bill – is concurred in or not concurred in

Point of Order – is sustained or overruled

Decision of the Chair – is sustained or not sustained.

Division Vote:

A REPRESENTATIVE: I ask for the yeas and nays.

THE SPEAKER: The Representative from ____ requests the yeas and nays. All in favor of a recorded vote will rise.

If there is sufficient second:

THE SPEAKER: A sufficient number having risen; the yeas and nays are ordered. The question is on adoption (passage) of Insert the question. Members will record their vote by electronic device. **

Count ** On this vote, the yeas are ____; the nays are ____.

Bill – is passed or not passed

Joint Resolution – is passed or not passed

Resolution – is agreed to or not agreed to

Motion – is agreed to or not agreed to

Amendment – is adopted or not adopted

Amendment of the other House to a bill – is concurred in or not concurred in

Point of Order – is sustained or overruled

Decision of the Chair – is sustained or not sustained.

If there is not sufficient second:

PRESIDING OFFICER: There is not a sufficient second to order the yeas and nays.

Amendments

A simple amendment can be offered without being written. However, upon the demand of the Speaker or any other Member, an amendment may be required to be “reduced to writing” (written down). Any complex or large amendment should be done in writing. A motion to Amend requires a second. A motion to amend in the House of Representative is not subject to a time limit. In the Committee of the Whole, the Member who makes the motion is recognized for 2 minutes, and then a Member who opposes it can be recognized for 2 minutes, and then the amendment is voted on.

Amendment in Writing:

A REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment which I send to the desk.

THE SPEAKER: It’s been moved and seconded to amend the bill. The Representative name of person who made the motion is recognized.*

** continue with debate until there is no further debate, or, if under a time limit, time for debate expires, or the previous question is moved***

THE SPEAKER: The question occurs on the amendment.

** move to voting section **

Amendment Not in Writing:

A REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. Speaker, I move to amend the bill by _____.

THE SPEAKER: It's been moved and seconded to amend the bill. The Representative name of person who made the motion is recognized.*

** continue with debate until there is no further debate, or, if under a time limit, time for debate expires, or the previous question is moved***

THE SPEAKER: The question occurs on the amendment.

** move to voting section **

Appeal from the Decision of the Chair

A REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. Speaker, I appeal from the decision of the chair.

THE SPEAKER: There is a motion to appeal from the decision of the Chair. The question is (state the point of order and the decision of the Chair).

** The question is open to debate. There is no limitation on debate unless the House votes to limit it. **

After debate:

PRESIDING OFFICER: There is a motion to appeal from the decision of the Chair. The question is (state the point of order and the decision of the Chair). Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

** Move to voting section**

Special Rules

Special rules are privileged when offered by a member of the Rules Committee. This motion is subject to 10 minutes of debate, equally divided between the majority and the minority. No motion to amend the resolution is in order. After all debate is consumed or yielded back, the question is on adoption of the resolution providing for a special rule. If the rule is adopted, the next course of action depends on what the rule says.

A REPRESENTATIVE (from the Rules Committee): Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution _____ and ask for its immediate consideration.

--- or ---

Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I send a Resolution to the desk, and ask its immediate consideration.

THE SPEAKER: The Clerk will report the resolution.

** The Clerk reads the resolution**

THE SPEAKER: Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman (or gentlewoman) name of person who called up the resolution, and the Ranking Member of the Rules Committee (or designee) will each control five minutes.

Suspension of the Rules (Suspension)

The suspension provision of the House Rules allows the House to suspend the rules and pass a bill. The motion to suspend the rules is debatable for 10 minutes equally divided. Under suspension, the bill cannot be amended unless an amendment was specified in the motion to suspend the rules. The motion to suspend is not amendable. When time has expired, the question is on suspending the rules. It requires a 2/3rd majority vote to suspend.

A REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill _____.

THE SPEAKER: The Clerk will report the title of the bill.

**** the Clerk will read the title of the bill ****

THE SPEAKER: Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman (or gentlewoman) name of person who made the motion, and the Minority Leader (or Majority Leader if motion by a member of the minority) will each control five minutes.

After debate:

THE SPEAKER: The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman (or gentlewoman) name of person who made the motion, that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill _____.

**** move to voting section ****

Discharge Petition

House Rules provide for a Discharge Petition to discharge a committee from consideration of a specific piece of legislation. The petition must be signed by a majority of the Members of the House to be called up, and it must be called up by a Member who signed the petition. It requires a majority vote to discharge the committee. If the committee is discharged, the bill will be placed on the Calendar. Any Member who signed the petition can make a privileged, non-debatable motion to proceed to the consideration of the bill when it is placed on the Calendar.

A REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. Speaker, I call up Discharge Petition number __, of which I am a signer, and ask for its immediate consideration.

--- or ---

Mr. Speaker, I send a Discharge Petition to the desk, of which I am a signer, and ask its immediate consideration.

PRESIDING OFFICER: The Clerk will report the Discharge Petition.

Clerk will read the text of the petition, not the names

THE SPEAKER: Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman (or gentlewoman) Representative name of person who made the motion, and the _____ (*will probably be either the Majority Leader or the Chair of the Committee being discharged*) will each control two and one-half minutes.

After debate:

THE SPEAKER: The question is on the Discharge Petition. Will the House discharge the Committee on _____ from further consideration of bill number ?

** move to voting section **

Resolving House/Senate differences

If the House amends a Senate bill, or the Senate amends a House bill, the other house can either concur to the amendments or request a conference committee.

Concur to the Senate Amendment(s)

A REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House concur to the Senate Amendment(s) to the bill _____.

THE SPEAKER: It's been moved and seconded to concur to the Senate Amendment(s) to the bill _____. The Representative name of person who made the motion is recognized.*

** continue with debate until there is no further debate, or, if under a time limit, time for debate expires, or the previous question is moved***

THE SPEAKER: The question occurs on the motion to concur to the Senate Amendment(s) to the bill _____.

** move to voting section **

Request a Conference Committee

A Representative: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House request a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill _____.

THE SPEAKER: It's been moved and seconded to request a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill _____. The Representative name of person who made the motion is recognized.*

** continue with debate until there is no further debate, or, if under a time limit, time for debate expires, or the previous question is moved***

THE SPEAKER: The question occurs on the motion request a conference with the Senate.

** move to voting section **

** If adopted:

THE SPEAKER: The House has requested a conference with the Senate. The House will send five Members as conferees. The Majority Leader will appoint three Members and the Minority Leader will appoint two members.

Veto

When a veto is received from the President, the Speaker is to immediately inform the House, and any message from the President is to be read. Once it is read, it becomes the pending question. Debate of the veto message is limited to 10 minutes equally divided. The managers will normally be the Majority Leader or the Chairman of the committee of jurisdiction, and the Minority Leader or the Ranking Member of the committee of jurisdiction. According to the Constitution, a vote to override a veto must be done by roll call. 2/3rds of the Members voting, a quorum being present, must agree to repass the bill over the President's objections.

THE SPEAKER: The House has received a communication from the President of the United States. The Clerk will report the communication.

**** Clerk will report****

THE SPEAKER: The pending question is whether the House will, on reconsideration, pass the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding. The Majority Leader (or whoever the majority floor manager is) is recognized.

**** continue with debate until the 10 minutes is used, or all time for debate is yielded back from the managers****

THE SPEAKER: The question is whether the House will, on reconsideration, pass the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding. The yeas and nays are required. Members will record their vote by electronic device.

**** After vote, tally votes.****

THE SPEAKER: On this vote, the yeas are ____ and the nays are _____. Two-thirds of the Members voting, a quorum being present, voting in the affirmative (not having voted in the affirmative) the bill, on reconsideration, passes over the veto of the President of the United States (fails to pass over the veto of the President of the United States).