

Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

South Dakota Synod, ELCA

Introduction

- 0.01 The purpose of any system of parliamentary procedure is to provide a structure within which a deliberative body may conduct its business with the greatest degree of efficiency consistent with full and free debate. These rules of order have been prepared for use in the Synod Assembly of the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA. They reflect generally accepted principles of parliamentary law and procedure, simplified, and modified for their specific purpose.
- 0.02 The presiding officer of the Assembly should be identified as the President of the Assembly, and should be addressed as Mr. President or Madam President.

Motions and Resolutions

- 1.00 There are two kinds of motions that may come to the floor of the Assembly. *Substantive* motions propose actions that determine the policy and program of the Synod. These are usually presented in the form of **resolutions**. Only one substantive motion may be on the floor at a time. *Procedural* motions determine the procedures the Assembly follows in dealing with substantive motions and in conducting its business.

(To illustrate, motions to amend, to substitute, to table, to adjourn or recess and so on are procedural motions. A procedural motion may be made while there is a substantive motion on the floor. Although only one procedural motion may be on the floor at a time, one procedural motion may displace another. For example, a motion to refer a substantive motion may be displaced by a motion to adjourn, a point of order, or a call for the orders of the day. Some procedural motions may interrupt the actions of the Assembly in order to change its direction.)

- 1.01 a. Resolutions may be submitted to the Resolutions Committee by the Synod Council, Conference Councils or Assemblies, Synod Boards and Task Force Committees, the Regional Center for Mission Coordinating Council, Congregations of the Synod, Synod Auxiliaries, other ELCA Synod Assemblies, the Synod Bishop, Conference Caucuses, the Resolutions Committee, or corresponding Churchwide Expression of the ELCA. Resolutions from individuals must gain the approval of one of the above groups before their resolution will be considered. Every resolution shall have a specified source. The source of a resolution is the chair or designee of the entity submitting the resolution.

When sources of resolutions know that their resolutions may be controversial or pertaining to sensitive issues, the sources are encouraged to arrange for a meeting with the Resolutions Committee. These arrangements for a meeting should be made with the committee chairperson prior to the convening of the Assembly.

- b. The Resolutions Committee, by direction of the Bishop shall meet early enough to complete preliminary work prior to the beginning of the meeting of the Assembly to allow time during the meeting of the Assembly:
- 1) for consultation with sources.
 - 2) to deal with resolutions submitted during that meeting.

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- c. The order for presentation of resolutions shall be determined by the Chair of the Resolutions Committee, the Bishop, and Chair of the Synod Council. At the beginning of each plenary session the Assembly is to be informed of the intended schedule of all pending resolutions and may take action to change the order of presentation of resolutions.
 - d. All resolutions or amendments dealing with one issue shall be presented together to the Assembly prior to action moved on any single resolution.
 - e. As resolutions are received at the Synod Office, they should be edited for form and grammar by a committee appointed by the Bishop.
- 1.02 Resolutions shall include a title reflecting the content of the resolution, its origin, and a number assigned by the Committee.
- 1.03 The Committee, in consultation with the source of the resolution, may edit and revise each resolution for clarity and consistency.
- 1.04 The Committee must present each resolution substantially as it is received but may propose amendments. The sources of resolutions should be informed of Resolutions Committee recommendations prior to plenary presentation. Consultation with source of resolution is required in the case of substantive amendments prior to plenary presentation.
- 1.05 The Committee may also draft such resolutions it deems necessary or is directed by the Assembly.
- 1.06 The Committee shall forward each resolution to the Assembly with one of the following recommendations:
- 1.06.01 **Do Pass**
"Do Pass" indicates the Committee's approval of the resolution and places it on the floor of the Assembly. No further motion or second is needed.
 - 1.06.02 **Do Pass as Amended**
"Do Pass as Amended" indicates the Committee's approval of the Resolution modified by the Committee's amendment(s) and places the Resolution and the Committee's amendment(s) on the floor without further motion or second. Both Resolution and amendment(s) are considered together.
 - 1.06.03 **No Recommendation**
"No Recommendation" indicates the Committee's inability or unwillingness to make a common recommendation. For the Resolution to be considered, it must be moved and seconded from the floor of the Assembly.
 - 1.06.04 **Commit to Committee**
"Commit to Committee" places a motion on the floor of the Assembly to refer the Resolution to one of the Synod Boards or Committees.

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- 1.06.05 **Do Not Pass**
"Do Not Pass" indicates the Committee's recommendation not to pass the Resolution. For the Resolution to be considered, it must be moved and seconded from the floor of the Assembly.
- 1.07 A resolution is presented to the Assembly by a representative of the Committee with its recommendation.

Amendments

- 2.00 Amendments may alter or even reverse the purpose or effect of the original Resolution.
- 2.01 A Resolution may be amended by "striking" or "deleting" parts of it, "inserting" or "adding" material, or by both. Any voting member may make an amendment. A second is required. The President may require the voting member making the substantive amendment to provide a written copy of the amendment to the Secretary of the Assembly before a vote is taken on the amendment.
- 2.02 Amendments may be made to a resolution, to previous amendments, or in some cases to procedural motions. Each amendment is considered in order, and at each point, passing an amendment modifies the next stage of the matter.
- 2.03 When an amendment is moved, made and seconded, the amendment becomes the primary substantive motion on the floor and is the subject of discussion. When discussion on the amendment is complete, the Assembly votes whether to change the original resolution (Yes) or not (No). If the amendment passes, then the question is on the amended resolution.
- 2.04 Resolutions, amendments, and other actions require a simple majority to pass unless specifically noted.

Procedural Motions

- 3.00 Certain motions may be made and acted upon while there is a substantive motion on the floor. A procedural motion may be on the floor at the same time as a substantive motion and may be displaced by further procedural motions. Those motions permitted by these rules in order of precedence are as follows-
- 3.01 **"I move we adjourn."** This motion cannot interrupt a speaker. It requires a second. It is not debatable. Requires a majority vote to pass. When there is no further business, the President may declare the Assembly adjourned without a motion.
- 3.02 **"I move we recess for _____ minutes, or until _____."**
This motion may not interrupt a speaker. It requires a second. It may be amended. It is not debatable. It requires a majority vote to pass. The President may declare a recess without a motion.
- 3.03 **"I call for the orders of the day."** This motion may interrupt a speaker. It does not require a second. It is not debatable, and it requires no vote. It enables the Assembly to return to its Agenda and time schedule. The President may invoke the Orders of the Day without a motion.

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- 3.04 **"I rise to make a point of order."** May interrupt a speaker. Does not require a second. It is not debatable. It requires no vote because the President rules. The President may rule on points of order without a call for a ruling.
- 3.05 **"I appeal the decision of the President."** May interrupt a speaker and does not require recognition by the President. Requires a second. The President may indicate the reasons for the ruling and the appellant or may state his or her objection. No further debate is allowed. Requires a majority to pass. A tie will sustain the President.
- 3.06 **"I call for a division of the Assembly."** This provides for a vote by standing. It may interrupt a speaker. It may be requested by any voting member and is required if 50 voting members support it. It is not debatable. The President may request a division if uncertain of the result of a voice vote.
- 3.07 **"I call for the division of the question."** This requires the resolution to be divided into its separate parts. It may not interrupt a speaker. It requires a second. It is not debatable. It requires a majority.
- 3.08 **"I move that nominations be closed."** May not interrupt a speaker. Requires a second. It is not debatable. Because it restricts discussion, it requires a two-thirds majority to pass. If further nominations are not forthcoming, the President may declare nominations closed.
- 3.09 **"I move that we suspend the rules and...."** It may not interrupt a speaker. Requires a second. It is not debatable. Because it delays the discussion of the issue on the floor, it requires a two-thirds majority to pass. The only rules that may be suspended are the parliamentary rules.

The following motions have no order of precedence or rank among themselves.

- 3.10 **"I move to lay _____ on the table."** Requires a second. It is not debatable. It requires a majority to pass. If the motion is passed, the matter that is tabled is no longer under consideration until the Assembly votes to take it from the table. (See 3.13).
- 3.11 **"I move that we proceed to vote on the resolution before us,"** or **"I move the previous question."** It may not interrupt a speaker (calls of "Question" are out of order). Requires a second. Because it forces debate to an end and restricts full and free discussion, it requires a two-thirds majority to pass. If there are no more speakers and it is clear that discussion is finished, the President may proceed to call for the vote. One may not make this motion at the end of a speech on the motion on the floor.
- 3.12 **"I move that we refer ... to...."** It cannot interrupt a speaker. This motion requires a second. It is debatable. It requires a majority vote to pass.

The following motions are in order whenever there is no other business on the floor.

- 3.13 **"I move we take _____ from the table."** It requires a second. It is not debatable. It requires a majority vote to pass. This motion reverses the action of 3.10.
- 3.14 **"I move we reconsider...."** This motion asks that a previous action be reopened for further discussion and another vote. It may interrupt a speaker. It requires a second. The proposer of the motion must have voted on the winning side in the previous action. It is debatable. It requires a majority vote to pass.

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Speaking by Voting Members

- 4.00 When a voting member wishes to speak on a matter before the Assembly, the following procedure should be followed.
- a. Go to a microphone.
 - b. Wait to be recognized.
 - c. State your name and position (voting member, advisory).
 - d. Make your comments – 2 minute limit
 - e. If you have motions to make, make them. If you make a substantive amendment or one that is long or involved, you must provide a written copy of the motion to the Secretary of the Assembly before the vote is taken if requested by the President.
- 4.1 The proposer of a motion has first opportunity to speak on the motion, if it is debatable.
- 4.2 The President will seek to facilitate open and balanced discussion.

Amendment of Rules

- 5.00 These rules may be amended at a Synod Assembly by a Resolution approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Assembly.