

Rules of Order

39th General Assembly • November 13-16, 2008 • State Capitol • Nashville

INTRODUCTION

The Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature conducts business according to its Rules of Order, which are a blend of Robert's Rules of Order and the Rules of Order for the two houses of the Tennessee General Assembly.

Robert's Rules of Order is the basis for the rules of procedure in all Western legislative bodies, but nearly every institution also customizes the rules of procedure to streamline business and to provide for unique situations.

Robert's Rules is virtually silent, for example, on issues arising in a legislative body with two houses.

TISL's Rules of Order is based primarily on the Rules of Order of the Tennessee Senate and of the Tennessee House of Representatives, each of which is based on Robert's Rules of Order.



TISL's Rules of Order is simpler by omitting situations and motions that aren't relevant for TISL.

Robert's Rules, for example, describes several options in the conduct of elections, but the TISL Constitution resolves those issues in advance.

TISL also simplifies the Legislature's Rules of Order, such as by omitting rules relative to the budget and also by dropping notice requirements that presume a session much longer than four days.

Anyone skilled with TISL's Rules of Order would be well prepared at the Tennessee General Assembly and would also be quite comfortable with the proceedings of Congress or any other bicameral legislative body.

THE PATH TO PASSAGE

The first step after writing a bill is to introduce it. All bills are to be introduced in a digital form that allows TISL to copy and paste your text. Text files and Microsoft Word documents are specifically OK.

Introduce a bill by filing it with the Secretary of State. You can email it to StateOffice@TISLonline.org.

Pre-filed bills will be considered at the first committee meeting, which is advantageous for the sponsors.

After you introduce your bill, the Secretary of State will assign the bill a number and refer the bill to a standing committee for consideration .

If you want your bill referred to a certain committee, give written notice to the Secretary of State. It will be

taken into consideration when assigning bills to committee.

Standing committees will convene to study and consider the legislation assigned to them. The committee will take one of these actions on each bill:

Report the bill:

- a. with a recommendation for passage
- b. with a recommendation for defeat
- c. with no recommendation

Postpone consideration of the bill until the next committee meeting, which action may be taken only once on each bill.

The committee will adopt any amendments it decides are necessary for the bill, and these amendments are

TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules of Order

automatically included when the bill reaches the Senate and/or House.

Each bill must have a Senate and House prime sponsor before it is reported out of committee.

A sponsor has two options for making changes after the standing committee has considered a bill.

First, if the filing deadline hasn't passed, you can re-write your bill, re-introduce it and start this process over again. The bill will be given a new bill number and will be regarded as a totally new and different bill.

Second, you may sponsor an amendment to your bill on the floor, just as anyone else would do if he/she wanted to amend your bill. The second method can be used to re-write the bill by deleting everything after the enacting clause and inserting new language.

When the standing committee reports the bill, it is set on the Calendar (agenda) for either the Senate or the House of Representatives. This decision is made by the Secretary of State's office and will be based on the backlog of bills for each house.

For the sake of example, let us say that a bill is placed on the Senate calendar. Before the bill is called up in the Senate, each Senator will receive a copy of the bill. When the bill is next on the Calendar, the Clerk will read the title of the bill and the committee report. He/She will also read the entire bill, if any Senator requests it, but this is usually omitted to save time.

The Senate sponsor of the bill has 10 minutes for introductory remarks about the bill.

The speaker will then open a question period of up to 10 minutes during which Senators can ask questions about the bill for the purpose of understanding it better.

During this time, debate and rhetorical questions ("How do you have the nerve to force this bill on the citizens of Tennessee?") are out of order. The question-and-answer period ends when the speaker believes no more questions are waiting or after 10 minutes, whichever occurs first. Ending the question period isn't the sponsor's decision.

You may still ask questions after the question and answer period ends, but debate is also in order.

Immediately after the question and answer period ends, proposed amendments that have been filed with the Clerk are considered.

When additional amendments are filed, they are considered as soon as possible because whether an

amendment is adopted may affect Senators' and Representatives' opinions of the bill during debate.

To amend a bill, write two copies of the amendment on an Amendment form and deliver it to the Clerk. Blank forms are available at the Clerk's desk and from the Secretary of State.

If the bill is adopted in the first house where it is considered, it will go through the Secretary of State's office to the other house. In our example, amendments adopted in the Senate are automatically included in the bill when it reaches the House.

All amendments adopted in the first house that considers the bill are automatically included in the bill when it reaches the second house.

If the second house adopts amendments that the first house didn't adopt, the bill must go back to the first for consideration of the amendments passed in the second house.

It is the combined responsibility of the Secretary of State, the Clerks, and, especially, the sponsors to see that the bill is returned to the first house for concurrence in amendments. Unless both houses pass all amendments, the bill is not passed by the General Assembly. Both houses must pass identical versions of the same bill.

The houses might not agree on the amendments. One house might want an amendment adopted while the other won't adopt it. In this situation, the sponsor in the first house should move to appoint a Conference Committee to meet and negotiate a compromise version of the bill (Rule 70). If the Conference Committee adopts a compromise version, each house votes on whether to adopt the Conference Committee report. The motion to adopt the Conference Committee report cannot be amended. Each house simply votes "yes" or "no" on a motion to adopt the Conference Committee report.

When each house passes an identical version of the same bill, it goes to the Governor for his/her signature. This signature is automatic; the TISL Governor cannot veto a bill.

If you have any questions at any time, the best people to ask are the officers or the Clerks in each house. They are supposed to be experts in these matters.

This essay is provided to help delegates understand rules and procedures. The Rules of Order prevail in case of a conflict.

RULES OF ORDER

1. Speaker to Preside The Speakers will convene their respective houses at the times established by the Official Schedule and at such other times as either house may establish by a motion to recess.

In the absence of the Speaker, the Speaker Pro Tem shall convene the house.

In the absence of the Speaker and the Speaker Pro Tem, the Chief Clerk shall convene the house and preside until a Temporary Speaker is elected by a majority of members voting, provided that a quorum is present.

2. Authority Conferred on Governor All authority and responsibility conferred by these rules on the Speaker or other presiding officers shall be conferred on the Governor when presiding in a joint session.

In the absence of the Governor, the Speaker of the Senate or, as successor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, shall preside over a joint session.

3. Orders of the Day The Official Schedule of the General Assembly shall designate discrete legislative sessions. Upon being called to order by the presiding officer, each legislative session shall proceed as follows:

1. Invocation (optional; first session of each day)
2. Pledge of Allegiance (first session of each day)
3. Roll Call
4. Announcements
5. Bills received from the other house
6. Bills reported by Standing Committees, ordered as follows:
 - a. Recommended for Adoption
 - b. No Recommendation
 - c. Recommended for Defeat

4. Rank of Motions Motions rank in the following order:

1. Adjourn (highest)
2. Recess
3. Lay on the table
4. Previous question (close debate)
5. Postpone to a certain time
6. Refer to committee
7. Amend an amendment
8. Amend the bill
9. Postpone indefinitely
10. Adopt a bill (main motion; lowest)

A motion is in order when it outranks all other pending motions. For example, if a motion to Refer to Committee is pending, a motion to Adjourn shall be in order. On the other hand, if a motion to Adjourn is pending, a motion to Refer to Committee shall not be in order.

All of these motions require a second.

What's changed in 2008

- Every delegate is expected to write and submit a bill. Co-sponsoring someone else's bill doesn't count. Information about writing a bill is on the TISL website.
- Rules related to elections have been deleted; the Election Procedures Act of 1977 governs. If you don't find a copy of the Election Procedures Act with these Rules, it's available on the TISL website.
- Guests with the privilege of sitting on the floor should refrain from interacting with delegates.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

5. Adjourn A motion to Adjourn is always in order. It is not debatable and shall be voted on immediately. It requires a simple majority to pass.

A motion to adjourn should include a specific time to reconvene. If a motion to adjourn does not include a time to reconvene, the house shall reconvene pursuant to the Official Schedule of the General Assembly.

A motion to adjourn *sine die* (without a time to reconvene) shall be out of order except at the Closing Session of the General Assembly.

"Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to adjourn."

6. Recess A motion to recess should be expressed in terms of recessing for a specified length of time (e.g., recess one hour for lunch), until a specific time (e.g., 2 p.m.), or at the call of the Speaker. A motion to recess is not debatable and takes a simple majority for passage.

"Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to recess for 10 minutes."

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

7. Lay on the Table This is a quick method to dispose of an undesirable motion. The motion to Lay on the Table may apply to any motion ranked below it.

All debate ceases when the motion is made and seconded, except that the proponent of the lowest-ranking motion that might be tabled is allowed closing remarks.

The motion to Lay on the Table passes with a simple majority, but the motion to Lift from the Table requires a two-thirds majority (Rule 44).

"Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to lay [motion] on the table."

TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules of Order

8. Previous Question Previous Question is a motion to end debate. It requires a second, is not debatable and requires a two-thirds majority to pass. As soon as this motion is made and seconded, the presiding officer puts the motion to a vote. If the motion fails, debate resumes as before.

The previous question may be moved on any motion that ranks below it. However, if more than one motion is pending, the person moving the previous question must specify to which motion the previous question applies.

For instance, if a motion is pending to amend a bill, the previous question may be moved on the motion to amend *or* on the motion to adopt the bill.

If the previous question applies to the motion to adopt the bill, it implicitly includes closing debate on the motion to amend. If the previous question is adopted, the body will first vote on the amendment and then, without further debate, on the motion to adopt the bill.

If the motion for the previous question applies only to the amendment and is adopted, the house will proceed to vote on the amendment and continue debating the bill.

“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move for the previous question.”

9. Postpone to a Certain Time This delays consideration of a bill for a specified period of time (as opposed to tabling, which postpones until a motion to lift from the table is adopted). The motion to postpone is debatable and requires a simple majority for adoption. A motion to amend is in order.

The motion to postpone may be expressed as a specific time (e.g., 3 p.m.), as relative time (e.g., immediately after lunch), or as a specific legislative session (e.g., the beginning of the third legislative session).

If a bill is postponed to a certain time, it automatically becomes the next bill considered after the time set in the motion to postpone.

“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to postpone TISL Bill [number] until [time].”

10. Refer to Committee All bills are referred to a Standing Committee by the Secretary of State upon introduction and are to be considered by the committee before being reported to the floor.

A house may vote to send the bill back to committee for further consideration or for modifications in the bill as directed by the house.

A motion to refer to committee must specify the standing committee to which the bill is being referred. (Standing Committees, Rule 23). The motion to refer to committee is debatable, may be amended, and requires a simple majority for passage.

A motion to commit may include instructions to the committee on redrafting or when to complete its work.

A motion may create a special committee, which will be appointed by the Speaker of the house that created the special committee and shall include only members of the same house.

“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to refer TISL Bill [number] to the [committee name] Committee.”

11. Amend an Amendment Also known as an amendment to the second degree. After an amendment has been proposed (Rule 12), an amendment to the first amendment may be proposed. The second-degree amendment is considered before the main amendment.

A second-degree amendment is debatable and requires a simple majority for adoption. An amendment beyond the second degree (e.g., an amendment to the third degree) is out of order.

Rules for amendments (Rule 12), also apply to second-degree amendments.

“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to adopt Amendment [number] to Amendment [number].”

12. Amendment An amendment is a method to change part of a motion to eliminate flaws, clear ambiguities and otherwise change the motion.

The motion to amend is debatable, may be amended further (Rule 11) and requires a simple majority for adoption.

Amendments to bills are to be submitted in writing on an Amendment Form available from the Clerk or committee Secretary.

When a delegate submits an amendment to the Clerk for the pending bill, the Clerk shall notify the Speaker, and the Speaker shall recognize the sponsor as soon as possible.

The sponsor of the amendment shall ask the Clerk to read the amendment. If the bill is seconded, the sponsor will be allowed introductory remarks on the amendment, after which the floor will be open for debate.

An amendment may take one of three forms:

1. **To Delete** ... Be specific about the part of the bill to be deleted.

Delete Section 3 and renumber subsequent sections accordingly.

2. **To Insert** ... Give the specific wording to be inserted and the specific location of where it is to be inserted.

In Section 3, insert “or community college” after the word “university”.

3. **To Delete and Insert** ... A combination of the above.

TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules of Order

In Section 5, delete “5,000” and insert in lieu thereof “10,000”.

Tabling an amendment has the effect of defeating it unless the same body votes to lift the amendment from the table before another body has acted on the bill.

Amendments to the title of the bill are *prima facie* unconstitutional and out of order. (Tenn. Const. Art. II, Sec. 17) (Conflicting Motions, Rule 55)

If a bill is adopted in the first house and amended in the second house, the different versions must be reconciled for the bill to be finally adopted by the General Assembly. (Conference Committees , Rule 70)

“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to adopt Amendment [amendment number] to TISL Bill [bill number].”

13. Postpone Indefinitely This causes a main motion to face a preliminary test of support. It is debatable, may not be amended, and requires a simple majority for passage.

If the motion is adopted, consideration of the bill ceases and the house proceeds to consider the next item of business. The only way the house can return to consider the bill is to reconsider the motion to postpone indefinitely. (Rule 45).

14. Main Motion This is primarily the motion to adopt a bill as presented to the house by the sponsor. It is subject to all of the motions listed above, is debatable, and requires a simple majority to pass.

“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move that this house adopt TISL Bill [bill number].”

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

15. Incidental Motions Incidental motions concern matters that need to be brought before the house immediately.

Incidental motions must pertain to the business before the house. They have no rank among themselves and outrank all other motions. Only one incidental motion of each type may be pending at a time.

16. Point of Order If a delegate believes the rules of order are being breached, he/she makes a Point of Order, asking the Speaker to rule on the issue. If the Speaker doesn’t understand the Point of Order, he/she may ask the delegate to explain the complaint.

If the speaker agrees with the Point of Order, he/she will rule that the point “is well taken.” Conversely, he/she will rule that the point “is not well taken.”

This motion does not require a second or a vote. Point of Order is the only motion that doesn’t require recognition from the Speaker and can interrupt when someone else is speaking.

“Point of Order!”

17. Appeal the Ruling of the Chair After the Speaker has ruled on an issue such as a Point of Order, the house may review his/her decision.

For example, if the Speaker rules that a motion is out of order, a delegate who believes the motion is in order may appeal the Speaker's ruling. If the appeal is seconded, the house decides whether to uphold or overrule the Speaker's decision.

An appeal is subject to the general rules of debate, and the presiding officer may explain his/her decision. The presiding officer does not have to relinquish the chair during the discussion. A simple majority can overrule the presiding officer’s decision.

“Mr./Madam Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the chair.”

18. Suspend the Rules When the house desires to consider a matter or do something that would violate these rules or to establish a special rule for itself, it may suspend the rules.

A motion to suspend the rules requires a second, is debatable, and requires a two-thirds majority for passage.

A motion to suspend the rules must include the purpose for suspending the rules. Once that purpose has been accomplished, the rules are automatically reinstated. No motion or action is necessary to reinstate a rule that has been suspended.

A suspension of the rules applies only to actions that are in pursuit of the stated purpose for suspending the rules.

It is necessary to suspend the rules to make any motion not listed in this Delegate Manual. (Also see Conflicting Motions , Rule 55).

A motion to suspend the rules can’t affect another body. For example, the Senate cannot suspend the rules as they apply to the House.

A Standing Committee may suspend the rules only as they affect the order in which the committee considers legislation or the rules of debate in committee.

“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to suspend Rule [number] for the purpose of [purpose].”

19. Division of the House Immediately after a voice vote, any three members in the Senate or in a committee or any five members in the House of Representatives or in a Joint Session may request a count of the yeas and nays.

Delegates requesting a roll call should raise a hand immediately after the presiding officer announces the results of the voice vote.

REQUESTS AND INQUIRIES

20. Requests and Inquiries Requests and Inquiries require no motion, second, or vote and are the

TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules of Order

prerogative of any delegate. They are proper at any time, but may not interrupt another speaker.

21. Parliamentary Inquiry A request for information about the parliamentary situation or for the presiding officer's opinion on a matter concerning the Rules of Order. This is not a request for a ruling.

22. Point of Information A request for facts affecting the business at hand directed at the chair or another member.

COMMITTEES

23. Standing Committees Standing committees at this General Assembly will be:

- Conservation & Environment
- Education
- General Welfare
- Higher Education I
- Higher Education II
- Judiciary
- State & Local Government
- Transportation

24. Officers The Governor shall appoint a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary for each committee.

Duties include:

Chairperson Presides at meetings and manages the business of the committee. Calls special meetings, subject to Rule 34 .

Vice Chairperson Assists the Chairperson and presides when the Chairperson is absent or yields the chair.

Secretary Maintains a record of the committee's actions. Liaison with the Secretary of State for routine business.

25. Delegates on Committees Every delegate may serve on one committee. Delegates from a given school should be dispersed evenly among various committees.

26. Maximum Number of Members Each committee will have no more than 25 members.

27. Selecting Committees Delegates will sign up for committees when they register at the General Assembly. Registration will be expedited if delegations decide on committee assignments in advance.

28. Assignment of Bills The Secretary of State shall assign each bill to a standing committee.

If a bill sponsor has a preference regarding assignment of his/her bill, he/she should notify the Secretary of State in writing.

If a sponsor believes a bill has been assigned to the wrong committee, he/she should discuss this with the

Secretary of State before the committee considers the bill.

Bills proposing to amend the TISL Constitution, the Laws of TISL or otherwise relating to TISL's internal affairs shall be referred to the Executive Council in lieu of a Standing Committee. The Executive Council will meet as a Standing Committee and consider all such bills.

29. Introductory Remarks, Questions & Debate When a bill is considered by a committee, the sponsor(s) will first be given a chance to explain the bill. The committee will then be allowed to ask questions about the bill, after which debate on the bill will occur.

After the bill has been considered for 15 minutes, including the sponsor's introduction, at a given committee meeting, the chairman, at his/her initiative, may put the question of whether to report the bill, either with a recommendation for approval, for defeat or with no recommendation.

30. Amendments & Prohibited Motions A standing committee may amend the bill. However, a motion to table the bill or to postpone the bill indefinitely is out of order.

31. Final Actions The committee may take one of these actions on each bill:

Report the bill:

- a. With a recommendation for passage
- b. With a recommendation for defeat
- c. With no recommendation

Postpone the bill until the next committee session unless:

- a. If it has been postponed previously, it may not be postponed again unless it lacks an essential component of a bill (Essential Components of a Bill, Rules 32).
- b. If it is the final scheduled committee meeting, it may be postponed only if it lacks an essential component of a bill.

32. Essential Components of a Bill Before reporting a bill, the committee should be sure it contains all of the following essential parts of a bill:

1. **Caption or title.** The caption or title must accurately summarize the bill. A caption or title may not be amended in committee or on the floor.
2. **Enacting clause.** "Enacted (or resolved) by the General Assembly of the Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature."
3. **Substance of the bill.** Organized by sections (Section 1, Section 2, etc.).

TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules of Order

4. **Effective date.** (Acts only, not resolutions). Final section. "This bill shall take effect on [date]."
5. **House sponsor(s).** First-listed sponsor is the Prime Sponsor and will introduce the bill in the House of Representatives.
6. **Senate sponsor(s).** First-listed sponsor is the Senate sponsor and will introduce the bill in the Senate.

If the bill does not have any of these six items, it should be corrected or postponed. It may not be reported to the floor if any of these essential parts is missing.

33. Committee Meeting Times Standing Committees will meet at the times designated by the Official Schedule of the General Assembly. Locations will be posted.

34. Committee Backlogs If a committee develops a backlog, the Chairman, in consultation with the other officers, may call a special meeting of the committee at a time when no other activities are scheduled. Special meetings should be scheduled as far in advance as possible and shall be announced in a joint session or to the Senate and the House of Representatives in separate session.

The chairman might also confer with the Secretary of State about whether to transfer some bills to a different committee.

35. Testimony from Outsiders The committee may invite outside experts to appear before the committee to testify or answer questions. If such a person is invited, the committee should make all efforts to respect the visitor's schedule.

36. Sponsors' Responsibility to Follow Bills It is the responsibility of the sponsor to know which committee his/her bill has been assigned to and to be at the committee hearing.

A sponsor does not have to be present for the bill to be considered by the committee. The committee should make an effort, however, to consider first the bills whose sponsors are present and to wait as long as reasonably possible for absent sponsors to arrive. The committee is not obliged to summon the sponsor(s) of the bill.

LATE BILLS COMMITTEE

37. Filing Deadline All bills introduced after the Filing Deadline listed in the Official Schedule of the General Assembly shall be referred by the Secretary of State to the Late Bills Committee.

38. Membership The Late Bills Committee (LBC) shall be comprised of three members: The Speaker Pro Tempore of each house and a Chairman to be ap-

pointed by the Governor. The Secretary of State or his/her designee shall serve as non-voting Secretary of the Committee.

39. Responsibility The LBC considers bills submitted after the filing deadline and releases those that most merit consideration, if there will be time to consider them. On the floors of both houses and in the committees, priority shall be given to bills that were filed on time.

When it appears that the General Assembly might dispose of all bills filed by the deadline, the LBC may begin releasing bills to assure a full calendar in each house.

40. Procedure When a late bill is filed, the submitted draft of that bill shall be given to the Chairman of the LBC. The Secretary of State shall not refer the bill to a Standing Committee.

41. Criteria If it becomes advantageous for the LBC to release bills, it shall release only bills of good quality. Its decision shall also take into consideration the order in which the bills were filed, giving preference to bills filed earlier.

42. Procedure after Release When the LBC releases a bill, it shall be referred to a standing committee by the Secretary of State for regular consideration.

43. Quorum Two members of the LBC shall constitute a quorum to conduct business, and two members of the LBC must agree to release each bill.

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS

44. Lift from the Table After a motion has been tabled, a motion to lift it from the table is necessary to bring the question back before the house. A motion to Lift from the Table requires a second for adoption, is debatable and requires a two-thirds majority for adoption.

If a bill is still pending on the floor, a motion is in order to lift from the table a motion previously tabled that pertains to the pending bill. If the bill is no longer being considered, it is necessary to bring the bill back before the house by reconsideration or other appropriate motions.

For example, if an amendment is tabled and the bill is then defeated: to revive the amendment, the house must first pass a motion to reconsider the bill, and then vote to lift the amendment from the table.

In the same circumstances, if the amendment was tabled but the bill is still pending on the floor, the motion to reconsider would be unnecessary.

If a main motion is tabled, a motion to lift it from the table is in order when no other main motion is pending.

"Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to lift from the table [motion to be lifted]."

TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules of Order

45. Reconsideration Reconsideration is a motion to bring back before the house or committee a question that was previously decided.

Reconsideration requires a second, is debatable, and requires a simple majority for adoption.

A motion to reconsider must be proposed by someone who voted with the prevailing side. For instance, if a bill is defeated, only someone who voted against it may move to reconsider it. A motion to reconsider may be made only on the day the original vote was taken or on the next day.

A motion to reconsider is out of order if the other house has acted on the bill subsequently.

The rank of a motion to reconsider is the same as the rank of the motion to which it is applied.

For example, a motion to reconsider an amendment is in order in the same circumstances as a motion to adopt an amendment.

A motion to reconsider a bill is in order only when no other motion is pending. If the bill has already been disposed of, it is first necessary to reconsider the bill, then the amendment. If the bill is still before the house, it is necessary to only reconsider the amendment.

“Mr./Madam Speaker, having voted with the prevailing side, I move to reconsider our action in regard to [motion to be reconsidered].”

46. Other Motions The rules must be suspended to consider any motion not described in the Rules of Order.

MISCELLANEOUS RULES

47. Amend the Rules To amend these Rules of Order, both houses must pass a bill in the usual manner (TISL Const. Art. VI, Sec. 3(f)).

48. Voting In putting a question, the presiding officer will specify the method of voting. Each delegate shall vote from his/her chair in the manner prescribed by the presiding officer. The presiding officer shall make clear the question being decided and give everyone a reasonable opportunity to vote.

49. Majority Vote A majority of those present and voting shall decide any question (TISL Const. Art. 7, Sec. 7) unless a different majority is specified by these Rules of Order or by the TISL Constitution. A delegate who abstains from voting shall not be counted for either side when deciding the outcome of a vote.

50. Voting by Proxy Voting by proxy is prohibited in all situations.

51. Voting by the Speaker The Speaker may vote only when his/her vote will affect the fate of the motion.

If the vote is tied, the Speaker may vote “aye” and pass the motion, If the motion passes by one vote (without the Speaker's vote), the Speaker may vote “no,” creating a tie and denying the motion a majority.

The Speaker Pro Tem may vote as a Senator or Representative for his delegation (TISL Const. Art. V, Sec. 8).

52. Debate In debate, the presiding officer shall recognize delegates in the order in which they rise seeking recognition.

Except for the Prime Sponsor, no delegate may speak a second time on the pending motion if a delegate who has not spoken seeks recognition.

The Prime Sponsor shall be given reasonable priority to be recognized in debate, and there shall be no limit on the number of times the Prime Sponsor may speak. No delegate may speak more than five minutes at a time without the permission of the house.

All debate must pertain to the merits of the pending question, refrain from attacking a delegate's motives, and avoid the use of delegates' names.

The Speaker may not participate in debate, unless he/she relinquishes the chair to the Speaker Pro Tem and speaks from the floor. The speaker may return to the chair once the question he/she spoke to is resolved. This paragraph does not apply to discussion following an appeal of a Speaker's ruling (Rule 17).

Every motion is debatable unless otherwise specified in the Rules Of Order.

53. Quorum A quorum is necessary to conduct any business except to adjourn until a specific time.

A quorum in the Senate is one-half of the number of TISL member schools. A quorum in the House of Representatives is 50. (TISL Const. Art. VII, Sec. 5)

Upon recognition by the presiding officer, a delegate may question the presence of a quorum. If the quorum is questioned, the presiding officer will direct the clerk or secretary to ascertain whether a quorum is present. If so, the body shall proceed with its business. If not, business stops until a quorum is present.

The Speaker of either house may take actions to ensure the maintenance of a quorum and may direct the Sergeant-at-Arms to summon absent members.

54. Dilatory Motions The presiding officer may declare a motion as dilatory and refuse to put it to a vote. Such a decision may be appealed to the members present. However, if the presiding officer has consistently won such appeals, he/she may ignore an appeal.

55. Conflicting Motions Motions that conflict with the Constitution or Laws of the United States of America, the Constitution or Laws of the State of Tennessee, or the Constitution or Legal Code of the Ten-

TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules of Order

nessee Intercollegiate State Legislature are out of order. Suspending the Rules cannot circumvent this requirement.

56. Modification of a Motion A delegate making a motion may modify that motion before a vote has occurred, with the permission of the house and of the person who seconded the motion.

57. Division of the House After a voice vote, it is in order to request a precise count of the votes.

Three members of the Senate or of a committee or five members of the House of Representatives or of a joint session should raise a hand immediately after the presiding officer announces the results of the voice vote.

If the presiding officer sees as many hands as are required, he/she must promptly ascertain the exact vote.

58. Omnibus Bills The Constitution of the State of Tennessee prohibits bills that embrace more than one subject, and such prohibition shall be respected. (Tenn. Const. Art. II, Sec. 17)

59. Two-Thirds Majority The following motions require a two-thirds majority for adoption:

- a. Amend the TISL Constitution (TISL Const. Art. X)
- b. Lift from the Table
- c. Previous Question
- d. Suspend the Rules

60. Filling Blanks No bill or amendment shall be considered which leaves to the floor the task of filling blanks.

61. Admission to the Floor Only the members of each house, the officers of the house, the staff, the Executive Council, and the press shall be admitted to the floor of each house except that the Sergeant-at-Arms shall provide suitable seating for guests.

When either house is in session, members of the other house are not permitted on the floor.

This rule shall not apply for the introduction of an invited guest or dignitary nor in a joint session.

Guests with the privilege of sitting on the floor should refrain from interacting with delegates.

62. Senators Each school shall designate one Senator and, if a school has three or more delegates in attendance, one Alternate Senator. These shall be the only delegates to represent that school in the Senate.

An Alternate Senator may also serve as a member of the House of Representatives.

63. Motions to be Seconded Every motion must be seconded unless otherwise stated.

64. Announcements Announcements, including announcements pertaining to the proceedings of the

General Assembly, should be reduced to writing and submitted to the Chief Clerk to be read.

65. Bill Numbers to be Posted When voting on a bill, the number of the pending bill shall be posted in the chamber.

66. Prime Sponsor to be Present The Prime Sponsor of a bill must be present when the bill is considered by the Senate or House of Representatives.

If a bill is the next order of business and the Prime Sponsor is absent, the bill shall be postponed a reasonable interval to give the Prime Sponsor an opportunity to arrive.

67. Withdraw a Bill To withdraw a bill from consideration, file a Withdraw A Bill form with the Secretary of State signed by all sponsors of the bill. A blank form is available from the Secretary of State.

68. Add or Delete a Sponsor To add or delete a sponsor from a bill, file an Add or Delete Sponsor form with the Secretary of State. A blank form is available from the Secretary of State.

69. Discharge from Committee A bill pending in committee may be discharged and brought to the floor by submitting a petition to the Secretary of State bearing the signatures of 50 delegates. A blank petition is available from the Secretary of State.

Upon receipt of a properly executed discharge petition, the Secretary of State shall assign the bill to the calendar of either house as if it had been reported by the committee with no recommendation.

70. Conference Committees When a bill is passed by the first house and amended and passed in the second house, it must return to the first house to because of differences in the versions.

When the bill is returned to the first house, the Prime Sponsor, upon recognition by the Speaker when no other main motion is pending, may make either of two motions:

"I move that the bill be adopted as amended by the (Senate/House)."

"I move that a Conference Committee be appointed to resolve the differences in the bills."

Either motion requires a second, is debatable and takes a simple majority to pass.

If a Conference Committee is approved by one house, the Conference Committee will attempt to recommend a compromise version of the bill to both houses.

The Speaker of each house shall appoint two members to the Conference Committee.

The chairperson of the Standing Committee that considered the bill shall be chairperson of the Conference Committee.

TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules of Order

If the Conference Committee approves a compromise bill, it is referred to the house where the motion for the Conference Committee was initiated.

The motion to adopt a Conference Committee Report is in order when no other main motion is pending. It requires a second, is debatable and passes with a simple majority. If the first house approves the Conference Committee Report, the second house may consider the same report.

The compromise version may not be amended. If either house rejects the compromise version, the Conference Committee may meet again or it may let the bill die.

A Conference Committee may not meet when a Standing Committee is scheduled to meet, but it may meet when either house is in session.

71. Prime Sponsor to Remain in Well The Prime Sponsor of a bill shall remain in the well of the house while the bill is being considered on the floor.

72. Signaling the Chair The Speaker is the gatekeeper for those who are seeking the floor. For this reason, it is advantageous to adopt procedures for signaling the chair that you want to be recognized.

Additionally, by gesture some business can be handled without the formal processes normally necessary, thereby speeding up the operation of the house.

- a. Stand at your desk with your microphone in hand if you are seeking recognition to participate in debate, make a motion, or ask a question of the sponsor,

- b. Hold two fingers in the air to second a motion.
- c. Hold your hand in the air and say “object” when the Speaker says “without objection.”
- d. Hold your hand in the air immediately following the reading of the caption of a bill if you wish to have the entire bill read.
- e. Stand at your desk and speak loudly when making motions which are allowed to interrupt a speaker (primarily Point Of Order).

73. Committee of the Whole Neither house may enter into a Committee of the Whole.

74. Official Schedule The Official Schedule as posted on the TISL web site at the beginning of the General Assembly is hereby made an official part of the Rules of Order.

75. Robert’s Rules of Order Robert’s Rules of Order 10th Revised Edition (Perseus) is the basis for interpreting these rules and resolving any issues not otherwise addressed herein.

76. Citations Not Binding Citations in these Rules of Order to the TISL Constitution, to the Legal Code of TISL or to other rules within the Rules of Order are for the convenience of the user. Errors in citations are of no consequence.

Caucuses

Delegates may organize caucuses of Senators and Representatives with similar interests.

Caucuses meet to discuss matters of mutual interest and to formulate legislative strategy on such matters.

Caucuses are self-created and self-perpetuating organizations. They are not an official part of TISL, and TISL is in no way responsible for their actions or their welfare.

Any group desiring to form a caucus will be given an opportunity to announce on the floor the meetings of their caucuses.

Additional Resources

TISL Web Site www.TISLonline.org

Tennessee General Assembly www.legislature.state.tn.us

The Senate Rules of Order and the House of Representatives Legislative Manual can be downloaded in PDF format

Robert’s Rules of Order www.rulesonline.com



TENNESSEE INTERCOLLEGIATE STATE LEGISLATURE
Rules of Order

Rank of Main, Subsidiary & Privileged Motions All of these motions require a second		May Be Debated	May Be Amended	Majority Required	May Be Reconsidered
Privileged Motions	Adjourn highest rank "I move to adjourn."	No	No	Simple	No
	Recess "I move to recess for 10 minutes." "I move to recess until after the Joint Session."	No	Yes	Simple	No
Subsidiary Motions	Lay on the Table [set the referenced motion aside, which typically defeats it] "I move to table ___."	No	No	Simple	No The opposite motion is to Lift from the Table, which requires a second and a two-thirds majority.
	Previous Question [end debate] "I move the Previous Question on the amendment." "I move the Previous Question on the bill."	No	No	Two-thirds	No
	Postpone to a Certain Time "I move to postpone TISL Bill ___ until ___."	Yes	Yes	Simple	Yes
	Refer to Committee "I move to refer TISL Bill ___ to the _____ Committee."	Yes	Yes	Simple	Yes
	Amend an Amendment "I move to adopt Amendment ___ to Amendment ___."	Yes	No	Simple	Yes
	Amend "I move to adopt Amendment ___ to TISL Bill ___."	Yes	Yes	Simple	Yes
	Postpone Indefinitely "I move to postpone TISL Bill ___ indefinitely."	Yes	No	Simple	Yes
Main Motion	Adopt a Bill lowest rank "I move that the Senate/House adopt TISL Bill ___."	Yes	Yes	Simple	Yes

This table is provided for the convenience of delegates. The Rules of Order are the final authority.
 © Copyright 2007. Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature Foundation. All Rights Reserved.