



# TISL

Tennessee Intercollegiate  
State Legislature

## LEGISLATIVE HANDBOOK 2025

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

|                                          |                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Speaker of the Senate</b>             | <b>Carmen Witt</b> , University of Tennessee at Chattanooga            |
| <b>Speaker of the House</b>              | <b>Will Bowen</b> , University of Tennessee at Knoxville               |
| <b>Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate</b> | <b>TBD</b>                                                             |
| <b>Speaker Pro Tempore of the House</b>  | <b>Harrison Simpson</b> , Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville        |
| <b>Secretary of State</b>                | <b>Grace Olson</b> , Sewanee: The University of the South              |
| <b>Chief Clerk of the Senate</b>         | <b>Omaiya Al-Salim</b> , East Tennessee State University, Johnson City |
| <b>First Deputy Clerk of the Senate</b>  | <b>Sumiran Sharma</b> , University of Memphis                          |
| <b>Chief Clerk of the House</b>          | <b>Abby McCulley</b> , Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville           |
| <b>First Deputy Clerk of the House</b>   | <b>Camryn Ragland</b> , University of Tennessee at Knoxville           |
| <b>Second Deputy Clerk of the House</b>  | <b>Izzy Hollman</b> , University of Tennessee at Knoxville             |

## MISSION

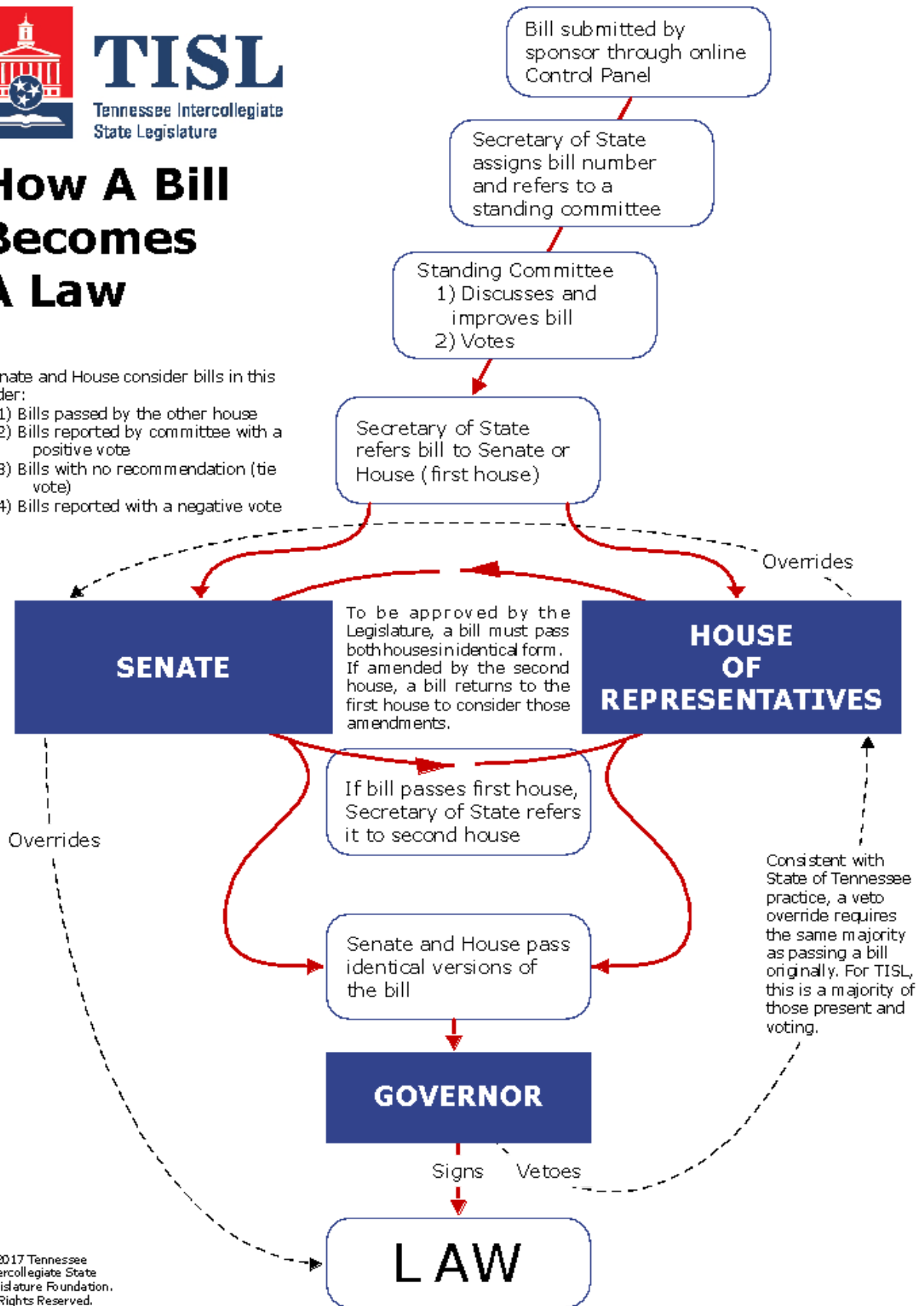
The mission of the Legislative Council is to create a forum to represent the views of each delegation with utmost integrity through an efficient and transparent legislative process within the Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature.



# How A Bill Becomes A Law

Senate and House consider bills in this order:

- 1) Bills passed by the other house
- 2) Bills reported by committee with a positive vote
- 3) Bills with no recommendation (tie vote)
- 4) Bills reported with a negative vote



## THE PATH TO PASSAGE

Submit your bill to the Secretary of State through your online Control Panel. Navigate to the Legislation tab, then click “Submit A Bill.”

The earlier the bill is submitted, the sooner it will be considered by the committee, which is advantageous for the sponsors.

Once submitted, the Secretary of State will assign the bill a number and refer the bill to a standing committee for consideration. You may request a certain committee when you submit your bill, but the Secretary of State has the final decision.

If the sponsor wishes to make changes to the bill, they have two options:

- a. If the final filing deadline hasn’t passed, the sponsor can rewrite the bill, re-submit 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.
- b. The sponsor may write an amendment to the bill, just as anyone else would do if they wanted to amend a bill. This method can be used to rewrite the bill by deleting everything after the enacting clause and inserting new language, but it still must conform to the original title.

When the bill comes up for discussion in the standing committee to which it has been referred, amendments to the bill may be proposed. These amendments are automatically included when the bill reaches the Senate or House of Representatives.

Each bill must have at least one prime sponsor in the Senate and one prime sponsor in the House before it is reported out of committee.

Finally, the standing committee shall report the bill to the Senate or House:

- a. with a recommendation for passage and placement on the consent calendar
- b. with a recommendation for passage
- c. with no recommendation
- d. with a recommendation for defeat

When the standing committee reports the bill, it is added to the Calendar for either the Senate or the House by the Secretary of State's office.

When the bill is next on the Calendar in the Senate/House, the Clerk will read the title of the bill and the committee report.

The sponsor of the bill has 2 minutes for introductory remarks and concludes with a motion to pass it.

Immediately after introductory remarks by the Prime Sponsor, sponsors of amendments that have been filed with the Clerk are recognized.

To submit an amendment, write it on an Amendment form and deliver the copy to the Clerk’s desk. 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 automatically go through the Secretary of State's office to the other house.

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 did not adopt, the bill goes back to the first house for consideration of the amendments passed in the second house.

Unless both houses pass all amendments, the bill is not passed by the General Assembly. Each house must pass an identical version of the same bill. If the houses disagree on which version of the bill to pass, the sponsor in the first house should move to appoint a

Conference Committee to meet and negotiate a compromise version of the bill (Rule 46).

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/no on a motion to adopt the Conference Committee report.

Once each house passes an identical version of the same bill, it goes to the Governor for their signature or veto. A veto can be overridden by a majority of each house of the Legislature under the procedures in Rule 46A.

This essay is to help delegates understand rules and procedures; however, the Rules of Order shall prevail in case of a conflict.

## The Weak Veto

The Governor of Tennessee and the Governor of TISL each have a weak veto, one that can be overridden by the same majority that originally passed the bill.

In Washington, a bill requires a majority of those present and voting to pass. Congress can override a President's veto with a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.

Tennessee, with its history of a strong legislative branch, requires a majority of the members to which each house is entitled — 17 senators and 50 representatives — to pass a bill. A veto can be overridden by the same majority.

TISL requires a majority of those present and voting to pass a bill and the same majority to override a veto, thereby replicating the Tennessee governor's weak veto.

## Attorney General's Opinions

Each house may request an opinion about legal issues relative to a bill from the Attorney General once in each legislative session.

This is governed by TISL Legal Code section 4-10-10 and by Rule 71 of the Rules of Order.

Questions addressed to the Attorney General should be specific and are to be composed by the clerk on a form for this purpose. After the AG receives the request for an opinion, they have 24 hours to submit an opinion to the house that requested it.

Example of an invalid question: "Is TISL Bill 49 constitutional?" (Too vague)

Example of a valid question: "Does Section 6 of TISL Bill 49 violate the Second Amendment?"

The process is initiated by a motion when the bill is pending on the floor to postpone the bill until the Attorney General can provide an opinion on the question of [question to be submitted]. Procedurally, this will be treated the same as a motion to postpone to a certain time (Rule 10).

If the motion is adopted, consideration will be postponed until the AG's opinion is received by the clerk, at which time it will automatically be the next bill on the calendar.

A request for an opinion needs the approval of one house, not both. Each house may submit one request in each legislative session. If a house has already submitted one request in a given session, it may postpone a bill until the next legislative session to consider a request for an opinion at that time.

The AG's opinion is non-binding but may be used in debate for/against a bill.

# STANDING COMMITTEES

Every legislator serves on a standing committee, which will review and vote on bills headed to the Senate and House of Representatives.

Senators, Alternate Senators and Representatives choose a committee assignment when they register online for the General Assembly. Deputy and assistant clerks may also serve on a committee as a non-voting member.

The purpose of standing committees is to review bills for grammatical errors, proper form, and logical and analytical reasoning before they are presented in the Senate or House. Committees are also a good place to learn the basics of parliamentary procedure.

A committee can amend a bill to improve it or to reflect the opinion of the majority of the committee. However, a committee can't table or stop a bill, they may only postpone a bill. Every bill is reported to the floor. Committee members should discuss and understand each bill before voting.

When debate is closed, committee members vote "aye" or "no" on each bill. A majority of "aye" votes means it is recommended for passage. A majority of "no" votes means it is recommended for defeat. A tie vote means no recommendation. Abstentions are allowed.

Bills shall be placed on the calendar of the house to which it is reported in the following order:

- a. **Recommended for Adoption**
- b. **No Recommendation**
- c. **Recommended for Defeat**

A committee may recommend, through a separate vote, that a bill passed by the committee with a recommendation for adoption be placed on the Consent Calendar of the house to which it is reported. See Rule 4A in the Senate and House Rules Of Order.

If a vote on adoption for passage, with or without placement on the consent calendar, fails, then the bill is recommended for defeat.

## Committee Officers

The Legislative Council appoints a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary for each committee. Any delegate is welcome to apply via the online Control Panel.

Chairs tend to be experienced delegates, but Vice Chairs and Secretaries are often first-year delegates.

Officers' duties are described in Committee Rule 4.

## Committee Meetings

The chair of the committee shall convene the meeting and proceed to the agenda, as set forth in Committee Rule 5.

At the first meeting, the chair should introduce the committee officers and ask every member of the committee to introduce themselves (name, college, years at TISL, etc.).

The calendar from the Secretary of State lists the bills assigned to your committee. Bills should be considered in the order listed on the calendar. The presiding officer may allow a bill to be heard early to accommodate a sponsor who is present and needs to return to their regular committee.

A committee may consider a bill regardless of whether the sponsor is present. The committee may summon the sponsor if it has questions or postpone the bill until the next meeting so that the sponsor can be present. Remember, every bill has two sponsors — Senate and House — either of whom should be prepared to explain it. The sponsor has a role in their respective committee and should fulfill that role.

For each bill, the committee secretary will read the bill number, the names of the

sponsors and the title of the bill. A sponsor will be allowed introductory remarks of two minutes (Committee Rule 9).

When addressing the committee, you should stand up, face the committee, and speak calmly and confidently. Refer to applicable state statutes and articles in the Constitution.

The committee will vote on each bill after a maximum of 15 minutes of discussion. A two-thirds majority may extend debate, but the extension must be approved by the committee before the original 15 minutes expires. (Committee Rule 9).

You may debate the substance of the bill in committees. A committee member who disagrees with a bill is not expected to vote for it just because it is written well.

The committee may not approve a bill that lacks any of the essential elements in Committee Rule 12.

Lobbyists, cabinet members, and other individuals may be called on in discussion but may not vote. Committee officers are entitled to vote.

**Tips:** Address arguments, not people, and respond politely to countering arguments. Know there is no “right answer” in politics. Debate is not about right or wrong, but which argument is stronger. Each person is entitled to a different opinion.

## COMMITTEE RULES OF ORDER

**1. Standing Committees** The standing committees of the General Assembly shall be established by the Secretary of State. The Executive Council shall publish a list of standing committees after the bill-filing deadline and before the General Assembly.

**2. Delegates on Committees** Every Senator, Alternate Senator, Representative, Deputy Clerk, and Assistant Clerk shall serve on one standing committee. Members of the Executive Council and the chief clerk of each house are ineligible to serve on any committee, except as provided in these rules.

**3. Maximum Number of Members** Each committee will have no more than twenty-five (25) members.

**4. Officers** The Legislative Council shall appoint a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary for each standing committee. The duties of each officer shall include:

**Chair** Presides at meetings, manages the business of the committee, calls special meetings as necessary (subject to Committee Rule 13).

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

**Secretary** Maintains a record of the committee’s actions, serves as liaison to the Secretary of State for routine business, and monitors the amount of time a bill has been considered for the purpose of enforcing time limits.

**5. Committee Order of Proceedings** The Chair of a standing committee shall call the committee to order at the time established by the official schedule of the General Assembly.

If the Chair is absent, the Vice Chair shall convene the meeting and preside until the Chair arrives. If the Chair and Vice Chair are absent, the Secretary will convene the meeting and preside to elect a temporary Chair to serve until the arrival of the Chair or Vice Chair.

Upon being called to order, the committee shall proceed as follows:

1. Introduction of committee officers and members (first meeting only)
2. Roll call (Committee Rule 6).

### 3. Consideration of bills.

**6. Committee Quorum** A quorum must be present for a Standing Committee to conduct business. A quorum at a regularly scheduled meeting of the committee is one-half of the members of the committee. A quorum at a specially-called meeting of the committee shall be one-half of the members of the committee or seven members of the committee, whichever is less.

**7. Selecting Committees** Eligible legislators will sign up for a standing committee when they register for the General Assembly. All final assignments shall be made by the Executive Council, subject to the approval of the Executive Council.

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

If a sponsor believes a bill has been assigned to the wrong committee, they should discuss this with the Secretary of State before the committee considers the bill.

Bills proposing to amend the TISL Constitution, the Legal Code 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 under the rules of a standing committee and consider all such bills.

**9. Time Limits, Introductory Remarks, Questions, and Debate** Each bill will be considered by a standing committee for no more than 15 minutes, unless the committee, by a two-thirds majority, votes for a different time limit. A different time limit may apply to a single bill or to all bills yet to be considered by the committee. A different time limit may be adopted while a bill is under consideration.

If present, the sponsor may make introductory remarks not to exceed two minutes.

After the bill has been considered for 15 minutes, including the sponsor's introduction, the chair will put the question of whether to report the bill.

If, by a show of hands, a majority of committee members present and voting are in favor of a bill, the bill shall be reported with a recommendation for approval. If a majority of committee members vote against the bill, the bill shall be reported with a recommendation for defeat. A tie vote means no recommendation will be assigned to the bill.

A committee member may move that a bill be placed on the consent calendar if there are no amendments on the bill. A bill will be placed on the consent calendar if there is a unanimous vote to place it on the consent calendar. If the motion fails, debate will resume for the time remaining.

The secretary of the committee will take an exact count of the votes on each motion to report the bill.

**10. Amendments and Prohibited Motions** A standing committee may amend a bill. Amendments shall be voted on by voice vote in accordance with Senate/House Rule 13. However, a motion to table a bill or to postpone a bill indefinitely is out of order. Otherwise, committees will conduct business in accordance with the legislative Rules of Procedure.

**11. Final Actions** A 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**
- d. **Postpone the bill until the next committee session except:**
  1. If it has been postponed previously. Unless it lacks an essential component of a bill (Committee Rule 12), it may not be postponed again.
  2. If it is the final scheduled committee meeting. It may be postponed further only if it lacks an essential component of a bill.

**12. 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.** “Be it enacted (or resolved) by the General Assembly of the Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature.”
3. **Substance of the bill.** The bill shall be organized in sections (ex. Section 1, Section 2, etc.).
4. **Effective date.** (Acts only, not resolutions). The Effective date shall be contained in the final section and shall read: “This bill shall take effect on [date]” or “This bill shall take effect immediately, the welfare of the people requiring it.”
5. **House sponsor(s).** The first-listed sponsor is the House Prime Sponsor and will introduce the bill in the House of Representatives.
6. **Senate sponsor(s).** The first-listed sponsor is the Senate Prime 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.

**13. Committee Backlogs** If a committee develops a backlog, the chair, 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 sessions.

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

**14. Testimony from Non-Members** The committee may permit lobbyists and outside experts to appear before the committee to testify or to answer questions. The committee should make every effort to respect the visitor’s schedule.

**15. Sponsors’ Responsibility to Follow Bills** It is the responsibility of the sponsor to know which committee is considering their bill and to be at the committee hearing. The sponsor may be excused from their assigned committee to attend the hearing of the committee in which their bill has been assigned.

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.

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

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SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# RULES OF ORDER

The Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature Rules of Order are a blend of *Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure*, *Robert's Rules of Order*, and the Rules of Order for the two houses of the Tennessee General Assembly.

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

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**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 adopting a motion to recess.

In the absence of the Speaker, the Speaker Pro Tempore shall convene the house at the designated time and proceed with the regular order of business.

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

**2. Joint Session** The Speaker of the Senate shall preside when the Senate and House of Representatives convene in joint session. In the absence of the Speaker of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall preside.

**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 disregard the incomplete

portion of any previous calendar and proceed as follows:

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

**4. Calendars** The Secretary of State shall publish a calendar for each legislative session that lists bills properly before each house in the sequence they are to be considered pursuant to the Rules of Order.

**5. 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 delegate must be recognized by the presiding officer to make a motion. 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.

### PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

**6. 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 until the next legislative session.”*

(RRONR §21 & 22, Mason’s §21)

**7. 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.”*

(RRONR §20, Mason’s §22)

### SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

**8. Lay on the Table** Laying on the Table is a way to set a bill aside to discuss another or more urgent matter. 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.

A motion to Lift from the Table brings the bill back into question. A motion to Lift from the Table is only in order when no main motion is pending

The motion to Lay on the Table passes with a simple majority, and the motion to Lift from the Table requires a simple majority.

*“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to lay TISL Bill [number] on the table.”*

(RRONR §17 & 34, Mason’s §34 & 42-492)

**9. 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.”*

(RRONR §16, Mason’s §35)

**10. Postpone to a Certain Time** This delays consideration of a bill for a specified period of time (as opposed to tabling, which delays 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 to a time/calendar place may be expressed as a specific time (e.g., 3 p.m.), as relative time (e.g., immediately after lunch), as a specific legislative session (e.g., the beginning of the third legislative session), or as a number of spaces in the calendar (e.g., three spaces forward on the calendar)

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].”*

*“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move to postpone TISL Bill [number] four spaces on calendar”*

(RRONR §11, Mason’s §37)

**11. 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. The motion to refer to committee is debatable, may be amended, and requires a simple majority for passage.

In lieu of referring a bill to a standing committee, 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.”*

(RRONR §13, Mason’s §38)

**12. Amend an Amendment** An amendment to an amendment is also known as an amendment

to the second degree. After an amendment has been proposed (Rule 13), 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 13), also apply to second-degree amendments.

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

(RRONR §12:7:2, Mason’s §39:409)

**13. Amendment** An amendment is a method to change part of a motion to eliminate flaws, clear ambiguities, or otherwise change the motion.

The motion to amend is debatable, may be amended further (Rule 12), and requires a simple majority for adoption. Amendments made during session shall be voted on by voice vote. In order to receive a roll call vote on an amendment, the sponsor may request the vote to be taken through roll call before the period of debate ends. Furthermore, an amendment may receive a roll call vote through a *Division of the House* (Rule 20).

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 presiding officer, and the Speaker shall recognize the sponsor.

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 four forms:

**1. To Add...** Give the specific wording to be inserted at the end of the bill.

In Section 8, add “the public welfare requiring it” after the word “immediately.”

**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 Strike Out...** Be specific about the part of the bill to be deleted.

Strike out Section 3 and renumber subsequent sections accordingly.

**4. To Strike Out and Insert...** A combination of the above.

In Section 5, strike out “\$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.

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 46)

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

(RRONR §12, Mason’s §39)

**14. 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 25).

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

(RRONR §11, Mason’s §40)

**15. 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].”

(RRONR §10, Mason’s §41)

## INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

**16. 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.

**17. Point of Order** If a delegate believes the rules of order are being breached, they may make a Point of Order, asking the presiding officer to rule on the issue. If the presiding officer does not understand the Point of Order, they may ask the delegate to explain the point and/or consult the parliamentarian.

If the presiding officer agrees with the Point of Order, they shall rule that the point “is well taken.” Conversely, they will rule that the point “is not well taken.”

This motion does not require a second or a vote. A Point of Order is the only motion that does not require recognition from the presiding officer and can interrupt when someone else is speaking.

“Point of Order!”

(RRONR §23, Mason’s §25)

**18. Appeal the Ruling of the Chair** After the presiding officer has ruled on an issue such as a Point of Order, the house may review their decision.

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

An appeal is subject to the general rules of debate, and the presiding officer may explain their 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.”*

(RRONR §24, Mason's §24)

**19. 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.

A motion to suspend the rules can't affect another body.

A motion to suspend the rules must be submitted in writing and approved by the presiding officer before it may be considered on the floor.

The rules may not be suspended to permit a Senator to speak in the House of Representatives or *vice versa*, or to allow a lobbyist to speak in either 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].”*

(RRONR §25, Mason's §29)

**20. Division of the House** Immediately after a voice vote, any three members in the Senate or in a committee or any ten members in the House of Representatives or in a Joint Session may request a count of the “ayes” and “noes” in a more specific manner than that of the previous vote.

A delegate requesting a division of the house should raise their hand immediately and exclaim “Division!” after the presiding officer announces the results of the voice vote.

(RRONR §29, Mason's §48:533)

## REQUESTS AND INQUIRIES

**21. Requests and Inquiries** Requests and Inquiries require no motion, second, or vote and are the prerogative of any delegate. They are proper at any time but may not interrupt another speaker.

**22. 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.

**23. Request for Information:** A request for facts affecting the business at hand directed at the chair or another member. A point of information cannot address the substance of legislation.

## MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS

**24. Lift from the Table** After a motion has been tabled, a motion to lift it from the table can bring the question back before the house. A motion to Lift from the Table requires a second, is debatable and requires a simple 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 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].”*

**25. 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 is out of order if the other house has subsequently acted on the bill.

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].”*

**25A. Consideration of a Veto** If the Governor returns a bill to the Legislature after vetoing

it from becoming law, the sponsor in either house may move that it be passed notwithstanding the objection of the Governor. Said motion must be seconded to be considered.

The sponsor in each house will notify the Chief Clerk in writing of their intention to make such a motion and said notice shall be read in open session at least one hour before the motion is to be considered.

The motion to override a veto is debatable. The motion may not be amended, but is otherwise subject to all other subsidiary and incidental motions.

Having once been lost, the motion to override a veto may not be put to the same house again except by adopting a motion to reconsider the previous action (Rule 25).

*“Mr./Madam Speaker, I move that the Senate/House pass TISL Bill \_\_\_\_\_, notwithstanding the objection of the Governor.”*

## MISCELLANEOUS RULES

**26. Voting** In putting a question, the presiding officer will specify the method of voting. Each delegate shall vote from their desk 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.

**27. 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 is not counted for either side when deciding the outcome of a vote.

**28. Voting by Proxy** Proxy voting is prohibited.

**29. Voting by the Presiding Officer** The presiding officer may vote only when their vote will affect the fate of the motion.

If the vote is tied, the presiding officer may vote “aye” and pass the motion. If the motion passes by one vote (without the Speaker's

vote), the presiding officer may vote “no,” creating a tie and denying the motion a majority.

The Speaker Pro Tempore may vote as a Senator or Representative for his delegation (TISL Const. Art. V, Sec. 8), unless they are presiding or a member of their delegation has already voted

**30. 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 opportunity to respond to other delegates in debate and there shall be no limit on the number of times the Prime Sponsor may speak.

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 presiding officer may not participate in debate, unless they relinquish the chair and speak from the floor if entitled to do so. The presiding officer may return to the chair once the question they spoke to is resolved. This paragraph does not apply to discussion following an appeal of a Speaker's ruling (Rule 18).

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

**30A. Time Limits for Introductory Remarks** The prime sponsor of the bill will be recognized by the presiding officer for introductory remarks not to exceed two minutes.

**30B. Time Limit for Debate of Bills on Sunday** If either house has more than 25 bills pending on its calendar at the beginning of the final scheduled legislative session, the period for debate on each bill in that house shall be no more than 10 minutes, including the sponsor's introductory and closing remarks and the

consideration of any subsidiary motions. At the expiration of the prescribed time, the presiding officer shall put the question on any pending motion(s) as if a motion for the previous question on the bill had been adopted.

A motion to suspend the rules and change the debate time limit for either a specific bill or for all bills shall be in order. It shall be non-debatable, notwithstanding Rule 19 (Suspend the Rules). Such a motion regarding all bills shall be in order when no other motion is pending.

**30C. House Limit on Debate Time** Debate on any main motion in the House of Representatives is limited to 10 minutes. Debate on any subsidiary motion shall be limited to five minutes. At the expiration of main motion debate time, a member may move to extend debate by 10 minutes by a two-thirds majority. At the expiration of debate time on subsidiary motions, a member may move to extend debate time by five minutes by a two-thirds majority.

**31. Quorum** A quorum is required to conduct any business except to adjourn until a specific time.

A quorum in the Senate is one-half of the number of participating schools. A quorum in the House of Representatives shall be one-half of the members. (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 presiding officer of either house may take actions to ensure the maintenance of a quorum and may direct the Sergeant(s)-at-Arms to summon absent members.

**32. 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, they may rule further appeals out of order.

**33. 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.

**35. Omnibus Bills** Bills that embrace more than one subject are prohibited. A bill that might embrace more than one subject or be broader than its title may be referred to a standing committee or a select committee to review the issue and make a report.

*“I move to refer TISL Bill \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ committee to consider whether it violates Rule 35.”*

**36. Two-Thirds Majority** The following motions require a two-thirds majority for adoption. A motion requiring a two-thirds majority is adopted if the ‘aye’ votes are twice or more as many as the ‘no’ votes.

- a. Previous Question
- b. Suspend the Rules
- c. Extension of Debate in the House

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

**38. Admission to the Floor** Only the members of the house, the officers of the house, the Secretary of State, the legislative staff, and the media shall be admitted to the floor of the house while it is in session.

The presiding officer shall provide suitable seating for guests with special needs.

This rule shall not apply to the introduction of an invited guest or dignitary, or in a joint session.

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

Folding chairs are prohibited on the floor of the House except those placed by the Sergeant at Arms for use during joint sessions.

**39. Senators** Each school shall designate one Senator and may have one Alternate Senator. These shall be the only delegates to represent that school in the Senate.

An Alternate Senator may not serve as a member of the House of Representatives.

**40. Motions to be Seconded** Every motion must be seconded unless otherwise provided.

**41. 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 aloud when in order. A form for this purpose is available from the Chief Clerk or from the Secretary of State.

**42. 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.

The Prime Sponsor shall stand in the well of the house while the bill is being considered.

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.

A Representative may not speak in the Senate nor a Senator in the House of Representatives. This rule may not be suspended.

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

**44. Add or Remove a Sponsor** To add or remove a sponsor from a bill, the prime sponsor must file an Add or Remove Sponsor form with the Secretary of State.

**45. 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 legislators. 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 next-published calendar of either house as if it had been reported by the committee with no recommendation.

**46. 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 reconcile differences in the versions.

When the bill is returned to the first house, the Prime Sponsor, upon recognition by the presiding officer and 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 chair of the Standing Committee that first considered the bill or their designee shall be chair of the Conference Committee.

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 Conference Committee Report may not be amended. If either house rejects the Conference Committee's report, the Conference Committee may meet again.

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

**47. Attorney General's Opinion** Pursuant to TISL Legal Code 4-10-10, each house may request an official opinion from the Attorney General about one bill in each legislative session.

Such a request shall be presented as a motion to postpone consideration of the bill until an opinion is received from the AG. Rule 10 (Postpone To A Certain Time) shall apply to consideration of the motion unless otherwise provided in this rule.

A request for an opinion shall include specific questions, not to exceed three, and shall be reduced to writing by the clerk on a form to be provided. Two copies shall be delivered to the Attorney General, who shall record the time of receipt on one, which shall be returned to the house where the request originated.

The 24-hour time limit set forth in TISL Legal Code 4-10-10 shall commence at the time the request was received by the Attorney General.

Upon receipt of the Attorney General's opinion, the bill shall be the next bill considered in the regular order of business.

An opinion is non-binding but may be cited in debate.

**48. Committee of the Whole** Neither house may enter into a Committee of the Whole.

**49. Official Schedule** The Official Schedule as posted on the TISL website at the beginning of the General Assembly is hereby made an official part of the Rules of Order.

**50. Interpreting Rules of Order** Mason's *Manual of Legislative Procedure* 2020 (et seq.) and

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th Edition (et seq.)* shall be the basis for interpreting these rules and for resolving issues not otherwise addressed herein.

**51. 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 inconsequential.

**52. Seating Assignments** The Speaker of each house will assign seating in their respective chambers at their discretion.

**53. Attire** Delegates shall dress in business attire befitting the decorum of the General Assembly. Any article of clothing with holes, rips, or stains is inappropriate and out of decorum. Jeans, nighttime wear, flip-flops, and overly strong fragrances are also inappropriate.

The Presiding Officer may relax this rule on special occasions or in cases where accommodation is required due to an individual's disability or medical condition.

**54. Sergeants-at-Arms** The Speaker of each house shall appoint at least one Sergeant-at-Arms for the duration of the General Assembly.

The presiding officer of each house may order the Sergeant(s)-at-Arms to remove an individual who impedes, disrupts, or hinders the proceedings of the house or who endangers any member, officer, or employee of the General Assembly or any member of the public.

**55. Amendments to the Tennessee Constitution** A bill proposing to amend the Tennessee Constitution, if passed by a simple majority in each house, shall lie over to a subsequent day and be considered again. If passed by a two-thirds majority on second consideration in each house, it shall be presented to the Governor to sign or veto in accordance with the TISL Constitution.

**56. Parliamentarians** The Chief Clerk of each house shall act as parliamentarian for their respective houses.

**57. Unanimous Consent** Any motion that requires a vote, except for a main motion, may be made by any member through a request for unanimous consent. If any one member objects, then the motion is considered lost.