A Brief Overview

Rules of Procedure
National Model U.S. Congress shall have an official set of Rules of Procedure that can only be amended by the members of the Committee on Rules.
Rule 2 – House, Senate, & Congressional Officers

- The Vice President of the U.S. or Senate President Pro Tempore and the Speaker of the House or the Speaker Pro Tempore are the presiding officers.

- Duties of Presiding Officers:
  - Declare opening and closing of each meeting
  - Recognize speakers
  - Decide points of order
  - Put questions to vote and announce the results
  - Preserve order and decorum

- The Chairperson may only vote to complete a 2/3 vote, to make quorum, or when their vote would change the results
Duties of the Clerk/Secretary:
- Read all bills and amendments
- Assist in counting all votes
- Distribute approved material to members
- Determine time limitations on each speaker
- Make sure quorum is present at all times

Duties of the Parliamentarian:
- Assist the Chairperson in maintaining order and decorum
- Advise the Chairperson in the decision of any parliamentary questions
Duties of the Committee Chair:
- Preside over all committee meetings and proceedings
- Elect, as appropriate, a Secretary
- Maintain decorum in committee proceedings at all times
- Facilitate debate of legislation assigned to the committee
- Adhere to the rules of the model congress
Determined prior to the opening of Model Congress

Committee Procedures:

- Have one chairperson, vice chairperson/ranking member, and one clerk
- The chairperson not actually presiding has all the rights and privileges of any other voting member
- Follows the daily Order of Business
  - Call to Order
  - Pledge of Allegiance
  - Quorum Call
  - Communications and message from the House/Senate
  - Reading of the Calendar
  - Unfinished Business
  - Passage of Bills
The Clerk/Secretary shall make sure that every member has a copy of the agenda
Order will be determined by Chamber leadership
Bills not on the agenda may be introduced by a motion to suspend the rules
Bills passed in committee are forwarded to the Committee on Rules for inclusion on the Senate/House agenda
Changes may be made to a bill, by the author, in committee
The sponsor may only withdraw before it has been moved or by leave of assembly to do so through a majority vote
A defeated motion may only be reconsidered upon the discretion of the chair
Rule 4 – Agenda and Order of Business

- Agenda:
  - Call to Order
  - Pledge of Allegiance
  - Establish Quorum
  - Morning Business
    - Presentation of petitions and memorials
    - Committee reports
    - Introduction of bills and joint resolutions
    - *All may be waived by unanimous consent*
Rule 4 – Agenda and Order of Business

- Order of Business - Senate
  - Leader time – Majority and minority leaders (or their designees) use this time to notify members of any schedule changes, comment on issues, or other reminders. Up to 10 minutes will be allocated which may be reserved for later use.
  - Unfinished Business – continue unfinished business from the prior legislative session
  - Move to the consideration of bills and resolutions
  - Executive Business – by non debatable motion or unanimous consent, the Executive Calendar is taken up
Rule 4 – Agenda and Order of Business

- Order of Business - House
  - Unfinished business on the Speakers Desk
    - Messages from the President
    - Messages from the Senate (bills, amendments, etc)
  - Unfinished Business
    - Tabled measures from the previous session
  - “Morning Hour”
    - Members deliver speeches on topics of their choice for up to 2 minutes. The party leaders will provide the Speaker with a list of speakers.
  - Resolve into the Committee of the Whole
  - Orders of the Day
Rule 5 - Debate

- Quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of the chamber in question
- A quorum must be present for any business to be conducted
- Address remarks thru the chair, not directly to the speaker
- Debate shall be limited to 45 minutes, subject to one 15 minute extension, if called for by 2/3 vote of the chamber
- Order of speakers on the main motion shall be as follows:
  - Structured Debate:
    - Sponsor of the bill: 8 minutes
    - Speaker against the bill: 5 minutes
  - General Debate:
    - 3 minutes per speaker
    - Sponsor of a motion may not speak against their own motion. However, he/she may vote against it.
Rule 5 - Debate

- **Order of Debate**
  - Opening statement by floor managers
  - Committee amendments
  - Structured debate:
    - General debate and floor amendments

- **Amendments:**
  - In order anytime after a measure has been introduced
    - Sponsor of amendment
    - Speaker against the amendment
    - General debate (pro/con, not to exceed 2 minutes)
Rule 6 - Motions

- Motions are made following Roberts Rules of Orders and The Rules of Procedure
- Precedence of Motions During Debate:
  - To adjourn, adjourn or recess at a certain time – to set time for meeting to close
  - Point of privilege – a question concerning the rights of a member or the entire assembly
  - Point of order – to correct parliamentarian procedure
  - Point of information – single question, addressed to the chair, may be unrelated to the current subject
  - Point of inquiry – a question for the speaker (single question), speaker must yield
  - Point of query – series of three questions addressed to the speaker, thru the chair
Rule 6 – motions Continued...

- To lay on the table – To remove item from consideration indefinitely
- Suspend the rules – waives a specific rule for a specific time; requires 2/3’s vote to pass
- For the previous question – Close debate on the question (terminates consideration of amendments to that question)
- To divide a motion – to have a bill voted on separately from its amendments; no vote required
- Secondary amendment – changes the text of a primary amendment
- Primary amendment – changes the text of a main motion; requires a majority vote
- Object to consideration – has the effect of canceling the effect of a bill
- Acclamation – requires a unanimous vote and must be made before debate begins
- Main motion – what is currently being discussed
Rule 7 – Voting

- Voting shall be done by show of hands, acclamation, or a division of the assembly.
- Voting shall consist of those present and voting.
- All motions and points except for point of privilege, order, and information related to the vote.
- Abstentions shall not be counted.
House of Representatives
Committee of the Whole

- **Purpose:**
  - To consider major legislation
  - Allows bills and resolutions to be considered without adhering to all the formal house rules

- **Membership:**
  - For model congress, the entire House of Representatives will compose the Committee of the Whole. Quorum will be 1/4 of the registered house delegates

- **Referral of Legislation**
  - Requires a special rule, usually imposed by the House Rules Committee
  - Debate on the rule in the house must occur before the rule is adopted.
  - Once adopted, the Committee of the Whole convenes.

- **Resolving into the Committee of the Whole**
  - By announcement of the Speaker
  - Bill manager (committee chair or ranking member) makes a motion
General Debate in the Committee of the Whole

- Bill is read three times
- Debate is managed by a majority (committee chair) and minority (ranking member) party member from the committee of jurisdiction
- Debate time is equally divided between both sides
- Debate time per measure cannot exceed 20 minutes
- Committee members are given priority in debate; after committee members have spoken, debate will alternate between majority and minority members.
Amendments
- In order after general debate has completed
- Bill is read for the second time
- Debate is limited to 5 minutes per amendment and will follow the order:
  - Amendment Sponsor (1 minute)
  - Member against the amendment (1 minute)
  - General debate
- Vote on amendment, then vote (3rd reading) on bill

Committee of the Whole reports back to the House
- Dispose of committee amendments
- Bill read for 3rd and final time and vote on final passage

NOTE: a motion to recommit may be made by a member opposed to the measure. If passed, the bill is sent back to the committee of origin for reconsideration.

Suspension of the Rules:
- Consideration of legislation under suspension of the rules do not require a “special rule” and follow the general and structured debate guidelines provided in Section VI – General Rules of Debate.
Senate – Special Rules

- Senators’ Rights
  - Rules and procedures emphasize full deliberation more than expeditious decisions and rights of individual senators more than the powers of the minority.

- Debate, Filibusters, and Cloture
  - Presiding officer may not use the power to recognize senators to control the flow of business. Any senator seeking recognition must be recognized.
  - Model Congress rules don’t allow for filibuster.
  - Cloture can be initiated if a petition, signed by at least ¼ of the Senate body is obtained.
  - Under cloture, discussion on any measure is limited to 20 minutes.
  - Debate in the Senate will follow the procedures for general and structured debate as provided in the General Rules of Debate procedures.
Senate – Special Rules

- **Scheduling of Legislative Business**
  - Responsibility of the Majority Leader
  - Majority and Minority Leaders are recognized preferentially
- **Unanimous Consent Agreements**
  - May limit or change rules of debate
- **Amendments**
  - Floor managers (committee chair and ranking member of the reporting committee) provide opening statements
  - Committee amendments are disposed of first (accepted by unanimous consent or one by one)
  - After committee amendments are disposed of, other amendments may be offered (committee amendments are subject to amending.)
- **Voting and Quorum**
  - The Senate is always assumed to be under Quorum, once established, unless a Senator suggests the absence.
Questions and answers

- Thank You!
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