

## Chairing your Committee: The Basics

Introduce yourself and your co-chair, and any officers or advisors that are in the room.  
Have members sign the attendance form, announce and post the docket.  
Begin debating bills:

**Chair:** *“The first bill on the docket is \_\_\_\_\_. The Clerk will read the bill.”*

**Clerk reads title, purpose and authors**

**Chair:** *“Is there an author present?”*

The author stands and replies:

***“Mr./Madam Speaker/President, I move that House/Senate Bill \_\_\_ be placed on final passage and wish to speak on the same.”***

**Chair:** *“That is your privilege.”*

**If Times runs out for Author Presentation, rap gavel and declare:**

*“Time has elapsed for Author Presentation. We will now move into a period of questions to the author? Does any wish to question the author?”*

**If Author concludes before time expires:** *“The author has yielded the remainder of his/her time to the chair. We will now move into a period of questions to the author? Does any wish to question the author?”*

**After Delegates receive proper recognition:**

*“Will the Author yield to a question?”*

If a legislator wishes to ask more than one question, then they would first be recognized, and then ask:  
***“Will the Representative/Senator yield to a series of questions?”***

If the author would like to be asked a question by that legislator, then you would reply:  
***“The author will yield.”***

The author may refuse to yield to any legislator who wishes to ask a question.

**If time runs out for Open Debate, rap gavel and declare:** *“Time has elapsed for Questions to the Author. We will now move into a period of Open Debate. Amendments are now in order. Is there anyone wishing to speak on the bill?”*

**If there is still time but no one wishes to ask a question, state:** *“Seeing as no delegate wishes to question the author, we will now move into a period of Open Debate.”* **Rap gavel.** *“Is there anyone wishing to speak on the bill?”*

In order to speak during open debate, a legislator must stand up, be recognized and request:  
***“May I approach the well?”***

**Chair responds:** *“That is your privilege.”*

Once a legislator is speaking from the well, they may continue to do so until either:

- 1) They finish speaking and wish to yield the well
- 2) They are asked to yield the well and agree to do so
- 3) Time runs out during open debate

While they are speaking, a legislator may ask for the speaker to yield the well. This may be done by interrupting them while they are speaking.

To do so, they would stand up and be recognized by the presiding officer, then ask:

***“Will the Representative/Senator yield the well?”***

The legislator in the well then has the option to continue speaking or yielding the well by answering a simple ***“Yes” or “No”***

A question may also be asked to any Representative/Senator who is speaking in the well. This process is the same as asking a question to the author.

A Legislator in the well may also prevent such interruptions from happening by request to the presiding officer once they are speaking in the well. They would simply request to the presiding officer:

***“I wish to not be interrupted.”***

At this point, the presiding officer will no longer recognize any legislators attempting to be recognized.

**If Time Runs out for Open Debate, rap gavel and declare:** *“Time has elapsed for Open Debate. The Previous Question is now ordered. We will now move into a period of Pro/Con Debate. Amendments are no longer in order. Is there anyone wishing to speak against the bill?”*

**If there is still time left but no one else wishes to speak in Open Debate, declare:** *“The chair will now entertain a call for the Previous Question.”*

**The Previous Question may not be called for when someone is in the well.**

**When a delegate moves the Previous Question: After proper recognition:** *“I move the Previous Question.”*

**Chair:** *“There has been a call for the Previous Question. Are there any objections?”*

**If there are no objections:** *“Hearing none, the Previous Question is now ordered”. **Rap Gavel.**” We will now move into a period of Pro/Con Debate. Amendments are no longer in order. Is there anyone wishing to speak against the bill?*

**If there are objections:** *“There is an objection. All those in favor of the call for the Previous Question, please signify by saying “Aye”. **Listen to votes.** “All those opposed please signify by saying “Nay”. **Listen to votes.** “In the eyes of the chair, the \_\_\_ seem to have it” **Pause for a call for division, if none, continue:** “The \_\_\_ do have it, therefore the Previous Question is ordered (lost). **Rap Gavel***

**If there is a call for Division:** *“There has been a call for Division. All those in favor of moving the Previous Question shall rise and stand until counted.” **Count votes.** “Reverse your position.” **Count votes.** On the call for the Previous Question, the “Ayes” were \_\_\_ and the “Nays” were \_\_\_, therefore the Previous Question is ordered (lost). **Rap Gavel.***

**If the Previous Question is Ordered, move into Pro/Con Debate. If it is lost, continue with Open Debate until Time Elapses or another call for the Previous Question is made.**

## **Pro/Con Debate**

Pro/Con debate immediately follows open debate. During Pro/Con, speakers will alternate speaker either for the bill or against it. The first speaker must speak against the bill, the second speaker must speak for the bill, the third speaker must speak against the bill, the fourth speaker must speak for the bill and so on. Pro/Con Debate will last four rounds or until a set time has expired. A round is one Con speaker and one Pro speaker. Each speaker has thirty seconds to speak. No amendments may be presented during Pro/Con debate. No questions may be asked during Pro/Con debate.

The speakers for Pro/Con debate are recognized by the presiding officer who will ask:

**Chair:** *“Is there anyone wishing to speak against the bill?”*

**Con speaker must receive proper recognition, ask to approach the well, then may speak for 30 seconds against the bill.**

**Alternate Pro/Con speakers for 5 rounds, ending on a Con.**

**No amendments or questions to the speaker during Pro/Con debate.**

**When all rounds of Pro/Con Debate are over, rap gavel and declare:** “Time for Pro/Con debate has now elapsed. The Committee will now move into a period of Author Summation time. Does the Author wish Summation time?”

**The Author does not need to seek recognition, but may simply approach the well and begin their summation.**

**If time runs out for Author Summation: Rap Gavel.** *“Time for Author Summation has elapsed. Would you like to place your bill on final passage?”*

**If the author concludes before time runs out, they state “I wish to place HB/SB \_\_ on final passage.”**

**Chair:** *“The Question is on the passage of \_\_\_\_\_, the committee shall proceed to vote. All those in favor of the passage of the bill, please rise and stand until counted.”* **Count votes.** *“Reverse your positions”.* **Count Votes.** *“On the question of the passage of \_\_\_\_\_, the “Yays” were \_\_\_\_\_ and the “Nays” were \_\_\_\_\_. This bill having therefore received (not received) the requisite constitutional majority is therefore passed (lost).* **Rap Gavel.**

***Move on to next bill on the docket.***