



Oregon Senate

Protocol & Decorum



Office of the Secretary of the Senate

“Rules are basically protectoral and purposeful and not mere fluff. They reflect the observance of mutual respect and consideration for each other in an atmosphere of courtesy and friendliness. It is this behavior that is most favorable to achievement, to understanding and cooperation.”

~ Cecil L. Edwards
Secretary of the Senate (1965-1975)
Legislative Historian (1975-1993)

PROTOCOL & DECORUM

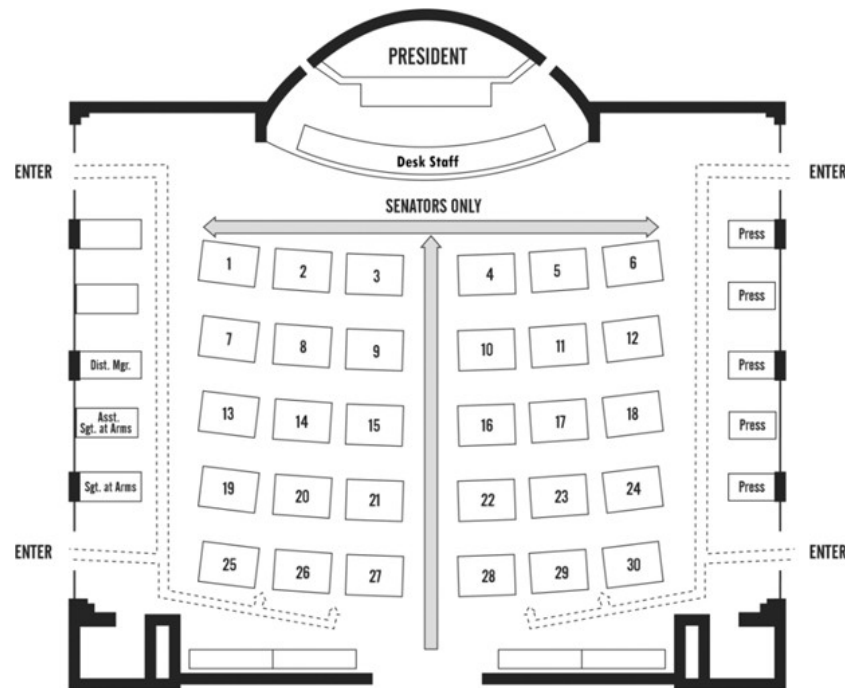
CONVENING The President will bring the Senate to order promptly at the time set for convening. Chimes will ring five minutes before session throughout each floor of the Senate Wing to alert Senators.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS The Orders of Business for each floor session follow a precise order. (See a list of Orders of Business on page 20). The general order of business shall not be varied except upon suspension of the rules.

ALWAYS ON CAMERA Remember you are *always* on camera in the Chamber. Actions and conversations may be recorded. The Senate floor sessions are recorded and broadcast live in the Capitol and on the Internet.

QUIET CONVERSATION Please be mindful of fellow Senators as they give floor speeches. Please have conversations quietly at your desk or at the back of the Chamber.

THIRD READING LIST The daily “Third Reading List” is posted online and emailed to each Senate office before the daily session, enabling you to know the measures up for a vote that day.



WALKING IN THE CHAMBER Only members of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of the Senate, or staff acting under the direction of the Secretary, may walk in the center aisle or “T” that runs the length of the floor in front of the rostrum. Members may access the rostrum to speak with the President. Staff should enter the Chamber from the back side aisles and proceed to a member’s desk by walking down the aisles between desks. As required by rule, no one should walk between a Senator who is speaking and the President at the rostrum.

ACCESS TO THE CHAMBER FLOOR All 90 members of the Legislature, as well as Senate desk and floor personnel, may access the Senate floor. Members’ staff, caucus staff, presiding officer’s staff, certain committee staff, and

authorized guests are permitted as well. Accredited representatives of the news media are permitted at designated desks along the side of the Senate floor. Lobbyists are prohibited on the Senate floor, side aisles, and adjacent areas during session.

*“Rules should be designed to make
it possible for members of the
assembly to express themselves fully
to try to sway each other and to
vote as equals when a time for
decision is reached.”*

~ Cecil L. Edwards
Secretary of the Senate (1965-1975)
Legislative Historian (1975-1993)

WHERE TO SIT There are two chairs at each desk. The chair with arms is for the member's use *only*.

FLOOR DESKS Your floor desk is your personal space during session. One staff member is able to accompany you at your desk, and additional staff or guests may be seated in the side aisle or gallery. The Chamber is cordoned off when session is out, but the desks remain unlocked. Do not leave anything confidential or valuable at your Chamber desk.

LEAVING DURING SESSION You may leave the Chamber for short periods of time as long as the body is not under a "Call of the Senate," in which case all Senators must remain present. Before leaving the floor, it is customary to notify the Secretary of the Senate or Desk Staff, and your caucus personnel.

BEFORE AND AFTER SESSION The side aisles and double center doors are closed for fifteen minutes before and after session. During this period, all rules of protocol are observed as if the Senate is in session. During a recess, the doors remain closed and access rules remain in effect.

*“The process works, which I think shows
how important it is.”*

~ Maribel Cadmus
Secretary of the Senate (1977-1987)

FOOD AND WATER Only water is permitted in the Chamber.

PHONES AND LAPTOPS Phone calls should only be made in the phone booths at the back of the Chamber. Phone booths are for members *only*. Laptops are permitted for members and staff. No device should make an audible noise while in the Chamber.

HOUSE FLOOR SESSIONS A television is located in the Hannon Reading Room directly off the Chamber to enable observation of House proceedings. The House Third Reading List is available on OLIS.

OPENING CEREMONIES Opening ceremonies may be scheduled to begin a floor session. Opening ceremonies are typically an invocation, poetry reading, or musical performance. Please do not enter the Chamber during an opening ceremony. If you would like to participate, or recommend a person or group, please contact the Reading Clerk for scheduling (Ext. 6-1851 or email secretaryofsenatesoffice@oregonlegislature.gov).

COURTESIES AND GUESTS Guests may be introduced under the order of Courtesies. It is customary to wait until debate and voting on a bill is completed before asking for permission to return to the order of Courtesies. Any guest on the floor or in the side aisle cannot be currently advocating for or against legislation. When introducing a guest with access to the floor or side aisle, a member **should not** indicate any issue the guest supports or opposes. Guests on the floor should not wear or display visible indications supporting or opposing any issue or legislation. Signs are prohibited at all times anywhere in the Chamber, including the public galleries.

REMONSTRANCES Remonstrances have a two-minute time limit (no yields). A member may only speak one time per session day under Remonstrances. Under this order of business, a member may voice objections, observations, or “protests.” The motives or integrity of another member of the Senate or House may not be impugned.

VISUAL AIDS & READING FROM WRITTEN MATERIAL A member must ask for unanimous consent to use a visual aid. Permission is not required when reading from written material, however another member may object to what is being read. If an objection is made, the matter will be put to an immediate vote.

SCRIPTS When you have a speaking part in a floor session, the Secretary of the Senate's staff prepares the script and places it on your Chamber desk. If you would like an additional script beforehand, please contact the Secretary of the Senate.

ADDRESSING A MEMBER When addressing another member, it is customary to use the title of "Senator" only or "the Senator from [district number or other description provided on the reference list at your desk]". For example, say "the Senator from District 23" or "the Senator from Baker County." Do not use the Senator's name. This rule helps maintain decorum during debate.

QUESTION OF THE CARRIER If you have a question for the carrier of a bill, press the button at our desk to be recognized by the President. When recognized, tell the President you have a "Question for the Carrier." The President will then ask if the carrier will answer a question. The question should then be addressed to the President, not the carrier. Likewise, the answer to the question should be addressed to the President, not the member who asked the question. This rule helps maintain decorum during debate. Questions and answers are timed and count towards the member who asked the question.

DECLARING A CONFLICT OF INTEREST You

must declare the conflict or potential conflict of interest before you vote. Ask to be recognized during debate but before the closing statement. If you forget to declare a conflict of interest and the vote has been taken, you can ask for unanimous consent to declare your conflict after the vote. When declaring a conflict, please remember to state the nature of the conflict or potential conflict.

“One of the first things I think that a legislator has to keep in mind is that for a bill to pass there needs to be consensus and compromise, and one way to do that is to get to know the members and to establish relationships with them so that a compromise and consensus can come about.”

~ Maribel Cadmus
Secretary of the Senate (1977-1987)

VOTING Votes are taken orally in the Senate. To vote, members must be “within the bar” and outside the telephone booths. It is the custom of the Senate to “roll the roll.” Rolling the roll call is the practice of calling first the next alphabetically listed senator after each subsequent roll call. You must *audibly* respond when your name is called; please check the display boards to ensure your vote is recorded correctly.

VOTE EXPLANATION For any roll call vote, members may give an oral vote explanation, a written vote explanation, or both. For an oral vote explanation, immediately after the result of the vote is announced, press the button at your desk and, when recognized, ask to provide your vote explanation. Your vote explanation may not be longer than two minutes. Written vote explanations must be submitted to the Secretary of the Senate by 5:00 p.m. on the next session day after the vote. It is helpful if they are submitted electronically. Only written vote explanations are recorded in the Journal. Vote explanations must be germane to the subject and shall not reflect on the honor or integrity of other members of the Legislative Assembly.

VOTE COUNTS Printed vote counts are available at the rostrum after each roll call vote; they are also available on OLIS.

*“I will miss this place. But you will not miss me.
The thirty of you, and how you treat each other
and respect each other, does more to keep this body
running than the person that sits in this chair.”*

~ Robert L. Taylor
Secretary of the Senate (2011-2014)

CHANGING YOUR VOTE You may change your vote before the gavel has fallen. Please promptly notify the Secretary. If the gavel has fallen and the vote is over, you must ask for unanimous consent to change your vote before adjournment and state that your vote change will not affect the outcome.

IF YOU MISS A VOTE If you are absent or excused when a vote is taken, you may ask for unanimous consent to record your vote before adjournment. When you ask for unanimous consent, please state that your vote will not affect the outcome.

RECONSIDERATION A motion to reconsider asks the body to undo a previous action. If the motion to reconsider carries, the original question is back in front of the body as if the previous action never occurred. If the motion to reconsider fails, the previous action stands. The body may be asked to reconsider a vote only once. To move for reconsideration, you must have voted on the prevailing side on the previous action. For example, if a bill fails, you must have voted “no” in order to move for reconsideration. Often, a member will need to change their vote to be on the prevailing side to move for reconsideration. If possible, you should change your vote before the gavel falls. Otherwise, you will need to ask for unanimous consent to change your vote after the gavel has fallen. After the gavel falls and the result of the vote is announced, you should then give notice of possible reconsideration. After giving notice you may then move to reconsider. (For details, see pages 17 and 18).

“In this job, I am always learning. It’s a challenge. I love the diverse personalities in the Senate and how they come together to represent their districts and the state.”

~ Judy M. Hall
Secretary of the Senate (1995-2011)

COMMONLY USED MOTIONS

Before making a motion, it is often useful to advise the Desk Staff to ensure the motion is handled appropriately.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO CHANGE A VOTE AFTER THE GAVEL HAS FALLEN

Senator: I request unanimous consent to change my vote from **AYE** to **NAY** (or vice versa) on SB/HB _____. It will not change the outcome.

President: (Repeats motion.)

President: If there is no objection, so ordered.
(Gavel.)

~

NOTE: This is a rules suspension, so it is an undebatable motion. If there is any objection, it takes 20 affirmative votes to suspend the rules. This request must be made before adjournment on the day the vote was taken.

**UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO BE
RECORDED AS VOTING**

(Undebatable)

Senator: I request unanimous consent to be recorded as voting **AYE** or **NAY** on SB/HB____. It will not change the outcome.

President: (Repeats motion.)

President: If there is no objection, so ordered.
(Gavel.)

~

NOTE: This is a rules suspension,
so it is an undebatable motion.
If there is any objection, it
takes 20 affirmative votes to
suspend the rules. This request
must be made before adjournment
on the day the vote was taken.

TAKE AND PLACE

(Debatable)

Senator: I move that consideration of SB/HB ____ be taken from its place on today's calendar and be placed on the **(day, date specific)** calendar.

President: (Repeats motion.) Recognize Sen. _____.

Senator: (Explains motion.) (Discussion.)

President: If there is no further discussion, Sen._____, do you wish to close?

The question is on taking SB/HB____ from today's calendar and placing it on the **(day, date specific)** calendar.

~

NOTE: Requires a majority of members present. May be done by a voice vote unless a roll call is demanded by two members.

REFER OR RE-REFER TO COMMITTEE

(Debatable)

Senator: I move that SB/HB ____ be
(re)referred to the Committee
on_____.

President: (Repeats motion.) Recognize
Sen. _____.

Senator: (Explains motion.) (Discussion.)

President: If there is no further discussion,
Sen._____, do you wish to
close?

The question is on (re)referring
SB/HB ____ to the Committee
on _____.

~

NOTE: Requires a majority of members
present. May be done by a voice
vote unless a roll call is
demanded by two members.

LAY ON THE TABLE

(Undebatable)

Senator: I move that SB/HB ____ be laid
on the table.

President: (Repeats motion.)

President: The question is on laying SB/HB
____ on the table.

~

NOTE: Requires a majority of members
present. May be done by a voice
vote unless a roll call is demanded
by two members.

NOTICE OF POSSIBLE RECONSIDERATION

*Notice should be given after the gavel falls and the result of the
vote is announced.*

President: Recognize Sen._____.

Senator: Having voted on the prevailing
side, I serve notice of possible
reconsideration.

~

NOTE: Notice must be given before adjournment
on the day the vote was taken. After giving
this notice, the member may then move for
reconsideration. The motion to reconsider
must be made the day the vote was taken, or
the next session day.

RECONSIDERATION

(Debatable)

Senator: Having served notice, I move that
the vote whereby the Senate
(passed/failed to pass)
SB/HB ____ be reconsidered.

President: (Repeats motion.)

Senator: (Explains motion.) (Discussion.)

President: Is there any further discussion? If
not, Senator_____, do you wish
to close?

~

NOTE: If the motion carries, the vote is reconsidered and the measure is automatically up for final consideration or other action such as re-referral to committee or postponement to another day. If the motion fails, the previous action stands and the motion to reconsider cannot be renewed. During a regular session, a majority of members present is required to reconsider a vote. When considering interim executive appointments, a constitutional majority (16) is required to reconsider the vote.

WITHDRAW A BILL FROM COMMITTEE

(Debate limited to motion; no debate on the merits.)

Senator: I move that SB/HB____ be
withdrawn from the Committee
on_____.

President: (Repeats motion.)

Senator: (Explains motion.)

Reference ~ Mason's Section 491(4)

It is not in order to discuss the merits of a bill upon a motion to . . . withdraw the bill from committee. Debate in such cases must be confined strictly to the purpose of the motion, for if this were not true, the merits of any question could be forced under discussion merely by such a motion to withdraw.

President: Is there any further discussion? If
not, Senator_____, do you wish to
close?

~

NOTE: A constitutional majority (16) is
required to withdraw a bill from
committee. As a matter of courtesy, it is
customary to notify the Presiding
Officer at the beginning of session
before the motion is made to ensure that
it is handled appropriately.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS

CALL TO ORDER

HONORS COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION, GREETING, OR OPENING CEREMONY

COURTESIES OF THE SENATE

ROLL CALL

REMONSTRANCES

MESSAGES

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

PROPOSITIONS AND MOTIONS

ACTION ON EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS REQUIRING
SENATE CONFIRMATION

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF SENATE
MEASURES

SECOND READING OF SENATE MEASURES

THIRD READING OF SENATE MEASURES

FIRST READING OF HOUSE MEASURES

SECOND READING OF HOUSE MEASURES

THIRD READING OF HOUSE MEASURES

OTHER BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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*“...it takes tons of humility to
serve. All of you come here to
work for the people of
Oregon... You listen to them
all.”*

*~ Lori L. Brocker
Secretary of the Senate (2014-2023)*