Virginia TSA
Parliamentary Guide
Parliamentary Authority is defined as a book of rules on conducting business in an organization. TSA as a whole adopted and now uses Robert’s Rules of Order as its parliamentary authority. The purpose of Robert’s Rules is to achieve the will of the majority while protecting all members’ rights.

What Is Robert’s Rules?

How Does It Work?

New business or new ideas are brought up in the form of a main motion. A main motion is a proposal that one wishes the assembly to consider, such as “I move that our chapter holds a local fundraiser”. After a member makes a main motion, it goes through a set of steps before it can go into effect.

Bylaw Amendments?

During Virginia TSA business meetings, there are oftentimes amendments to our Constitution or Bylaws are still motions and are handled the same way as an amendment, but with a few changes which are shown below.
Procedure of Motions

1. Member stands and addresses the Chair: “Mr./Madam President.”

2. The Chair recognizes the member: “Mr./Madam Member.”

3. The Member states the motion: “I move to/that…” **

4. Another member seconds the motion: “Second!” **

5. The Chair states the motion: “It is moved and properly seconded that…”

6. The members debate the motion: *etiquette and procedure explained below***

7. The Chair Puts the Question and the members vote: “All those in favor of *states the motion* please say ‘aye’… All opposed please say ‘no’…”

8. The Chair announces the result of the vote: “The ‘ayes’ have it and the motion passes.” *gavel rap* or “The ‘nays’ have it and the motion fails.” *gavel rap* **

**Note: A member must be recognized before making a motion.

**Note: Making a second means you wish the motion to come before the assembly, not necessarily that you must vote for that motion. A member can second a motion by simply calling out “Second”.

**Note: During this period of debate, other secondary and incidental motions can be made, such as Amend or Point of Information.

**Note: After the chair announces the result the floor opens back up for a new main motion or other business.
Processes and Details of Motions

Main motions are how business is introduced to the assembly, but there are also other motions to help with the procedure of these main motions. These can be divided into two categories, secondary motions and incidental motions. Within secondary motions, there is a rule known as the Order of Precedence. This rule states in which order different motions can be made (explanation and example on the next page). Below is a list of common motions used in a typical business meeting.

**Point of Order** - A Point of Order is used to call attention to a breach of Robert's Rules in the procedure. This is made by stating: “Point of Order, (state point here).” after being recognized by the chair. The chair will then decide if the Point is valid, take appropriate action, and resume business accordingly.

**Appeal** - An Appeal is used to overturn the ruling of the chair. It is made by saying: “Mr./Madam President, I Appeal from the ruling/decision of the chair.” When voting, an affirmative vote would indicate that a member wishes to sustain the chair’s original ruling, while a negative vote means they wish to overturn the ruling.

**Limit or Extend Limits of Debate** - The limits of debate are by default two times per motion, up to 10 minutes each. The motion is made by stating: “I move that debate be limited to (number of) speech(es) of (number of) minutes for each member.”

**Previous Question** - The motion Previous Question is used to put an end to debate and vote on the pending motion at once. The motion is made by stating: “I move the Previous Question.”

**Parliamentary Inquiry** - A Parliamentary Inquiry is used by a single member to acquire knowledge of the procedure of Robert’s Rules. The motion is made by stating “Parliamentary Inquiry, (ask question),” after recognition.

**Point of Information** - A Point of Information is used to ask a question related to the details of a main motion, such as the location or time of an event. Made by stating “Point of Information, (ask question).”

**Division of the Assembly** - Division of the Assembly is used to make the results of a vote clearer. This is made on the request of a single member. This motion calls for a more detailed vote to be taken; for example, a voice vote would change to a standing vote. The motion is made by calling: “Division” before the chair raps the gavel to announce the results of a vote.

**Amend** - The motion to Amend is used to change the wording or impact of a motion. An amendment can be amended, but an amendment to an amendment cannot be amended. An amendment must be germane, or relevant, to the motion’s intentions. Amending can insert, strike out, or replace words in a motion. The motion is made by stating: “I move to amend the motion by (substituting, striking out, or inserting...).”

**Reconsider** - The motion to Reconsider is used to call a revote on a motion that has already been voted on. However, in order to make the motion, the member calling it must have voted on the prevailing, or winning, side. This motion is made by saying: “Mr./Madam President... I voted on the prevailing side of the motion to (state motion), and I move to reconsider the vote taken earlier.”

**Postpone Indefinitely** - This motion is used to stop all debate and prevent a vote on the pending motion, effectively removing the motion from consideration until someone brings it back to the floor. This motion is made by simply stating: “I move to postpone the pending motion indefinitely.” after gaining recognition from the chair.
Table of Motion Characteristics

Every motion has a set of certain characteristics on how they are handled. These include: can it interrupt, does it require a second, can it be amended, does it allow for debate, what is the voting threshold required for it to pass, and can it be reconsidered.

Key

- Requires a Second = S
- Can Interrupt = I
- Can be Amended = A
- Is Debatable = D
- Voting: Majority = M
- Can be Reconsidered = R

Incidental Motions:
- Point of Order - I
- Appeal - I, S, D if the pending question is D, M, R
- Parliamentary Inquiry - I
- Point of Information - I
- Division of the Assembly - I
- Reconsider - I, S, D if the motion being reconsidered is D, M

Subsidiary Motions:
- Previous Question - S, A, 2/3 vote, R if adopted
- Limit or Extend Limits of Debate - S, A, 2/3 vote, R if adopted
- Amend - S, A, D, M (Bylaw amendments - 2/3, Constitution - 3/4), R
- Postpone Indefinitely - S, D, M, R if it was an affirmative vote
- Main Motion - S, A, D, M, R

Order of Precedence: Secondary motions follow the order of precedence in the order that they appear on the chart. Motions above others can be made when motions below them are pending, but motions below ones above them cannot be made. For example, the motion to amend can be made when a main motion is pending, but a main motion cannot be made when a motion to amend is pending.
Proper Debate Etiquette and Procedure

**Obtaining the Floor:** To obtain the floor, gain recognition by saying “Mr./Madam President.” They will reply with “Mr./Madam member.” You now have your opportunity to speak. You can now state your debate point or make a motion.

**Limitations:**
- Members are limited to 2 speeches (points of debate) up to 10 minutes each by default.
- Time between speeches does not transfer.
- Be careful to not interrupt a speaker unless the motion allows for it.
- Make sure motions are not dilatory (wasting time on purpose), such as unnecessary Divisions of the Assembly.
- Also make sure all debate and motions are germane (relevant) to the intentions of the subject.

**Etiquette:**
- Listen to the opposing side, no matter what their point.
- Do not base your opinion of another’s motion on your opinion of a them as a person.
- Do not address members directly; use titles (Mr./Madam Member), not names.
- Most importantly, be polite to the opposing side.

*If you’re unsure, don’t hesitate to raise a Parliamentary Inquiry!*