

PARLIAMENTARY GLOSSARY

ABSTAIN – To refrain from voting. Thus giving consent to the decision by the group.

AD HOC – A special committee formed for a particular purpose.

ADJOURN – A motion to close the meeting.

ADOPT – To accept or approve a motion or report.

AGENDA – A predetermined sequence of items of business to be covered at a specific meeting. An order of business.

AMEND – A motion to modify the pending motion before it is voted on.

AMEND SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED or **RESCIND**– A motion that allows the assembly to change an action previously taken. This motion can be applied to any motion previously adopted provided that none of the action involved has been carried out in a way that is too late to undo.

ANNUAL MEETING – A meeting held yearly usually for the purpose of electing officers and receiving the annual report of current officers and committees. The annual meeting is specified in the bylaws.

APPEAL – A motion to take a decision regarding parliamentary procedure out of the hands of the presiding officer and place the final decision in the hands of the assembly.

ASSEMBLY – A group of people meeting together to openly discuss issues and make decisions that then become the decision of the group.

AUDIT – An examination and verification of the financial records of the association. This may be carried out by an internal audit committee of 3 or 5 members.

BASIC POLICIES – Established policies of the National PTA, as stated in the bylaws of each association, which sum up the principles of conduct that PTA groups must follow in carrying out the Objects of the organization.

BALLOT – A written vote.

BOARD – A group of members of an organization which is authorized to act for the organization between its meetings, with specified limitations, which should be delineated in the bylaws.

BUDGET – Itemized estimates of income and disbursements.

BUSINESS – Important matters to be brought before the assembly for action.

BYLAWS – A document, adopted by the society, which contains the basic and legal rules for governing that organization.

COMMITTEE – A body of one or more persons appointed or elected to consider, investigate or take action on certain subjects.

CONSENT AGENDA – An agenda category that includes a list of routine, uncontroversial items that are approved with one motion, no discussion, and one vote.

CREDENTIAL – A certificate indicating that a person is authorized to be a delegate.

DEBATE or **DISCUSSION** – The discussion of a motion that occurs after the presiding officer has restated the motion and before putting it to a vote.

DECORUM – To conduct oneself in a proper manner.

DEFER ACTION – Using specific motions to delay action on a motion.

DISBURSEMENT – The paying out of funds.

EXECUTIVE BOARD – A group of members of an organization, which is authorized to act for the organization between its meetings with specific limitations. This includes the executive committee plus the committee chairs and other appointed positions.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – A committee which is made up of the elected officers of an organization as specified in the bylaws.

EX-OFFICIO – A person is a member by virtue of an office held. An ex-officio has full voting and speaking rights.

GENERAL CONSENT or **UNANIMOUS CONSENT** – A method of voting without taking a formal vote. The presiding officer asks if there are any objections, and if none are expressed, the motion is considered passed.

LIMIT or **EXTEND LIMITS OF DEBATE** – This motion can reduce or increase the number and length of speeches permitted or limit the length of debate on a specific question.

MAIN MOTION – A motion that brings before the assembly any particular subject and is made when no other business is pending.

MAJORITY – More than half of the votes cast.

MINUTES – The written record of the proceedings of an assembly. They are a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said at the meeting.

MOTION – A proposal that the group take a specific action or stand.

NOTICE – An official announcement, given verbally or in writing, of an item of business that will be introduced at the meeting. Certain motions require previous notice.

OLD BUSINESS – An incorrect and misleading term for the part of the agenda properly called “Unfinished Business.” Old business is misleading because it indicates that anything that the group once talked about fits here. The only business that fits in unfinished business is business that was started but not yet finished.

ORDER OF BUSINESS – The scheduled of business for the meeting; the agenda. An assembly’s order of business should be indicated in the organization’s standing rules.

OUT OF ORDER – A motion, action, request, or procedure that is in violation of the rules of the organization.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE – A system of rules for the orderly conduct of business.

POINT OF INFORMATION – A nonparliamentary question about the business at hand.

POINT OF ORDER – If a member feels the rules are not being followed, he or she can use this motion. It requires the chair to make a ruling and enforce the rules.

PRESIDING OFFICER – The person in charge of the meeting. Presiding officer and chair are interchangeable terms. They both are sometimes used to refer to the president of the organization when the president is conducting business.

PRIMARY AMENDMENT – A proposed change to the main motion.

PREVAILING SIDE – The winning side; the side having obtained the greatest number of votes.

PRO TEM – Temporary or for the time being, as in secretary pro tem.

QUESTION – The business before the assembly. It is used interchangeably with the word motion.

QUORUM – The number of voting members who must be present in or that business can be legally transacted. The bylaws state what the quorum must be. Votes may not be taken with a quorum present.

RANK – Priority; an orderly arrangement of motions.

RECEIPT – A written record of money received.

REFER TO A COMMITTEE or **COMMIT** – This motion sends the main motion to a smaller group (or committee) for further examination and refinement before the body votes on it.

REGULAR MEETING – A business meeting of a permanent group that is held at regular intervals (weekly, monthly, quarterly, and so on). The meetings are held when prescribed in the bylaws, the standing rules, or through a motion of the group, usually adopted at the beginning of the administrative year.

RESOLUTION – A formal motion that usually includes reasons as “whereas” clauses and the action as “resolved” clause(s).

SECOND – An indication by a voting member, other than the person who made the motion, that he or she publicly agrees that the proposed motion should be considered.

SERIATIM – To consider paragraph-by-paragraph or section-by-section.

SKELETAL MINUTES – Minutes prepared in advance of a meeting that include all that will be occurring and order which it will occur. They contain many blank spaces that are filled in during the meeting by the person(s) in charge of the minutes.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE – A committee that is formed to perform a particular function, such as the nominating committee. After it gives its final report, it ceases to exist.

SPECIAL MEETING – A meeting called at a special time for a specific purpose. Notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting must be included in the information sent to all of the members regarding the meeting. Only business that was specified in the call of the meeting can be transacted at the meeting.

SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER – Written rules, which supplement or modify the rules contained in the manual of parliamentary authority.

STANDING COMMITTEE – A permanent committee, usually listed in the bylaws or standing rules, to perform ongoing functions.

STANDING RULES – Rules adopted by an organization that are administrative in nature rather than procedural. They guide the executive committee and board on how the business of the organization is to be conducted; standard operating procedures of the organization.

TELLERS – Individuals officially designated to count ballots or votes.

TIE VOTE – An equal number of affirmative and negative votes. If a majority vote is needed, the motion fails because it lacks a majority vote.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT – No objection; general consent.

VACANCY – An office or position which is unfilled or unoccupied.

VACATE THE CHAIR – To temporarily relinquish the chair so that the presiding officer can participate in debate.

VOTE – A formal expression of will, opinion or choice by members of an assembly in regard to a matter submitted to it.

WITHDRAW OF A MOTION – A request by the mover of a motion to remove the motion from consideration. After the presiding officer has stated the motion, it belongs to the assembly and assembly’s permission (majority vote) is need to withdraw the motion.