

# American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure

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## Introduction

The *American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* is a new book on parliamentary procedure, including new fundamental principles and new motions not included in any other parliamentary authority. Also included are innovative features, such as Borda Count voting; double majority voting; challenging an election, including challenging mail-in votes or electronic votes; a full chapter on reference committees and their processes; a chapter on the different types of organizations; appendices explaining flag etiquette for the USA and Canada and protocols in meetings; and many legal citations and notes to support the rules. In addition, many other innovative and modern features have been included.

When Alice Sturgis, in 1950, produced a book on procedure called *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, it dramatically simplified meeting procedures with the intent of making the rules understandable by all. The procedure was simple, used plain language, dropped archaic procedure and terminology, yet was complete and usable by most organizations. The American Institute of Parliamentarians (AIP) continues the philosophy and teachings of Alice Sturgis through this new book entitled *American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*.

The remainder of this article describes briefly some of the features in the new *AIP Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*.

## Authorship Team

The team consists entirely of members of the American Institute of Parliamentarians. They are: Barry Glazer, Jim Jones, Jim Lochrie, Michael Malamut, Mary Randolph, Ann Rempel, Mary

Remson, and Tom Soliday.

## **Fundamental Principles**

Two principles, fundamental to all democracies, are specifically included in the book. The *right of association* and the *right of assembly* provide the anchor through which many of the rules and processes in any parliamentary authority adhere to. They are partly described below.

***Right of Association.* Individual persons have the right to associate with other persons to promote and pursue their common interests and aspirations.** In forming or joining such associations the members choose the terms of their relationship with each other by agreeing, through democratic processes, to a set of bylaws and other governing documents. The governing documents form a contract between each member and the association formed. This contract may be amended from time to time as the common requirements of the association and the members change. Members also have a right not to associate and may resign at any time subject to the association's rules at that time.

***Right of Assembly.* Individual persons or groups have a right to assemble to promote their common interest.** The right of assembly is inherent in the right to associate. Associations may protect this right to assemble by securing their assembly location and environment from interference from others, including their own members, to ensure privacy, quiet enjoyment, and security of property and person. In addition, the assembly controls those who may and may not attend, whether the person is a regular member, a delegate, or a non-member, such as a guest or observer. This protection can be enforced through rules of the association and, as a last resort, through outside agencies such as law enforcement.

## **Specific Main Motions**

There are six main motions that have specific names and are governed by somewhat different rules. The most innovative of these, and not included in any other parliamentary authority, is the

motion to *Adopt in-lieu-of*, which is further explained below. The motion to *Recall from a Committee (or Board)* has also been introduced as a specific main motion. This motion is similar to other parliamentary authorities where there is a need to provide for returning a subject or motion from a committee to the superior body. The specific main motions are:

1. Adopt in-lieu-of
2. Amend a previous action
3. Ratify
4. Recall from committee (or board)
5. Reconsider
6. Rescind

### **Adopt In-Lieu-Of : A Specific Main Motion**

This is a main motion that has been constructed or developed from a number of main motions of similar intent that are known to be coming before the assembly. It is introduced to the assembly with the intent that its adoption will also dispose of the other main motions referenced in the motion. The form of the motion is:

“I move the adoption of Resolution X in lieu of Resolutions A, B, and C.”

When a motion to adopt in-lieu-of is adopted it enacts the main motion and renders moot the other main motions referenced in the motion. When a motion to adopt in lieu of is defeated, a member may move one of the other resolutions (A, B or C, as in the example above) that was referenced in the motion to adopt in-lieu-of.

Other than the above two unique features, the adopt in-lieu-of motion is a main motion and has all the same characteristics of a main motion. This motion will be useful in large assemblies or conventions, where the assembly uses reference committees and is expected to deal with scores of resolutions, many of them with similar intent.

### **Subsidiary Motions**

The six subsidiary motions in the book are listed in their order of precedence (from highest to lowest in rank):

1. Table
2. Close debate
3. Limit or extend debate
4. Postpone to a certain time
5. Refer to a committee
6. Amend

**Table** (*Dispose Without Direct Vote*)

When the motion to *Table* is adopted, it disposes of a main motion without a direct vote on the main motion. It suppresses or kills a main motion, without further debate, with the intention of avoiding any further action on the main motion in the meeting.

The motion to *Table* is not the motion to *Lay on the Table*. *Lay on the Table* (*Postpone Temporarily*) is commonly used in other parliamentary authorities to temporarily dispose of currently pending motions with the intent to bring them back to the floor when the purpose for which they were laid on the table no longer pertains. In direct contrast, the purpose of the motion to *Table* is the opposite, and is to dispense with a main motion with a two-thirds vote with no intention to bring it back to the floor, except in unusual cases where the main motion could be reconsidered. Note, that the motion to *Table* could be moved even after the main motion has been debated and perhaps even amended, before the assembly decides that the main motion should be disposed of by the motion to *Table* and without further debate.

**Other Features**

1. Parliamentary Inquiry is split between parliamentary inquiry (rules) and factual inquiry (business).
2. There are now nine basic rules (characteristics) of each motion.
3. Signed ballot is included as a form of roll call vote.
4. The use of proxies is fully explained.
5. A section on the security and privacy of balloting.
6. Blank ballots are not considered illegal ballots – they are ignored.
7. As an alternative to balloting when there is only one

candidate, acclamation may be used.

8. Minutes chapter includes the use of Minutes Approval Committee, minutes templates, and an action log.
9. A chapter is included on Frequently Asked Questions.
10. Many legal citations and notes are referenced to support the rules.