

RobertsRules.org | Robert's Rules of Order - Summary Version

For Fair and Orderly Meetings & Conventions

Provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language. The conduct of ALL business is controlled by the general will of the whole membership - the right of the deliberate majority to decide. Complementary is the right of at least a strong minority to require the majority to be deliberate - to act according to its considered judgment AFTER a full and fair "working through" of the issues involved. Robert's Rules provides for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the assembly. Under no circumstances should "undue strictness" be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation.

The fundamental right of deliberative assemblies require all questions to be thoroughly discussed before taking action!

The assembly rules - they have the final say on everything!
Silence means consent!

- Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by being the first to stand when the person speaking has finished; state Mr./Madam Chairman. Raising your hand means nothing, and standing while another has the floor is out of order! Must be recognized by the Chair before speaking!
- Debate can not begin until the Chair has stated the motion or resolution and asked "are you ready for the question?" If no one rises, the chair calls for the vote!
- Before the motion is stated by the Chair (the question) members may suggest modification of the motion; the mover can modify as he pleases, or even withdraw the motion without consent of the seconder; if mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second.
- The "immediately pending question" is the last question stated by the Chair! Motion/Resolution - Amendment - Motion to Postpone
- The member moving the "immediately pending question" is entitled to preference to the floor!
- No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once!
- All remarks must be directed to the Chair. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment - avoid all personalities, never allude to others by name or to motives!
- The agenda and all committee reports are merely recommendations! When presented to the assembly and the question is stated, debate begins and changes occur!

The Rules

- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion - to accomplish a desired result, or raise a point of order
- **Point of Information:** Generally applies to information desired from the speaker: "I should like to ask the (speaker) a question."
- **Orders of the Day (Agenda):** A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules)
- **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- **Main Motion:** Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly
- **Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)
- **Consider by Paragraph:** Adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs are debated and amended and entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs are considered, the entire paper is then open to amendment, and paragraphs may be further amended. Any Preamble can not be considered until debate on the body of the paper has ceased.
- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- **Commit /Refer/Recommit to Committee:** State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).
- **Extend Debate:** Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time
- **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time
- **Postpone to a Certain Time:** State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed
- **Object to Consideration:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated
- **Lay on the Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending
- **Take from the Table:** Resumes consideration of item previously "laid on the table" - state the motion to take from the table
- **Reconsider:** Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view
- **Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session - exception: the motion to reconsider can be made this session
- **Previous Question:** Closes debate if successful - may be moved to "Close Debate" if preferred

- **Informal Consideration:** Move that the assembly go into "**Committee of the Whole**" - informal debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes, however, are formal.
- **Appeal Decision of the Chair:** Appeal for the assembly to decide - must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business
- **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified

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ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

NOTE: Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hand when no one else has the floor

- The chair recognizes the member by name

How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to") ...* and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion or I second it or second.*
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

The chair puts the motion to a vote

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'. (Pause for response.) Those opposed, say 'Nay'. (Pause for response.) Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

The chair announces the result of the vote.

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite

HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS

MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that _____."

AMENDING A MOTION

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words _____."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words _____."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, _____, and adding in their place the following words _____."

REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown."

POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until _____."

PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question."

LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You are against a motion just proposed and want to learn who is for and who is against the motion.

- After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

RECESS

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

ADJOURNMENT

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

- Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

SUSPENDING THE RULES

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

- After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to kill it by various maneuvers. Also you want to keep out visitors and the press.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the chair."

Rule Classification and Requirements

Class of Rule	Requirements to Adopt	Requirements to Suspend
Charter	Adopted by majority vote or as proved by law or governing authority	Cannot be suspended
Bylaws	Adopted by membership	Cannot be suspended
Special Rules of Order	Previous notice & 2/3 vote, or a majority of entire membership	2/3 Vote
Standing Rules	Majority vote	Can be suspended for session by majority vote during a meeting
Modified Roberts Rules of Order	Adopted in bylaws	2/3 vote

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Origins of a Motion

1. **Item on the agenda:**
 - a. The chair introduces the item briefly
 - b. A member moves a motion (seconded)
 - c. Debate/Vote.

2. **Item not on the agenda** (bylaws allow 'New Business'):
 - a. A member moves a motion (seconded) during 'New Business', or
 - b. Outside of 'New Business', a member moves an unrelated motion (seconded) with the body's consent.
 - c. Debate/Vote.

3. **Committee is charged with returning a recommendation:**
 - a. Committee Chair presents a report
 - b. Committee Chair states the committee's recommendations
[Resolutions committees are not charged with moving a motion. They are asked for a recommendation. A member must then move a motion.]
 - c. Any member moves the recommendation as a motion (no second required), or
 - d. Any member moves a slightly different motion (second required), or
 - e. Any member moves a completely different motion (second required)
 - f. Debate/Vote.

4. **Committee is charged with returning a motion (or has the power to do so):**
 - a. Committee Chair presents a report
 - b. Committee Chair moves the committee's motion (no second required)
[A chair may read this expected resolution in the form of a motion. It could be handled as an assumed motion. Or, debate would follow without a second required. It is wiser to allow the committee to make its own motion.]
 - c. Debate/Vote.

5. **Chair assumes a routine motion:**

- a. Chair states, ***"If there is no objection, a motion to ... will be adopted."***
- b. If there is no objection, the motion is properly adopted without a second, or debate, or voting.
- c. If there is an objection, the chair handles the motion according to Robert's Rules' 6 formal steps.

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LORENZO CUESTA
PROFESSIONAL
REGISTERED
PARLIAMENTARIAN

parliam@roberts-rules.com
(916) 203-6894

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Need a Parliamentarian?

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We must learn to run a meeting without victimizing the audience; but more importantly, without being victimized by individuals who are armed with parliamentary procedure and a personal agenda.

Some Necessary Actions Related to the Handling of a Motion

1. [Before](#) the Handling of the Main Motion
2. [During](#) the Handling of the Main Motion [NEW ITEM]
3. [After](#) the Handling of the Main Motion

Some Thoughts

1. [Brown Act Classes for your Organization](#)
2. [Robert's Rules of Order Superseded?](#)

Some California Code

1. [California Brown Act Amended effective 1/1/14.](#) NEW for 2014!
2. [California Brown Act CC 54950, et seq.](#)
3. [CA Brown Act \(my notes\).](#)
4. [Davis-Stirling Common Interest Dev. Act CC 1350, et seq.](#)

Relaxation of Brown Act Requirements?

Article: [The 2012-13 California Budget Act suspends reimbursements.](#) (8/29/12)

This affects costs associated with the Brown Act's requirements for postings and reportings.

Arguments:

1. Mandated statutes should be funded, say tax sensitive groups.
2. Government should be open and accessible to the public, says the California Constitution.
3. A lack of funding does not affect compliance, says the Brown Act.

4. Inform the constituency and avoid political suicide, say the locally elected officials.

Parliamentary Surprises:

If one is not armed with the fundamentals of parliamentary procedure, one will suffer surprising consequences such as the ones I have seen in various meetings. Read and be prepared.

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RONR (Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th Ed., 2011, Da Capo Press, 716 p)

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Unanimous Consent

"If there is no objection ...". These are the 5 most helpful words a chairperson will ever find.



In cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business; or on questions of little importance; and in the presences of a quorum; you can save time by obtaining Unanimous Consent (General Consent) from the assembly. And then in one meeting, you as a chair can accomplish ten times the amount of work.

After all, parliamentary procedure is designed to protect the minority, and generally need not be strictly enforced when there is no minority (opposition) to protect. In these cases, a motion can be adopted without the Six Steps or even the formality of making a motion.

Any meeting can be ten times more productive if the chair will merely state, "If there is no objection, (we will adopt a motion to do such and such)." When no objection is heard, the chair states, "Since there is no objection, ... (such and such a motion is adopted)." If someone objects, the chair cheerfully proceeds with the traditional Six Steps.

Examples of situations which clearly beg for the Unanimous Consent approach are:

1. To correct or approve the minutes. You do not need a time wasteful motion for this.
2. To withdraw an own motion before the vote is taken. The maker may wish to withdraw his own motion; but the motion belongs to the assembly. Only the assembly may allow the withdrawal of a motion.
3. To suspend a rule on a matter clearly not controversial (and as long as no ByLaw is violated).
4. To allow a speaker a few more minutes than the prescribed time.

5. To allow a guest speaker to speak in an order contrary to the approved agenda (or Rules of Order).
6. To divide a complex motion into logical parts for discussion, amendments, and voting purposes.
7. To close polls on a voting process after inquiring if there are any more votes. No motion to close the polls is necessary.
8. To elect a lone nominee by acclamation.

In reality, as long as you have a quorum and do not violate a ByLaw, these 5 powerful words can allow a chair to quickly accomplish just about anything. These 5 words can shorten any meeting which is typically run by an egocentric, self-indulging, power meister. ↖

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LORENZO CUESTA
PROFESSIONAL
REGISTERED
PARLIAMENTARIAN

parliam@roberts-rules.com
(916) 203-6894

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Debate Protocol

 Effective Meeting Management is defeated because 10 simple concepts are neglected.

1. Only one person speaks at a time, without repeating what has already been stated.
2. A speaker must be recognized before speaking, so that all know who has the floor.
3. All comments are made through the chair, even if intended for another member.
4. Comments are confined to the current motion or amendment, and never both.
5. Discussion should alternate between Pro and Con.
6. Members have no right to complain; only to make motions (e.g., amend, refer, postpone, etc.).
7. No cross conversations; no interruptions; no intimidations.
8. No verbal attacks of other members, not even questioning other member's motives.
9. Debate time limits must be respected, unless a 2/3 vote amends the limits.
10. Decisions are null and void in the absence of a quorum or as unilateral decisions.

[Four Unfortunate Misconceptions Promoted by Members
Teach towards Changing the Listener's Behavior](#)

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Six Steps to Every Motion!

Every motion requires 6 steps (with some exceptions). The shoulds and shouldn'ts are as follows: (RONR(10th ed.),p.31-54)



STEP 1. A member stands up, is recognized, and makes a motion;
Common Mistake: Members do not stand up, do not wait to be recognized, and typically start to discuss their motion before completing STEP 2, STEP 3, and STEP 4 below!

STEP 2. Another member seconds the motion;
Common Mistake: The person seconding the motion dives into the merits of the motion.

STEP 3. The presiding officer restates the motion to the assembly;
Common Mistake: Motion is restated differently from the wording of the maker! Beware because the motion that is adopted is the one stated by the presiding officer, not the one stated by the maker of the original motion.

STEP 4. The members debate the motion;
Common Mistake: Debate gets out of control in temper, in duration, in relevance! Members talk at each other across the room rather than through the presiding officer.

STEP 5. Presiding officer asks for the affirmative votes & then the negative votes;
Common Mistake: The presiding officer states 'All in favor' and fails to tell the members what to do as a matter of voting (for example, 'say aye', 'stand up', 'raise your hand', etc.); or the negative vote is never requested or counted!

STEP 6. The presiding officer announces the result of the voting; instructs the corresponding officer to take action; and introduces the next item of business.
Common Mistake: Presiding officer fails to pronounce the result of the voting! No one is instructed to take action. Commonly, dead silence follows because the presiding officer is lost and stares at the assembly 

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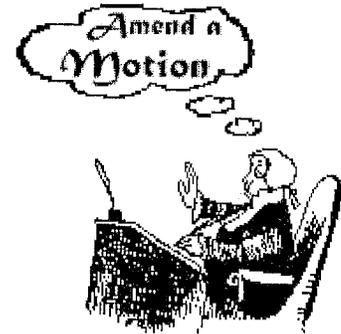
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Three Ways to Amend a Motion

As a matter of survival, the most common motion a club member needs to know completely is the **Motion to Amend a Pending Motion**.



The difficult part is remembering that the more urgent motions can not be amended - *Adjourn, Question of Privilege, Orders of the Day, Lay on/Take from the Table, Previous Question, Point of Order, Appeal, Parliamentary Inquiry, Suspend the Rules, and Reconsider.*

During the Debate step of a Pending Motion, one may move to Amend the Pending Motion. All one needs to remember is that there are really **only 3 basic processes of amendments**:

Let's Amend this Sample Motion: "I move that we buy a new sign."

1. **You can Move to Amend by *Inserting* words or paragraphs.**
I move to Amend by Inserting the phrase "not to exceed \$50 dollars" at the end of the motion.
2. **You can Move to Amend by *Striking out* (not deleting) words or paragraphs.**
I move to Amend by striking out the word "new".
3. **You can Move to Amend by *Striking out and Inserting* words or paragraphs.** One can even Amend by *Substituting* (Striking out and Inserting) entire paragraphs or the complete motion.
I move to Amend by Striking out the word "sign" and Inserting the word "billboard".

You can also Amend the Amendment, before it is voted upon: But you can only Amend the Inserted or Struck out **words**. You can not Amend a separate part of the Main Motion not covered by the Amendment that is currently being discussed!

After the current Amendment is voted upon, you can Amend the Motion again and Amend this new Amendment.

If you carefully review these 3 basic processes of amendments (*insert, strike out, and strike out/insert*), you will agree that any other form is not an amendment. Proper usage of these 3 processes will reduce the chances of chaos and confusion that is common during discussion of motions and amendments.

When one understands the means to amend a motion, one will be able to calmly defend oneself from all tyrannical group leaders.

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Five Ways to Modify a Motion

Modify a
Motion



Motions are rarely perfect for everyone. Modifications are inevitable.

1. **Between the time that a motion is made and *before the chair states the motion***, any member may informally offer modifying suggestions to the maker of the motion. The maker may accept or reject that member's recommendations.
2. **After the chair has stated the motion**, the maker of the motion may *request unanimous consent* from the members to modify the motion. Remember that at this time, the motion belongs to the assembly and not the original maker.
3. **By means of the subsidiary motion to Amend**, any member may propose changes to the motion, before the motion is voted upon. These proposed changes must be seconded and may be amended and/or debated.
4. **If a motion requires further study**, the members may vote to *Refer the Main Motion to a Committee*. When the committee returns the motion to the assembly, the committee normally **proposes** amendments for the assembly to vote upon.
5. **Sometimes the motion is so complex** that the only way to do it justice is for a member to urge its rejection and offer to propose a simpler version as a *Substitute Motion*. Upon defeat of the complex motion, anyone may propose the *Substitute Motion*.

Once a member learns which motions are out of order, how to make a motion, and how to amend a motion, the member becomes a productive member of the organization. Until then, the member is just another victim of the organization! 

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Totally Wrong Phrases!

I am sure you have frequently heard these phrases applied with loud and blind confidence.



I. SO MOVED!

This is a common statement which means nothing. One must state the actual motion so as to avoid confusion in the audience. Everyone has the right to know exactly what is being moved and discussed. "So moved!" is vague and pointless. Do not allow your club members to be vague and pointless.

• I MOVE TO TABLE!

First of all, the motion is "*Move to Lay on the Table*". According to Robert's Rules of Order, this motion is in order only as a **temporary interruption of the agenda**, so as to allow something special and urgent out of turn. It is not intended to kill a motion. If your members wish to kill a motion, let them use the correct motion - "*Move to Postpone Indefinitely*".

• CALL FOR THE QUESTION!

This is not a motion. The person calling "Question! Question!" is being disorderly, if another person has the floor. At best, it is a nagging hint to the chair to stop the discussion and get on with the voting. The chair should make sure that everyone has had an opportunity to speak and still please the nagging "call for the question" hint. The chair should state that after one or two more speakers' comments, the vote shall be taken.

It is critical that the chair not automatically stop the discussion when someone says "Call for the question". The disorderly member who wishes to stop the discussion does not have more rights than the members who wish to discuss the issue. Actually, a motion to stop the discussion ("*I Call for*" or "*I Move the Main Question*") would **require a 2/3 vote** to be adopted. 

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