

# call to order

## *Dilatory & Improper Motions*

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The object of rules of order is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the assembly, to assist in the transaction of business, and to provide a firm basis for resolving questions of procedure. Sometimes a member may use the rules of order for disruptive purposes or to impede the transaction of business. Activities and motions used for this purpose are considered *dilatory*.

Any motion that is frivolous, absurd, or contains no rational business or purpose is dilatory and should not be allowed. Some examples of *dilatory* motions include the following:

- ❑ An appeal for a ruling of the chair on a question where there could not possibly be two reasonable opinions.
- ❑ A motion to lay on the table a matter for which a special meeting had been called.
- ❑ Repeatedly raising points of order.
- ❑ A motion to adjourn again and again when no significant progress has been made on the meeting's business.
- ❑ Referral of a matter to committee that defeats the purpose of the main question due to time limits.

If these *dilatory* tactics are allowed, one or two members could bring business to a standstill.

A motion to *Commit* or *Refer* to committee a matter the body would rather not take a vote on, should not be considered *dilatory*. Letting a matter die in committee is another way of disposing of an inappropriate or irrelevant question.

It is the duty of the chair to prevent members from misusing legitimate forms of parliamentary procedure to obstruct business. The chair should not recognize members who are repeatedly using parliamentary procedure for *dilatory* purposes or rule their motions out of order.

Improper motions are those that conflict with an organization's charter, constitution, and bylaws. Motions that conflict with federal, state, and local laws are also improper and should be ruled out of order. If an improper or conflicting motion of this type is adopted, it is null and void.

A motion that conflicts with a previously adopted motion is also improper. A motion to *Reconsider*, *Rescind*, or *Amend Something Previously Adopted* should be used for making changes or voiding a previously adopted motion. A motion that presents practically the same question as a motion previously decided upon or one still under consideration, is also improper. No motion should be introduced that is outside the object or purpose of the organization.

The chair should never let his personal feelings affect his judgment in ruling on such cases. If the chair only suspects that a motion is not made in good faith, he should give the maker of the motion the benefit of the doubt. The chair should always be courteous and fair, but at the same time firm in protecting the body from imposition.

Remember, parliamentary procedure was designed to improve the transaction of business, not thwart the will of the people.

Source: *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition*