

## DISCUSSION ITEMS REGARDING COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

SENATE FINANCE AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE -- 59TH LEGISLATURE  
SENATOR MIKE COONEY, PRESIDING OFFICER

### Hearings on Bills

The committee chair can limit the time available for testimony if it appears a lot of people want to testify and meeting time is limited. The chair also controls the decorum of the hearing and can ask people to quit conversing or take their conversations outside of the committee room. Also, people may not speak to the committee unless called upon by the chair.

Everyone who wants to testify must be given the opportunity to do so. Written testimony is not required but is encouraged. Witnesses will be asked to give their name and place of residence and who they represent before they begin testifying.

The secretary will get copies of all written testimony presented to the committee.

During the question-and-answer period, committee members should direct any questions of audience members through the chair.

### Executive Action

All bills in a committee must be acted upon by either reporting the bill out of committee or by tabling the bill in committee. The committee can report the bill with one of the following recommendations:

- do pass
- do pass as amended
- do not pass
- refer to another committee

Before debate begins there should be a motion for action on the bill. Normally, the committee chair will not entertain a motion to table as the first motion because a table motion is nondebatable and members may wish to discuss the bill.

Once a motion is offered, debate and discussion on the bill can begin. Only committee members are allowed to discuss the bill during executive action. People in the audience may observe the discussion but cannot participate. If a committee member would like someone from the audience to answer a question, that is allowed if the committee agrees. The person must simply answer the question and cannot offer any additional testimony either for or against the bill. Staff does not participate in the discussion, unless asked a question by a committee member or unless the law or legislative rules may be violated.

A motion to amend a bill is allowed at any time during debate. Once an amendment is offered, discussion must then center only on the amendment. Following discussion, a vote on the amendment is taken. Once the vote on the amendment is completed, the entire bill can again be discussed.

The following motions, which will end debate, are allowed at any time during the debate on a bill:

- to table
- to postpone consideration
- to refer bill to another Committee

Voting can be done by voice, show of hands, or roll call.

Senate Finance and Claims Committee Rules of Procedure **no 2005**

SENATOR MIKE COONEY, PRESIDING OFFICER

## I. Public Hearings on Proposed Legislation

## A. Hearing Process

1. At the time set for hearing, the chair will recognize the sponsor of the bill who will open the presentation.
2. Proponents of the bill will present testimony.
3. Opponents of the bill will present testimony.
4. Questions will then be asked by committee members only.  
All questions will be directed through the chair.
5. All discussion will begin and end at the discretion of the chair.
6. The sponsor of the bill will close the presentation.

## B. Witnesses

1. All witnesses shall sign the witness sheet before presenting testimony.
2. Proponents and opponents should try to state new points of testimony only. If they wish to agree with points already made, they should simply say that they agree.
3. Witnesses presenting testimony before the committee should remain in the room until the hearing is closed to answer any questions from committee members.
4. Written copies of the testimony may also be submitted for the permanent committee record.

## C. General

1. Everyone will act and be treated in a courteous manner.
2. The committee chair shall maintain order within the committee room and the environs during all committee meetings.
3. Suggested amendments to bills should be presented to the committee in writing.
4. Cell phones must be turned off in the hearing room except in cases of urgency.
5. Video taping of hearings by members of the public will be allowed at the discretion of the chair.
6. Testimony requiring the use of video, audio, or other equipment will be permitted at the discretion of the chair, if arrangements are made in advance.
7. Absentee video or audio testimony may not be permitted.

## II. Executive Session

- A. Generally, executive session will not be held the same day as the public hearing on the bill.
- B. Although executive sessions are open to the public, no comments may be made by anyone but committee members. Members of the public may be asked questions by committee members at the discretion of the chair.
- C. Absentee voting by committee members is permitted through the use of a standard form or through the vice chair or minority vice chair.
- D. Motions by committee members do not require a second.

## III. Amendments

- A. Amendments to be presented to the committee for consideration during executive session must be requested by a committee member or the sponsor of the bill.
- B. All amendments must be submitted in writing to the staff by noon of the day prior to executive action on a bill. A simple amendment may be considered on shorter notice at the discretion of the chair. For example, a change in a date or number could be a simple amendment.
- C. Committee members are the only legislators who can move amendments to a bill while the bill is in committee.