

PURPOSE: To implement written amendments and note-based debate

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BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE SENATE:

SECTION ONE (REASONING):

There are two problems with the Senate's functions that affect the efficiency and effectivity of debate within the chamber. These issues are that of critical amendments often taking too long to say aloud and having to directly ask a Senator or Representative within the chamber for their opinion on an issue. These both slow down debates, either by having a Senator or Representative work out a long amendment in their head while having the Secretary type it all out by ear, or by forcing a Senator or Representative to either call for an unmoderated caucus or to call upon a Senator or Representative after being put on the speaker's list.

However, these issues have already been addressed in another adjacent chamber of debate: Mississippi Model Security Council (MMSC). This body functions in a similar way to the MSMS' SGA, using Robert's Rules of Order and engaging in debate through a speaker's list to pass legislation.

In MMSC's chamber, delegates may make written amendments by writing it down on a paper and then passing it down the chamber to the moderators. Applying this idea to our chamber, this speeds up spoken amendments by allowing for longer amendments to be brought directly to the Secretary, allowing Senators or Representatives to think about how they want their amendment to be worded rather than having to think of one on the spot. This also keeps spoken amendments for when written amendments are not required, like when a critical or friendly amendment is able to be made short.

An example of this interaction could go as follows.

The Senator or Representative would first be put on the speaker's list, and when the Vice President calls on the Senator or Representative's name, they would say,

“Motion to make a critical amendment.”

The Vice President would respond,

“State your amendment.”

They would reply with their full amendment before stating,

“Point of Personal Privilege.”

The Vice President would answer,

“State your point.”

They would reply,

“To pass my amendment to the Secretary.”

The Vice President would return,

“Permission granted.”

Then, the Senator or Representative would pass their amendment to the Secretary, and the Secretary will write it out in the document. The Senator or Representative should then yield the floor for debate for the critical amendment.

Additionally, in MMSC’s chamber, delegates may write notes on a slip of paper, fold them in half with a “To:” and “From:” on the back of the slip and then pass that paper via the other delegates to another delegation down the row. Applied to our chamber, this allows ongoing debate to not be interrupted by a small inquiry to another Senator or Representative while making Senate as a whole more fun.

SECTION TWO (SPECIFIC CHANGE):

Section 5 Decorum

All Senate meetings will be conducted in an orderly manner. To this end, the following rules shall be held at all times:

1. All motions and debates must be addressed to the Presiding Officer.
2. Senators and Representatives are expected to raise their hand and be recognized by the chair to be given the floor to debate or make a motion with the exception of the interrupting motions.
3. No movements outside of those listed are acceptable in MSMS Senate meetings. All movements are subject to the discretion of the chair. The chair may ask the Senator or Representative questions to interpret the intentions of the Senator or Representative, so as to not continue with a misinterpreted motion.
4. Senators and Representatives may speak freely when granted the floor. Motions and points are still limited to those allowed by the Rules of Order, but general speech pertaining to the topic at hand is permitted.

5. Senators and Representatives may make a point of personal privilege when they have been given the floor to debate to pass a written version of their amendment to the Secretary.

6. Senators and Representatives may pass folded notes to each other. This movement must be performed nonverbally, with the stated sender and receiver's name on one side of the note.