

U.S. SENATE

Rules of Procedure

Agenda: “Re-evaluating Executive Authority in the Context of U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War”

Freeze Date: April 29, 1975

1. COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

1.1 Nature of Committee

This committee simulates the United States Senate on the eve of a pivotal moment in American history—the Fall of Saigon. Senators will re-evaluate the extent of presidential authority during wartime, with reference to real legislative frameworks such as the War Powers Resolution (1973). Delegates are expected to reflect the views of their assigned Senators in 1975, with arguments grounded in history, policy, and national interest.

1.2 Chairperson and Order

The committee will be presided over by a Chairperson, acting as the President pro tempore or an appointed officer. The Chair’s role includes:

- Moderating debate
- Enforcing decorum and time limits
- Deciding on procedural matters
- Facilitating voting and document flow

1.3 Senators

Most delegates will represent sitting U.S. Senators. They should refer to one another as “*Senator [Last Name]*” and conduct themselves with the dignity and professionalism expected of real U.S. legislators.

1.4 Observers

Some individuals (e.g., military advisors, legal experts, executive representatives) will attend as observers. They:

- May be recognized by the Chair to speak during debate
- Provide alternative perspectives
- However they are **not allowed to vote** on any resolutions

Their primary purpose is to enhance debate and ensure diverse inputs on complex issues.

2. SESSION FLOW

2.1 Roll Call

At the start of each session, a Roll Call will be conducted. Senators must respond:

- “*Present*” – You are in attendance and will vote on all substantive matters.
- “*Absent*” – The Senator is not present.

2.2 Opening Statements

The session opens with 90 second addresses by the Majority and Minority Leaders, followed by opening statements (90 second long) from each Senator. This helps outline key ideological standpoints before formal debate begins.

3. MODES OF DEBATE

3.1 Moderated Caucus

Used to explore specific subtopics or lines of inquiry. To introduce a moderated caucus, a Senator must propose:

- A clear topic worth discussing
- Total time (e.g., 12 minutes)
- Individual speaking time (e.g., 1 minute per speaker)

If passed by a simple majority, the Chair moderates the caucus.

3.2 Unmoderated Caucus

Allows Senators to move freely, lobby informally, and draft documents. This is especially helpful during collaboration and drafting stages. A motion must specify the duration (e.g., 15 minutes). It requires a simple majority (50%+1) to pass.

3.3 Closed-Door Session

For confidential discussions (e.g., sensitive military, legal, or national security issues). Requires a motion and Chair's approval. All observers and press exit the room. The session remains formal and is moderated by the Chair.

Note: *Delegates are encouraged to remain alert throughout the committee. The situation in 1975 is highly fluid, and developments may unfold. The committee is expected to respond with foresight, maturity, and urgency.*

4. DOCUMENTATION

4.1 Working Papers

Informal proposals written by one or more Senators to outline an idea or approach. Working papers:

- Do not need formatting or signatories
- Are not voted upon
- May evolve into Bills or Directives

4.2 Bills

Bills are structured, formal legislative proposals. If passed, they represent the Senate's official recommendation or response.

Format of a Bill:

- *Title* – E.g., “The War Powers Clarification Act”
- *Preamble* – Context, purpose, and background
- *Sections* – Specific provisions, actions, or mandates
- *Implementation Clause* – Timeline for enactment

Requirements:

- Minimum 3 sponsors
- Typed and correctly formatted
- Must be approved by the Chair prior to introduction

Debate Procedure:

1. *First Reading* – 4-minute authorship speech and 4-minute opposition speech
2. *Second Reading* – Floor opens for amendments (friendly and unfriendly)

3. *Third Reading* – Final 2-minute speech from one supporting and one opposing Senator
4. *Vote* – Simple majority required to pass

4.3 Combined Directive

If committee consensus leans toward an action-oriented, adaptive approach (especially in response to emerging events), a Combined Directive may be drafted instead of a bill. A directive:

- Compiles responses and instructions
- May include legislative advisories and policy positions
- Must reflect Senate consensus

Directives are created during debate, often through collaboration in caucuses. They are voted on like bills.

Note: *Whether the committee produces a bill or a directive will depend on how discussion unfolds. The final output will be determined organically.*

5. AMENDMENTS

5.1 Friendly Amendments

- Proposed changes accepted by the original sponsor(s)
- Automatically incorporated; no debate or vote needed

5.2 Unfriendly Amendments

(Not accepted by the sponsor(s))

Requires:

- 2 speakers for and 2 against (1 minute each)
- 2/3 majority to pass

Amendments may be to wording, structure, or provisions of a bill or directive.

6. POINTS

Point	Purpose
Point of Personal Privilege	For personal discomfort (e.g., can't hear, feeling unwell)
Point of Parliamentary Inquiry	To ask the Chair about procedural rules
Point of Order	To address violations of the ROP

All points must be raised respectfully and immediately. The Chair's decision is final.

7. MOTIONS AND VOTING

7.1 Raising a Motion

Steps to raise a motion:

1. Raise your placard and wait to be recognized
2. Clearly state your motion (e.g., "Motion for a 10-minute unmoderated caucus")
3. Another Senator must second the motion
4. The Chair may ask for verbal votes (Aye/Nay) and then proceed to formal vote

7.2 Voting Thresholds

Motion	Debate Required	Threshold
Motion for Unmoderated Caucus	No	Simple Majority
Motion for Moderated Caucus	No	Simple Majority
Motion to Introduce a Bill/Directive	No	Chair's Discretion
Motion to Amend (Unfriendly)	2 for/2 against	$\frac{2}{3}$ majority
Motion to Close Debate	2 For / 2 Against	$\frac{2}{3}$ Majority

7.3 Voting on Final Documents

- Voting is by roll call
- Senators respond: “Yea” or “Nay”
- No abstentions are allowed
- In case of a tie, the Chair may cast the tie-breaking vote

8. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Documentation must be original and created during committee time.
- All delegates are expected to uphold decorum, civility, and clarity.
- Use historically and constitutionally accurate references a all times.
- Observers must wait to be recognized by the Chair before speaking.

Final Note to Delegates

You are sitting in one of the most powerful legislative bodies in history. Your words, decisions, and documents carry weight. Approach this committee with critical thought, constitutional clarity, and a deep understanding of America's political crossroads in 1975.