

44th Legislative District Democrats of the State of Washington

Policies and Procedures for 2015 - 2016

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Basic Rules of Procedure:

1. A quorum is required to conduct business

The quorum prescribed in the by-laws must be present for the assembly to do business.

2. One thing at a time

Only one main motion is allowed on the floor at a time; however, there is a parliamentary protocol to put that motion aside if more urgent issues come up.

3. To debate a topic, a motion is necessary

An issue is not debatable until a motion has been made, seconded, and restated by the chair.

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4. One person at a time

Only one person may speak at a time. If a member wants to speak, he or she must raise a hand and wait to be recognized by the chair. The member then stands, states his or her name and precinct, and then speaks. No other member should speak at the same time.

5. Speak only to the issue under consideration

Discussion on any issue by any member must be germane to the topic under consideration or the member will be ruled out of order.

6. Avoid the use of "so move"

It is a common error in parliamentary procedure to use the phrase "so move" for any motion other than for the approval of the minutes, for calling a recess, or for calling for adjournment. Only in these 3 cases is it acceptable to use the phrase "so move."

7. Speak only one time per issue until everyone has had a say

A member may speak on a motion only one time until everyone who wishes to speak has spoken. Then and only then, may a member seek to be recognized a second time. In no case may any member speak more than twice on any issue under discussion. The standing rules limit the maximum time for an individual speech.

8. The rights of the minority must be protected

Everyone must be afforded an equal opportunity to speak, and silence is required from the other members while one member has the floor.

9. The rights of absent members must be protected

The assemble should take no action as the specific result of one or more member's absence from the assembly.

10. Silence equals tacit consent

An abstention on a vote is the equivalent to consent.

11. Everybody is equal

No member, by virtue of his or her office, has a voice of greater weight than any other member of the assembly.

12. Personal verbal attacks are strictly prohibited

This rule applies to all members, whether present or absent, and to all other individuals who are being discussed by any member of the assembly.

13. Points of information

Any member who has a question about, for example, correct procedure or about the meaning of a term or the implications of an action that is under consideration, may, at any time, rise and state:

- "I rise to a point of information."
- The chair will ask, "What is your point of information?"
- The member then asks his or her question.

14. To be an effective participant

To be an effective participant, and to understand what is happening at the meeting, every member needs to know the basics of parliamentary procedure. When engaging in debate, a member should:

- think before speaking
- be dispassionate
- be succinct
- stick to the issue
- speak once per issue
- listen carefully and respectfully to others

15. Audible distractions

Members should be considerate of other's right to hear during meetings. Cell phones, pagers and computers shall be turned off, during general and Executive Board meetings, with the exception of the secretary, who may take official minutes by computer. The chair may give permission, on a case by case basis, to any member to use a computer in a general or Executive Board meeting. Cell phones and pagers may remain on if, and only if, they are set on "silent." Phones may, in no case, be used in the meeting room, with the possible exception of an official phone communication that is an item on the agenda. Sidebar conversations during any meeting are disruptive and should not occur. It is recommended that children under 12 not be brought to general or Executive Board meetings. The chair shall call any disruption to any general or Executive Board meeting out of order, and the chair has the right to request the removal of any member or guest who does not comply.

16. Other things to avoid

Many members have medical conditions, such as asthma, that result in a sensitivity to strong perfumes or colognes. Other members may have serious peanut allergies that may

be triggered by even being in the same room when someone else is eating peanuts. Allergic reactions to scents or peanuts can be life-threatening. Be aware of these conditions, and please be considerate.

17. Firearms, weapons, explosives and fireworks are prohibited

No firearms or weapons may be brought to any general or Executive Board meeting, with the sole exception of officers of the law who are required by law to be armed. Members and guests are prohibited from the possession of explosives and/or fireworks at any general or Executive Board meeting.

18. Gender

The declared gender of any member is left to the discretion of the individual member.

19. General meetings: who may attend

Guests are welcome to come to the general meetings of the 44th LD Democrats; however, with the exception of officially invited guest speakers, guests may not speak during the meetings. Guests and members must register prior to the meeting.

20. Executive Board meetings: who may attend

Any member may attend any Executive Board meetings; however, members are not permitted to speak, unless specifically invited to the meeting by a member of the Executive Board, for the purpose of providing the Board with information. Guests, except for those explicitly invited by the Board, may not attend any Executive Board meeting.

21. Amendment

These policies and procedures may be amended by a majority vote of the eligible voting members, with due notice. The by-laws stipulate who is an eligible voting member. Due notice for changes to these policies and procedures shall be the same as for changes to the by-laws. These policies and procedures shall be approved every two (2) years at the general re-organization meeting.