

How the Georgia State (Area 16) Service Assembly Operates

The purpose of Assembly discussion is to reach group conscience – there are no winners or losers.

Summary of Assembly Procedures

Generally speaking, the Assembly follows Robert's Rules of Order, and proceeds on as informal a basis as possible consistent with the rights of all concerned. It is important to remember that the purpose of rules of order is to make it easier for the Assembly to conduct its business; rules exist to allow the Assembly to do what it needs to do to carry out the will of the Fellowship by reaching an informed group conscience. Over the years the Assembly has adopted some exceptions to Robert's Rules, which help it to proceed more closely in accord with the spirit of A.A. Tradition.

Study (Ad-Hoc) Committee

Motions brought before the Assembly that are a change to The Georgia A.A. Service Manual or impact policy will be handled via a study (Ad-Hoc) committee. This assures that a large number of questions can be dealt with during the Assembly. The Ad-Hoc Committee studies the motion and makes a report to the Assembly. The results are reported at Assembly with instruction to the GSR's to use this information for discussion at the District and Group level.

Substantial Unanimity

All matters of policy and changes to the Georgia State Service Manual require substantial unanimity, that is, a two-thirds majority. Any actions, including amendments, that affect a Manual change, or motions that might result in such an action, also require a two-thirds majority. Because the number of GSR's present in the hall during the weekend of Assembly varies from time to time, the phrase "two-thirds majority" is taken to mean two-thirds vote of the Assembly members present who are eligible to vote (only GSR's or their designated Alt. GSR may vote).

General Rules of Discussion and Voting

- People who wish to speak line up at the microphones and are called on in order.
- Each person may speak for two (2) minutes.
- No one may speak for a second time on a topic until all who wish to have spoken for the first time.
- Full discussion of a recommendation should take place before each vote.
- **Everyone** is entitled to (though only GSR's vote), and should, express his or her opinion. However, if your perspective has already been stated by someone else, it is not necessary to go to the microphone and say it again.
- Premature actions (e.g., amending motions early in the discussion or hastily calling the question) can divert attention from the subject at hand, thus confusing and/or delaying Assembly business.
- Voting is by show of hands except for Officer Elections which are closed ballot.

Amending Motions

Amendments to motions can be made to improve the idea or clarify the meaning of a motion. Amendments can be made by striking words, adding words, or by striking and adding words. During discussion, someone may move to amend the motion. In doing so, the amendment should state exactly what word changes are proposed. The motion to amend requires a second and a majority vote in order to adopt the amendment. If not, the discussion will resume on the original motion.

Calling the Question

Calling the question brings discussion to a halt while Assembly members decide whether to proceed directly to a vote (the question) or go on with the discussion. A motion to call the question:

- Must be made in order at the microphone.
- Must be made without comment.
- Requires a second.
- Is not debatable.
- Requires a two-thirds vote.

Minority Opinion

After each vote on a matter of policy, the side which did not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. If the motion passes with two-thirds vote, the minority may speak. If the motion receives a majority vote, but fails to pass for lack of a two-thirds vote, the majority may speak. Remember that saving specific points for after the vote, when there is no rebuttal, is a time-waster, for it can force the Assembly body to reconsider a question that might well have been decided the first time around if it had been thoroughly examined from all sides.

Reconsideration

A motion to reconsider a vote may be made only by a member who voted with the prevailing side, but it can be seconded by anyone.

- Only a simple majority is required.
- If the majority votes to reconsider, full discussion, pro and con, is resumed. (Assembly members are urged to limit discussion to new considerations of the question under discussion.)
- No action may be reconsidered twice.

Tabling a Motion

Tabling a motion (postponing discussion to a later time):

- Must be made without comment.
- Requires a second.
- Is not debatable.
- Needs only a simple majority to pass.