



# **LEGISLATIVE ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE HANDBOOK**

**FLORIDA GIRLS STATE**

**Sponsored by the  
American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of Florida**

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## **ORGANIZATION OF FLORIDA'S GOVERNMENT**

Florida's Constitution, in the traditional American pattern of "separation of powers," divides State government into three separate and independent branches - the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branches. This structural division sets up a system of "checks and balances" to ensure all three branches properly perform their constitutional duties in the administration of state affairs. The Executive Branch consists of the governor, lieutenant governor, Cabinet (which includes the attorney general, commissioner of agriculture, and chief financial officer), and several executive departments. The Legislative Branch has exclusive lawmaking power and determines the general policies by which the problems of society are to be met. The Judicial Branch interprets the law and applies the Constitution and presides over trials.

### **NEW CABINET STRUCTURE**

Florida is historically unique among the 50 states in America. Until January 7, 2003, it was the only state to have a Governor plus a Cabinet consisting of six independently and constitutionally elected state executives. Florida now has a Cabinet consisting of three constitutionally elected state executives. The Governor is the popularly elected "chief executive" of Florida but the three members of the Cabinet are also elected by the people and serve as a collective decision and rule making body for the state. Each Cabinet member serves a four-year term with a two-term limit and is wholly responsible for the administration of at least one state department. The Governor is responsible for the administration of most other state departments.

Reflecting the concern that a single person might exercise too much power, Floridians ratified the Florida Constitution of 1968, affirming the independence of Cabinet members by deleting the phrase, "the Governor shall be assisted by" the Cabinet. This gave each member equal footing with the Governor on matters that come before the Governor and Cabinet. So, Cabinet members were no longer expected, constitutionally, to capitulate to the Governor's wishes.

In 1998, the Constitutional Revision Commission proposed a rewrite of Article IV, Section IV of the Florida Constitution that reduced the Florida Cabinet from six elected officials to five. Effective January 7, 2003, the new Florida Cabinet consists of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Agriculture. The Cabinet offices of Secretary of State and Commissioner of Education became appointed offices and their respective agencies became the responsibility of the Governor. The revised constitution also created a new State Board of Education with seven members appointed by the Governor to oversee the Department of Education. The Cabinet offices of Treasurer and Comptroller were merged into the new position of Chief Financial Officer who serves as agency head for the newly created Department of Financial Services.

## **HOW THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE WORKS**

### **Membership; Powers and Duties**

Florida's Legislature is composed of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Each house chooses its own officers and establishes its own rules of procedure. All legislative sessions are open to the public except executive sessions of the Senate, when appointments or suspensions of public officials are considered. Either house of the Legislature may initiate legislation on any subject. There are 40 Senators and 120 Representatives. Senators serve 4-year terms and Representatives serve 2-year terms. Legislators are subject to term limitations.

The Constitution requires members of the Legislature be elected at the general election in November of even-numbered years. Members of the Legislature must be at least 21 years old, electors and residents of the districts they represent, and Florida residents for 2 years prior to election. Two weeks after each general election, the Legislature convenes for the exclusive purpose of organization and election of officers. The Senate designates a Secretary of the Senate and the House designates a Clerk of the House during the organization session. Each house also names a Sergeant-At-Arms.

Regular sessions of the Legislature begin on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March and continue for 60 consecutive days. Special sessions may be called by the Governor or may be convened by joint proclamation of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

In addition to the regular standing committees, both the Senate and House of Representatives may establish additional committees to handle some temporary legislative problems. A select committee can be appointed to make recommendations on special or unique problems. A joint committee, composed of members from each house, may be appointed jointly by the presiding officers to deal with a problem affecting both houses. When the Senate and House are unable to agree on the final content of a bill, it goes to a conference committee. This committee, composed of members of both houses, tries to resolve the differences between the Senate and House versions of a bill. Since it is a temporary group with responsibility only for reaching a compromise on a single legislative subject, it is a special committee.

### **Committee Meetings**

Each committee meets as scheduled to consider the bills referred to it. The chairman of each committee conducts the meetings, allowing various points of view to be heard. People who are interested appear before the committee and explain why they are for or against the bills. The committees decide which bills they will recommend to be passed, sometimes with changes and sometimes not. The committees can also decide to not recommend passage of certain bills. The work of the committees is very important because it forms the basis for final consideration of most bills by the full membership of the Legislature.

## **HOW THE FLORIDA GIRLS STATE LEGISLATURE WORKS**

### **Membership; Powers and Duties**

Each house elects its officers from its membership. Specific employees are appointed. The rules detail the duties of each of the officers and employees. A member is required to be present in her house's chamber when it is in session. *A member is considered present in the chamber once she has answered the roll, even though she may not actually be at her desk or in the chamber.* Committees of a house may not meet when that house is in session.

During debate, members are always formally addressed as "Senator" or "Representative" and not by their given names. Each member must conduct herself to justify the confidence placed in her by the people sponsoring her and, by personal example and admonition to colleagues, must maintain the integrity and responsibility of the office. A member may not accept anything that will improperly influence her official act, decision, or vote.

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who are the presiding officers of the respective houses, call their respective house to order. The Secretary of the Senate or the Chief Clerk of the House calls the roll of the membership of the house. The Chaplain offers a prayer. The Pages lead each house in Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States. Each house then proceeds to the business as specified in Rule 7.3. The presiding officers follow a calendar set by the Rules and Calendar Committee.

### **Legislative Proposals**

A bill is the only formal way in which a legislator can present before the Legislature any matter needing the approval of the Legislature. A formal document must be prepared according to form; the main objective of a bill is to propose an addition to or a deletion from existing law. The Rules of Florida Girls State prescribe the form a bill must take. Sample documents are included in this manual. When a bill is filed for introduction, it is numbered serially. After a bill is read, by title only, the presiding officer of each house determines which committee will study a particular bill. Every bill and joint resolution is read three times before final passage. Resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and memorials are read only twice.

With very few exceptions, the first numbered page of a bill must begin with the words "A bill to be entitled" followed by "An act..." on the next line. Any other information required to be in the title will appear there. Usually the last phrase appearing in the title reads, "providing an effective date." A line of space and the enacting clause, "Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Seminole:" follow. A line of space and "Section 1... follows this." Usually the final section in the bill specifies when the act will become a law.

## *The Committee System*

The committee system is the heart of the legislative process. The committee does what the Senate and the House of Representatives could not do as well by functioning as a whole. The committee can and should do the groundwork for the Senate and the House of Representatives.

### **Select Committee Meetings:**

Select committees are those who have been appointed, or selected, to perform a specific task. The powers of each select committee are set forth in the action creating it.

The goal of the select committee meeting is to prepare bills for their journey in the legislative process. The committee will determine if bills are strong enough to survive standing committee meetings and then the scrutiny of the floor of the Senate and House. The committee will recommend changes to the standing committees or to the Senate and House.

According to the Rules of the Florida Girls State, the select committee meetings will proceed as follows:

- The Select committees will consist of the members of each city, and will meet as scheduled.
- Mayors preside. (Refer to Rule 3.4)
  - Appoint a timekeeper, a secretary, and a Sergeant-at-Arms.
  - Prior to meeting, Mayors check all bill covers. Covers must have the author's name and room number.
- Committee informally reviews all bills.
  - Determine if changes can be made to strengthen the bill. If changes can be made, the committee will recommend amendments to the Standing committee.
  - The secretary will record the committee's recommendations on the form provided and the mayor will sign the form.
- All bills must have a sponsor by the end of the meeting.
  - If the author is a member of the Senate or House, she may sponsor her bill.
  - If the author is not a member of the Senate or House, she must find a member of the Senate or House to sponsor her bill.
  - The names of the author and the sponsor must be recorded on the bill cover.
  - Note: The sponsor does not have to be from the same city as the author.
- The committee selects three bills that are complete and ready for consideration during the first legislative session.
  - If necessary, recommend amendments to be considered on the floor of the Senate or House during the third reading.
- The Mayor will speak on behalf of the city committee during the second reading on the floor of the house where the bill originates.
  - If the mayor is not a member of the house where the bill originates, then the city must designate a spokesperson for the city's committee report.
  - The select committee spokesperson will discuss the recommendations of the select committee in the second reading. However, the select committee does not have the power to amend any legislation.
  - The House or Senate may entertain the recommendations of the select committee in the form of floor amendments in the third reading.
    - Note: A select committee member may make the committee's recommended amendments in the third reading.

## **Standing Committees:**

Both the Senate and House of Florida Girls State maintain subject matter committees. The presiding officers of each house appoint the members of each house to these committees. Each member serves on one committee. Each house divides legislative proposals on the basis of subject matter and assigns them to the proper committees. Every delegate of Girls State must attend a committee meeting.

According to the Rules of the Florida Girls State, standing committee meetings will proceed as follows:

- Senate and House committees meet jointly.
- Each committee chairman appoints a secretary and a timekeeper.
- The committee chairman of each house alternates presiding over the meeting to allow various points of view to be heard. The Senate Chairman presides first.
- Where possible, Senate and House bills will be alternated on the agenda.
- Where possible, a speaker who favors passage of a bill (proponent) will be alternated with a speaker who is against the bill (opponent).
- The sponsor of the measure under consideration may open and close debate. The sponsor may not speak longer than 1 minute either in opening or closing.
- No person may appear before the same committee to speak for or against a bill more than once unless another person, who is eligible to speak, yields her time to this person, should she feel this person is better versed and will be more effective than herself.
- Any citizen of Girls State may appear before a committee to speak on a bill.
- Only committee members may vote on a measure before the committee.
- The committees may report the bill out of committee:
  - Favorable without changes
  - Favorable with changes (amendments or combining one or more bills)
  - Unfavorable (recommending the bill does not pass, effectively killing the bill)

The actions of the committees form the basis of final consideration of the bills by all of the members of Florida Girls State. As committees "report out" bills, and after consideration by the Rules and Calendar Committee, bills may be heard by the full membership of a house.

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## *Consideration of Bills*

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### On first reading:

First reading of a bill is carried out at the beginning of the legislative session when all bills are ***read in numerical order*** by title only. At this time, the President/Speaker will refer each bill to committee. After bills are considered in committee, they are placed on the calendar for the second reading.

### On second reading:

The bill is read in full and the select committee spokesperson is recognized for 2 minutes to give the select committee report. The bill goes on the Calendar for the third reading.

During the remainder of the legislative session, the bill is read in full with any standing committee amendments.

The committee chairman has 2 minutes to discuss the bill and amendments.

Questions may not be asked. The chairman then moves for adoption of the amendment. There is debate on the committee amendments. Alternating, 3 proponents (Pro) speak and 3 opponents (Con) speak. Each Pro and Con speaker has 1 minute to discuss and 1 minute for questions. Only non-debatable questions may be asked. (A non-debatable question is a technical question about the amendment. Members ask questions of fact or clarification of meaning. This is NOT the time for matters of opinion or debate.)

The previous question is called. When previous question is called, all debate stops, and the sponsor of the bill has 1 minute to close. If the motion for previous question passes, the amendments are voted upon. A majority vote is required for passage.

After action has been taken on all committee amendments, the bill goes on the Calendar for the third reading.

### On third reading:

The bill is read by title only.

The sponsor has 2 minutes to discuss the bill and 1 minute for questions.

The chairman recognizes members, who may ask technical and non-debatable questions.

Debate on the bill: Alternating, 3 proponents (Pro) and 3 opponents (Con) speak. Each Pro and Con speaker has 1 minute to discuss and 1 minute for questions. The time for debate may be extended on a 2/3 vote.

After debate on the bill, amendments from the floor are in order. The sponsor of the amendment has 1 minute to discuss and 1 minute for questions. Then, debate on the amendment begins. Alternating, 3 proponents (Pro) speak and 3 opponents (Con) speak. Each Pro and Con speaker has 1 minute to discuss and 1 minute for questions. The previous question is called on the floor amendment. The sponsor of the amendment has 1 minute to close debate. A 2/3 vote is required for the amendment to pass.

The previous question on the bill can be called to stop all debate.

If the motion for the previous question passes, the sponsor of the bill has 1 minute to close.

Previous question on the final passage of the bill is now in order.

A majority vote is required for passage.

Bills passed by one house are sent to the other house for consideration. Bills will be designated SB# or HB# and will remain as designated throughout legislation in both houses.

To have the bill read in full when it arrives from the other house, you must waive the rules by 2/3 vote.

When a bill from one house is amended in the other house, the bill must be sent back to the originating house for a re-vote of the amended bill.

After final passage by both houses, the bill is sent to the Governor for consideration.

If she vetoes the bill, a reason should be stated, and the bill is sent back to the originating house for consideration. A motion to reconsider may be entertained to put the bill back before the assembly. The sponsor may speak for 1 minute and then request a vote, by division, to override the veto, which requires a 2/3 vote. The vetoed bill is then sent to the other house, where the same procedure is followed. The originating house can amend the bill, and then the other house must reconsider the bill as amended. (Refer to Rule Twelve)

### ***Amendments***

An amendment is a method of changing details within a bill or another amendment. It may have one of three purposes and must be written and given to the Bill Clerks. Amendments are recorded in the order received, i.e., #1, #2, #3, and are acted on in reverse order.

TO STRIKE (delete): You must be very specific about what part of the bill you are deleting. Show the Section and Line numbers.

TO INSERT: You must have the exact wording and location of where the insertion is to be made. Show the Section and Line numbers.

TO STRIKE AND INSERT: A combination of both of the above. You must be very specific about wording and location.

You may draft amendments as follows (the last amendment presented shall be voted on first):  
Amendment to the bill; Substitute amendment;  
Amendment to the substitute; or, Amendment to the amendment.

Any of the following may be before a house at the same time:

Amendments to the amendment are disposed of before the substitute is taken up.

Only one amendment to the amendment is in order at one time, but as soon as one amendment to the amendment is disposed of, another is in order.

Amendments to the substitute are next voted on and may be offered one after another as fast as disposed of until the substitute is perfected.

The substitute is next voted on. Both the amendments and substitute being perfected are presented in final form. The house makes its choice of the two.

The amendment, as amended, is voted on last.

If the substitute passes, the vote comes on the amendment as amended by the substitute.

### ***Motions***

*Rule 9 describes how motions are to be made and the order of precedence each motion is entitled to. The parliamentary procedure chart included in this document suggests the wording of the motion and details the vote required for passage of the motion.*



# ***RULES OF FLORIDA GIRLS STATE***

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## ***RULE ONE OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES***

### ***PART ONE--ELECTION OF OFFICERS***

- 1.1 Election of Senate Officers.** --At its initial session, the Senate shall elect a President and President Pro Tempore from members of the Senate. A Secretary of the Senate, Assistant Secretary, and Sergeant-at-Arms, sent from appointments, are elected by the Senators from citizens of Florida Girls State. A majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect each officer. They shall take an oath to support the Constitution and for the true and faithful discharge of the duties of office.
- 1.2 Election of House Officers.** --At its initial session, the House shall elect a Speaker and Speaker Pro Tempore from members of the House. The Representatives elect a Chief Clerk, Deputy Clerk, and Sergeant-at-Arms from citizens of Florida Girls State sent from appointments. A majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect each officer. They shall take an oath to support the Constitution and for the true and faithful discharge of the duties of office.

### ***PART TWO--APPOINTMENTS***

- 1.3 Senate Appointments.** --At its initial session, a Chaplain, two Reading Secretaries, two Bill Messengers, two Bill Clerks, Communications Director, and all Pages shall be appointed from the Citizens of Florida Girls State. (These positions are filled during the Organization of the State of Seminole.)
- 1.4 House Appointments.** --At its initial session, a Chaplain, two Reading Clerks, two Bill Messengers, two Bill Clerks, Communications Director, and all Pages shall be appointed from the Citizens of Florida Girls State. (These positions are filled during the Organization of the State of Seminole.)

### ***PART THREE--DUTIES OF SENATE OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES***

- 1.5 President of the Senate.** --The President shall call the Senate to order. On the appearance of a quorum, the President shall cause the Secretary to call the roll. The President shall preserve order and decorum and shall have general control of the Senate and the corridors and rooms assigned to it. She shall sign all bills and other documents arising from action of the Senate and shall decide questions of order. The President shall appoint all committee chairmen and all members of each committee. She shall refer all bills to committee. The President shall not be required to vote except on the final passage of a bill or resolution, or where her vote would decide the issue.
- 1.6 President Pro Tempore.** --When the President is absent or relinquishes the chair, the President Pro Tempore shall preside. When the President Pro Tempore resigns (must be in writing), the Senators will elect a successor.
- 1.7 Secretary of the Senate.** --The Secretary of the Senate shall call the roll. She shall see that the Bill Messengers deliver to the House, or to the Governor, all bills that are passed and shall keep all records and materials pertaining to the Senate. She shall sign all bills and other documents arising from the action of the Senate.

- 1.8 Assistant Secretary of the Senate.** --The Assistant Secretary of the Senate shall perform duties as assigned by the Secretary. She compiles press releases relative to bills being considered in the Senate. She reads press releases from the House and/or the Governor. Note: She always speaks from the Well, not the Rostrum microphone.
- 1.9 Reading Secretary.** --The Reading Secretary shall read all bills, resolutions, and communications. Note: She always speaks from the Well, not the Rostrum microphone.
- 1.10 Bill Messenger.** --Under the direction of the Secretary, the Bill Messenger will deliver bills to the House or to the Governor immediately after passage.
- 1.11 Bill Clerk.**--The Bill Clerk shall serially number each bill presented for introduction.
- 1.12 Sergeant-at-Arms.** --The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be present at all meetings and be stationed at the entrance to the chambers. She shall maintain order under the direction of the President. She shall clear the house of all persons not authorized by the members to be present. The Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms shall perform all duties as assigned by the Sergeant-at-Arms.
- 1.13 Chaplain.** --The Chaplain must attend each day's session and is responsible for opening each session with prayer. Her duties also include preparing and presenting the opening prayer at the Inauguration and planning and implementing the opening assembly on the second and third days at the Capitol, using a Senate Page to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. She shall perform any other duties assigned by the President.
- 1.14 Communications Director.** --The Communications Director serves as the liaison between the Governor's office, Senate, and the House. She compiles and delivers press releases relative to bills being considered in the Legislature. She plans and presents the News Briefs during opening assembly on the second and third days at the Capitol. NOTE: She always speaks from the Well, not the Rostrum microphone.
- 1.15 Pages.** --Pages shall lead each house in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and shall perform duties as assigned by their respective presiding officers.

#### ***PART FOUR--DUTIES OF HOUSE OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES***

- 1.16 Speaker of the House of Representatives.** --The Speaker shall call the House of Representatives to order. On the appearance of a quorum, the Speaker shall cause the Chief Clerk to call the roll. The Speaker shall preserve order and decorum and shall have general control of the House of Representatives and the corridors and rooms assigned to it. The Speaker shall sign all bills and other documents arising from action of the House of Representatives and shall decide questions of order. The Speaker shall appoint all committee chairmen and all members of each committee. She shall refer all bills to committee. The Speaker shall not be required to vote except on the final passage of a bill or resolution, or where her vote would decide the issue.
- 1.17 Speaker Pro Tempore.** --When the Speaker is absent or relinquishes the chair, the Speaker Pro Tempore shall preside. When the Speaker Pro Tempore resigns (must be in writing), the Representatives will elect a successor.
- 1.18 Chief Clerk of the House.** --The Chief Clerk of the House shall call the roll. She shall

see that the Bill Messengers deliver to the Senate, or to the Governor, all bills that are passed and shall keep all records and materials pertaining to the House of Representatives. She shall sign all bills and other documents arising from the action of the House of Representatives.

- 1.19 Deputy Clerk.** --The Deputy Clerk shall perform duties as assigned by the Chief Clerk. She compiles press releases relative to bills being considered in the House. She reads press releases from the Senate and/or the Governor. Note: She always speaks from the Well, not the Rostrum microphone.
- 1.20 Reading Clerk.** --The Reading Clerk shall read all bills, resolutions, and communications. Note: She always speaks from the Well, not the Rostrum microphone.
- 1.21 Bill Messenger.** --Under the direction of the Chief Clerk, the Bill Messenger shall deliver bills to the Senate or to the Governor immediately after passage.
- 1.22 Bill Clerk.** --The Bill Clerk shall serially number each bill presented for introduction.
- 1.23 Sergeant-at-Arms.** --The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be present at all meetings and be stationed at the entrance to the chambers. She shall maintain order under the direction of the Speaker. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall clear the house of all persons not authorized by the members to be present.
- 1.24 Chaplain.** --The Chaplain shall attend each day's legislative session and open each session with prayer. Her duties also include preparing and presenting the closing benediction at the Inauguration and planning and implementing the opening assembly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> days at the Capitol, using a House Page to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. She shall perform any other duties assigned by the Speaker.
- 1.25 Communications Director.** --The Communications Director serves as the liaison between the Governor's office, Senate, and the House. She compiles and delivers press releases relative to bills being considered in the Legislature. She plans and presents the News Briefs during opening assembly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> days at the Capitol. NOTE: She always speaks from the Well, not the Rostrum microphone.
- 1.25 Pages.** --Pages shall lead each house in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and shall perform duties as assigned by their respective presiding officers.

***RULE TWO***  
***MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE***

- 2.1 Attendance.** --All members are required to be present in their respective chamber during each session unless excused or necessarily absent.
- 2.2 Members deemed present unless excused.** --A member who answers the roll at the opening of a session shall be considered present, even though she may not be at her desk or actually in the chamber at all times. Majority and 2/3 voting strength is determined from the number answering roll call on a daily basis.
- 2.3 Legislative conduct.** --Every member shall conduct herself to justify the confidence placed in her by the people and, by personal example and admonition to colleagues, shall maintain the integrity and responsibility of her office.

**2.4 Improper influence.** --A member shall not accept anything that will improperly influence her official act, decision, or vote.

***RULE THREE  
COMMITTEES***

**3.1 Rules and Calendar Committee.** --The Rules and Calendar Committee shall consist of the President, President Pro Tempore, Speaker, and Speaker Pro Tempore. (The Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Senate and Chief Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the House should attend the meeting to record and number bills.)

**3.2 Priority of consideration of legislative measures.** --The Rules and Calendar Committee may, at its discretion, determine the priority for consideration of bills and resolutions by each house.

**3.3 Select Committees.** ---Select committees are those that have been appointed, or selected, to perform a specific task. The goal of the select committee meeting is to prepare bills for their journey in the legislative process. The committee will recommend any changes to the standing committees or to the House and Senate.

**3.4 Select Committees Established.** --The Select committees will consist of the members of each city and will meet as scheduled. Mayors preside. The Mayor will appoint a timekeeper, secretary, and Sergeant-At-Arms.

**3.5 Duties of Select Committees.** -- Committees informally review all city bills. The names of the author and the sponsor must be recorded on the bill cover.

**3.5.1** Determine if changes can be made to strengthen the bill. If changes can be made, the committee will recommend amendments to the Standing committee. The secretary will record the committee's recommendations on the form provided, and the mayor will sign the form.

**3.5.2** The committee will select three bills for consideration during the first legislative session. If necessary, recommend amendments to be considered on the floor of the House or Senate during the third reading.

**3.6 Standing Committees established.** --The presiding officer of each house shall appoint the membership of the following legislative standing committees in each house:

Committee on Education  
Committee on Natural Resources, Growth, and Energy  
Committee on Agriculture, Commerce, and General Legislation  
Committee on Transportation, Regulated Industries and Licensing  
Committee on Community Affairs, Health and Rehabilitative Services  
Committee on Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement

**3.7 Standing Committee membership.** --Each Senate committee shall consist of 8 Senators, one of who has been previously appointed by the President as the chairman. Each House committee shall consist of 22 Representatives, one of who has been previously appointed by the Speaker as the chairman.

- 3.8 Duties of Standing Committees.** --Each committee shall meet and discuss all bills and report bills back to its respective house. A bill must be reported out: favorably; favorably with amendments; favorably with a substitute for the original bill; or unfavorably. A bill that is unfavorably reported is automatically laid on the table.
- 3.9 Duties of committee personnel.** --The committee chairman shall appoint a secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, and timekeeper of the committee from the membership of the committee. The secretary shall keep complete records and minutes of the proceedings of the committee and shall return the bills, with report of the committees, to the Bill Clerk of her respective house. The Sergeant-at-Arms will keep order in the meeting. The timekeeper shall keep accurate timing for each person speaking before the committee and shall call time when the allotted period is up.
- 3.10 Standing Committee duties in deliberation.** --Each committee shall meet at the time and place scheduled for such committee meeting. A committee may not meet when its respective house is in session. A committee is actually assembled only when a quorum constituting a majority of the members of that committee is present in person. The chairman shall call the committee to order. Any member may question the existence of a quorum. The chairman shall preserve order and decorum and shall have general control of the committee room. If there is a disturbance or disorderly conduct in the committee room, the chairman may request that the Sergeant-at-Arms assist the participants in the disturbance to clear the room. Bills shall be considered as they are reached on the agenda. House and Senate bills shall be placed on the agenda in alternate fashion. In considering bills, the chairman shall alternate proponents and opponents in speaking on the bills. The sponsor of the measure under consideration may open and close debate and may not speak longer than 2 minutes, either in opening or in closing. No person may appear before the same committee to speak for or against a bill more than once unless another person, who is eligible to speak, yields her time to this person. Any citizen of Girls State may appear before a committee to speak on a bill. Only a committee member may vote on a measure before the committee.
- 3.11 Open meetings.** --Committee meetings shall be open to the public.
- 3.12 Member attendance.** --Every member of a committee shall be in attendance during each of its meetings, unless excused or necessarily prevented from attending, and shall vote on each question. Every delegate who is not a member of the Senate or House **must** attend a committee meeting but does not vote.
- 3.13 Taking the vote.** --The chairman shall declare all votes. She shall direct the committee secretary to enter the vote on the records of the committee. If any member questions a vote, then by a show of hands by three members, the chairman shall count the yeas and nays. When there is a tie vote, the question shall be lost. A member may request to change her vote with unanimous consent of those present. On the request of a member prior to consideration of other business, the chairman shall order a verification of a vote.
- 3.14 Decorum and debate.** --When a member desires to speak to the committee, the member shall address herself to "Madam Chairman" and, on being recognized, may address the committee and shall confine herself to the question under debate, avoiding personal references. A member shall not address or refer to another member by her first name. A member shall use the appellation of Senator or Representative or such appellation and the surname of the member referred to or addressed.

- 3.15 **Chairman's power to recognize.** --When two or more committee members rise to speak at once, the chairman shall name the member who is to be first recognized.
- 3.16 **Speaking rights.** --When a member is speaking and another member interrupts to request recognition, the chairman may permit the person rising to state why she desires the floor. If the question the member desires to raise is entitled to precedence, the member originally speaking shall relinquish the floor until the question having precedence is disposed of. The member is then entitled to resume the floor.
- 3.17 **Time for debate.** --No member shall speak longer than 2 minutes without yielding the floor, except by consent of a majority of those present.
- 3.18 **Appeals.** --The proper method of taking exception to a ruling of the chairman is by appeal. An appeal from a decision of the chairman must be made promptly, before debate has concluded or other business has intervened. A point of order on any other question is not in order while an appeal is pending.
- 3.19 **Appeals debatable.** --An appeal from a decision of the chairman on a point of order is debatable.

**RULE FOUR  
BILLS**

- 4.1 **Standard Cover.** --Every final version of each Senate or House bill shall have the standard cover provided by Florida Girls State. Circle whether a Senate or House bill.
- 4.2 **General bills.** --Each bill shall contain a proper title and an enacting clause as defined in these Rules:

*A bill to be entitled* \_\_\_\_\_  
*An act (Here must be summarized what the bill seeks to accomplish.);* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Providing an effective date.* \_\_\_\_\_

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SEMINOLE:**

*(This is called the enacting clause, and a bill does not become law without it.)*

*Section 1. (Details of the bill follow here.)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Section 2.* \_\_\_\_\_

*Section 3. This act shall take effect [specify].* \_\_\_\_\_

**RULE FIVE  
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

- 5.1 **Filing bills for introduction.** --Any citizen may file a bill for introduction. There is no limit on the number of bills a citizen may introduce. However, if not a Senate or House member, she must obtain a person in one of the houses to sponsor her bill.
- 5.2 **Numbering bills.** --Bills and other measure shall be introduced in the order in which the Bill Clerk receives them. They shall be serially numbered as introduced. Senate Bills begin with SB/100 and House Bills begin with HB500.

***RULE SIX  
READING OF BILLS***

- 6.1 Readings required.** --Every bill and joint resolution shall receive three separate readings previous to a vote on final passage. Resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and memorials shall receive two separate readings previous to a vote on final passage.
- 6.2 First Reading.** --The Reading Clerk of the House or the Reading Secretary of the Senate shall read each bill in numerical order of introduction.
- 6.3 Second Reading.** --The Rules and Calendar Committee determines the priority for placement of a bill on the calendar for the second reading. Using the calendar, the presiding officer calls the number of the bill next in line for consideration. On the first day at the Capitol, the presiding officer directs the Reading Clerk or Reading Secretary, as appropriate, to read the bill in full, and recognizes the select committee spokesperson to discuss the select committee's recommendations. The presiding officer directs the Reading Clerk or Reading Secretary, as appropriate, to read the bill in full with amendments, if there are any, and recognizes the chairman of the committee on Rules and Calendar or standing committee to discuss the bill and amendments, if any, and to move for adoption.
- 6.4 Debate on amendments after second reading.** --Debate on the standing committee amendments is in order after second reading of the bill.
- 6.5 Third Reading.** --The presiding officer shall direct the Reading Secretary or Reading Clerk, as appropriate, to read the bill by title only. The presiding officer shall recognize the sponsor to discuss the bill. The sponsor shall have 2 minutes to discuss her bill and 1 minute to answer questions. The presiding officer shall allow proponents and opponents of the measure to speak in alternating fashion. Each speaker shall have 1 minute to discuss her point and 1 minute to answer questions.
- 6.6 Debate on amendments after third reading.** --All amendments must be written and must be filed with the Senate Reading Secretary or House Reading Clerk before a motion can be made to amend a bill under consideration on third reading. The motion to amend requires a 2/3 vote to carry. The sponsor shall have 1 minute to close before the presiding officer places the bill on final passage.

***RULE SEVEN  
ORDER OF BUSINESS AND CALENDAR***

- 7.1 Sessions of each house.** --Each house shall meet pursuant to a schedule adopted by the Rules and Calendar Committee.
- 7.2 Quorum.** --A majority of members in each house answering roll call, shall constitute a quorum. A member may at any time question the existence of a quorum.
- 7.3 Daily order of business.** --The daily order of business for each house shall be as follows:
- A. Call to Order
  - B. Roll Call by Senate Secretary or the House Chief Clerk
  - C. Prayer by Chaplain
  - D. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

- E. Receiving of Communications
- F. Introduction of Bills
- G. Consideration of Messages from Governor or the Other House
- H. Unfinished Business
- I. Second Reading of Bills
- J. Third Reading of Bills

**7.4 Order of Business after completion of calendar.** --The house shall, upon completion of current legislation, immediately consider any Vetoes or Bills pending from the other house.

### ***RULE EIGHT VOTING***

**8.1 Taking the vote.** --The presiding officer of each house shall take the vote by:

- A. Voice, where each member answers "yea (yes)" or "nay (no);"
- B. Division, where the opponents and proponents stand, in alternate fashion, to be counted;
- C. Roll call, where the Secretary or Chief Clerk calls the names of each member who responds "yea" or "nay;" or
- D. Electronic voting machines.

**8.2 Voice vote in doubt.** --If a voice vote is in doubt, the presiding officer shall take the vote by division at the request of one member or by roll call upon the request of five members, of the body. Division must be called before results of voting are announced.

**8.3 Change of vote.** --A member may change her vote with unanimous consent of those present.

**8.4 Tie votes.** --When a vote results in a tie, the measure or question shall fail to pass.

**8.5 Voting by members.** —Senators/Representatives do not have to vote for each motion, but they count towards the quorum if they answered roll call.

### ***RULE NINE MOTIONS AND PRECEDENTS***

**9.1 Motions - how made.** --Every motion will be made orally. When a motion is made, the chairman shall state it. The chairman shall not entertain any dilatory or delaying motion.

**9.2 Motions; precedence.** --Motions shall be stated in the manner prescribed below and must have the vote indicated to carry. These motions shall have precedence in the descending order given.

### ***RULE TEN AMENDMENTS***

**10.1 Manner of amendments.** --An amendment must be made in writing and must be submitted to the Reading Secretary of the Senate or the Reading Clerk of the House before it can be considered. Each amendment offered must be logically related to the matter under



consideration. Amendments must be numbered in order received for the bill on the floor.

- 10.2 Adoption.** --Amendments may be adopted on second reading by a majority vote of those present and on third reading by a 2/3 vote of those present. Amendments to the title or corrective amendments may be decided, without debate, by a majority vote of those present on third reading.
- 10.3 Sequence of amendments to amendments.** --An amendment to a pending amendment may be received, but, until it is disposed of, no other motion to amend will be in order except a substitute amendment or an amendment to the substitute. Such amendments are to be disposed of in the following order:
- A. Amendments to the amendment are acted on before the substitute is taken up. Only one amendment to the amendment is in order at any time.
  - B. Amendments to the substitute are next voted on.
  - C. The substitute is then voted on. The adoption of a substitute amendment in lieu of an original amendment shall be treated and considered as an amendment to the bill itself. Amendments are handled from last submitted back to first submitted.
- 10.4 Deleting everything after enacting clause.** --A proposal to delete everything after the enacting clause of a bill, or the resolving clause of a resolution, and insert new matter of the same general subject as stated in the original title shall be deemed proper and germane and shall be treated as an amendment.
- 10.5 Amendment by section.** --The adoption of an amendment to a section shall not preclude further amendment of that section. If a bill is being considered section-by-section or item- by-item, only amendments to the section or item under consideration shall be in order. The presiding officers, in recognizing members for the purpose of moving the adoption of amendments, shall endeavor to cause all amendments to section 1 to be considered first, then all those in section 2, and so on. After all sections have been considered separately, the entire bill shall be open for amendment.
- 10.6 Amendments to bills from the other house.** --After the reading of an amendment from the other house to a bill from the current house, the current house may:
- A. Amend the other house's amendment,
  - B. Concur in the other house's amendment,
  - C. Refuse to concur in the other house's amendment and ask the other house to recede.

The adoption of any of the foregoing motions shall be by majority vote of those present.

- 10.7 Refusal to concur in amendments in the other house.** -- If the originating house refuses to concur in an amendment to the originating house's bill, a motion to ask the other house to recede will be in order.

The adoption of the foregoing motion shall be by majority vote of those present.

### ***RULE ELEVEN DECORUM AND DEBATE***

- 11.1 Decorum and debate.** --When a member desires to speak to the house, the member shall rise at her seat and address herself to "Madam President" or "Madam Speaker," and, on being recognized, may address the house from her desk, and shall confine any remarks to the question

under debate, avoiding personal references. A member shall not address or refer to another member by her first name. A member shall use the title of Senator or Representative or such title and the surname of the member referred to or addressed.

**11.2 Presiding officer's power of recognition.** --When two or more members rise at once, the presiding officer shall name the member who is first to be recognized.

**11.3 Interruptions; when allowed.** --No member shall be interrupted by another without the consent of the member who has the floor, except:

- A. By rising to a question of privilege;
- B. By rising to a point of order requiring an immediate ruling;
- C. By appeal from the decision of the presiding officer concerning a point of order (if the appeal is made immediately following the decision);
- D. By making a parliamentary inquiry requiring an immediate reply; or
- E. By raising a question of no quorum.

The presiding officer shall strictly enforce this rule.

**11.4 Member speaking rights.** --When a member is speaking and another member interrupts to request recognition, the presiding officer may permit the person rising to state why she desires the floor. If the question the member desires to raise is entitled to precedence, the member originally speaking shall relinquish the floor until the question having precedence is disposed of. The member is then entitled to resume the floor.

**11.5 Sponsor's speaking rights on bill.** --Senators sponsoring bills shall be allowed to speak on their bills in the House. Representatives sponsoring bills shall be allowed to speak on their bills in the Senate.

**11.6 Speaking limits.** --No member may speak for more than 2 minutes or more than once on a question except:

- A. Members proposing amendments shall be entitled to 1 minute to close debate on the amendments.
- B. Sponsors of bills shall be entitled to 1 minute to close debate on amendments after the proposer of the amendments, provided the effect of the amendment is to kill the bill.
- C. Sponsors of bills shall be entitled to 1 minute to close debate in the general debate on the bill.

**11.7 Limitation of debate.** --When a measure is under debate by either house, a member may move to limit debate, and such motion shall be decided without debate, except the introducer of the measure shall have 2 minutes to discuss such motion. If, by 2/3 votes of those present, the question is decided in the affirmative, debate shall be limited accordingly.

**11.8 Points of order, parliamentary inquiry, definitions.** --A point of order is the parliamentary device that is used to require a deliberative body to observe its own rules and to follow established parliamentary practice. A parliamentary inquiry is the device for obtaining a predetermination of a rule or a clarification thereof and may be presented in hypothetical form.

**11.9 Appeals.** --Taking exception to a ruling of a presiding officer shall be by appeal. An appeal from a decision of the presiding officer must be made promptly, before debate has concluded or other business has intervened. A point of order on any other question is not in order while

an appeal is pending.

**11.10 Appeals, debatable.** --An appeal from a decision of the presiding officer on a point of order is debatable.

**11.11 Questions of privilege.** --Questions of privilege shall be: first, those affecting the rights of the respective house collectively, its safety and dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings; and second, the rights, reputation, and conduct of that house's members individually, in their representative capacity only. These shall have precedence over all other questions except motions to adjourn. The question shall not be recognized during the debate on a bill. A question of privilege affecting either house collectively takes precedence over a question of privilege affecting an individual member.

#### ***RULE TWELVE VETOED BILLS***

**12.1 Vetoed bills, manner of consideration.** --When the Governor vetoes a bill, she shall return the bill to the house in which it originated with a reason for the veto. A motion to reconsider may be entertained to put the bill back before the assembly. The sponsor may speak for 1 minute and then request a vote, by division, to override the veto, which requires a 2/3 vote. The vetoed bill is then sent to the other house, where the same procedure is followed.

**12.2 If an amendment is added.** -- The originating house can amend the bill, and then the other house must reconsider the bill as amended. An amendment can be added in third reading and handled as a regular amendment. A 2/3 vote is required to override the amended vetoed bill.

#### ***RULE THIRTEEN CONSTRUCTION AND WAIVER OF RULES***

**13.1 Interpretation of Rules.** --It shall be the duty of the presiding officer to interpret all Rules. Motions for the previous question and to lie on the table shall not be entertained.

**13.2 Waiver and suspension of Rules.** --These Rules shall not be waived or suspended in either house except by a 2/3 vote of all members present. The motion, when made, shall be decided without debate.

**13.3 Changes in Rules.** --All proposed actions touching the Rules and Order of Business in either house shall be first referred to the Rules and Calendar Committee, which shall report as soon as practicable. Consideration of such a report shall always be in order. The Rules and Calendar Committee may originate reports and resolutions dealing with these Rules and the Order of Business, and such power shall be exclusive; however, any report made pursuant to this Rule may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the members present.

**13.4 Majority action.** --Unless otherwise indicated by these Rules or the Constitution of Seminole, all action by either house shall be by majority vote of those members present.

**13.5 Uniform construction.** --When in these Rules reference is made to "2/3 of those present," "2/3 vote," or "2/3 of those voting," these shall all be construed to mean 2/3 of those members having answered roll call.

**13.6 General.** --When used in these Rules, the following words shall, unless the text otherwise indicates, have the following respective meaning: the singular always includes the plural. Except where specifically provided otherwise, the use of the word "bill" or "measure" means a bill, joint resolution, concurrent resolution, resolution, or memorial.

## ***SAMPLES OF LEGISLATIVE MEASURES***

### **SAMPLE - GENERAL BILL AMENDING FLORIDA STATUTES:**

*A bill to be entitled*

*An act relating to railroads, amending s. 860.04, F.S., relating to Persons beating their way on railroad trains, to increase the Penalty for such offense; providing an effective date.*

*Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:*

*Section 1. Section 860.04, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:*

*860.04 Persons beating their way on railroad train. --Any person who, without permission of those having authority, with the intention of being transported free, rides or attempts to ride on any railroad train in this state, is shall-be guilty of a misdemeanor of the first second degree, punishable as provided s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.*

*Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2025.*

**[This is an example of a bill that amends an existing section of the Florida Statutes. Material that is being added is underlined and material that is being deleted is struck through.]**

<b>TO DO THIS:</b>	<b>YOU SAY THIS:</b>	<b>MAY YOU INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER?</b>	<b>DO YOU NEED A SECOND?</b>	<b>IS IT DEBATABLE?</b>	<b>CAN IT BE AMENDED?</b>	<b>WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?</b>	<b>CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?</b>
<b>Adjourn at a Certain Time</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move the Senate (House) adjourn at (specific time)...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
<b>Adjourn the Meeting</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move the Senate (House) do now adjourn...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
<b>Take a Recess</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move the Senate (House) recess for ... minutes for the purpose of ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
<b>Point of Personal Privilege - for concerns about heat, noise, personal needs</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I rise to a question personal privilege	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
<b>Point of Order - to protest a breach of the Rules of Order</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I rise to a point of order	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
<b>Point of Information - to request or provide factual information</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I rise to a point of information	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
<b>Waive the Rules - to extend debate or questions, etc.</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move the rules be waived and that...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
<b>Reconsider a Motion or Action</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move the Senate (House) reconsider the vote by which it passed Senate (House) Bill No...	Yes	Yes	Yes, if the motion to be reconsidered is debatable.	No	Majority	No
<b>Lay on the Table - temporarily suspend consideration of an issue, or retrieve bill from the table</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move the Senate (House) Bill No... be laid on the table... or be taken from the table.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
<b>Call Previous Question - end debate and amendments</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move previous question on the adoption of the amendment/bill (or both)	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
<b>Recommit - refer to committee</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move the Senate (House) Bill No... be recommitted to the committee on... for further consideration..	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	Yes
<b>Amends a Motion</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move the adoption of Amendment No... to Senate (House) Bill No...	No	Yes	Yes, if the motion to be amended is debatable	Yes	Majority on 2nd reading, 2/3 on 3rd reading	Yes
<b>Postpone Indefinitely</b>	Madam President/Speaker, I move that Senate (House) Bill No... (with pending amendments) be postponed indefinitely.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

\*\*Motions are listed in order of priority, from the highest to the lowest priority.

# NOTES