



Parliamentary Procedure

To Lay a Motion on the Table



In parliamentary law, a motion is often referred to as a "**question**" because a motion is a proposal that presents a "yes" or "no" question for the assembly to decide.

Q: What if a motion is made to "table" the motion or "lay the motion on the table"?

A: You have a few choices. You can interrupt to say "Point of Order" which the chair knows is a violation complaint.

The motion to ***Lay on the Table*** enables the assembly to lay the pending question aside ***temporarily*** when something else ***of immediate urgency*** has arisen or when something else needs to be addressed before consideration of the pending question is resumed...

This motion is commonly misused in ordinary assemblies-in place of a motion to Postpone Indefinitely (11), a motion to Postpone to a Certain Time (14), or other motions. Particularly in such misuses, it also is known as a motion "to table."

By adopting the motion to ***Lay on the Table***, a majority has the power to halt consideration of a question immediately ***without debate***. ***Such action violates the rights of the minority and individual members if it is for any other purpose than the one stated in the first sentence of this section.*** In ordinary assemblies, the motion to ***Lay on the Table*** is not in order if the evident intent is to kill or avoid dealing with a measure. If a time for resuming consideration is specified in making the motion, it can be admitted only as a motion to Postpone (14), in which case it is debatable.

A motion can be made to postpone to a later date and members can debate on this before a vote is taken.

Remember, ***a motion to Postpone Indefinitely is a motion to kill the question and is also debatable.***

Roberts Rules of Order § 17 **LAY ON THE TABLE**

NSDAR Handbook - Miscellaneous Parliamentary Points