

FLORIDA 4-H LEGISLATURE

DECORUM AND DEBATE

Gavel Raps

Members must understand and respond promptly when the presiding officer raps the gavel.

- 1 rap – The chamber will come to order.
- 2 raps – Members will rise.
- 3 raps – Members stand and applaud (usually when a guest enters the chamber – continue until one (1) rap brings order).

Decorum and Debate

- When a legislator wants to speak, he or she will stand and address the presiding officer by saying:
 - Senate: “Mr. President” / “Madame President”
 - House: “Mr. Speaker” / “Madame Speaker”
- When recognized, a member shall say (a) his or her name; and (b) county. If a member doesn’t follow this rule, the 4-H legislator may be ruled out of order and is likely to lose the right to speak.
- When two or more 4-H legislators stand at the same time, the presiding officer will decide who is to speak first and that decision will be final.
- The sponsor of a bill shall have the right to make opening and closing remarks in debate on the floor of the chambers. So, a bill sponsor should be prepared.
- Once the presiding officer has set the time limit for debate, the member speaking must “yield his/her time” by saying “I yield my time to a like speaker,” or “I yield my time to _____ (specific member’s name)” in order to continue that round of debate. However, the presiding officer may or may not allow the “yielding of time to a specific member.” If time is not yielded, the presiding officer states “Time was not yielded” and the debate is ended or reverts to the opposing view.
- When a legislator is recognized by the presiding officer and obtains the floor, his/her remarks must pertain to the subject under debate, avoiding personal comments about others. Failure to do so will result in the presiding officer calling the legislative member out of order and the member loses his/her right to speak. A member continuing to speak improperly may be ordered to take a seat by the presiding officer.

Voting

- The presiding officer may take any vote by voice vote. This will be done by asking those who are voting for the proposition to signify by saying “Aye.” Then those against the proposition will signify by saying “Nay.” If the presiding officer is in doubt as to the outcome, he/she may proceed by asking for a standing vote of those “For” and “Against.” The count then determines the outcome.
- A member/legislator who is unsatisfied with a voice vote may call for “division” which allows for a standing vote. The presiding officer then has the discretion to ask for a standing vote