

CONSENSUS, UNANIMITY, AND CONSENT



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Unanimous Consent

Unanimous: *unus* meaning "one" and *animus* meaning "spirit" or "mind"

unanimus Latin meaning "of one mind"

Definition of Parliamentary Usage:

On questions of little importance when members appear to be of "one mind", the chair assumes agreement, if no one objects to the statement of the adoption of the motion.

Variations stated in RONR:

1) No Objection:

"If there is no objection, the motion will be adopted"

2) Without Objection:

"Without Objection, the motion will be adopted"

Handling the Unanimous Consent

#1) State the Intent

"If there is no objection,"

#2) State the Motion, as if forgone conclusion. Always assume no objection.

"we will purchase a computer for the office"

#3) Pause for period based on circumstances. Allow enough time for honest objection.

#4) Announce the Result

"There being no objection, we will purchase a computer for the office. The next item of business is....."

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Never Use Unanimous Consent when:

- Statutory Requirement
- A record for the minutes is needed
- When a clear opposition is present
- Involves high expense in terms of money or personnel

Motion's Effect on Fundamental Rights:

(Right of the Majority to Decide, Right of the Minority to be heard, Right of the Absent to be Protected)

The use of unanimous consent can potentially deny a member of his right to speak, make secondary motions and vote. Therefore, every opportunity to object must be allowed.

RONR 4:60 "Unanimous consent" does not necessarily imply that every member present is in favor of the proposed action; it may only mean that the opposition, feeling that it is useless to oppose or discuss the matter, simply acquiesces.

Other Rules of Orders: All Rules of Order have some variation on the Unanimous Consent

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I Object!

How to Respond to a Unanimous Consent Call:

I object:

Forces the handling of the motion to standard practice
(State motion, debate, put motion, announce result)

I reserve the right to object:

Stops the unanimous consent process to allow for a
parliamentary inquiry or request for information, to be followed by
either an objection or a withdrawal of the objection.

#1) Stop the Process

“I reserve the right to object”

#2) Make inquiry

“I rise to a parliamentary inquiry”

Or

“I rise to request for information”

#3) Resolve

“I object to the unanimous consent”

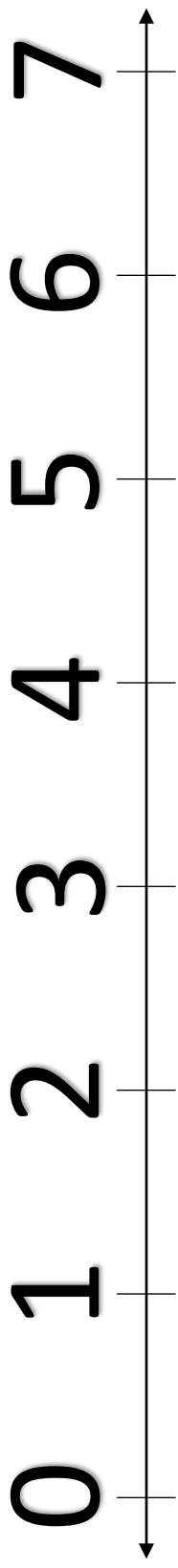
Or

“I withdraw my objection”

Consensus Models

Mental Consensus		Interactive Consensus			
Type	Delphi	Deliberation	Imposed	Affirmed	Explicit
Social Network	Isolated	In a Group	Imposed from Above	Discourages Dissent	Encourages Dissent
Expression	Published statements agree	Agreement by expression	If there is no objection	Are we all in agreement?	Is there anyone who can't live with this decision?
Determination	External	Internal	Leader	Group	Group

GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT



0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Veto "I block this proposal"	Serious Disagreement "I am not on board with this, don't count on me"	Don't Like But Won't Block "It's not great, but I don't want to hold up the group"	More Discussion Needed "I don't understand the issues well enough yet."	Abstain "This issue does not affect me."	Support with Reservations "I can live with it"	Agreement with a Minor Point of Contention "Not perfect but it's good enough"	Whole-Hearted Support "I really like it."

Level of Agreement Required

Unanimous Consent		Explicit Consensus
Lukewarm Support		Enthusiastic Support
Low Stakes	Importance	High Stakes
Short Term	Duration	Long Term
Simple Problem	Difficulty	Tough Problem
Low Investment	Buy-In	High Investment
Low Member Autonomy	Empowerment	High Member Autonomy