

ITEM 23 | OBJECTION TO THE CONSIDERATION OF A QUESTION

An objection may be made to the consideration of any original main motion, and to no others, provided it is made before there is any debate or before any subsidiary motion is stated. Thus, it may be applied to petitions and to communications that are not from a superior body, as well as to resolutions. It cannot be applied to incidental main motions [11], such as amendments to by-laws, or to reports of committees on subjects referred to them, etc. It is similar to a question of order in that it can be made when another has the floor, and does not require a second; and as the chairman can call a member to order, so he can put this question, if he deems it advisable, upon his own responsibility. It cannot be debated, or amended, or have any other subsidiary motion applied to it. It yields to privileged motions and to the motion to lay on the table. A negative, but not an affirmative vote on the consideration may be reconsidered.¹

When an original main motion is made and any member wishes to prevent its consideration, he rises, although another has the floor, and says, "Mr. Chairman, I object to its consideration." The chairman immediately puts the question, "The consideration of the question has been objected to: Will the assembly consider it? [or, Shall the question be considered?]" If decided in the negative by a two-thirds vote, the whole matter is dismissed for that session; otherwise, the discussion continues as if this objection had never been made. The same question may be introduced at any succeeding session.

The Object of this motion is not to cut off debate (for which other motions are provided) but to enable the assembly to avoid altogether any question which it may deem irrelevant, unprofitable, or contentious. If the chair considers the question entirely outside the objects of the society, he should rule it out of order, from which decision an appeal may be taken.

Objection to the consideration of a question must not be confounded with objecting where unanimous consent, or a majority vote, is required. Thus, in case of the minority of a committee desiring to submit their views, a single member saying, "I object," prevents it, unless the assembly by a majority vote grants them permission.

Footnotes

¹ In Congress the introduction of a question may be prevented temporarily by a majority vote under H.R. Rule 16, §3, which is as follows:



"3. When any motion or proposition is made, the question, Will the House now consider it? shall not be put unless demanded by a member." If the House refuses to consider a bill the vote cannot be reconsidered. But this refusal does not prevent the question's being again introduced the same session. In assemblies having brief sessions lasting usually only a few hours, or at most not over a week, it is necessary that the assembly have the power by a two-thirds vote to decide that a question shall not be introduced during that session. As the refusal to consider the question prevents its renewal during the session, the vote may be reconsidered.

