



Senate Legislative Procedures: Published Sources of Information

Christopher M. Davis

Analyst on the Congress and Legislative Process

June 8, 2007

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

98-308

The Senate publishes its rules, precedents, and other related information so that Senators and their staff have convenient access to the Senate's legislative procedures and can gauge how those procedures are likely to apply in various situations.¹ Information about the Senate's legislative procedures is published in four official documents.

The Senate publishes its standing rules periodically as a Senate document. The most recent edition is the *Standing Rules of the Senate*, S.Doc. 106-15. This 71-page document is compiled by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and contains only the text of the Senate's 43 standing rules. It is also available online at <http://rules.senate.gov/senaterules/standingrules.txt>.

These standing rules also appear in a much larger volume, the *Senate Manual*, most recently published in 2002 as S.Doc. 107-1. This *Manual* also is compiled by the Committee on Rules and Administration and is available online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/smanual/browse.html>.

In addition to the standing rules, the *Manual* contains other documents, some of which are relevant to the Senate's legislative proceedings. Among these documents are

- standing orders of the Senate and resolutions adopted by the Senate that remain in force;
- rules adopted by the Committee on Rules and Administration to govern the Senate wing of the Capitol; and
- the text of general and permanent laws relating to the Senate, excerpted from the *United States Code* and comprising almost 500 pages.

Finally, the *Manual* includes various historical documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, as well as useful statistical and tabular data, such as the names and dates of service of all Senators, listed chronologically and arranged by state and class. A table of the electoral votes cast for President and Vice President and lists of Supreme Court justices and Cabinet secretaries, including their dates of service.

The Senate's precedents, especially those of the last 100 years, are compiled in a single volume, *Riddick's Senate Procedure*, written by Floyd M. Riddick and Alan S. Frumin, and published in 1992 as S.Doc. 101-28. It is available online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/riddick/browse.html>. This book of more than 1,600 pages is named in honor of the late Dr. Riddick, once the parliamentarian of the Senate, who had been instrumental in the preparation of earlier editions that were entitled *Senate Procedure*.

Riddick's Senate Procedure is organized alphabetically by topic, beginning with rules and precedents relating to "Adjournment" and continuing through those concerning "Voting" on the Senate floor. The treatment of each topic begins with a summary prepared by the Senate parliamentarian and his colleagues, and continues with the text of the relevant Senate rule or rules. Statements follow that summarize the related precedents that the Senate has established, with footnote citations to the decisions and the events surrounding them, as reported in the *Congressional Record* or the *Senate's Journal*.

The appendix provides the language that Senators and the Senate's presiding officer usually use for various purposes, such as putting a question to a vote or appealing a ruling of the Chair. This

¹ This report was written by Stanley Bach, formerly a Senior Specialist in the Legislative Process at CRS.

appendix is very useful for Senators who are about to take some action on the floor and who want to verify the proper or usual language for doing so.

In addition to these documents, the Committee on Rules and Administration also prepares a compilation of materials on the authority and rules of the Senate's committees. This compilation is published every Congress as a Senate document, most recently as *Authority and Rules of Senate Committees, 2003-2004* (S.Doc. 108-6). For each committee, this document presents its jurisdiction, deriving from Senate rules or other sources, and the rules the committee has adopted to govern its own proceedings. Also included is comparable information on joint committees and several other Senate and bicameral bodies, as well as the texts of statutes, resolutions, and Senate rules affecting committee procedures. For example, this last section includes provisions of law concerning the enforcement of Senate committee subpoenas and grants of immunity for witnesses appearing before Senate committees.

New editions of the *Standing Rules of the Senate* and the *Senate Manual* are distributed to the offices of Senators and Senate committees. Contact the Senate Document Room regarding the availability of additional copies. Newly elected Senators also receive copies of *Riddick's Senate Procedure*. The compilation of committee authorities and rules, if available, can be obtained from the Senate Document Room. Copies of all these publications can be examined at the Senate Library (Room B-15, Russell Senate Office Building) and the CRS Senate Research Center (Room B-07, Russell Senate Office Building).

For additional information on all these documents, see CRS Report RL30788, *Parliamentary Reference Sources: Senate*.

Author Contact Information

Christopher M. Davis
Analyst on the Congress and Legislative Process
cmdavis@crs.loc.gov, 7-0656