



Highlights of the Cloture Vote In the U.S. Senate

Prepared by the office of Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D.

Current Cloture: the motion to shut off debate requires 60 votes. If a cloture vote passes, 30 additional hours of consideration are in order prior to moving to a final up-or-down vote on the nominee.

- 1789** – The Senate permits debate to be shut off by a simple-majority vote
- 1806** – The Senate eliminates the ability to shut off debate
- 1841** – Henry Clay (W-KY) unsuccessfully proposes reinstating simply-majority vote to shut off debate
- 1850** – Stephen Douglas (D-IL) unsuccessfully proposes reinstating simply-majority vote to shut off debate
- 1890** – Nelson Aldrich (R-RI) unsuccessfully proposes to curtail debate by majority vote
- 1917** – Thomas Martin (D-VA) proposes first successful cloture rule, applicable to “pending measures,” with requirement of 2/3 present and voting
- 1925** – Oscar Underwood (D-AL) unsuccessfully proposes reinstating simply-majority vote to shut off debate
- 1949** – Carl Hayden (D-AZ) successfully proposes to extend cloture to “any measure, motion or other matter,” but cloture made inapplicable to motions to consider rules changes and cloture requirement raised to 2/3 of all Senators
- 1959** – Lyndon Johnson (D-TX) successfully proposes lowering voting requirement to 2/3 present & voting, and cloture is made applicable to motions to consider rules changes; language inserted in the Standing Rules that the Senate is a continuing body and rules changes must follow the procedures of the Standing Rules (now Rule V)
- 1975** – Robert Byrd (D-WV) successfully proposes lowering voting requirement to 3/5 (60 votes), with 2/3 present & voting for rules changes
- 1979** – Robert Byrd successfully proposes 100-hour post-cloture limit on consideration
- 1986** – Bob Dole (R-KS) and Byrd successfully propose lowering post-cloture consideration to 30 hours
- 2003** – Majority Leader Bill Frist joins with Zell Miller (D-GA) to propose cascading cloture votes to stop filibuster of nominations