

## What the Senate can do

Norm Ornstein, "[Fighting the Putsch](#)" at *The Contrarian*

1. **Insist that the Journal of the Senate be read** at the onset of every day's business, soaking up time otherwise spent on legislating.
2. **Deny unanimous consent to every action.** The Senate operates by unanimous consent, and getting around it is time-consuming and uncomfortable.
3. **Refuse to allow committees to meet** when the Senate is doing business on the floor.
4. This is the relevant portion of Senate Rule 26: A committee may not meet (or continue a meeting in progress) on any day (1) after the Senate has been in session for two hours, or (2) after 2:00 p.m. when the Senate is in session. The Senate routinely waives this rule via unanimous consent. **Deny it.**
5. In Rule 14, there is a requirement that every bill is to be read in full three times before passage. That is routinely waived to include only reading a summary. **Require the full reading**, especially with omnibus bills.
6. **Use the filibuster on every bill and confirmation.** Draw a page from [the Mitch McConnell playbook](#); raise the bar to 60 on legislation and use all the delays that can come with filibusters on confirmations. It is a regular misconception that filibusters have been taken away from confirmations. In fact, the cloture barrier has been moved from 60 to a simple majority. But even if these confirmations can pass ultimately, they can be delayed significantly by exploiting the rules.
7. **Use the hold to block many if not most confirmations.** A hold is simply a senator indicating he or she will deny unanimous consent to move forward on a confirmation, but it has been respected for many decades as a [norm blocking action](#). Holds are no longer anonymous, but that is not a barrier. This something applied more than once by Senate Republicans during the Biden presidency; it was not just Tommy Tuberville and military promotions. Rand Paul, Tom Cotton, Josh Hawley, among others, used blanket holds to protest Biden policies or just to gum up the works. Kudos to Hawaii's Brian Schatz for showing how it is done, with today's blanket hold on State Department nominees over the hostile takeover of AID. It should be done by others for Treasury, Justice, Defense, Education, and other departments.