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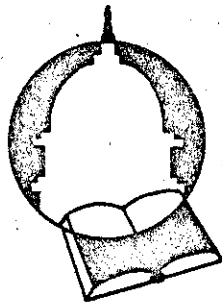
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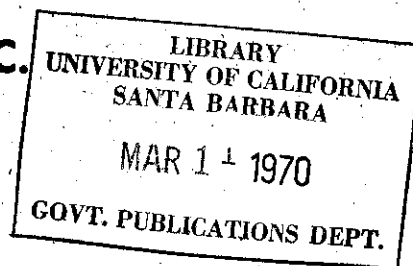
# THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE SERVICE

THE REASONS FOR THE CALLING OF  
CONFIDENTIAL LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
1884-1966, 1966.



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Rule XXXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate:

"On a motion made and seconded to close the doors of the Senate, on the discussion of any business which may, in the opinion of a Senator, require secrecy, the Presiding Officer shall direct the galleries to be cleared; and during the discussion of such motion the doors shall remain closed."

Under Rule XXXV, no vote is required. A motion and a second are sufficient for the ordering of the closed door session.

Since 1929, when Senate procedure was changed so that treaties and nominations were no longer necessarily to be discussed behind closed doors, closed-door sessions have been infrequent and have generally dealt with matters pertaining to national security.

Those sessions for which no reason was recorded are indicated by an asterick.

January 21, 1884

The Senate went behind closed doors for twelve minutes to consider a resolution to permit further consideration of the reciprocity treaty between Mexico and the United States in open session.

\*May 21, 1884

Senator Miller moved that the Senate proceed to the discussion of executive business. The motion was agreed to and the Senate went behind closed doors for two hours and eight minutes.

\*May 23, 1884

Senator Sherman of Ohio moved that the Senate proceed to the consideration of executive business. The doors were reopened after one hour and forty minutes spent in executive session.

June 10, 1884

Senator Allison of Iowa moved that the Senate proceed to executive session in order to discuss the consular and diplomatic bill. The doors were closed and were reopened after two hours and twenty-four minutes had passed.

June 11, 1884

Senator Allison of Iowa again moved that the Senate proceed to executive session in order to discuss an amendment to the consular and diplomatic bill to appropriate \$250,000 to meet the expenses to be incurred under the direction of the President in the execution of the neutrality act. The doors were ordered closed and were reopened forty minutes later.

December 15, 1884

Senator Hoar from Massachusetts requested that an executive session be called in order to discuss a resolution which would require that treaties which concern matters of revenue be considered in open session. The resolution followed the negotiation of a commercial treaty between the United States and Spain, which was publicly announced in the United States before it was presented "with becoming solemnity and secrecy to the Senate." The doors were ordered closed and were reopened sixteen minutes later.

December 20, 1884

Senator Morgan of Alabama moved that the Senate go behind closed doors to consider a joint resolution declaring the action of the Secretary of the Navy in sending an expedition to Nicaragua to be illegal. The Sergeant-at-Arms was ordered to clear the galleries and close the doors. After three hours and twenty-five minutes the executive session was concluded and the doors were reopened.

\*January 5, 1885

Senator Allison of Iowa moved that the Senate proceed to the consideration of executive business. The motion was agreed to and the doors were closed. After six minutes the executive session was terminated and the doors were reopened.

April 3, 1888

In consideration of the fisheries treaty, Senator Edmonds of Vermont moved that the Senate proceed in executive session because he wished "to submit some observations to the Senate which [he did] not desire to submit to Her Majesty's minister just at present." The doors were closed and the Senate considered the resolution in executive session for two hours and seventeen minutes.

April 17, 1888

Senator Edmonds of Vermont moved that the doors be closed for consideration of a resolve to suspend those portions of Senate Rules XXXVI, XXXVII and XXXVIII which pertain to executive sessions during the consideration of the fisheries treaty. The Senate proceeded to

discuss the resolution in executive session and after fourteen minutes the doors were reopened.

May 10, 1888

Senator Edmonds of Vermont moved that the Senate proceed in executive session for consideration of a resolve to allow the stenographic reporter to record executive sessions relating to the fisheries treaty so that thereafter if a majority of the Senate so willed, information, the secrecy of which was not essential to the national interest, could be released to the public. The Senate went behind closed doors for one hour and forty-eight minutes for consideration of the resolution.

May 14, 1888

The President pro tempore of the Senate announced that "the hour of 2 o'clock having arrived, it is the duty of the Chair to lay before the Senate the unfinished business." The Senate proceeded to executive session for further discussion of the fisheries treaty and the doors were reopened three hours later.

January 7, 1889

Senator Edmonds of Vermont moved that the doors of the Senate be closed for consideration of a joint resolution declaring the sense of Congress in respect to the connection of European governments with the construction or control of any ship-canal across the Isthmus of Darien or across Central America. The Senate discussed that matter in executive session and the doors were reopened after five hours and five minutes.

January 29, 1889

Senator Hale of Maine moved that the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of amendments to the diplomatic and consular appropriation bill pertaining to the "execution of the obligations and the protection of the interests of the United States existing under the treaty between the United States and the Government of the Samoan Islands" and to the "survey, improvement, and occupation of the bay and harbor of Pago Pago in the island of Tutuila, Samoa." The doors were closed and were reopened one hour and five minutes later.

February 11, 1889

Senator Sherman of Ohio moved that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of a bill reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations concerning the protection of United States interests in Panama. After two hours and fifty minutes the doors were reopened.

March 17, 1890

Senator Sherman of Ohio moved that the doors be closed for discussion of a proposed change to the Senate Rules concerning secrecy in Senate consideration of nominations when the character or qualifications of the nominee are being discussed. The doors of the Senate were closed and fifty minutes later the Senate proceeded to the consideration of executive business. The doors were reopened after twenty minutes in executive session.

June 25, 1890

Senator Sherman of Ohio moved that the doors be closed for consideration of resolutions concerning negotiations with the Government of Spain for the purpose of "inducing that Government to consent to the establishment in the Island of Cuba of a free and independent republic." The doors were closed and were reopened after fifty-five minutes.

February 16, 1891

Senator Edmonds of Vermont moved that the Senate proceed to the consideration of executive business concerning the diplomatic and consular appropriation bill. The doors were closed at 12:38 p. m. and were reopened four hours and ten minutes later.

October 10, 1893

Senator Sherman of Ohio moved that the doors be closed for consideration of a resolution concerning the registration of Chinese laborers in the United States. The doors were closed after the Sergeant-at-Arms cleared the galleries and were reopened twenty-five minutes later.

January 16, 1894

Senator Hoar of Massachusetts moved that the doors be closed for consideration of a proposed change to the Senate Rules concerning secrecy in Senate discussion of nominations when the character or qualifications of the nominee are being considered. The doors were closed and were reopened twenty minutes later.

\*April 17, 1894

Senator Morgan of Alabama moved that the Senate proceed to the consideration of executive business for a brief session. The doors were closed at 1:50 p. m. and were reopened twenty-five minutes later.

May 7, 1894

Senator Chandler of New Hampshire moved that a secret session be ordered for consideration of a resolution proposing "that the pending Chinese treaty be considered in open session." The galleries were cleared and the doors closed at 11:25 a. m. While the doors were closed the Senate proceeded to the consideration of executive business and at 5:38 p. m. the doors were reopened.

June 5, 1896

Senator Sherman of Ohio moved that the doors be closed. The Senate had been informed that a vessel of the United States named the Competitor had been captured by a Spanish ship of war and that one or more United States citizens had been captured, tried, and condemned to death by a military court in Cuba. A resolution had been proposed requesting the President to inform the Senate on "all the facts and proceedings relative to such capture, sentence and imprisonment of such citizens." The doors were closed for consideration of the resolution and were reopened after forty minutes.

After the doors had been reopened, Senator Hill of Tennessee moved that the Senate return to secret session for further consideration



of the resolution. The doors were closed and were reopened at the expiration of twelve minutes.

February 15, 1897

Senator Hoar of Massachusetts moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for further consideration of a joint resolution to declare the Clayton-Bulwer treaty abrogated. The motion carried and, after debate, the resolution was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. The Senate then proceeded to the consideration of executive business on the motion of Senator Turpie of Indiana. After two hours spent in executive session the doors were reopened.

\*February 8, 1898

Senator Davis of Minnesota moved that the Senate proceed to the consideration of executive business. The doors were closed and were reopened after two hours and ten minutes were spent in executive session.

April 1, 1898

Senator Lodge of Massachusetts, desiring to bring before the Senate a matter which he believed should be considered in secret legislative session, moved that the galleries be cleared and the doors closed. The doors were closed at 12:35 p. m. and the Senate deliberated behind closed doors until 4:30 p. m., when the Senate proceeded to the consideration of executive business. After ten minutes in executive session the doors were reopened.

April 25, 1898

Senator Davis of Minnesota moved that the Senate go behind closed doors to consider a bill declaring that war existed between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain. The Senate proceeded behind closed doors, as in Committee of the Whole, to consider the resolution. It was reported to the Senate without amendment, ordered to a third reading and read the third time. The bill passed unanimously.

May 18, 1898

Senator Hawley of Connecticut moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for consideration of a conference report concerning regulations governing the Quartermaster's Department's and Ordnance Department's purchases of military supplies. The Senate proceeded to deliberate behind closed doors and after further debate the conference report was agreed to.

May 31, 1898

Senator Turpie of Indiana moved that the Senate proceed to secret legislative session for continued consideration of the prosecution of the war against Spain. The doors were closed and were reopened two hours and fifty-three minutes later.

January 6, 1899

Senator Davis of Minnesota moved that the doors of the Senate be closed for consideration of a resolution which would request the President "so far as in his judgement is not inconsistent with the public interest, to communicate to the Senate the instructions given to the commissioners who negotiated the pending treaty (with Spain) at Paris." The doors were closed and were reopened twenty-five minutes later.

January 16, 1900

Senator Davis of Minnesota moved that the doors be closed for consideration of that portion of a resolution concerning insurrection in the Philippine Islands pertaining to all instructions given the commissioners who negotiated the Spanish treaty and all communications between the Government and the Commissioners to the Philippine Islands. The doors were closed and were reopened ten minutes later.

March 9, 1900

Senator Davis of Minnesota moved that the doors be closed for consideration of a motion to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from any further consideration of a Senate resolution expressing sympathy for the South African Republic in their "heroic battle against cruelty and oppression." The Senate deliberated behind closed doors for one hour and forty-two minutes, at which time the doors were reopened.

May 8, 1900

Senator Tillman of South Carolina moved that the doors be closed for discussion concerning the naval appropriation bill. The doors were closed at 4:30 p. m. and at 4:55 the Senate proceeded to executive business. The doors were reopened at 5:02 p. m.

May 9, 1900

Senator Vest of Missouri moved that the doors be closed for consideration of the naval appropriation bill. The doors were closed at 12:20 p. m. and were reopened at 1:03 p. m.

January 26, 1903

Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island moved that the Senate proceed to secret session for consideration of a resolution which would request the President to inform the Senate as to the extent of the role played by Señor Herran in the negotiation of a treaty with Colombia. The doors were closed at 12:28 p. m. and were reopened at 2:00 p. m. for the consideration of unfinished business.

February 6, 1903

Senator Cullom of Illinois moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors to discuss a treaty with Colombia concerning the construction of an interoceanic canal across Panama. The doors were closed at 1:15 p. m. and were reopened at 1:58 p. m.

March 11, 1904

Senator Hoar of Massachusetts moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for the consideration of a motion to refer to the Committee on Finance a resolution which would require the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit to the Senate all available information concerning H. Smith Woolley, whose name was before the Senate for confirmation as assayer in charge at Boise, Idaho. The doors were closed at 12:30 p. m. and were reopened at 5:45 p. m.

January 9, 1906

Senator Lodge of Massachusetts moved that the Senate go behind closed doors for consideration of a resolution to request the President to supply the Senate with certain information relating to a proposed conference in Algeciras, Spain for the purpose of a major power discussion of Moroccan affairs. The doors were closed and were reopened after three hours and fifty minutes in secret session.

January 11, 1906

Senator Morgan of Alabama moved that the Senate proceed in secret session for the consideration of the resolution pertaining to the proposed conference on Moroccan affairs. The doors were closed and the Senate considered the question behind closed doors for two hours and forty-five minutes.

January 21, 1907

Senator Teller of Colorado moved that the doors of the Senate be closed for consideration of a resolution concerning the authority of the President to discharge the enlisted men of a battalion of the Twenty-fifth Infantry stationed at Brownsville, Texas during the Brownsville incident. The doors were closed and were reopened one hour and forty-five minutes later.

\*January 22, 1909

Senator Cullom of Illinois moved that the Senate proceed to the consideration of executive business. The doors were closed and were reopened one hour later at 5:10 p. m.

January 15, 1912

Senator Lodge of Massachusetts moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for consideration of an arbitration treaty between the United States and Great Britain. The doors were closed and after one hour and five minutes were reopened.

August 2, 1912

Senator Root of New York moved that the doors be closed for discussion of a resolution concerning foreign occupation of "any harbor or other place in the American continents so situated that the occupation thereof for naval or military purposes might threaten the communications or the safety of the United States." The doors were closed at 11:30 a. m. and were reopened at 2:20 p. m.

October 20, 1913

Senator Bacon of Georgia moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for consideration of a resolution to remove from the table a bill which would request the Postmaster General to transmit to the Senate all papers relating to the appointment of a postmaster at Salem, Ohio. The doors were closed and were reopened after thirty-five minutes in secret session.

July 14, 1914

Senator Stone of Missouri moved that the Senate go behind closed doors for consideration of a request for unanimous consent to place the hearings, record, report, and minority views of the Committee on Banking and Currency concerning the confirmation of Mr. Thomas D. Jones on the public record. The doors were closed at 12:40 p. m. and were reopened at 5:25 p. m.

August 21, 1916

Senator O'Gorman of New York moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for further consideration of a bill which pertained to the regulation of immigration to, and the residence of aliens in, the United States. The doors were closed at 1:30 p. m. and were reopened at 2:00 p. m.

December 11, 1916

Senator Pomerene of Ohio moved that the Senate go behind closed doors for further consideration of that portion of the immigration bill which pertained to United States-Japanese relations. The doors were closed and were reopened after one hour and a half.

January 19, 1917

Senator Gallinger moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for consideration of a resolution which would establish an investigating committee of three Senators for the purpose of ascertaining what Senator or officer of the Senate was guilty of revealing remarks made in confidence behind closed doors concerning the confirmation proceedings of the Honorable Winthrop M. Daniels to become a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission. The doors were closed and were reopened after one hour and forty minutes in secret session.

February 6, 1917

Senator Pittman of Nevada moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for consideration of the confirmation of Dr. Cary T. Grayson as a rear admiral in the Navy. The doors were closed at 11:45 a. m. and were reopened at 5:15 p. m.

April 30, 1917

Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska moved that the Senate proceed to executive session for further consideration of a motion to request the President to requisition all vessels of alien enemies of the United States in the ports and waters of the United States. The doors were closed and were reopened five hours later.



May 7, 1917

Senator Martin of Virginia moved that the Senate proceed to secret session for consideration of a bill to punish acts of interference with the foreign relations, the neutrality, and the foreign commerce of the United States, to punish espionage, and to better enforce the criminal laws of the United States. The doors were closed and were reopened after four hours and fifty-five minutes.

May 8, 1917

Senator Martin of Virginia moved that the Senate proceed to secret session for consideration of the espionage bill. The doors were closed and were reopened four hours and forty minutes later.

May 16, 1917

Senator Martin of Virginia moved that the Senate proceed in secret session for the consideration of Army and Naval appropriations. The doors were closed at 12:20 p. m. and were reopened four hours and fifty minutes later.

March 1, 1921

Senator Lodge of Massachusetts moved that the Senate proceed to secret session for consideration of the naval appropriation bill. The doors were closed and the galleries cleared at 4:05 p. m. and were reopened at 6:35 p. m.

April 14, 1924

Senator Lodge of Massachusetts moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for consideration of the Japanese exclusion provision of the immigration act. The doors were closed and were reopened fifty minutes later.

February 10, 1934

Senator Robinson of Arkansas moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for consideration of the investigation of air and ocean mail contracts involving William P. MacCracken, Jr., et al. The doors were closed at 3:50 p. m. and were reopened at 4:14 p. m.

February 13, 1934

Senator Black of Alabama moved that the Senate go behind closed doors for the purpose of deliberation on contempt proceedings in the case against William P. MacCracken, Jr. The doors were closed at 2:45 p. m. and were reopened three hours and a half later.

February 14, 1934

At 1:20 p. m. the Senate proceeded to the consideration of contempt proceedings. After deliberating for six hours the doors were reopened. Respondents William P. MacCracken, Jr. and L. H. Brittin were found in contempt and ordered to ten days in the District of Columbia jail. Gilbert Givvin and Harris M. Hanshue were found not in contempt of the Senate.

June 26, 1942

Senator Walsh of Massachusetts moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for discussion of information pertaining to the Navy's policy with relation to the building of battleships and airplane carriers. The doors were closed at 4:30 p. m. and were reopened at 5:53 p. m.

October 7, 1943

On October 6, 1943 Senator Barkley of Kentucky requested that it be ordered by unanimous consent that the Senate proceed behind closed doors on the seventh to hear Senators Richard B. Russell, James M. Mead, Albert B. Chandler, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., and Ralph O. Brewster who had recently returned from the war fronts. On the seventh, the doors were closed at 12:03 p. m. and were reopened at 4:30 p. m. Later in the day, Senator Barkley repeated his request for the next day.

October 8, 1943

At 12:12 p. m. the Senate went behind closed doors to hear the remainder of the reports from the Senators who visited the war fronts. The doors were reopened at 5:18 p. m.

April 11, 1963

Senator Thurmond of South Carolina moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors to discuss the Armed Services Committee amendment to the Armed Services appropriations bill for fiscal 1964 to authorize the appropriation of \$196 million to put the component parts of the

Nike-Zeus system in production. The doors were closed at 1:51 p. m. and were reopened at 6:10 p. m.

July 14, 1966

Senator Mansfield of Montana moved that the Senate proceed behind closed doors for consideration of a resolution which would create a new Senate committee for review and oversight of security agency activities, particularly those of the Central Intelligence Agency. The doors were closed at 12:25 p. m. and were reopened at 4:05 p. m.

Source: Congressional Record, 1884-1966.