

Filibuster!

Introduction

The elections are over, the people have spoken... and for you and your fellow Senators, the result was a bloodbath!!! You find yourselves in the minority after sweeping changes to the Senate and a transfer of power at the White House.

You're all that stands against a legislative agenda that promises to up-end Democracy as you know it...

Now you must stand together and help each other use the most powerful tool you have to block upcoming policy votes - the Filibuster!

Overview

Filibuster! is a semi-cooperative game card for 3-5 players acting as a group of minority Senators in the Upper Chamber of Congress.

The White House and new majority are aggressively pushing a new set of policies that you must work together to prevent by utilizing the tried-and-tested political tools of Influence and the Filibuster.

Each policy in question acts as a round of play, and is resolved through a Bidding Phase to determine the Senate Minority Leader, and a Filibuster Phase to execute the Filibuster.

Players must successfully block 4 out of 7 policies from being enacted by filibustering for a certain amount of time. One player (The Senate Minority Leader) actively works on the Filibuster while the other players support the Filibuster through special actions, gaining influence behind the scenes. Players complete all 7 rounds unless they fail to block 4 policies. If 4 policies are enacted at any time, all of the players lose and the game ends! Of course, if the players stop the majority's policy agenda in its tracks, the minority Senator who managed to accrue the most influence during the game is the true winner!

Components

Policy Deck - The policy agenda laid out by the current White House and majority Senators. Policies the minority Senators (players) are trying to prevent!

Time Deck - Played by the Senate Minority Leader. This deck dictates the round length, containing cards that allow play to continue, reduce your Influence, stop the Filibuster dead in its tracks, and every once in awhile... help you out!

Action Deck - Cards used by the players to increase the length of their Filibuster, gain influence within their Party, and assist the Senate Minority Leader.

Influence Tokens - Used during the Bidding Phase to determine the Senate Minority Leader for each round after the first.

The player with the most Influence at the end of the game (if 4 or more policies are blocked) is the game winner. Come in values of 1, 5, and 10.

Filibuster, Difficulty, and Voting Game Mat with Tokens - Tracks the progress of each Filibuster, round difficulty, and voting mechanic.

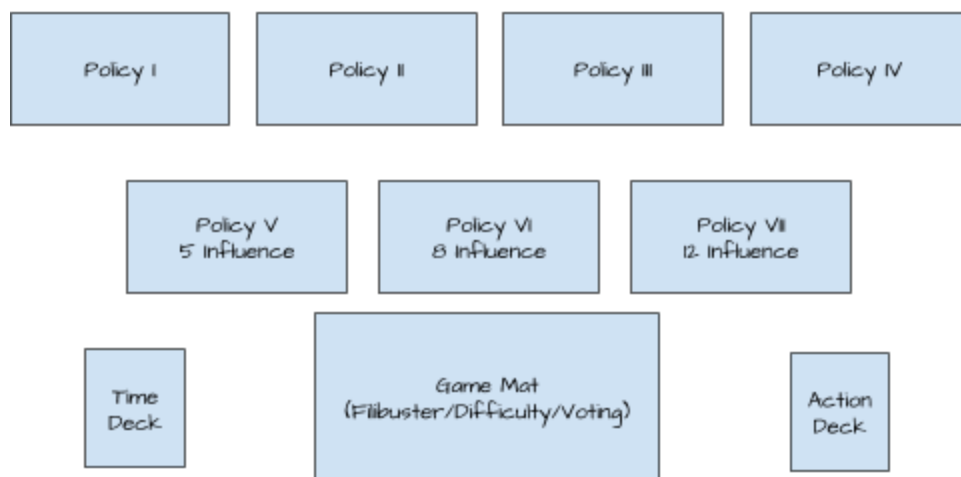
"Aye" and "Nay" Cards - Each player receives an "Aye" and "Nay" card to use for voting on voluntary ending of Filibusters.

Setup

Shuffle the Policy Deck. Deal 7 policies face down in the center of the play area, with 4 policies in the first row, and 3 policies in the second. Place 3 influence on the 5th policy, 5 influence on the 6th policy, and 7 influence on the 7th policy. Shuffle the Action card deck and deal 4 cards to each player. Each player also receives 3 influence and an "Aye" and "Nay" card. Place the game mat in the play area below the policies, with the Time Deck and Action decks on either side of it.

Flip the policy proposal in the first slot face up to indicate it is "in play." For the first round, the bidding phase is skipped - the last person to visit Washington, D.C. is the Senate Minority Leader. If this cannot be determined, decide the Senate Minority Leader randomly.

Filibuster! Play Area



Filibuster Phase

Shuffle the Time Deck at the beginning of each Filibuster Phase. The Round Difficulty is determined by the number of successes the minority already has. **The initial difficulty requires the minority Senators to reach a Filibuster time of 6 hours.** Each successful Filibuster raises the minimum time needed to successfully Filibuster by 3 hours. When a Filibuster fails, the difficulty for the next round does not increase. Difficulty caps at 24 hours. Use the **Filibuster Track** to keep track of round difficulty.

Play begins with the Senate Minority Leader. During their turn, the Senate Minority Leader first plays a card from the Time Deck. The Senate Minority Leader must then play an action card from their hand that increases the length of the current Filibuster, provided it has not been ended by the Time Deck. The Filibuster length is increased by the amount found in the upper left portion of the card played. If the Senate Minority Leader has no cards, or they only have cards with the **Assist** keyword in their hand, the opportunity to play a card is forfeit.

Use the Filibuster Track to indicate progress on the Filibuster each round.

After the Senate Minority Leader completes their turn, play passes to their left. **Note: When beginning a new Filibuster Phase, after the new Senate Minority Leader begins the round, play begins where the last round left off (moving to the next player in sequence).** If the new Senate Minority Leader was the next person in sequence, play passes to their left as normal.

Minority Senators **do not** play a card from the Time Deck during their turn. Instead, Minority Senators begin their turn by drawing one card from the Action Deck. They may then take one of the following actions:

- Draw an additional Action Card
- Play an Action Card with the **Assist** Keyword
- Pass a non-assist Action Card to the Senate Minority Leader

Minority Senators may only play action cards with the **Assist** keyword; they **may not play** cards that directly increase the length of a Filibuster for the Senate Minority Leader.

Playing an action card with the **Assist** keyword rewards Influence tokens equal the value shown in the **star** in the upper left portion of the card. The player simply follows the directions printed on the card when playing an **Assist**.

Minority Senators who pass a card to the Senate Minority Leader are rewarded influence equal to the value in the **clock** in the upper left portion of the card.

The Senate Minority Leader takes the first turn in each Filibuster Phase, returning to the Senate Minority Leader after each minority Senator's turn. For example, a 4-player game with players A, B, C, and D would like this if "A" were the Senate Minority Leader:

A B A C A D A B A C A D A, Etc, etc.

Play continues on the Filibuster until a card is drawn in the Time Deck that ends it, there are no more Time Cards to draw, or players successfully reach the maximum Filibuster time of 24 hours, at which time the Filibuster immediately ends in a success.

Once the Filibuster is ended, players check to see if the Filibuster was successful (The length of the Filibuster is greater than or equal to the Round Difficulty).

If the Filibuster was successful, the policy is blocked. Turn the Policy so the **Reward** is on the bottom of the card - you've stifled the Majority's agenda! You receive the **Reward** as described on the Policy card..

If the Filibuster failed, turn the Policy so the **Setback** is on the bottom of the card - the policy is enacted! Players suffer a **Setback** as described on the card, which must be implemented immediately!

The Senate Minority Leader is awarded influence equal to the length of the Filibuster at the end of the phase, **regardless of the outcome**. Any cards or tokens players have remain in their possession. There is no limit to hand size or number of influence tokens a player may have.

Voting to End a Filibuster

At the beginning of their turn, the Senate Minority Leader may, twice per round, attempt to end a Filibuster voluntarily by calling the Senators to a vote. Players may discuss the idea before casting a vote with their "Aye" or "Nay" card simultaneously in the play area. The Senate Minority Leader must vote "Aye" when calling a vote. **An "Aye" vote must be unanimous to take effect!**

Discussing a vote is the **only** time players may offer trades or "incentives" to other players in order to earn their vote. Players may "buy" their fellow senators, with cards or influence. However, you cannot manipulate turn order as a bargaining tool.

If the "Ayes have it," the Filibuster immediately ends as a success, however the players forfeit the reward for the round and the Senate Minority Leader earns half the value of the influence earned, rounding up.

If the "Nays have it," each player who voted "Nay" gains influence equal to the policy round. Play then continues as normal.

Votes may only be successfully carried out twice per game, after which this option is no longer available.

Bidding Phase - "Snap Elections"

After a Policy is enacted or defeated, a new round begins, starting with "snap elections" for Minority Leader and a new Bidding Phase.

Every round after the first starts with a bidding phase that determines which player will act as Senate Minority Leader, and therefore take the responsibility (and credit!) for the upcoming Filibuster. The previous Senate Minority Leader places the opening bid.

Each player in turn may bid influence tokens to attempt to become the next Senate Minority Leader. Alternatively, a player may choose to pass, saving their influence for other purposes.

Bidding continues in a clockwise motion until each player consecutively passes. If you pass and bidding comes back around to you, you may either pass again, or choose to place a bid.

Once all other players consecutively pass after the last bid is placed, the player with the highest influence bid is elected Senate Minority Leader and will Filibuster the active policy. All influence bid by all players is paid to the Treasury. The bids represent each player spending their political influence to gather votes - they still spend the influence and get the votes, it simply may not be enough to get elected.

After bids have been paid, the next policy is turned face up to indicate that it is in play. If players are starting the 5th, 6th, or 7th, Policy Round, the elected Senate Minority Leader will earn the influence reward that was placed with the policy **at the end of the Filibuster Phase**.

Finally, **except for the newly elected Senate Minority Leader**, players with fewer than 4 cards in hand draw cards from the Action Card deck until they have a hand of 4 cards.

Play on the next Filibuster phase then begins.

FAQ

- **Can I pass an Assist card to the current Senate Minority Leader?** No, players may only pass cards that increase the Filibuster Track to the Senate Minority Leader.
- **As the Senate Minority Leader, can I save my Action cards for later, i.e. skip playing a card from my hand after drawing a Time card?** If the Senate Minority Leader has an Action card in hand that can increase the Filibuster Track, it must be played.
- **Yay! We are winning the round! Can't we just end the Filibuster now?** The Senate Minority Leader may call a vote to end a Filibuster voluntarily (see *Voting to End a Filibuster*). Keep in mind that the Leader may only call a vote twice per round, and players can only successfully vote to end a Filibuster twice per game. If you are unable to use this option, play must continue until the players reach 24 hours on the Filibuster Track, or a card that ends the Filibuster is drawn from the Time Deck.

- **I bid a lot of influence but ended up losing the bidding phase. Why do I still pay my losing bid to the Treasury?** The best way to think of your influence bid is to think of it as the expenditure of influence to gather votes from other Senators within the party. You would still earn all of those votes, but if someone used more of their influence within the party to gather even more votes, they would still walk away with the prize. Such is the way of politics...!
- **Can I tell other players what's in my hand?** While we encourage table talk, wheeling and dealing, and robust discussion amongst all the players, there is one restriction the players should try to observe - you may not tell any other players the *specific* cards remaining in your hand. Any other hints, clues, or general statements about your cards or questions about other players' cards are acceptable.
- **How does discussion work before a vote?** When preparing for a vote, players may trade cards and/or influence, or make promises for such trades in exchange for a fellow Senator's vote. Of course, this is Politics...! Players may choose to be as cooperative or as deceptive as they wish; a player may declare or trade whatever they wish, but ultimately they may choose whatever they want for their final vote. *Any cards or influenced paid or traded **before** a vote is final, even if the expected outcome does not occur.* A particularly cunning Senator may use this to their personal advantage, or to sabotage a powerful opponent. But be wary that such tactics could severely impair your ability to cooperate with the other Senators in the future, and could even cost the players the entire game!