## Senatus Consultum Ultimum

Whether it be the Athenian Council of 500, the Senate of Rome, the Great Council of the Serene Republic of Venice, or the Parliament of England, many of history’s greatest realms have ben advised or ruled by deliberative bodies drawn from the aristocratic classes. In *ACKS* these bodies are referred to as **senates**, and a realm with a senate is called a **senatorial realm.** Senatorial realms have certain advantages over other types of realms, but suffer certain disadvantages as well. Adventurers may be elected to rule senatorial realms, or may establish senatorial realms in order to secure the advantages a senate offers.

###### Benefits of a Senate

A senatorial realm gains the following advantages:

* Each domain in the realm gains a permanent +1 bonus to its base morale score. Realms with senates tend to inspire more patriotism and have more stability.
* Non-henchman assigned to rule vassal domains have a base morale of 0 instead of -2. A senatorial realm commands loyalty to its senate even if not every member of the government is personally loyal to the current ruler.
* If a demand for a duty (e.g. build additional stronghold, call to arms, tax demanded, or loan demanded) is approved by the senate, it does not trigger a Henchman loyalty check.
* Levying militia from the realm does not reduce the morale of the realm, provided the levy is approved by the senate. Senatorial realms often pride themselves on their citizen-soldiers.

###### Restrictions of a Senate

A senatorial realm has the following restrictions:

* The ruler must consult the senate before invading another realm.
* The ruler must consult the senate before demanding a duty from any vassals.
* The ruler must consult the senate when appointing a new character to manage a vassal domain.

Particular senatorial realms may have different restrictions, but these are typical of all. If a ruler does not consult the senate when required to do so, or enacts a policy that the senate voted against, then the realm immediately loses all of the benefits of being a senatorial realm. The benefits are only restored if the ruler successfully regains the approval of the senate. Rules for petitioning the senate are provided below.

###### Establishing a Senatorial realm

A senatorial realm can be established in one of two ways.

1. The ruler of an existing realm can establish a senate to advise him. In this case, the ruler will continue to rule his realm, subject to the restrictions imposed by the new senate.
2. Several independent rulers can merge their realms together into one larger realm, establishing a senate as the new realm’s governing body. In this case, the first action of the new senate will be to appoint a character as the new senatorial realm’s ruler. The new ruler will manage the realm subject to the restrictions of the senate. Realms where the ruler is chosen by the senate are often referred to as **republic**s and their rulers bear titles such as consul, prime minister, or doge.

Rules for construction of senates are provided below.

###### Constructing A Senate

The following guidelines are offered to help Judges establish senates for NPC realms.

1. Determine the **size of the senate**. This could range from as few as a dozen to over 2,000 senatorial seats. Larger realms typically have larger senates.
2. Determine the **requirements of office**. Requirements might be a minimum level of experience, a title, a wealth threshold, or a property holding. Write down a few sentences about how senators are selected and what powers they hold.
3. Determine the number of **leading senators** in the senate. (Leading senators are named NPCs with whom the adventurers interact. Other senators are called **minor senators**.) For each leading senator, the Judge should generate the following characteristics: alignment; class; level; Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma; and proficiencies.
4. Assign each leading senator 1d3 **policy objectives** which he aims to achieve while in office. A list of random policy objectives is provided below.
5. Assign each leading senator an **influence value**, which is the number of votes that the senator controls. If the number of votes controlled by all leading senators is less than the number of senatorial seats, the remaining votes are held by **independent minor senators**. If the number of votes controlled is greater than the number of senatorial seats, reduce the number of leading senators, starting with the least influential.
6. Group leading senators with compatible policy objectives together to create **political factions**. Historically, a common configuration has been two opposed factions, such as the Optimates and Populares; the Blues and Greens; the Royalists and Parliamentarians. Judges who prefer more complexity can, of course, have additional factions. Write down a few sentences about the platform of each faction.
7. Total up to the influence of the leading senators in each faction. If one faction has a majority of influence, it is the **ruling faction**. Otherwise, the faction with the most influence is the **leading faction**.

**Size of the Senate:** A senate may have as few as 4 senators to as many as 1,200 senators, even more. More powerful realms typically have larger senates, but do not have to. The larger a senate, the easier it is to qualify for, and the harder it is for a small number of senators to dominate it. The Size of the Senate table summarizes these factors.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Senatorial Seats | Minimum Realm Size | Minimum Senator Level | Leading Senators | Influence per Senator |
| 4-15 | March | Ruler’s Level -1 | 1d4 | 2d3 votes |
| 16-50 | County | Ruler’s Level -3 | 2d6 | 2d6 votes |
| 51 – 225 | Principality | Ruler’s Level -5 | 2d6+3 | 2d6x3 votes |
| 225 – 1,200 | Kingdom | Ruler’s Level -7 | 3d6+2 | 2d10x5 votes |
| 1,200 or more | Empire | Ruler’s Level -9 | 4d6+1 | 2d10x20 votes |

EXAMPLE: The Auran Empire, as an empire, could have a Senate of 1,201 or more seats. However, the Judge decides it has a smaller, more manageable senate of 600 seats. The Empire is ruled by a 14th level ruler, so the minimum senator level will be (14-7) 7, and there will be 3d6+2 leading senators. Rolling 3d6+2, the Judge gets a total of 11, so there are 11 leading senators. He rolls 2d8 for the number of votes controlled by each senator, getting 35, 45, 55, 20, 75, 60, 10, 75, 40, 85, and 50 votes, for a total of 550 votes. 50 votes are held by independent minor senators.

**Requirements of Office:** By cross-referencing the level of the realm ruler with the size of the senate, the Judge can determine the minimum level to hold the office of senator. The Judge can use level of experience as the requirement for senator if desired. However, a character’s level of experience is a game mechanic of which the inhabitants of the game world are only indirectly aware; a better option is to impose a requirement such as wealth, title of nobility, or families. The Requirements of Office has recommendations for each level. The Bribe column is used to determine the cost to bribe a senator (see below).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Required Level | Required Title | Required Wealth | Required Families | Bribe (+1/+2/+3) |
| 3 | Baron | 5,000gp | 40 families | 5gp/35gp/150gp |
| 4 | Baron | 10,000gp | 80 families | 10gp/70gp/300gp |
| 5 | Baron | 20,000gp | 160 families | 20gp/150gp/600gp |
| 6 | Marquis | 38,000gp | 285 families | 38gp/75gp/1,150gp |
| 7 | Count | 75,000gp | 550 families | 75gp/525gp/2,275gp |
| 8 | Count | 150,000gp | 1,200 families | 150gp/1,050gp/4,500gp |
| 9 | Duke | 350,000gp | 2,650 families | 350gp/2,450gp/10,000gp |
| 10 | Duke | 500,000gp | 3,750 families | 500gp/3,500gp/15,000gp |
| 11+ | Prince | 1,125,000gp | 8,500 families | 1,125gp/7,875gp/35,000gp |

EXAMPLE: As a 600-seat body under a 14th level ruler, the Auran senate is open to 7th level characters and above. The Judge decides that in the game world, the senate is open to characters who hold the title of Legate (count) or above and manage realms with at least 550 families.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Die Roll | Policy Objective |
| 1 | Establish overland trade routes |
| 2 | Establish maritime trade routes |
| 3 | Increase size of army |
| 4 | Decrease size of army |
| 5 | Increase size of navy |
| 6 | Decrease size of navy |
| 7 | Replace realm ruler with new ruler |
| 8 | Preserve current realm ruler |
| 9 | Conquer neighboring realm |
| 10 | Make peace with neighboring realm |
| 11 | Build strongholds on border with neighboring realm |
| 12 | Decrease taxes on peasants in realm |
| 13 | Increase taxes on peasants in realm |
| 14 | Eliminate slavery in realm (institute, if none) |
| 15 | Re-distribute land from nobility to peasants |
| 16 | Support existing faith of the realm |
| 17 | Introduce new faith to the realm |
| 18 | Increase size of urban settlements in personal realm |
| 19 | Increase territory and population of personal realm |
| 20 | Gain monopolies over merchandise in personal realm |

**Policy Objectives:** The Policy Objectives table can be used to randomly determine goals for the leading senators. Re-roll conflicting results. The Judge should interpret the policy objectives in light of the his campaign.

EXAMPLE: Senator Ulrand Valerian is being assigned 1d3 policy objectives. The Judge rolls for 3 policy goals and gets an 11, 15, and 16. He interprets these goals in light of Valerian’s position as a highly Lawful traditionalist serving as a legate on the borderlands. Valerian has a policy objective of strengthening the border forts along the Krysivor River because he fears the coming beastman invasion. He wants to re-distribute land from the nobility to the peasants in the civilized areas because he believes the Empire can only recover if it returns to its foundation of independent citizen-farmers. He wants to spread the faith of the realm because he believes that the Chthonic gods are subverting the Empire, its laws, and its patriotism.

A senator’s influence and policy objectives are secret until revealed in play.

**Senates Established by Adventurers:** An adventurer who establishes a senate only performs step 1 (determine the size of the senate) and step 2 (determine the requirements for office). He can then appoint qualified senators as desired. Normally these will be the adventurer’s friends, henchman, and vassals, and/or henchman of the same. A ruler who establishes a senate begins with very strong influence over it. For the first 1d6 months after the senate is established, all its senators will vote for the ruler’s policies.

Politics is unpredictable, however, and yesterday’s trusted right-hand man can be tomorrow’s rival. 1d6 months after the adventurer has established his senate, the Judge should randomly determine how many leading senators emerge as influential within the senate. The Judge should then select leading senators from among the NPCs appointed by the adventurer, giving more weight to NPCs that have high INT, WIS, CHA, class level, and relevant proficiencies such as Command, Diplomacy, Leadership, Military Strategy, Mystic Aura. The Judge should then choose or roll for policy objectives and influence for the senate’s new leaders, and create political factions guided by these results.

###### Consulting the Senate

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Senate Voting** | |
| **Adjusted Die Roll** | **Result** |
| 2- | Votes Against and Condemns Ruler’s Policy |
| 3-5 | Votes Against Ruler’s Policy |
| 6-8 | Votes With Current Trend |
| 9-11 | Vote For Ruler’s Policy |
| 12+ | Votes For and Endorses Ruler’s Policy |

When a ruler seeks the senate’s support for a policy, he must **consult the senate**. When a ruler consults the senate, the Judge should roll 2d6 on the Senate Voting table for each leading senator to see if the senator votes for or against the ruler’s policy. A senator that is **charmed** will always vote however the character who has charmed him directs.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Condition** | **Voting Roll Adjustment** |
| Ruler’s current Domain Morale score | + Domain Morale score |
| Ruler does not have Diplomacy | -2 |
| Ruler has Mystic Aura | +2 |
| Ruler is Lawful and never been implicated in bribery, etc. | +1 |
| Senator is henchman of ruler, or of ruler’s henchman | +5 |
| Senator and ruler are in same political faction | +1 |
| Senator and ruler are in opposed political factions | -2 |
| Other senator from same faction has endorsed ruler | +1 per endorsement |
| Other senator from same faction has condemned ruler | -1 per condemnation |
| Ruler’s proposed policy helps senator’s policy objective | +1 per objective |
| Ruler’s proposed policy hinders senator’s policy objective | -2 per objective |
| Senator has been bribed by ruler | +1/+2/+3 |
| Senator has been bribed by ruler’s rivals | -1/-2/-3 |
| Senator has been intimidated or seduced by ruler | +2 |
| Senator previously but no longer charmed, intimidated or seduced by ruler | -5 |
| Senator has been intimidated or seduced by ruler’s rivals | -2 |
| Senator previously but no longer charmed, intim., or seduc. By ruler’s rivals | +2 |
| Senator owes ruler for prior favor | +1 per favor |
| One-third or more of realm’s military loyal to ruler | +1 |
| All of realm’s military loyal to ruler | +2 |

A result of “Votes Against and Condemns Petition” means that the senator votes against the petition while giving a rousing condemnation of the petition and the petitioner, which will influence future votes by members of his faction. A result of “Votes Against Petition” means the senator votes against the petition but does not urge others to do so.

A result of “Votes with Current Trend” means the senator votes for the petition if more votes have so far been cast for the petition, and votes against the petition if more votes have so far been cast against the petition. If no votes have been cast for or against yet, the senator abstains.

A result of “Votes For Petition” means the senator votes for the petition but does not urge others to do so. Finally, a result of “Votes For and Endorses Petition” means that the senator votes for the petition and gives an inspiring speech supporting the petition and petitioner which will influence future votes by members of his faction.

Conduct voting rolls in order starting with the most influential senator and continue until a majority of the senators have voted either in favor or against the ruler’s policy. Remember that a leading senator’s vote carries a number of votes equal to the senator’s influence. (These other, less influential senators are assumed to vote “off camera”).

###### Voting Roll Adjustments

To reflect circumstances that may affect the senator’s vote, apply the Voting Roll adjustments shown, based on the ruler, the senator voting, and the policy being discussed.

**Political Factions**: A ruler may choose to align himself with a political faction in the senate. Doing so earns him a +1 bonus to the voting rolls of all senators of the same faction but a -2 penalty to the voting rolls of all senators in opposed factions.

**Bribery:** Rulers may bribe senators prior to a vote in order to ensure a more favorable outcome. Any character can bribe, but characters without Bribery proficiency must pay double the listed amount and cannot exceed a bonus of +2. On a voting roll result of 2, a bribed senator will reveal that the ruler bribed him. At the Judge’s discretion, a ruler’s rivals may bribe senators to vote against the ruler.

**Intimidation:** Rulers may intimidate senators prior to the vote in order to ensure a more favorable outcome. The character must have the Intimidation proficiency, be in a position to implicitly or explicitly threaten the senator, and grossly outrank or outnumber him. However, if a senator who was previously intimidated by the ruler is able to escape his dominance, a -5 penalty applies instead of a +2 bonus. On a voting roll result of 2, an intimidated senator will reveal that the ruler intimidated him. At the Judge’s discretion, a ruler’s rivals may intimidate senators to vote against the ruler.

**Seduction:** Petitioners may seduce senators who are potentially attracted to them. The character must have Seduction proficiency and be in a position to entice or allure the senator. However, if a senator was previously seduced by a petitioner and thereafter not well-treated, a -5 penalty applies instead of a +2 bonus. On a voting roll result of 2, a seduced senator will reveal that the ruler seduced him. At the Judge’s discretion, a ruler’s rivals may seduce senators to vote against the ruler.

**Military Loyalty:** Divisions of troops that are led by the ruler, or by the ruler’s henchmen, count as personally loyal to the ruler. Divisions of troops led by non-henchmen or mercenary commanders do not.

###### Voting Rolls by Faction

If the adventurers have not spent time building relationships with the leading senators, then the Judge can resolve a senate consultation by rolling once for each political faction instead of for each leading senator. Follow the rules above, but only apply voting roll adjustments which are applicable to the ruler and the faction as a whole.

###### Hijinks

Rulers with access to ruffians can use hijinks to gather intelligence on, and influence over, the senate. The following hijinks are particularly useful when dealing with senatorial politics:

**Assassination:** Perpetrators can be assigned to assassinate senators. Both leading and minor senators can be assassinated. If a leading senator is assassinated, half of the minor senators he controls become independent and the other half are allocated pro rata to members of his political faction (if none, then all of the votes he controls become independent). A new leading senator will emerge in 1d6 months. If a minor senator is assassinated, it reduces the influence of the leading senator who controlled him. Minor senators are always the minimum level for the senate.

**Carousing:** Perpetrators can be told to seek out political rumors. If successful, the perpetrator learns one of the following pieces of information (roll 1d4):

1. The current influence of a random leading senator.
2. The policy objectives of a random leading senator.
3. The planned whereabouts of a random leading senator in the next 1d4 days. This information provides a +2 bonus to Assassination hijinks.
4. Compromising information worth 3d12x5gp per level with which a leading senator could be blackmailed. Blackmail can be resolved with Intimidation or Bribery proficiency (the “bribe” is not revealing the information).

**Slandering (new):** Perpetrators can spread lies and rumors about a leading senator, reducing his influence. For slandering to succeed, the perpetrator must make a successful Hear Noise throw. There is a -1 penalty on the proficiency throw per each level the perpetrator is lower than the victim. If the throw is successful, the targeted senator loses control of one minor senator per level of the perpetrator. If the proficiency throw fails by 14 or more or is an unmodified 1, the perpetrator has been caught. If caught, determine the charges with a 1d6 roll: outrage (1-3), sedition (4-5), or treason (6).

**Spying:** Perpetrators can be assigned to spy on a specific leading senator. If successful, the perpetrator will learn 2d12x100gp per level worth of compromising information with which to blackmail the senator. In addition, the spy will learn one piece of information about the senator (roll 1d4):

1. The current influence of the leading senator and 1d3 members of his political faction.
2. The policy objectives of the leading senator and 1d3 members of his political faction.
3. The senator’s current attitude towards the ruler (roll 2d6 and tell the player the number. This number will be the die roll on the senator’s next voting roll).
4. The senator’s planned whereabouts in the next 1d4 days. This information provides a +2 bonus to Assassination hijinks.

###### Gaining Influence

Adventurers who are rulers or senators themselves might seek to gain influence over independent minor senators. An independent minor senator will vote as directed by the adventurer if any of the following applies:

* The minor senator has been **charmed** by the adventurer.
* The minor senator is a henchman of the adventurer.
* The minor senator has received gifts his month from the adventurer sufficient to provide a +3 bonus on reaction rolls from a bribe.
* The minor senator has Friendly reactions with the adventurer *and* has received gifts this month from the adventurer sufficient to provide a +1 bonus to reaction rolls from a bribe.

###### Politics Is Just War Continued By Other Means

The system is purposefully open to terrible amounts of skullduggery. The system empowers and encourages the adventurers and their opponents to bribe, intimidate, seduce, or **charm** senators; assassinate or kidnap senators so they cannot vote; defame and blackmail their political opponents; and generally do all of the awful ruthless things that historical politicians have done. It is up to the Judge to determine how much of the campaign should be set aside for “politicking”. Bribery, intimidation, etc. can be extensively role-played or resolved quickly with die rolls, depending on the interests of the Judge and players.