
Robert's Rules of Order cheat sheet

1 message

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Caryn Ann,

I remember going to my first convention. And being terribly intimidated by all the parliamentary wizardry around me. Now four years later, I am well on my way to obtaining my Registered Parliamentarian credentials and have been bitten by the RONR bug with one overriding passion – it isn't hard, and it shouldn't be intimidating. The point of rules is not to gunk up the works or scare people. It is to have a smooth meeting where everyone's basic rights are respected. This is one reason I have started (with my friend Mike Seebeck) the Cult of RONR YouTube channel. If you are interested in becoming very proficient in RONR, check it out. We make RONR funny. And that's not easy to do.

But for this convention, I wanted to just give you some really basic basics.

In Liberty,

Caryn Harlos
LNC Secretary

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Quick and Not So Dirty RONR



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But for this convention, I wanted to just give you some really basic basics.

The Chair

The Chair is the presiding officer who is tasked with running a smooth meeting with impartiality. All questions go through the Chair and not directly to another member. This procedure helps to depersonalize debate and maintain decorum. This is also why it is customary to refer to other members and the chair in the meeting by surnames.

The Secretary

That's me! The Secretary is formal record-keeper of the convention and displays motions and other results of the proceedings. It is essential that you speak slowly and clearly so that I can record things accurately. Complex motions will need to be submitted to me ahead of time in writing. I don't anticipate anything like this for the e-convention, but one never knows.

The Parliamentarian

Richard Brown serves as our parliamentarian. He is there to advise the chair on the finer points of parliamentary procedure if there is a doubt. He makes no decisions, however, as that right belongs to the Chair.

Vote Tellers

These are assistants to the Convention Secretary who help gather, count, and verify ballots.

Motions

This is how business gets heard. It is basically making a statement of something you would like to see be done. For example, “I move to shorten the time for nomination speeches to ten minutes.” I am not suggesting you make that motion! That is just the type of motion that is frequently heard during elections. All motions must receive a “second.” A second by you or anyone else does not indicate agreement with the motion, it simply means that you agree that it should be heard by the body.

Amendments

This is how motions get changed. Any motion can have two levels of amendment at any one time.

For example, if there is a motion to recognize Lulu Liberty for her outstanding activism work in the past year, it might be amended by adding “and mention this award in the next Liberty Pledge.” This is one level of amendment. However that amendment itself can be amended but it must be germane to the first amendment. For instance, at this point you could not add another person to the motion that would also receive this award as only the amendment is at issue and that has only to do with a mention in Liberty Pledge. However it would be in order to amend the amendment to say “on the first page” of Liberty Pledge. In order to add another person to the motion, you would need to wait until the amendment was resolved.

This process goes on until the motion is perfected and there is no other debate, time runs out (if there are time limits), or the “question is called.”

Calling The Question (Or Move To End Debate)

This is a motion that has the effect of ending debate on the current question (or all pending questions – be specific when you move to end debate) if it passes. Because this forecloses the right of people to speak, it requires a higher threshold than the typical majority vote. This vote threshold is 2/3. Take a feel for the mood of the room before making this motion because if it is obvious that most people want to hear more debate, you will only waste time and annoy people by bringing this to a vote just to fail. However, this is a great tool when it is obvious that people are simply rehashing the same points over and over, and it is time to move on. This motion is undebatable and proceeds immediately to a vote.

Move To Extend Time

This is the opposite of calling the question, and is a request to add time to hear something that is operating under a time constraint that is about to run out. Since this is a motion to amend something previously adopted (i.e., something the body already decided – in this case the agenda) it requires a 2/3 vote. This motion is undebatable and proceeds immediately to a vote.

Raise A Point Of Personal Privilege

This is a privileged motion which means that you can interrupt the normal speaking order as long as you do not interrupt someone who is presently speaking. This is used to request resolution of items that may be limiting your ability to participate – such as chatter or unclear directions.

Request For Information

This is a privileged motion which means that you can interrupt the normal speaking order as long as you do not interrupt someone who is presently speaking. This item used to be called “Point of Information,” and many people still use that name. However, it misled people into thinking the purpose was for them to give unsolicited information when the actual purpose is for the member to ask for needed information to be given to them.

Point Of Parliamentary Inquiry

This is a privileged motion which means that you can interrupt the normal speaking order as long as you do not interrupt someone who is presently speaking. Its purpose is to request that the Chair clarify issues of parliamentary procedure in play at the moment.

Point Of Order

This is a privileged motion which means that you can interrupt the normal speaking order, and if urgent, another member while speaking. This is used to draw the Chair’s attention to a serious breach of order, rules, or the bylaws. The Chair will then make a ruling that the point of order is either “well taken” or “not well taken.” Any member may appeal the ruling of the Chair with a second. The body then makes the final determination whether to uphold or overturn the ruling of the chair.

Okay that’s it for some basic basics. If you think I missed something crucial, [let me know](#), and if there is time, I will do a follow-up.

Go forth and meet!


About The Author



Caryn Ann Harlos

Caryn Ann Harlos has not written a bio yet

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