

**A Few Parliamentary Reminders
from Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th Edition [RONR (12th ed.)]¹**

Quickly stated in plain English

1. Don't speak until the Moderator calls on you.
2. Motions can only be made after the Moderator grants permission to speak.
3. Speak to the Moderator who directs the business.
4. Don't use names during discussion.
5. There is no such thing as a "friendly amendment."
6. "Call the Question!" is out of order if the Moderator has not granted you the floor! (Plus a nonstandard form of Previous Question motion.)
7. When the business/docket is complete, a motion to adjourn is not required!

References for the Parliamentary Reminders

Assignment of the Floor:

- "Before a member in an assembly can make a motion or speak in debate, he must claim the floor by rising and addressing the chair² as described in 3:31, and must be recognized by the chair. The chair must recognize any member who seeks the floor while entitled to it....the member—either on his own initiative or at the request of the chair—should state his name, with any appropriate additional identification, as soon as the presiding officer turns toward him after he has risen and addressed the chair..." **RONR** (12th ed.) 42:2
- "Except by unanimous consent (4:58-63), a motion can be made only by one who has been recognized by the chair as having the floor. If a motion is called out by anyone who has not obtained the floor, the chair must not treat it as having been properly moved..."³ **RONR** (12th ed.) 42:4
- "When a member has risen to claim the floor or has been assigned the floor, it is out of order for another to call out a motion to adjourn, or a motion to lay the pending question on the table. If someone does so, or if calls of "Question!" are made, it is the duty of the chair to obtain order and protect the rights of the member who is entitled to the floor." **RONR** (12th ed.) 42:22

Rules of Debate:

- **"Addressing all remarks through the Chair.** Members of an assembly cannot address one another directly, but must address all remarks through the chair. If, while a member is speaking in debate, another member wishes to address a question to him—which the person speaking can permit or not as he chooses, but which is taken out of his time if does—the member desiring to ask the question rises and addresses the chair, proceeding as explained under *Request for Information* (33:6-10)" **RONR** (12th ed.) 43:22
- **"Avoiding the Use of Members' Names.** As much as possible, the use of names of members should be avoided in debate. It is better to describe a member some other way, as by saying, 'the member who spoke last,' or, 'the delegate from Mason County.' The

¹ **RONR** (12th ed.) quotes are directly from its text which does not reflect inclusive language

² Moderator is the Presbyterian designated term for the Chair.

³ Multiple other references in **RONR** (12th ed.) direct actions by the Moderator under these circumstances which may result in the Moderator recognizing the motion under certain conditions

officers of the society should always be referred to by their official titles. There is no need, however, to refer to oneself in debate in the third person as by the use of such expressions as ‘this member.’ A member’s debate is expected and intended to be partial, and the first person is quite acceptable.” **RONR** (12th ed.) 43:23

Motion to Amend:

- “The subsidiary motion to *Amend* is a motion to modify the wording—and within certain limits the meaning—of a pending motion before the pending motion itself is acted upon.” **RONR** (12th ed.) 12:1
- **“Friendly Amendments.** The term “friendly amendment” is often used to describe an amendment offered by someone who is in sympathy with the purposes of the main motion, in the belief that the amendment will either improve the statement or effect of the main motion, presumably to the satisfaction of its maker, or will increase the chances of the main motion’s adoption. Regardless of whether or not the maker of the main motion “accepts” the amendment, it must be opened to debate and voted on formally (unless adopted by unanimous consent) and is handled under the same rules as amendments generally (see 33:11-19). **RONR** (12th ed.) 12:91

Moving the Previous Question

- “The *Previous Question* is the motion used to bring the assembly to an immediate vote on one or more pending questions; its adoption does this with certain exceptions.” **RONR** (12th ed.) 16:1
- Moving the Previous Question is only in order when the member has been granted the right to speak on the pending motion, in other words, is not to be offered while seated. [see Assignment of Floor above and **RONR** (12th ed.) 16:5(3)]
- **“Equal Applications of Rules to Nonstandard Forms Such as ‘Call for the Question.’** A motion such as ‘I call for [or ‘call’] the question,’ ‘I demand the previous question,’ ‘I move to close [or ‘end’] debate,’ or ‘I move we vote now’ is simply a motion for the *Previous Question* made in nonstandard form, and it is subject to all of the rules in this section....” **RONR** (12th ed.) 16:6
- “Sometimes the mere making of a motion for the *Previous Question* or ‘call for the question’ may motivate unanimous consent to ending debate. Before or after such a motion has been seconded, the chair may ask if there is any objection to closing debate...”⁴ **RONR** (12th ed.) 16:7
- “...Calls of ‘question’ by members from their seats are not motions for the *Previous Question* and are disorderly if another member is speaking or seeking recognition.” **RONR** (12th ed.) 16:20

Adjournment

- “When it appears that there is no further business in a meeting of an ordinary local society that normally goes through a complete order of business 941) at each regular meeting (9), the chair, instead of waiting or calling for a motion to adjourn, can ask, ‘Is there any further business?’ If there is no response, the chair can then say, ‘Since there is no further business, the meeting is adjourned.’” **RONR** (12th ed.) 21:15

⁴ Additional references in **RONR** (12th ed.) direct actions by the Moderator under this circumstance which may or may not result in the Moderator recognizing the motion under certain conditions