

#FLALASTRONG100

PARLIAMENTARIAN HELPFUL POINTS

2019-2020

- **BECOME A KNOWLEDGEABLE MEMBER** - Good members exercise their rights and also accept and meet expectations for member participation. You are empowered by knowing how the organization functions. - Obtain a copy of the basic documents such as bylaws, standing rules, and the Unit Handbook. Ask someone to help you get a copy of these resources, if necessary. - Become familiar with these documents and reference them often. - Help when asked. Volunteer if you can. Serve if elected.
- **PRESIDENT'S APPOINTMENT** – The president appoints the parliamentarian for her knowledge and skills, not as an honor or special appointment for a friend. The parliamentarian should be someone reliable and trusted to provide accurate advice for everyone on both sides of an issue. The president and parliamentarian should have a good working relationship
- **HELP MEMBERS LEARN** – During your year of service as parliamentarian also consider working with members to educate them in parliamentary procedure. This can be as you counsel them in their roles or teach lessons to further develop their knowledge and skills.
- **DEVELOP YOUR KNOWLEDGE** – Good parliamentarians are always learning their craft. Invest in your knowledge. Resources are available through Emblem Sales, through parliamentary associations, and online.
- **FOLLOW THE GOLDEN RULE** - Be sensitive to the feelings of other members. Give them the benefit of doubt that they have positive motives for their actions. - Listen to what members are saying, not just to how they say it. - Be on time for meetings. - Pay attention and listen to others. Do not engage in side conversations. - Keep your remarks focused on only the issue. Don't ramble or backtrack.
- **BE IMPARTIAL** – The parliamentarian is much like an official in a game. She is to be impartial and make sure everyone plays by the rules. Similarly, as the official does not play the game, the parliamentarian does not exercise the same rights as a member. She does not make motions, debate, or vote, except by ballot.
- **KNOW THE RULES** – Just as a referee must know the rules of the game, a parliamentarian must know the rules of the organization and of the parliamentary authority. As the size of the group increases, so must the depth of knowledge of the parliamentarian. A department parliamentarian must know and understand bylaws, standing rules, and parliamentary procedure much better than a unit parliamentarian.

• **KNOW THE BASICS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE** - A member has the right to attend meetings, make motions, speak in debate, vote, nominate, and hold office. Understand the correct process to exercise these rights. There are many books and resources available to learn all the rules of parliamentary procedure. - There are three basic guiding principles in parliamentary procedure:

- (a) justice and courtesy for all
- (b) the right of the majority to rule
- (c) the right of the minority to be heard.

• **VARIED ROLES** – The parliamentarian has a variety of duties before and during meetings with members, committees, officers, and boards. The goal is for the business to be handled properly and smoothly.

• **DUTIES BEFORE A MEETING** – Review the agenda with the president to be familiar with the business and possible problems that may arise. Review the bylaws and standing rules of the organization. Work with any committee members who request assistance in preparing reports for the meeting.

• **DUTIES DURING A MEETING** – Preparatory work before the meeting should reduce the work necessary during the meeting. The parliamentarian should arrive early to counsel as needed. Have a copy of the governing documents at the meeting. Keep track of the motions to assist the presiding officer. Be as inconspicuous as possible. Provide advice when requested and communicate with the president tactfully and discreetly. Remain impartial and be prepared to cite references if needed.

• **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY** – Any organization requires rules of operation. The most important should be the hardest to change. Typically these include a Corporate Charter, Constitution and/or Bylaws, Rules of Order such as Robert's Rules, and Standing Rules. The Charter, Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules are written specifically for a given organization. Those rules take precedence in governance. On matters not specifically addressed in those documents, the Rules of Order specified in the Bylaws are the parliamentary authority. This is usually the most recent edition Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. A parliamentarian should spend time studying these rules.

• **DUTIES FOR A CONVENTION** – The duties of the parliamentarian for a convention include those listed for meetings. Also be prepared to advise convention committees such as resolutions, credentials, rules, and elections. Review the script with the presiding officer. Stay focused, steady, patient, and fair.

• **SOME MAJOR POINTS OF THE BASICS TO FOLLOW:** - Every meeting should have an agenda. The chairman should prepare it or review it before the meeting if someone else creates it. Advise the president in advance if you have business that should be on the agenda.

As Parliamentarian you should be seated to the right of the President and you will be seen but not heard unless an issue comes up where you have to speak. As the Unit Parliamentarian you should have the following tools at hand:

Unit Constitution and Bylaws

Department Unit Guide

National Unit Guide

Roberts Rule of Order Newly Revised

Now here are a few pointers:

When you make a motion, say, "I move that..." (not "I motion..." or "I want to make a motion"). Language should be clear, brief, and specific. Consider who is to do what action, when, and will it be accepted by a majority of the members.

- The purpose of the "Second" is to understand there is a second person who agrees that a motion should be discussed. If the motion comes from a committee, a second is not needed.

- The maker of the motion is usually allowed to speak first. It is polite for members to not speak more than twice until all members have had a chance to speak on each motion. The chairman should try to allow alternating views to be heard as much as possible. All remarks should be addressed to the chair, not at other members.

- Motions have different levels of priority. For example, if a main motion is made and then an amendment is made to it, the amendment is addressed before there is more discussion on the merits of the main motion. An incidental "Point" is resolved at the time it is raised, no matter when it occurs.

- Discussion should continue until members wishing to speak have the opportunity or until the main points of both sides have been expressed. If there are members who want to continue the discussion and it has become repetitious, someone should move to end debate. If the discussion is ended or will end after a couple more speakers, the motion to end debate is not needed. The motion to end debate is, "I move previous question." It is a motion that takes away the right of members to have more discussion, so it must be voted on before the main motion is considered. The motion to end debate requires a 2/3 vote.

- It is important for members to voice their opinion during discussion and to vote. Silence means you are agreeing with the majority who do vote. To pass, some motions require a majority which is more than 50 percent of the votes cast. Other motions may require two-thirds of the votes cast.

- Votes may be taken by voice, a show of hands, standing, a voting card or ballot, roll call, or some electronic means. A vote may also be by unanimous consent when there is no objection. When a motion requires a two-thirds vote, it must be by a countable method.

***“So use your knowledge and talents that others will be glad you possess them.”
--Henry M. Robert***

**THERE IS NO MID OR YEAR END REPORT REQUIRED FOR PARLIAMENTARIAN HOWEVER
PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SEND ME A BRIEF DESCRIPTION ON HOW BEING A UNIT
PARLIAMENTARIAN HAS HELPED YOU BECOME A STRONGER MEMBER.**

Resources Available through Emblem Sales at emblem.legion.org:

- 1. National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules (also available on the Auxiliary’s website at www.ALAforVeterans.org)**
- 2. Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised (also available on the internet at <http://www.robertsrules.com/>)**
- 3. Parliamentary Procedure Booklet**
- 4. Department Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules found in the Department Unit Guide.**

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