

Parliamentarian Instructions

DUTIES OF A PARLIAMENTARIAN

The primary duty of the Parliamentarian is to be available to settle problems that might arise relating to procedure within a chamber. As long as things run smoothly, you should stay in the background. Even on minor parliamentary errors, you should sit back and let the chamber have an opportunity to recognize the error and resolve it. You may wish to point out the error briefly at the end of the session. **The general philosophy should be to let the members of the chamber solve their own difficulties.**

Only when a major problem or error has been made should you step in and correct matters. In particular, if debate or progress in the chamber bogs down, you should step in and point out ways out of the parliamentary quagmire. You MAY counsel the Presiding Officer on his/her discretionary power to rule dilatory motions out of order and to watch out for speakers that might try to monopolize time.

If the PO has (or is asked) a procedural question that s/he cannot answer, s/he may refer the question to you. Do your best to answer; consult the Congress Manual if you need further guidance. If you need to escalate the question to the tab staff, please do so.

You also function as a resource for the Scorers in your chamber. Their questions will likely go to you first, and please do not hesitate to give your best guidance in accordance with the rules. Please direct all questions concerning tournament procedures, scoring guidelines, and scoring ranges to the Tab Room. The Tab Room and the Tournament Coordinator are available as a resource for you.

STARTING THE SESSION

Before the start of the first session, you will be given a legislative calendar form, two paper seating charts, and two preset recency lists (labeled "Roster"). One chart and roster are for your use. The others should be given to the Presiding Officer, who will pass it along to her/his successor in due course. The seating charts are "backwards" relative to the online charts because they reflect the view from the PO's desk at the front of the room. **You are expected to sit near the Presiding Officer.**

At the start of the Congress, you should preside initially, take attendance from your seating chart, help the chamber set the calendar, and conduct the first PO election. **You MAY appoint a Temporary Presiding Officer from the chamber to conduct preliminary business.**

Setting the Calendar

Preliminary Sessions: When setting the calendar, follow these priorities:

1. Items with an author present (or a substitute from the same school without legislation of her/his own) must be scheduled before all other items.
2. Among items with an author (or substitute), *one item from each school* must be considered before a second item from **any** school may be considered. Items without an author (or substitute) present need not consider school affiliation in determining calendar order.
3. All items must be placed on the calendar.

The chamber **may** suspend the rules to reorder its calendar at the start of each session. This is done "on the clock" and consumes session time.

Conducting PO Elections

Entertain a motion to open the floor for PO nominations; it requires a second and a simple majority (usually a voice vote). Recognize legislators to nominate their peers, who may accept or decline the nomination. When there are no further nominations, entertain a motion to close the floor to further nominations. A legislator who has already served as PO may not serve again unless no one else is willing to serve.

If there is only one candidate, no election is required. Otherwise, allow each candidate to give a brief (~30 seconds) statement of her/his qualifications, then have the members of the chamber (including the sitting PO, if any) write the name of one candidate on a small paper ballot. Collect and count the ballots. A candidate must have a majority to win, i.e., more votes than all other candidates combined (including spoiled ballots). If no candidate has a majority, eliminate the candidate with the fewest votes and hold a runoff among the surviving candidates.

DURING THE SESSION

Sessions are 1 hour and 30 minutes; this includes the PO election and the orders of the day. The chamber recesses at the end of Sessions 1, 2, and 3; it adjourns *sine die* at the end of Session 3. All other recesses are **out of order** unless you approve a recess for extreme need. However, if the chamber has voted on every item on its calendar, it adjourns *sine die*, no matter how much time is remaining.

During the Congress, please assist the Presiding Officer by keeping a very careful record of all speeches given during each session and verifying speaker order and recency with the Presiding Officer occasionally. You should track speeches using your seating chart.

Service as Presiding Officer counts as the first speech of the session. Be sure to record it each session.

Priority accrues over all preliminary sessions and DOES NOT reset to zero. (This is an NCFL rule adopted in 2022.)

SCORES, BALLOTS, AND NOMINATIONS

You will not score the Presiding Officers or speakers. However, you may write comments for them on the electronic ballots, and you are encouraged to do so. (You may need to record your comments in a separate document, then paste them into your ballot during Session 4.)

At the end of the last session, you will be asked to rank ALL the legislators in the chamber (1 being the best). You are obligated to consider the Presiding Officers. When ranking the legislators, keep in mind it is not based solely on speeches! You should also consider their activity in the chamber: asking questions, making motions, and how they conduct themselves.

**Please submit and confirm your rankings within 10 minutes of the end of the last session.
Thank you for your service! Enjoy your time in the chamber!**