

# DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN RIDDICK'S RULES OF PROCEDURE AND ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

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In 1985, Floyd Riddick and Miriam Butcher produced a new parliamentary authority—**Riddick's Rules of Procedure** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985). Subtitled "A Modern Guide to Fast and More Efficient Meetings," **Riddick's Rules** was published with the goal of "simplify[ing] and streamlin[ing] meeting] procedures without sacrificing the rights of minorities or individuals." **Riddick** p. xv. This basic goal is similar to that of several other "modern" parliamentary authorities. See Hugh Cannon, **Cannon's Concise Guide to Rules of Order** pp. xvii–xix; Ray Keesey, **Modern Parliamentary Procedure** p. xv; Alice Sturgis, **Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure** p. xxi. See also Darwin Patnode, **History of Parliamentary Procedure** pp. 67–68.

Along with **Cannon**, **Keesey**, and **Sturgis**, **Riddick** aims to eliminate archaic language, unnecessary formality, and obscure motions. **Riddick** p. xv. **Riddick's Rules** can be distinguished from other "modern" parliamentary authorities primarily because its inspiration arises from the practical personal experience of Dr. Floyd Riddick, for many years the parliamentarian of the United States Senate. The other principal distinction of **Riddick's Rules** is organizational—it is the only major American parliamentary authority to be organized alphabetically rather than thematically. The book contains numerous short articles on various parliamentary topics alphabetically arranged by article title. Several of the longer articles contain several subtitles and there are numerous useful cross-references.

This article is not meant to be a theoretical examination of **Riddick's Rules** in comparison to other "modern" authorities and does not generally detail which of **Riddick's** departures from the more traditional **Robert's Rules** ("RONR") are in accord with other "modern" authorities.<sup>1</sup> Instead, this article is meant as a practical guide to the parliamentarian serving an organization which has chosen **Riddick** as its parliamentary authority, perhaps because the organization's officers felt that the alphabetical format indicates ease of reference. It is perhaps inevitable with this structure that a certain amount of duplication is necessary, but such duplication is by no means unique to **Riddick** among parliamentary manuals.

Therefore, this article discusses only those topics in which **Riddick** varies from **Robert**. Citations are given to **Riddick** for all rules cited, but are only given for **Robert** where the author felt that the parallel rule was relatively obscure or a review of the parallel texts might aid in understanding subtle distinctions. Unlike most "modern" authorities, **Riddick** relies entirely on its alphabetic organization, eschewing **Robert's** popular innovation of charts of

motions. Darwin Patnode, **History of Parliamentary Procedure** p. 68. For an understanding of the theoretical foundations of parliamentary procedure and connections between areas of procedure, the user of **Riddick** is directed to the book's extensive index and use of cross-references, **Riddick** p. xv, both of which tools, however, are themselves also alphabetically organized. Therefore, this article is organized thematically, so that it might act as a guide and companion to **Riddick** for a parliamentarian seeking to familiarize him or herself with **Riddick** by comparison with other authorities, which are thematically organized.

### Differences in Focus

As discussed above, **Riddick's** greatest distinction from other parliamentary authorities lies in its alphabetical organization. While superficially appealing to the novice, this characteristic may in fact be of greater utility to those experienced in parliamentary procedure. While an alphabetically organized, encyclopedic concordance to **Robert** would prove a boon to parliamentarians, **Riddick** does not provide that resource. Instead, **Riddick** stands as an independent authority.

The alphabetical organization of **Riddick** does not necessarily aid in speed of reference during a meeting until one becomes thoroughly familiar with the organization of the book. For example, a novice user of **Riddick** might need to look up at a meeting the duties of a Treasurer. There is no article on Treasurers in **Riddick**, however, although there are separate articles on Secretaries and the President. The novice user of **Riddick** might well take more time than a novice user of **Sturgis** or **Robert** by first erroneously looking up an article on the "Treasurer," not finding one, then turning to the index, and only then realizing that the treasurer's duties are listed in the article on "Officers." The novice user of **Sturgis** or **Robert**, would, on the other hand, have turned immediately to the index, eliminating an unnecessary first misstep. For a user familiar with **Riddick**, however, the alphabetical organization can be of great assistance. He or she is more likely to remember that **Riddick** has a good article on "Officers" and be able turn there in the alphabetical listing directly at the meeting. Even the experience user of **Robert** or **Sturgis** is not likely to have the page or chapter reference in his or her head during a meeting and would still have to turn first to the index.

Another drawback of **Riddick's** alphabetical organization is that the lack of an outline or schematic structure is likely to make systematic study of parliamentary basics from the book seem a daunting task. The natural jumping off point for study is no more likely to begin with the letter A than with the letter Z. An individual familiar with the basics of parliamentary procedure from other authorities, on the other hand, is more likely to be willing to plow ahead alphabetically, noting similarities and differences along the way. This article

aims in part to overcome these initial hurdles to familiarity with **Riddick** by presenting its distinctions in a systematic manner.

To understand what makes **Riddick** unique substantively, it is useful to examine **Riddick's** approach to simplification of traditional procedure. While **Riddick** is obviously concerned with minority rights, **Riddick** p. xv, it nevertheless eliminates the requirement of a two-thirds vote unless previous notice is given for the motions to Rescind, Change Something Previously Adopted (Amend Something Previously Adopted), and Discharge a Committee. **Riddick** pp. 42, 83, 173. All of these motions can be adopted by a majority vote without notice, even though *Riddick* emphasizes that notice *should* be given. **Riddick** pp. 42, 83, 173. Similarly, a Question of Consideration (essentially equivalent to **Robert's** Objection to Consideration) also requires only a majority vote. In these cases, the rights of the minority are sacrificed for simplification and expediency. Other examples of **Riddick's** concern for expediency involve seconds and motions to kill. **Riddick** makes it easier for an assembly to kill a motion by expanding the applicability of the motions to Table and the Question of Consideration. **Riddick** pp. 158–59, 188–89. In addition, **Riddick** eliminates the need for seconds. **Riddick** p. 159. As the entire seconding process is time-consuming and somewhat complex, **Riddick's** overarching goals of simplification and efficiency override the traditional reasons for requiring seconds.

In addition to implementing its own approach to simplification of traditional parliamentary procedure, **Riddick** introduces a new concept to parliamentary procedure—the significance of taking action on a motion. Taking action on a motion has important procedural implications for several motions: “friendly amendments,” Division of a Question, Question of Consideration, and Withdrawal. **Riddick** pp. 12–13, 88, 158, 208. The underlying principle is that a motion is not in the possession of the assembly *until the assembly takes some action on the motion*. **Riddick's** concern with expediency therefore allows a maximum in flexibility in handling motions with the involvement of a few people until such time as the assembly indicates a serious interest in the motion to taking some action on the motion. “Taking action” on a motion means making some change to the motion or its pending status, such as by adopting a motion to amend, postpone, or commit. Debate alone or the simple making (as opposed to the adoption) of such a procedural motion does not constitute “taking action.” **Riddick** p. 209.

Thus, under **Riddick**, Division of a Question (which under **Riddick** is available on demand of a single member) must be demanded “before any action is taken by the assembly” on the motion. **Riddick** p. 88. Similarly a Question of Consideration may be raised at any time up to the time some action is taken, **Riddick** p. 158, not until debate commences as under **Robert**. **RONR** p. 265. Finally, the maker of a motion may withdraw the motion at any time until the assembly “takes action” on the motion. **Riddick** p. 208. A

necessary corollary of this last proposition is that the maker of a motion may accept "friendly amendments" at any time until "some action is taken . . . by the assembly." **Riddick** pp. 12–13.

Another notable distinction in the focus of **Riddick** is the obvious legislative influence, attributable to Dr. Riddick's long service in the United States Senate. For example, **Riddick** contains descriptions of procedures usually found only in legislative bodies, such as pairing, stopping the clock, sunshine laws, and the sunset clause. **Riddick** pp. 135–36, 186–88. This information may be useful to the ordinary organization member in this era of cable television, where congressional debates, as well as those of state legislatures and local boards and councils, are the first exposure that many people have to parliamentary procedure. Also perhaps attributable to legislative influence is the availability of division of a question on demand of a single member. Luther Cushing, **Elements of the Law and Practice of Legislative Assemblies**, §§ 1347–49 at pp. 529–30; Thomas Jefferson, **Manual of Parliamentary Practice**, § 36 at pp. 399–400; Paul Mason, **Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure**, §§ 310–16 at pp. 216–21. With these considerations in mind—emphasis on expediency, simplification, reduction in two-thirds vote requirements, and legislative bent—**Riddick's Rules** begin to make sense as a comprehensive approach to the modernization of parliamentary procedure.

### Differences in Terminology

For a parliamentarian learning a new authority, one of the first hurdles to overcome is the use of new terminology for familiar concepts. The other side of this difficulty is that alternative terminology can often lead to a better understanding of the meaning, intent, and operation of familiar parliamentary concepts. Often the terms adopted in "modern" parliamentary authorities are easier to understand, particularly for those new to parliamentary procedure. The following differences in terminology should be kept in mind when serving as a parliamentarian for an organization that uses **Riddick** rather than **Robert** as its primary authority:

**Riddick** suggests use of the useful term "*documents of authority*" to include all of an organization's governing documents. **Riddick** p. 89. **Robert** uses the more confusing term "rules of a society." **RONR** p. 10. **Riddick** also uses different terminology to refer to various governing documents. Although **Riddick's** preferred terms are easy to understand on their own, they can be somewhat confusing for someone who steeped in **Robert's** references. **Riddick** uses the term "*Standing rules of procedure*," to refer to the equivalent of a combination of **Robert's** "special rules of order" and parliamentary authority. (For comparison, **Sturgis** refers to **Robert's** "special rules of order" as "standing rules." **Sturgis** p. 200.) **Riddick** pp. 90, 184–86. To confuse matters more, **Riddick** uses the term "*standing orders*" for what **Robert**,

**RONR** pp. 17–18, calls “standing rules,” which are essentially equivalent to what **Sturgis**, p. 200, calls “adopted procedures.” **Riddick** pp. 90–91, 184. In compensation for these potential terminological difficulties, **Riddick** does away with **Robert’s** distinctions between standing rules in conventions and ordinary standing rules. According to **Riddick**, standing rules for convention should be same as for business meetings of the society, with any special modifications for conventions adopted at the beginning of the session. **Riddick** p. 186.

**Riddick** introduces some different wording concerning the conduct of meetings: “*closed session*” instead of “executive session” (**Riddick** pp. 45–46); “*consent agenda*” instead of “consent calendar” (**Riddick** p. 56; **RONR** p. 356); and “*recess*” as the break between days of a convention instead of “adjournment” (**Riddick** p. 165; **RONR** p. 85). **Riddick** also distinguishes between a “*resolutions committee*,” which simply vets resolutions for editorial sense and compliance with statutes and bylaws if there is a reference committee, and a “*reference committee*,” which makes recommendations on passage of resolutions. **Riddick** pp. 62–63, 167–68. **Robert** essentially conflates these two roles and treats the two committee titles as equivalent. **RONR** p. 628.

**Riddick** also revises the familiar terminology for the different classes of motions. **Riddick** divides all motions into: Main motions; amendments to main motions; and *procedural motions*. **Riddick** pp. 117, 151. Main motions may in turn be divided into *new main motions*, *motions that reintroduce business*, and *procedural main motions*. **Riddick** pp. 104–05.

**Riddick** uses the useful phrase “*procedural main motions*” instead of “incidental main motions.” **Riddick** p. 105. The other innovations by **Riddick** do not necessarily aid significantly in the understanding of motion classification: “*New main motion*” is used instead of “original main motion,” **Riddick** p. 104, and “*Motions that reintroduce business*” instead of **Robert’s** “Motions that bring back a question before the assembly.” **Riddick** p. 105. Demeter’s term for the latter category “Restoratory motions,” **Demeter** p. 152, is far more concise or elegant than either **Robert’s** or **Riddick’s**. It should be noted that under **Riddick** all motions that reintroduce business are considered main motions, **Riddick** p. 104, whereas under **Robert** they are often, but not always, considered to be main motions. **RONR** pp. 75–76. **Riddick** also introduces a useful term for the ranking of motions, the “*ladder of motions*,” **Riddick** p. 118, also called the “*ladder of precedence*,” **Riddick** p. 150.

**Riddick** takes a unique approach to what **Robert** terms “secondary motions.” **RONR** p. 58. **Riddick** does away with all distinctions between incidental, subsidiary, and privileged motions as separate categories and instead recategorizes all such motions (except for amendments, which **Riddick** treats as a separate category) functionally as (1) *motions used in the disposition of main motions* and (2) *independent procedural motions*. **Riddick** pp. 117,

151. The category *Motions used in the disposition of main motions* includes all subsidiary motions (except amend) and incidental motions, such as division of a question, that deal with the disposition of main motions. The category *Independent procedural motions* includes privileged motions and those incidental motions, such as requests, that do not aid in the disposition of motions. Amendments and certain motions in both categories of procedural motions are included as ranked motions in the ladder of motions. **Riddick** pp. 118, 150.<sup>2</sup>

A final distinction concerning terminology regarding motions involves putting the question. Almost unique among parliamentary authorities, **Riddick** opposes the Chair prompting the assembly to indicate that debate over. The Chair does not ask: "Are you ready for the question?" **Demeter** p. 56, **RONR** p. 43; or "Is there any further discussion?" **Keesey** p. 81, **Sturgis** p. 119; nor does the Chair indicate explicitly that it appears that debate has finished. **Cannon** p. 109. Instead, the Chair waits for a hiatus in debate, then restates the question. If no one seeks recognition after a pause, the Chair then immediately takes the vote. **Riddick** p. 158.

It should be noted that **Riddick** also revises some of the names of familiar motions:

*"Adjourn to a Certain Time"* instead of "Fix a Time to which to Adjourn." **Riddick** p. 4.

*"Call for the Regular Order"* instead of "Call for Orders of the Day." **Riddick** p. 132.

*"Change an Adopted Motion"* or *"Change a Previous Decision"* instead of "Amend Something Previously Adopted." **Riddick** pp. 41–43, 120.

*"Close Debate"* instead of "Previous Question." **Riddick** p. 45.

*"Expunge"* instead of "Rescind and Expunge." **Riddick** pp. 94–95; **RONR** p. 303.

*"Question of Consideration"* is used instead of "Objection to Consideration," although the motions are not entirely equivalent. **Riddick** p. 158.

*"Table,"* as opposed to "Lay on the Table," is recognized by **Riddick** as a motion to kill. **Riddick** p. 189.

In addition, **Riddick** consolidates motions, for example by urging that assemblies use Parliamentary Inquiry to include Points of Information as well, **Riddick** pp. 120, 138. **Riddick** similarly treats Adjourn to a Certain Time (Fix a Time to which to Adjourn) as a variety of Adjourn and Postpone Indefinitely and

Postpone Definitely as forms of a single motion to Postpone. **Riddick** pp. 4–5, 143–44.<sup>3</sup>

## Differences in Document Preparation

**Riddick** takes a more inclusive approach than **Robert** to the preparation of organizational documents. For example, in the *agenda*, **Riddick** includes as separate items in the regular order of business for ordinary meetings: call to order, good & welfare, announcements, adjournment. **Riddick** pp. 9–10. Similarly, **Riddick** calls for much more detail than **Robert** in the preparation of minutes. In addition to standard requirements in **Robert**, under **Riddick** minutes should contain: a statement of presence of a quorum, names of reporting officers and committee chairmen, the treasurer's statement of funds on hand, all motions on which a vote is taken (not just main motions and secondary motions that passed when necessary for completeness or clarity, **RONR** p. 460), and results of informal consideration. **Riddick** p. 114. **Riddick** also allows notes regarding speaker or program, if the society so decides. **Riddick** p. 114. Another area of document preparation where **Riddick** calls for additional material is *bylaws*. **Riddick** includes dissolution as final article of standard bylaws and includes an article on nominations and elections after meetings (but indicates this can go elsewhere). **Riddick** pp. 34–36. **Riddick** also slightly modifies the traditional order of bylaws articles by placing amendment before parliamentary authority. **Riddick** p. 36.

## Additional Subjects Treated

One of **Riddick's** greatest strengths is that it contains much useful advice on how to handle business that is not contain in **Robert** or other sources. These additional subjects treated alone warrant using **Riddick** as a reference for parliamentarians even if they do not use it as a *parliamentary* authority. One particular area of emphasis for **Riddick** is strategic advice for participating in meetings. For example, **Riddick** includes useful information on how to create a *committee record*, **Riddick** pp. 54–55; *debate strategy*, **Riddick** pp. 77–79; and drafting a well made *main motion*, **Riddick** p. 105; and suggestions for how to take and draft *minutes*, **Riddick** pp. 113–16.

**Riddick** also usefully supplements with definitions or explanations matters that are treated briefly or mentioned without definition in **Robert**, such as the situations in which *assumed or implied motions* are appropriate, **Riddick** p. 24; differences between the motion to *Commit* and the motion to *Refer*, **Riddick** p. 47; differences between *discussion* and *debate*, **Riddick** p. 71; an extensive list of obligations and rights of *members*, **Riddick** pp. 110–11; *guidelines for which matters should become the special orders*, **Riddick** p. 132; and a useful definition of *immediate past president*, **Riddick** p. 140.

**Riddick** contains a wealth of proposals for procedures that an assembly might want to adopt into their documents of authority or follow when the circumstances arise:

*Bylaws:* **Riddick** suggests including a provision for governance in case of emergencies such as war or natural disaster for larger organizations. **Riddick** p. 93.

*Chairman:* **Riddick** includes the etymology of term and counsels against use of two or more co-chairmen. **Riddick** pp. 40–41.

*Committees:* **Riddick** discusses but disapproves of the practice of committee selection by the Board. **Riddick** p. 51. Betraying the author's legislative background, **Riddick** also contains procedures for committee hearings. **Riddick** p. 99.

*Conventions:* **Riddick** discusses the importance of the educational and entertainment functions of conventions. **Riddick** p. 59. **Riddick** contains practical information about organizing conventions not contained in **Robert**: opening ceremonies, **Riddick** p. 63; microphones and color cards, **Riddick** pp. 66–67; numerous arrangements committees, such as hospitality, protocol, decorations, and public relations, **Riddick** p. 61; and a model convention business agenda, **Riddick** pp. 68–69. **Riddick** encourages organizations to adopt a procedure for all convention minutes to be approved by a committee or the board. **Riddick** p. 67.

*Documents of Authority:* **Riddick** suggests compilation of customs, practices, and precedents. **Riddick** pp. 91, 145. Another indication of the author's legislative experience, the practice of compiling parliamentary precedents is particularly common in legislative bodies.

*Installations:* **Riddick** contains procedures for installations and oaths of office. **Riddick** pp. 101–02, 124.

*Opening Ceremonies:* **Riddick** provides a detailed list of opening ceremonies including order for welcoming address and introductions. **Riddick** p. 130.

*Pairing:* In a sign of legislative influence, **Riddick** provides a procedure for pairing. **Riddick** pp. 135–36.

*Policy Statements:* **Riddick** contains a useful section on policy statements. **Riddick** pp. 142–43.

*President-Elect:* **Riddick** suggests that the Bylaws should provide a means to prevent a president-elect from becoming president if he or she has neglected his or her duties. **Riddick** p. 127.



**Protocol:** **Riddick** contains an interesting discussion of guest speakers and protocol. **Riddick** pp. 153–54.

**Proxy:** **Riddick** contains form proxy. **Riddick** p. 156.

**Social Hour:** **Riddick** advocates a social hour for most organizations to be held either before or after meetings. **Riddick** p. 183.

**Stopping the clock:** **Riddick** discusses this procedure, used only in legislative bodies. **Riddick** pp. 186–87.

**Sunshine laws:** In another sign of the author's legislative background, **Riddick** discusses compliance with state sunshine laws. **Riddick** p. 187.

**Sunset Clause:** **Riddick** discusses the meaning and use of sunset clauses, used primarily in legislative bodies, but of increasing significance in organizations which take policy positions. **Riddick** p. 188. *See Sturgis* p. 202.

**Tape Recording:** **Riddick** provides a procedure for tape recording. The article indicates that a speaker must consent to his or her statements being recorded. **Riddick** p. 190.

**Teleconference:** **Riddick** provides a forward-looking approach by providing a procedure for teleconferences. **Riddick** pp. 190, 203–04.

**Voting:** **Riddick** provides two preferential voting alternatives in addition to the one described in **Robert**. **Riddick** pp. 145, 201. Common types of voting frauds are also listed for reference. **Riddick** p. 206.

### Substantive Differences—Motions

Under **Riddick**, the basic characteristics of motions are similar to those in **Robert**, but there is a definite tendency towards simplification and elimination of special procedures. **Riddick's** principal simplification is the elimination of *seconds*. **Riddick** p. 159. **Riddick** also eliminates the special rules concerning quarterly time periods except for the provision that previous notice is valid if given orally at a meeting, provided that meetings are held at least as frequently as quarterly. **Riddick** p. 149. **Riddick** also allows a majority, rather than a two-thirds vote, in more circumstances than **Robert**, as discussed below. The general rule under **Riddick** is that "The motion to reconsider can be applied to a vote on almost any motion." **Riddick** p. 166. Exceptions to this general rule are detailed below in this section in the discussion of Reconsideration. **Riddick's** rules concerning debatability, amendability, and interruptability are similar to **Robert's**, with any exceptions noted below. Motion distinctions are treated below in their order of presentation in **Robert**: first main motions, then subsidiary and privileged motions from

lowest to highest in precedence, next incidental motions, and finally motions that bring a question again before the assembly.

**Riddick's** ranking of *precedence of motions* is slightly different from **Robert's**. The following is **Riddick's** list of motions by rank in precedence, from lowest to highest: Main motion, Amend, Commit, Postpone, Limit or Extend Debate, Close debate (**Robert's** Previous Question), Table, Recess, Adjourn. **Riddick** p. 118. Postpone Indefinitely and Postpone Definitely are considered parts of a unified motion to Postpone. **Riddick** p. 143. Adjourn to a Certain Time (**Robert's** Fix a Time to which to Adjourn) is treated as part of Adjourn. **Riddick** p. 4. Call for the Regular Order (**Robert's** Orders of the Day) and Question of Privilege are unranked procedural motions. **Riddick** p. 120. *But see* note 2 above.

**Main Motions:** Under **Riddick**, main motions beyond an organization's objectives are improper. **Riddick** p. 116. (**Robert** allows consideration of such motions on a two-thirds vote. **RONR** p. 110.) **Riddick** appears to allow the Question of Consideration (similar to **Robert's** Objection to Consideration) to be applied to all main motions, even procedural main motions (**Robert's** incidental main motions), **Riddick** pp. 104, 158–59, whereas **Robert** prohibits application of Objection to Consideration to incidental main motions. **RONR** p. 100. Also under **Riddick**, a preamble to a resolution need not be read and should not be amended until after the resolution has been adopted. **Riddick** p. 175. Only after the motion has been adopted should the preamble be modified to conform to resolution, if it has been amended. **Riddick** p. 175.

**Amend:** **Riddick** allows any type of amendment to an amendment. **Riddick** pp. 18–19. After a substitute motion has been made, motions to amend both the main motion and the substitute are in order. **Riddick** p. 15. Nevertheless, perfecting amendments have precedence over substitute amendments. **Riddick** pp. 13–14. Similarly, amendments to the language subject to the proposed substitute have precedence over amendments to the substitute to be inserted. **Riddick** p. 14. Amendments must be contiguous. **Riddick** p. 15 (This contradicts **Robert**, **RONR** p. 146, which indicated that an amendment can strike out words in one place and insert the same words elsewhere). A secondary motion to strike out is interpreted as a motion to strike out fewer words than in the pending primary motion to strike out (not, as in **Robert**, **RONR** p. 143, to strike out words from the language proposed to be stricken out by the primary amendment), and if adopted automatically strikes out that language in main motion; if the primary amendment is later adopted, then the remaining language included in the primary amendment is stricken as well. **Riddick** p. 18.

**Creating a Blank:** **Riddick** discourages blanks and provides no procedure for filling blanks. **Riddick** p. 70.

**Commit:** The motion to refer to committee is only amendable as to instructions. **Riddick** p. 117. **Robert** allows amendments concerning the committee's composition and manner of selection and which committee the pending motion will be referred to. **Robert** p. 168.

**Postpone:** Under **Riddick**, Postpone Indefinitely and Postpone Definitely are forms of the motion to Postpone. **Riddick** p. 143. Postponement can be to any future date or indefinitely, which is considered the latest date; if several dates are proposed, the earlier dates are voted on first. **Riddick** p. 143. Although **Riddick** allows motions to be postponed indefinitely, it states that, if used as a motion to kill, Postpone Indefinitely would effectively be superseded by the motion "to Table." **Riddick** p. 143.

**Close Debate (Robert's Previous Question):** **Riddick** explicitly provides that the maker of a main motion should wait for another person to speak before moving to close debate. **Riddick** p. 45.

**Table:** **Riddick** recognizes the undebatable motion "to Table" (not "Lay on the Table") as a motion to kill, yet requires only a majority vote. **Riddick** p. 189. Under **Riddick**, in order to reach again a motion that has been tabled, the vote to table must be reconsidered, not "taken from the table." **Riddick** p. 189. A tabled motion to reconsider, however, cannot be reconsidered. **Riddick** p. 189. It is permissible to table any motion lower in precedence than the motion "to table," including an amendment, without the main motion. **Riddick** p. 189.

**Question of Privilege:** According to **Riddick**, a Question of Privilege cannot interrupt a speaker unless the speaker consents or the question raised concerns the speaker. **Riddick** p. 160. (At other points, **Riddick** appears to indicate that Questions of Privilege may interrupt a speaker for any good reason. **Riddick** pp. 77, 102.) **Robert** allows interruption for a Question of Privilege if the object of the question would otherwise be defeated. **RONR** p. 225.

**Adjourn:** The privileged motion to adjourn includes, in order of precedence, from lowest to highest: Adjourn Sine Die (which *is* considered privileged), Adjourn to a Certain Time (**Robert's** Fix a Time to which to Adjourn), and Adjourn (a meeting). **Riddick** p. 4. (As under **Robert**, the form of the motion to Adjourn to a Certain Time is amendable as to the time to be set for the adjourned meeting; other forms of the privileged motion to adjourn are not amendable. **Riddick** p. 4.) Contrary to **Robert**, **RONR** p. 234, the motion to Adjourn has no indicia of privilege if made when no motion is pending. **Riddick** p. 151.

**Point of Order:** In one location, **Riddick** states that when the Chair is in doubt, he or she must put the question to the assembly. **Riddick** p. 141. At another place, however, **Riddick** indicates that it is discretionary to put the question to

the assembly when the Chair is in doubt, **Riddick** p. 144, in accordance with **Robert**. **RONR** p. 252.

*Appeal:* In one location, **Riddick** holds that Appeal is debatable only if the pending question is debatable. **Riddick** p. 22. At another point, however, **Riddick** states that Appeal is debatable unless it applies to indecorum or an undebatable motion. **Riddick** p. 195. **Robert** says that Appeal is not debatable if it relates to indecorum, rules of speaking, or priority of debate, regardless of the debatability of the pending motion. **RONR** p. 256. Appeal may interrupt pending business, but not a speaker. **Riddick** p. 102. Under **Robert**, Appeal may interrupt at speaker if urgency requires. **RONR** p. 256.

*Suspend the Rules:* Under **Riddick**, Suspend the Rules is debatable, but “not usually” amendable. **Riddick** pp. 131, 188. Under **Robert**, the Suspend the Rules is neither debatable nor amendable. **RONR** p. 260.

*Question of Consideration:* Question of Consideration is similar to **Robert’s** Objection to Consideration. **Riddick** p. 158. A Question of Consideration is equivalent to a Point of Order in precedence. **Riddick** p. 158. Only a majority vote is required to prevent consideration of a question. **Riddick** p. 158. A Question of Consideration may be made up to such time as some action is taken. **Riddick** p. 158. A motion killed by a question of consideration may be renewed if the Chair determines the renewal is not dilatory. **Riddick** p. 159. (**Robert** requires reconsideration of a negative vote on an Objection to Consideration to revive the question for consideration. **RONR** p. 266.)

*Division of a Question:* Unlike **Robert’s** treatment of Division of a Question, under **Riddick** any member may demand division of a divisible motion, **Riddick** pp. 88, 117, and appeal of the Chair’s ruling on divisibility is debatable. **Riddick** p. 88. In accordance with **Robert**, **RONR** p. 269, Division of a Question is amendable. **Riddick** p. 117. As the motion is amendable, but available on demand, apparently after one member proposes a division of a question, another member may propose a different division of the question, and the assembly would then vote on which proposal to adopt.

*Division of the Assembly:* In several instances **Riddick** indicates that a Division of the Assembly must be called for before the results of a voice vote announced. **Riddick** pp. 87, 153, 176–77. On one occasion, however, **Riddick** states that a Division of the Assembly may be called for through the pause following the Chair’s announcement of the vote on the motion. **Riddick** p. 157. (**Robert** holds that a Division of the Assembly may be demanded at any time until the Chair states the question on another motion. **RONR** p. 277.) After a vote by Division of the Assembly, if a member wishes to verify the vote by another method, he or she must first succeed in passing a motion to reconsider the vote. **Riddick** pp. 88, 177. (**Robert** uses the phrase “reconsider the vote” to mean reconsider a prior decision, **RONR** p. 318; **Riddick** means to reconsider the

manner of voting, **Riddick** p. 88.). If a motion to reconsider the vote passes, then a motion to take the vote by a different method (ballot, roll call, etc.) is in order. **Riddick** pp. 88, 177. Division of the Assembly may interrupt pending business, but not a speaker. **Riddick** p. 102. Under **Robert**, Division of the Assembly may interrupt at speaker if urgency requires. **RONR** p. 277.

*Voting:* According to **Riddick**, motions relating to voting are amendable if made as a procedural main motion (**Robert's** incidental main motion) when a no motion is pending, but are unamendable if made when a motion is pending. **Riddick** p. 197. Under **Robert**, motions relating to voting are amendable whether a motion is pending or not. **RONR** p. 279.

*Nominations:* Under **Riddick**, it takes a majority vote to close nominations, not two-thirds as under **Robert**, but, as in **Robert**, such a motion may be made only if no members are seeking the floor to continue nominations. **Riddick** p. 123; **RONR** p. 282.

*Requests:* Under **Riddick**, no requests are debatable or amendable. **Riddick** pp. 117, 172–73, 196. **Robert** permits debate of and amendment to requests to be excused from a duty. **RONR** p. 284.

*Parliamentary Inquiry:* According to **Riddick**, information from a speaker should be sought by requesting the speaker to yield for a question as a form of Parliamentary Inquiry. **Riddick** p. 138.

*Rescind:* Under **Riddick**, Rescind and Change a Previous Decision (**Robert's** Amend Something Previously Adopted) require a majority vote (except if the motion to be rescinded or amended required a higher vote) even if there was no notice, although notice should be given. **Riddick** pp. 42, 173.

*Expunge:* **Riddick's Rules** require previous notice and majority vote to expunge. **Riddick** p. 95. **Robert** requires a majority of the entire membership, but previous notice is not mandatory. **RONR** p. 303. In a rare situation by unanimous consent **Riddick** allows a society to expunge something completely, rather than simply circling the item in the minutes and indicating that the matter has been ordered expunged. **Riddick** p. 95.

*Discharge a Committee:* **Riddick** requires only a only majority vote to discharge a committee; notice should, but need not, be given. **Riddick** p. 83.

*Reconsider:* According to **Riddick**: "The motion to reconsider can be applied to a vote on almost any motion." **Riddick** p. 166. Exceptions to this general rule explicitly mentioned are: (1) A negative vote only may be reconsidered on Discharge a Committee, **Riddick** p. 85; (2) A positive vote only may be reconsidered on Close Debate, **Riddick** p. 45; and (3) a Motion to Table a Motion to Reconsider, a Motion to Recess, and (except by unanimous consent

as under **Robert**) Reconsider itself cannot be reconsidered, **Riddick** pp. 165, 166, 189. **Riddick** permits any member to move to reconsider. **Riddick** p. 166. Under **Riddick**, it is the duty of the Chair to remind the assembly, at the first opportunity to take up the motion, that a motion to Reconsider has been made. **Riddick** p. 166. (**Robert** says it is the responsibility of the Chair to point out the failure to call up a motion to reconsider only when the failure may cause harm. **RONR** pp. 317–18.) The latest that a motion to reconsider may be called up pursuant to **Riddick's Rules** is the next meeting day after the motion to reconsider has been made, not the next regular meeting within a quarterly time interval or the end of the current session as under **Robert**. **Riddick** p. 166; **Robert** p. 315. **Riddick** does not recognize the motion to Reconsider and Enter.

### Substantive Differences—Debate and Meetings

In the area of how to conduct debate and handle issues that come up at a meeting, **Riddick** introduces some innovations that overall have the effect of increasing the flexibility of the organization and its members in conducting meetings. For example, in *debate*, the maker of a motion may speak against his or her own motion if it is amended beyond the original idea of the motion when presented. **Riddick** p. 73. **Riddick** also adds as a rule of *priority in debate* that if the Chair steps down in debate, he has priority in speaking. **Riddick** p. 74.

If a society has persistent problems meeting its *quorum* requirement, **Riddick** indicates that notice can be sent to all members that the next meeting will be presumed to have a quorum and will consider the amendment of the quorum requirement. **Riddick** p. 163. **Riddick** holds that the presence of a quorum cannot then be questioned at the meeting held to consider the quorum requirement. **Riddick** p. 163. **Robert's Parliamentary Law**, p. 452, suggests that a supermajority vote (two-thirds or whatever vote is otherwise required by the bylaws to amend the bylaws) at a properly called but quorumless meeting should be confirmed by a mail ballot in these circumstances. **Riddick** also provides that *proxies* do not count towards a quorum unless so stated in bylaws. **Riddick** p. 156, 163.

**Riddick** has a special rule for who may preside. For a non-member to preside, this procedure must be specifically allowed by the bylaws. **Riddick** p. 148. **Robert**, on the other hand, allows a nonmember to be elected to any office, including that of president, unless the bylaws provide to the contrary and indicates that a nonmember may preside at any meeting if the president, vice-president, and assembly concur. **RONR** pp. 438–39. In a subtle distinction from **Robert's** rule regarding the powers of the Chair, under **Riddick**, the Chair can recess or adjourn for *disruption* on his or her own initiative without motion. **Riddick** p. 84. The current version of **Robert** allows a meeting to be adjourned by the Chair without motion only for emergencies, such as fire or riot. **RONR** p. 87.

**Riddick** treats *informal consideration* in a unique manner. Under **Riddick**, an assembly recesses to consider informally and then reconvenes after the recess to take action formally. **Riddick** p. 57. See **Keesey** p. 67 (most informal way to consider a matter is in recess). **Riddick** does not allow for the Committee of the Whole or Quasi Committee of the Whole, most often used in legislatures, despite the legislative influence seen in other areas of the book. Like **Sturgis** p. 120, **Riddick** allows informal consideration when no motion is pending. **Riddick** p. 57. Under **Riddick**, there is no limit on the time or number of speeches in informal consideration, **Riddick** p. 57, whereas **Robert** allows an unlimited number of speeches, but still restricts their time to the standard ten minutes unless otherwise ordered by the assembly. **RONR** p. 533.

**Riddick** treats *minority reports* slightly differently from **Robert**. Under **Riddick**, minority reports are received for information only and filed. **Riddick** p. 112. Under **Robert**, minority reports are not to be filed unless the assembly consents by motion or general consent. **Robert** p. 520. If, however, "the documentary authority authorizes minority reports, they may be filed just like a majority report." **Riddick** p. 113. It is unclear what distinction is to be made between minority reports in organizations with documentary authority for minority reports (where such reports are to be filed "like a majority report") and those without documentary authority for minority reports (where such reports are received for information only and filed). Under **Riddick**, the Chair must recognize the minority reporting member immediately after the committee report of majority. **Riddick** p. 112. Under **Robert**, the Chair calls for the minority report after stating the question on the committee (majority) report, provided there is no objection. **Robert** p. 520.

### Substantive Differences—Nominations and Voting

In the area of nominations and voting, **Riddick** introduces subtle distinctions from **Robert's** methods. Under **Riddick**, previous consent to serve is necessary for *nomination* to an office if the member is not present. **Riddick** p. 121. **Robert** allows election of absent members who have not previously consented, who may serve if they consent after notification. **RONR** p. 436. A major difference under **Riddick** is that the *Secretary may cast a single ballot* if the bylaws require a ballot vote, although it is not recommended. **Riddick** p. 203. **Robert** clearly prohibits this practice. **RONR** p. 406.<sup>4</sup>

**Riddick** appears to take a middle position between **Robert** and **Sturgis** on counting *illegal votes* in determining a majority. **Robert**, **RONR** p. 410, counts illegal votes and **Sturgis**, p. 149, does not. Under **Riddick**, illegal votes are not used when calculating a majority. **Riddick** pp. 100, 205. It should be noted, however, that at another place, **Riddick** states explicitly that unintelligible ballots and those for ineligible candidates should be counted in calculating a majority. **Riddick** p. 191.

## Substantive Differences—Organizational Structure: Officers and Bylaws

There are certain distinctions that a parliamentarian should bear in mind in interpreting bylaws and enforcing the duties of officers and committee members in an organization governed by **Riddick**.

Under **Riddick**, unlike the current edition of **Robert**, **RONR** p. 17, even procedural provisions of *bylaws* may not be suspended. **Riddick** p. 31. **Riddick**, nevertheless, gives substantial deference to *custom* in the running of an organization. Custom may be able to override bylaws. **Riddick** p. 70. Under **Riddick**, in order to bring a disregarded bylaw back into effect, a point of order and a ruling (or vote on appeal) or adoption of a motion is necessary. **Riddick** p. 70. **Riddick** does not state how the Chair should rule on a point of order raised in order to enforce a long disregarded bylaw. Under **Robert**, the Chair must rule in such circumstances to enforce the bylaw. **RONR** pp. 261–62. **Riddick** indicates that *policy statements* are in the nature of standing orders (**Robert's** standing rules). **Riddick** pp. 142–43. **Robert** does not discuss the use of policy statements as documents of authority, **RONR** pp. 631–32, and **Sturgis** does not explicitly rank policies as documents of authority, but lists them after adopted policies (essentially equivalent to **Robert's** standing rules) and states that policies and bylaws are equally binding. **Sturgis** p. 201.

**Riddick** contains some differences from **Robert** in the conduct of *committees*. A majority of members may call a meeting if the committee chair does not. **Riddick** p. 52. (**Robert** says that a committee must meet on the call of any two members. **RONR** p. 490.) Committee members may speak without limit on the number of speeches or time. **Riddick** pp. 52–53. (According to **Robert**, time limits on debate still apply in committee. **RONR** p. 478.) Only members may serve on committees. **Riddick** p. 53. (**Robert** allows nonmembers to be appointed to committees. **RONR** pp. 482–83.) **Riddick** does not count *ex officio* members towards a committee's quorum requirement. **Riddick** p. 94. (Under **Robert**, if an *ex officio* member, other than the president, **RONR** p. 447, is "under the authority of the society," *e.g.*, a member, officer, or employee, he or she is counted towards the quorum. **RONR** p. 474.)

**Riddick** also contains some distinctions regarding the powers and authority of officers. **Riddick** allows officers to *resign* at any time, **Riddick** p. 174, but indicate that bylaws usually require previous notice of resignation, **Riddick** p. 125. To the contrary, under **Robert**, an officer's resignation is effective only after the passage of a reasonable amount of time for the society to accept resignation. **RONR** pp. 291–92. **Riddick** provides that complete dereliction of duty may be treated as implied resignation. **Riddick** p. 196.

In regard to specific offices, **Riddick** grants the *President* the extraordinary power to fill any office *pro tempore* for one meeting with consent



of the assembly. **Riddick** p. 148. **Riddick** adds a duty for the President as well. If the organization meets less frequently than quarterly,<sup>5</sup> under **Riddick** the President should prepare the agenda. **Riddick** p. 7. **Robert** says that the Secretary is to prepare the order of business. **RONR** p. 450. Also under **Riddick**, in agreement with **Sturgis**, p. 157, the *President-Elect* succeeds to the office of president in his absence before vice-presidents. **Riddick** p. 148. Under **Robert** vice-presidents succeed unless there is a bylaw to the contrary. **RONR** p. 127. **Riddick** also provides that the *Recording Secretary* reads correspondence addressed to the president and *Corresponding Secretary* reads all other correspondence, when there are two separate offices. **Riddick** p. 181. **Robert**, on the other hand, indicates that all official correspondence should be read by the Recording Secretary. **RONR** p. 450.

## CONCLUSION

**Riddick's Rules of Procedure** supplies a thoughtful addition to the parliamentarian's bookshelf. **Riddick** seeks to modernize and simplify parliamentary procedure without sacrificing unduly rules that protect minorities and those that are familiar to and properly used by many meeting participants. Some of the distinctions between **Riddick** and **Robert** are therefore subtle and require conscientious study for a parliamentarian new a group using **Riddick** as its authority. At the same time, **Riddick** provides a tremendous resource as a secondary authority for a parliamentarian to an organization trying to devise a procedure not addressed in **Robert**—for example, a teleconference or proper protocol for a situation. It is hoped that this article will provide a useful tool for parliamentarians, by familiarizing them with **Riddick** and its distinctions from **Robert** both in substance and in approach.

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## Endnotes

- 1 For comparative purposes, **Riddick** appears to be somewhat more willing to depart from tradition than **Sturgis**, but not as radical as **Keeseey**. For example, both **Riddick**, p. 159, and **Keeseey**, p. 21, eliminate the need for seconds, while **Sturgis**, pp. 13, 24, requires them in most cases, in accordance with tradition and **Robert**, pp. 34–36. On the other hand, **Sturgis**, pp. 45–46, 54–55, and **Riddick**, pp. 12, 131–32, like **Robert**, pp. 130, 182–85, retain secondary amendments and special orders, while **Keeseey**, pp. 66–67, 71–72, eliminates them as unnecessary. Above all, however, **Riddick's** positions are based on the practical experience of Dr. Riddick and his co-author, respected parliamentarian Miriam Butcher.
- 2 **Riddick** recognizes the same motions as privileged as does **Robert**. **Riddick** pp. 150–51. Nevertheless, in different places, **Riddick** appears to contradict itself in regard to whether all privileged motions constitute ranked motions on the ladder of motions. In one place, **Riddick** includes only recess and adjourn as ranked motions. **Riddick** p. 118. In another location, **Riddick** ranks all of the traditional privileged motions in the following, slightly nontraditional order: adjourn, adjourn to a time certain (fix a time to which to adjourn), recess, question of privilege, and regular order (orders of the day). **Riddick** p. 150–51. See **Riddick** p. 185.

- 3 Contrary to this general trend, in a specific incident **Riddick** indicates that a member doubting a quorum should raise a “*point of no quorum*” rather than a point of order. **Riddick** p. 162; **RONR** p. 343. This special term for doubting a quorum is a slight archaism, in accordance with **Demeter** p. 148 and **Robert’s Parliamentary Law**, p. 357, and contrary to the current version of **Robert**, **RONR** p. 343, and certain other “modern” authorities, which include doubting a quorum as a point of order to reduce and simplify the total number of motions for members to remember. **Cannon**, p. 90; **Sturgis** p. 105.
- 4 At one point, **Riddick** states that questions as to propriety or order of voting procedures are to be referred to the assembly without the Chair first ruling on a point of order. **Riddick** p. 208. See **Riddick** p. 198 (the assembly has final say on voting issues). At another point, however, **Riddick** holds that the Chair may rule on challenges to propriety of votes. **Riddick** p. 205.
- 5 It is interesting that **Riddick** uses the quarterly time period here for a duty not mentioned in **Robert**, when in general **Riddick** does away with special rules involving the quarterly time period, as discussed in the section entitled “Substantive Differences—Motions” above.

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## ADDENDUM TO "DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN RIDDICK'S RULES OF PROCEDURE AND ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER"

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Subsequent to publication of the article—"Distinctions between Riddick's Rules of Procedure and Robert's Rules of Order"—in the October, 1998, *Parliamentary Journal* (Vol. XXXIX, No. 4., p. 139), additional references to the legislative influence on distinctions in **Riddick** have come to the attention of the author and should be considered by parliamentarians trying to understand systematically the reasons for the distinctions between **Riddick** and **Robert**.

For example, the concept that a motion is not in the possession of the assembly *until some action is taken* on it may be attributable to Dr. Riddick's long service in the United States Senate, where the rules prescribe that "the mover of a resolution has a right to modify it where no action by the Senate has been taken thereon" (**Riddick, Senate Procedure** p. 984). See Virginia Schlotzhauer, William Evans, and John R. Stipp, Eds., **Parliamentary Opinions**, Des Moines, Iowa: American Institute of Parliamentarians (1982), p. 28.

Dr. Riddick's legislative experience is evident in other issues covered by **Riddick's Rules** as well, such as the preference for using the traditional amendment process instead of filling blanks (**Riddick** p. 70). See Henry Robert, **Robert's Rules of Order Revised** (4th ed. 1915), reprinted New York: William Morrow & Co. (1971), p. 148 n.\*; Henry Robert, **Robert's Rules of Order** (3d ed. 1893), reprinted New York: Pyramid Books (1967), p. 50 n.\*.

Another substantive distinction parliamentarians should be aware of is in the area of organizational structure. **Riddick's** "standing rules" (equivalent to **Robert's** special rules of order and adopted parliamentary authority) can be adopted or amended by majority vote, preferably (but not necessarily) with previous notice (**Riddick** p. 184). This is similar to **Riddick's** handling of the required vote for the motions to *Rescind*, *Change Something Previously Adopted* (*Amend Something Previously Adopted*), and *Discharge a Committee*. (**Riddick** pp. 42, 83, 173). **Robert** requires a two-thirds vote with previous notice or a majority of the entire membership without previous notice to adopt or amend special rules of order (**RONR90** p. 17). Nevertheless, both **Riddick** and **Robert** require a two-thirds vote to suspend **Riddick's** "standing rules" (**Riddick** p. 184; **RONR90** p. 17). In the case of **Riddick**, the two-thirds requirement for suspension is somewhat contradictory, since **Riddick's** "standing rules" can be adopted and presumably amended (based on **Riddick's** treatment of *Change Something Previously Adopted*) by a majority vote without notice. In that case, it would make more sense and give an

assembly greater flexibility to amend the "standing rules" instead of suspending them.

An additional minor difference between **Riddick** and **Robert** is that **Riddick** permits any pending *question to be divided* (**Riddick** p. 88), whereas **Robert** allows only main motions and amendments to them to be divided (**RONR90** p. 269).

### Letter from the Editor

This edition of the *Parliamentary Journal* is as full of opinions as any we have had to date. One thing about parliamentarians is that they usually have opinions and they generally are willing to expound and share them with anyone who is available. The *Parliamentary Journal* gives voice to your opinions in this issue and in every issue. It is a public forum and as stated on the inside cover of the *Journal*, "The opinions expressed in the *Journal* are the opinions of the authors of the articles and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor nor of the American Institute of Parliamentarians." As always, the diversity of opinions expressed by all of our contributors and readers is welcome.

Congratulations are in order for two AiP members who were honored at the November meeting of the Commission on American Parliamentary Practice in New York City meeting in conjunction with the National Communication Association. Professor David L. Vancil of Colorado state University, Ft. Collins, received the Gregg Phifer Distinguished Scholarship Award which includes recognition for his article "The Evolution of Parliamentary Procedure in the Assembly of Ancient Athens" published in the April 1996 issue of the *Parliamentary Journal*. Your editor was delighted to receive the first H.L. Ewbank Award for Distinguished Service in Parliamentary Procedure. Thanks... CAPP!

Thanks also to Ginger for her help with typing and proofreading. Hope you had great holidays! Many of us would be happy to have some snow in Texas!

Martha J. Haun, Ph.D., Editor  
University of Houston