



Cheat Sheet for New Delegates – Best Practices for Making Procedural Motions, Motions to Amend Reports and Resolutions, and Submitting New Business¹

- The control and administration of the NYSBA is vested in the House of Delegates, the decision and policy-making body of the Association. The House meets four times a year (January, April, June, and November). Action taken by the House of Delegates on specific issues becomes official NYSBA policy. The members of the House of Delegates serve as Trustees of the Association. (Bylaws V.1.)
- Robert’s Rules of Order Revised govern the proceedings of the Association, House of Delegates, and Executive Committee, and section/committee meetings. (Bylaws XII.4.B.)
- Reports and resolutions are circulated to the members of the House of Delegates and section and committee chairs (the “Reports Group”) upon submission of the report to reportsgroup@nysba.org. Delegates, sections, committees, and other stakeholders then review the reports and resolutions and submit comments in advance of the scheduled House meeting. The meeting agenda and materials, including any submitted comments, are then circulated to delegates several weeks in advance of meetings of the House. Link to Reports Group webpage: <https://nysba.org/reportsgroup/>.
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- The Rules of the Executive Committee and House of Delegates for the Consideration of Reports (<https://nysba.org/app/uploads/2020/07/Reports-Group-Rules.pdf>) require reports and resolutions to be submitted at least seventy-five days prior to the House of Delegates meeting at which action on the report/resolution is requested. Reports and resolutions submitted after the seventy-five-day deadline require the approval of the President and Chair of the House to be added to the meeting agenda and considered at the next meeting. Prior notice to the Reports Group is not required for requests to support, sponsor, or oppose proposals to the American Bar Association House of Delegates; request for *amicus* briefs; or reports relating to internal finance, governance, or membership benefit issues.
- NYSBA custom allows for reports and resolutions to be amended by “friendly amendment” both before and during the meeting of the House of Delegates at which action on the report/resolution is requested (e.g., Committee X requests that Task Force Y edit the language of resolution Z of the Task Force’s report. If both parties consent to the friendly amendment, then the report or resolution is automatically amended without the need for formal amendment by the House of Delegates. The House of Delegates, however, must still act to approve the amended report or resolution).
- Advance notice is REQUESTED at least three days before the scheduled meeting of the House of Delegates for any motions raising new business items or motions to amend reports or resolutions. Advance notice should be given to the NYSBA President and the Chair of the House. Adherence to this policy allows the text of any new business items or motions to amend to be circulated to all delegates and the movants of reports, permitting time for all participants to reflect and weigh in on any new proposals before the meeting.
- During debate, a motion to amend takes precedence over a main motion (i.e., the motion to approve the report or resolution), and is entertained by the Chair of the House if properly moved and seconded. Per Robert’s Rules of Order, all procedural motions take precedence over the main motion or a motion to amend. By custom, delegates are requested by the Chair of the House to refrain from making procedural motions until there has been sufficient opportunity for debate on the main motion (e.g., Procedural motions, or “subsidiary motions” in Robert’s Rules of Order, are motions to amend, postpone to a certain time, close debate, table, recess, and adjourn).

¹ This cheat sheet is intended as a primer on the customary etiquette for introducing new business and making motions at House of Delegates meetings and is not inclusive of the entirety of the Rules of the House of Delegates or of the NYSBA Bylaws provisions governing meetings of the House of Delegates.