

Florida State Association of PARLIAMENTARIANS



A TALE OF TWO CONVENTIONS

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Convention I. An organization with over 250,000 members and three hundred delegates at convention, all mostly of college age.

The group utilizes a professional parliamentarian for their convention and on retainer for issues that come up between conventions. The chair's convention script that has been carried forward from year to year contains a one-minute explanation on the meaning of "Are you ready for the question?" The script includes other *parliamentary* language: 1) "*floor is open;*" 2) "*pending debatable motion;*" 3) "*propose a secondary motion.*"

Convention II. An organization with more than one million members around the world and nine hundred plus delegates in convention, all age groups.

Until 2022, the organization had never worked with a professional parliamentarian relying on a member of the board of directors to be the parliamentarian. The chair does not use a script relying on his many years of experience in presiding. No explanation of the procedure in handling motions is given by the chair. When there appeared to be no one seeking the floor to speak in debate on a pending motion, the chair said: "Are you ready to vote?"

Summary: "Are you ready for the question?" or "Are you ready to vote?" Does the first require explanation and the second does not? Does the make-up of the convention delegates or membership make a difference? What does Robert say?

When debate appears to have concluded, the chair may again ask, "Are you ready for the question?" (or "Is there any further debate?") or if, after a reasonable pause, no one rises to claim the floor, the chair may assume that no member wishes to speak and, standing, may proceed to put the question.

—RONR (12th ed.) 43:6 (See also 4:34 and 43:4)

Is "Are you ready for the question?" a rule of order to be adhered to or an archaic custom that lives on just because it has always been done that way? Robert does say *may*. Has the chair of the second convention introduced an alternative question that is understood without explanation?

What do you think?