



## Amendments that are not treated as Amendments

The fundamental concept for amendments is that no more than one primary amendment and one secondary amendment are permitted to be pending at a time. The number of times a motion may be amended is endless, as long as a proposed amendment does not raise a question already decided. (RONR p. 135)

Unless an amendment is adopted by unanimous consent (or the body's bylaws require a higher vote), adoption of an amendment requires a majority of the votes cast. This means that a conventional amendment is proposed, debated (if debate is in order), voted upon, and then business moves on to the next amendment or to the main motion.

There are several situations where motion "modifications" behave as amendments. However, these modifications appear to violate Robert's limit on the number of pending amendments because numerous "modifications" are definitely pending at one time. Additionally, the same question may be voted upon numerous times.

RONR refers to these modifications as "suggestion". These "suggestions" are applied to 3 subsidiary motions and to 3 incidental motions. The Standard Descriptive Characteristics of these "suggestions" are different from the motion's Standard Descriptive Characteristics.

These "suggestions" do not require the mover to be recognized (except Previous Question), do not require a Second (except Previous Question), are not debatable (except Fill a Blank and Nominations), are not amendable, and all (except Previous Question) require a majority vote to adopt. (See also, Call for the Orders of the Day, and Elections.)

The most unique aspect of each of these "suggestions" is the voting sequence.

Here are 6 amendments that are not treated as amendments because each proposed modification is actually a series of "suggestions":

1. **Fill a blank:** The mover of a main motion (or a primary amendment), or any member, or the chair may move that a blank be created. The blank is inserted so as to contain names of persons or places; amounts; dates; or numbers.

Voting Sequence: Names (same order as proposed);  
Others by least popular option first! Money to be spent (least amount desirable first);  
Money to accept (smallest amount first); Places/Dates/Numbers (either same as

proposed, or least popular choice first, or largest/longest first). (RONR p. 162-7)

2. **When completing an incomplete motion to commit**, here are the potential committees that members may suggest to handle a referred motion.
  - a. Committee of the whole
  - b. Quasi committee of the whole
  - c. Consider informally
  - d. Recommit to the same previous Standing Committee or Special Committee
  - e. Standing committee
  - f. Special committee

Voting Sequence: If more than one of these committees is “suggested”, the vote would follow the sequence as listed above with 2 exceptions. (1) If more than one standing committee is proposed, the first proposed standing committee is voted on first. (2) If more than one special committee is proposed, the one with the greatest number of members is voted on first. (RONR p. 174)

3. **When completing an incomplete motion to commit**, here are the potential methods to appoint committee member to a Special Committee.
  - a. Election by ballot
  - b. Nominations from the floor (with voice vote)
  - c. Nominations by the chair
  - d. Appointment by the chair

Voting Sequence: if more than one appointment method is “suggested” by the members, the “suggestions” are voted upon in the sequence listed above. (RONR p. 174)

4. **Previous Question**: This motion cannot be amended, but once moved may be “qualified” with “suggestions”. Let us assume that 4 motions are pending: (a) main motion, (b) an amendment, (c) refer, and (d) postpone. By default, a call for the previous question would involve only (d), the pending motion. “Qualified Suggestions” could be proposed, either (d) and (c); or (d), (c) and (b); or ALL the pending motions.

Voting Sequence: If more than one “Qualified Suggestion” is offered, the “suggestion” that involves the largest number of motions would be voted on first. (RONR p. 200)

5. **Division of a Question**: A member may wish to deliberate and vote upon the separate stand-alone parts of a single subject motion. A motion to divide a question would be in order and would state the manner in which the member wishes to divide the motion.

Let us assume that a motion has 4 parts – A, B C, and D.

The mover states division into 2 parts – Part 1 (A), and Part 2 (B, C, D).

Member Smith suggests 2 parts – Part 1 (A, B), and Part 2 (C, D).

Member Jones suggests 3 parts – Part 1 (A, B), Part 2 (C), and Part 3 (D).

Voting Sequence: When more than one “suggestion” is made on how to divide a question, and all the “suggestions” involve the same number of parts, the “suggestions” are voted upon according to the order in which they were “suggested”. Otherwise, the “suggestion” with the largest number of parts is voted upon first. In the example above, the body would vote on Member Jones’ “suggestion” first, and then the mover’s “suggestion”, and finally Member Smith’s “suggestion”. (RONR p. 272)

6. **Nominations:** If neither the bylaws nor the body has a rule prescribing the method of nominations, members may offer the following “suggestions”.
- a. By the chair
  - b. From the floor
  - c. By Committee
  - d. By Ballot
  - e. By Mail
  - f. By Petition (added from page 431 in RONR)

Voting Sequence: If more than one method is “suggested”, the vote to select the method to nominate an office to be filled follows the list above.

In summary, the vote on a typical main motion or on a secondary motion is more like a True/False question because the body answers with ‘Aye’ or ‘No’. Modifications are not conventional amendments because they offer the body a multiple-choice answer to the question “Which shall we select.”

“Suggestions” are not conventional amendments because “suggestions” permit numerous choices on the same question to be pending at one time. Additionally, with “suggestions” the body does not vote just one time on the modification, and then move on with other business. The body continues to vote on the options until one of the “suggestions” for a question receives a majority vote.

The concept of “suggestions” vs. amendments illustrates not only that RONR is abundantly practical, but that RONR is also quite thorough, persistently consistent, and endlessly resourceful.