

Commit or Refer

RONR (12th ed.) Section 13

§13:1-26



ANOTHER
RONR SHORT TAKE

PREPARED BY

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A CSAP Short Take on Commit or Refer

“The subsidiary motion to *Commit* or *Refer* is generally used to send a pending question to a committee – so that ...

What?

*“...the question may be
carefully investigated
and put into better
condition for the
assembly to consider.*

§13:1



If a motion to commit or refer is made “when no question is pending” it is an original main motion (and “not the subsidiary motion).”

The motion is an incidental main motion when “referral is pursuant to a subject on which the assembly has already taken some action.”

§13:6 and see 13:4 ON “Recommit”.

STANDARD DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS (SDC #3-8) §13:7

- 3. Out of Order when another has the floor;
 - 4. Needs a **second**.
 - 5. Is **debatable**.
 - 6. Is **amendable as follows:**
 - i. As to the committee
 - ii. Its composition & selection
 - iii. Instructions to the committee
 - 7. Needs a **majority vote** for adoption.
 - 8. An affirmative vote can be reconsidered before action is taken by the committee; after committee action, one must move to *Discharge a Committee*.
- A negative vote is reconsidered only after such progress is made in debate sufficient to make the matter "a new question."

Commit or Refer to Whom? The Assembly, to a Standing Committee, to a Special Committee

Whether to the Assembly or Standing Committee, the motion to refer must identify by name which committee the mover *intends* to invoke.

Refer to a “Special Committee” –

- What is the name of the SC?
- Who is on the SC?
- What is the SC supposed to do?
- When is the SC supposed to do it?
- Who will chair the SC?

Q: Is the Assembly itself a Special Committee?



*Decide who the members will be
and say so.*

When moving to refer to a “Special Committee” don’t say “special”, say:

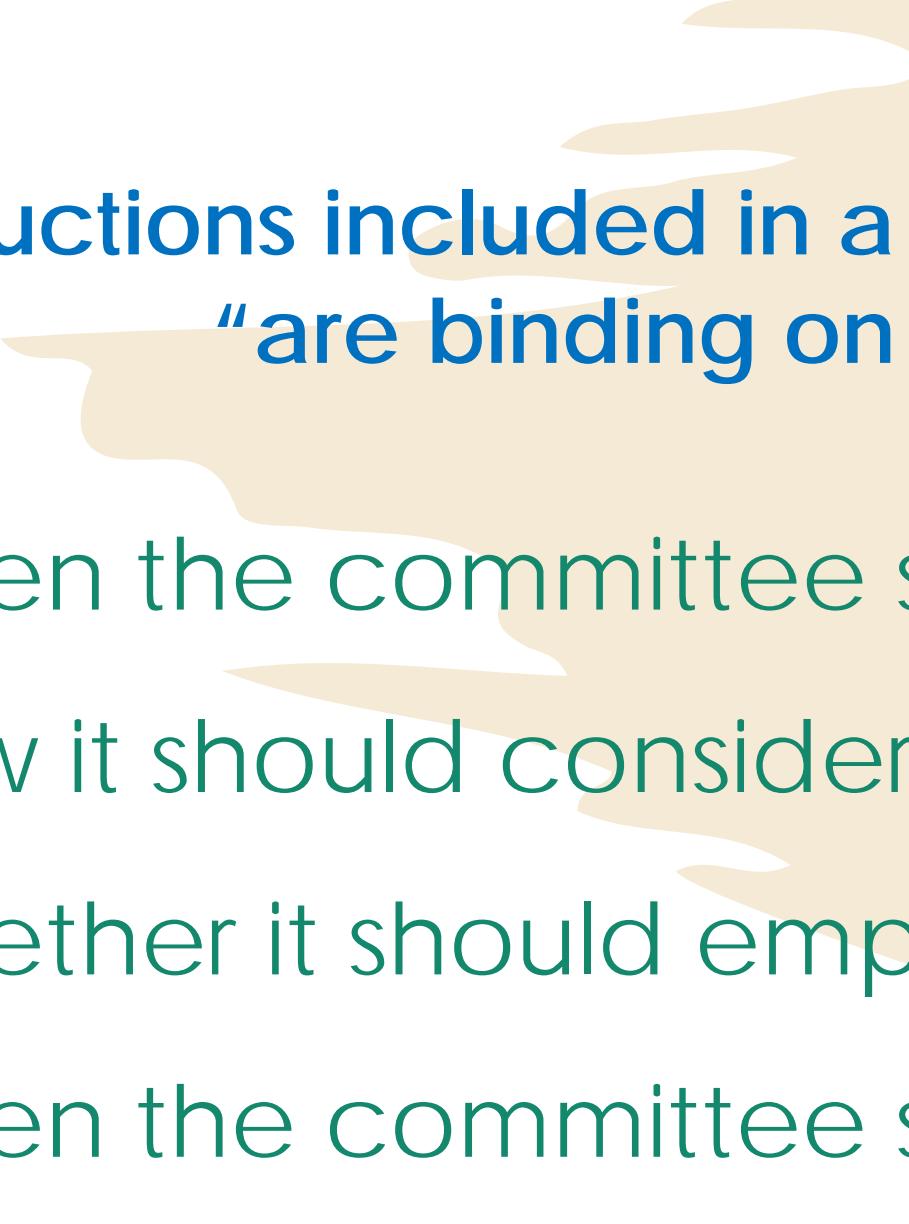
*“I move to refer the Q to –
... a committee of five to be
appointed by the Director.” or*

*“...a committee of all current Unit
Presidents”, or*

*“...a committee of 7 elected by
the assembly at the next regular
meeting.”*

“Instructions to the Committee can also be included in the motion to Commit...” § 13:8(d)





**Instructions included in a motion to commit or refer
“are binding on the committee”.**

- When the committee should meet
- How it should consider the question
- Whether it should employ an expert consultant
- When the committee should report

First, obtain the floor.
Then,

"I move to refer the question to a committee of 5 chosen by the Officers (each making 1 appointment), to meet at least twice per month until the Annual Meeting *Call* is issued; thereafter, to meet as needed to prepare a detailed, written report of the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations to present to the assembly at the Annual Meeting."





Let's try another one:

"I move that the Membership Committee identify specific demographics thought most open to the study of parliamentary procedure and membership in this organization, and prepare a written report of its findings, conclusions and recommendations. If necessary, the report must include a proposed budget to implement the Committee's recommendations. After review by the Board of Directors, the report would be published in the next club newsletter and presented to the Assembly for a vote at a special meeting called for that purpose."

Today's take aways on Commit or Refer are....

- 
1. Say your idea out loud
 2. Arrange your thoughts, write them down
 3. Confer with others who can help with details
 4. Keep an open mind
 5. Leap, and the net will appear!

I hope this RONR Short Take makes more familiar the very useful and versatile motion to Commit or Refer. Thank you for your attention.

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CSAP Quick Quiz based on RONR *In Brief*

COMMITTEES

READ EACH STATEMENT AND SELECT TRUE OR FALSE FOR YOUR ANSWER. The answer key follows.

1. The motion to Commit (Refer to a committee) allows the assembly to acquire more information before any action is taken.

True False

2. The motion to Commit requires a two-thirds affirmative vote for adoption.

True False

3. Standing Committee's members are usually selected by methods set forth in the bylaws.

True False

4. The motion to Commit is amendable but not debatable.

True False

5. Debate on the motion to Commit is limited.

True False

6. Special Committees are created for a particular purpose.

True False

7. The assembly will always decide how to populate a special committee.

True False

8. Members of Standing Committees generally serve for the same period as the officers of the organization.

True False

1. True	p. 54
2. False	p. 54
3. True	p. 55
4. False	p. 55
5. True	p. 55
6. True	p. 56
7. False	p. 56, fn 3
8. True	p. 56

The Motion to Commit (or Refer)

CSAP Quick Quiz ANSWER KEY