

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to §20702(b) of H.J. Res. 20, P.L. 110–5, I am notifying the House that I am designating Ali Qureshi, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Operations and Walter Edwards, Deputy CAO for Customer Solutions to act in my stead in the event of my death, resignation, separation from office or disability until a Chief Administrative Officer is appointed pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §5501.

Sincerely,

DANIEL P. BEARD.

D. Other House Officials and Capitol Employees

§ 18. The Parliamentarian

The Parliamentarian of the House is a nonpartisan official appointed by the Speaker to provide impartial guidance on House rules, precedents, and customs. Prior to the advent of the position of Parliamentarian, a “Clerk at the Speaker’s table” performed a similar role, advising the presiding officer as to proper parliamentary procedure.⁽¹⁾ In the 69th Congress in 1927, the official became formally known as the Parliamentarian of the House.⁽²⁾ In the 95th Congress, the House formally established an Office of the Parliamentarian in law.⁽³⁾ The office consists of the Parliamentarian, the Deputy Parliamentarian, and other attorneys, clerks, and IT support professionals. The Office of the Parliamentarian provides procedural guidance to the Speaker, House leadership, Members, committees, and staff.

The Parliamentarian has a wide variety of duties both on and off the floor of the House. Whenever the House is in session, the Parliamentarian is present on the floor and sits or stands to the right of the Chair. From that position, the Parliamentarian advises the presiding officer in real time as

1. An even earlier position, known as the “Messenger to the Speaker” dates back to at least the 34th Congress in 1857. See <https://history.house.gov/People/Office/Parliamentarians/> (last visited Oct. 24, 2019).
2. 68 CONG. REC. 2622–23, 69th Cong. 2d Sess. (Jan. 31, 1927). Since the 69th Congress, there have been six individuals appointed as Parliamentarian of the House: Lehr Fess (1919–1928), Lewis Deschler (1928–1974), William Holmes Brown (1974–1994), Charles W. Johnson, III (1994–2004), John V. Sullivan (2004–2012), and Thomas J. Wickham, Jr. (2012–).
3. 2 U.S.C. § 287. See § 18.1, *infra*.

to the current parliamentary situation and provides guidance for the orderly conduct of deliberations. The Parliamentarian also assists the various employees of the Clerk's Office at the rostrum with such tasks as: conducting votes; processing bills for referral to committee; filing committee reports; etc. The Parliamentarian works with the Official Reporters of Debate and Journal Clerks to ensure that procedural statements issued by the Chair and other proceedings are correctly depicted in the *Congressional Record* and *Journal*. Clerks to the Parliamentarian are positioned to the left of the Chair, and are primarily charged with timekeeping duties and other administrative tasks.

The Speaker's authority to refer bills and resolutions to committee has traditionally been delegated to the Parliamentarian, who researches prior referrals and arbitrates jurisdictional disputes among committees of the House.⁽⁴⁾ The Parliamentarian's Office works closely with the Committee on Rules on special orders of business and reviews possible amendments for compliance with House rules (such as germaneness).

The Office of the Parliamentarian publishes a number of parliamentary texts for use by the House. The primary text is the *House Rules and Manual*, which contains the annotated standing rules of the House, as well as Jefferson's *Manual of Parliamentary Practice* and the Constitution.⁽⁵⁾ A secondary text, known as *House Practice: A Guide to the Rules, Precedents, and Procedures of the House*, provides an overview of parliamentary practice in the House, divided by subject matter.⁽⁶⁾ A subsidiary Office of the Parliamentarian, known as the Office of Compilation of the Precedents, analyzes and compiles the procedural rulings of the House of Representatives for publication. This office was initially authorized in the 93d Congress by the Committee Reform Amendments of 1974.⁽⁷⁾ The printing and the distribution of these volumes of precedents has also been authorized by law.⁽⁸⁾ In 2013, the office completed publication of the Deschler's Precedents series. An updated series, known as the Precedents of the U.S. House of Representatives series began in 2018.⁽⁹⁾

4. For the referral process generally, see Deschler's Precedents Ch. 16 § 3 and Precedents (Wickham) Ch. 16. The Office of the Parliamentarian is also tasked with referring executive communications, petitions, and memorials to the appropriate committees of jurisdiction. See Rule XII, clause 8, *House Rules and Manual* § 827 (2019).

5. See Precedents (Wickham) Ch. 5 § 2.1.

6. The publication of this volume is authorized by statute. See 2 U.S.C. § 29.

7. See 2 U.S.C. § 28a.

8. See 2 U.S.C. §§ 28, 28b–e, 29.

9. Since 1907, the House has published four precedents series. Hinds' Precedents covers precedents from 1789–1907. Cannon's Precedents covers precedents from 1907–1936.

When a Parliamentarian resigns the position,⁽¹⁰⁾ the Speaker appoints a new Parliamentarian without regard to political affiliation.⁽¹¹⁾ Since 1927, every retiring Parliamentarian has been succeeded by another member of the office, thus ensuring the retention of institutional knowledge.

Creation of Office

§ 18.1 By unanimous consent, the House considered and adopted a resolution formally establishing in the House an Office of the Parliamentarian.⁽¹²⁾

On April 20, 1977,⁽¹³⁾ a resolution establishing the Office of the Parliamentarian (to be supervised by a nonpartisan Parliamentarian appointed by the Speaker) was considered and adopted as follows:

AUTHORIZING ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF PARLIAMENTARIAN OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. [James] WRIGHT [of Texas]. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a resolution (H. Res. 502) and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER.⁽¹⁴⁾ Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 502

Resolved,

ESTABLISHMENT

SECTION 1. There is hereby established in the House of Representatives an office to be known as the Office of the Parliamentarian, hereinafter in the resolution referred to as the "Office".

PARLIAMENTARIAN

SEC. 2. The management, supervision, and administration of the Office shall be vested in the Parliamentarian, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of fitness to perform the duties of the position. Any person so appointed shall serve at the pleasure of the Speaker.

Deschler's Precedents, and its subsequent mastheads of Deschler–Brown, Deschler–Brown–Johnson, and Deschler–Brown–Johnson–Sullivan Precedents, cover precedents from 1936–2013 (depending on the volume's date of publication). The fourth series, Precedents of the U.S. House of Representatives (cited as Precedents (Wickham)), saw its first volume published in 2018, and covers precedents from 1973 to opening day of the 115th Congress.

10. See § 18.2, *infra*. See also Deschler's Precedents Ch. 37 § 10.

11. See § 18.3, *infra*.

12. The resolution was enacted into permanent law by P.L. 95–94, 91 Stat. 653. See 2 U.S.C. § 287.

13. 123 CONG. REC. 11415, 95th Cong. 1st Sess. See also *House Rules and Manual* § 1122 (2019) and 2 U.S.C. § 287.

14. Thomas O'Neill (MA).

STAFF

SEC. 3. (a) With the approval of the Speaker or in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the Speaker, the Parliamentarian shall appoint such attorneys and other employees as may be necessary for the prompt and efficient performance of the functions of the Office. Any such appointment shall be made without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of fitness to perform the duties of the position. Any person so appointed may be removed by the Parliamentarian with the approval of the Speaker, or in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the Speaker.

(b) (1) One of the attorneys appointed under subsection (a) shall be designated by the Parliamentarian as Deputy Parliamentarian. During the absence or disability of the Parliamentarian, or when the office is vacant, the Deputy Parliamentarian shall perform the functions of the Parliamentarian.

(2) The Parliamentarian may delegate to the Deputy Parliamentarian and to other employees appointed under subsection (a) such of the functions of the Parliamentarian as the Parliamentarian considers necessary or appropriate.

COMPENSATION

SEC. 4. (a) The Parliamentarian shall be paid at a per annum gross rate established by the Speaker but not in excess of the rate of basic pay determined from time to time under subsection (b) of section 3 of the Speaker's salary directive of June 11, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 60a note).

(b) Members of the staff of the Office other than the Parliamentarian shall be paid at per annum gross rates fixed by the Parliamentarian with the approval of the Speaker or in accordance with policies approved by the Speaker, but not in excess of the rate of basic pay set forth in subsection (a).

EXPENDITURES

SEC. 5. In accordance with policies and procedures approved by the Speaker, the Parliamentarian may make such expenditures as may be necessary or appropriate for the functioning of the Office.

EFFECTIVE DATE

SEC. 6. This resolution shall take effect as of March 1, 1977, and shall continue in effect until otherwise provided by law.

Mr. WRIGHT (during the reading).

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution may be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, this resolution establishes an office of Parliamentarian. While the duties of the Parliamentarian are set forth in law, the existence of the office has heretofore been recognized only in annual appropriation measures. This resolution, when made permanent law, will constitute the authorization for future appropriations.

The resolution does not change the present nature, size, or duties of the office. All functions prescribed in existing law remain the same. Appointment of the Parliamentarian by the Speaker and the nonpartisan nature of the office will continue as before.

Present practices regarding employment of personnel in the office will continue. All employees in the office have traditionally been appointed with approval of Speaker. The resolution also permits a deputy to sign vouchers and other necessary papers in absence of the Parliamentarian.

In 1968 the pay of the Parliamentarian was fixed at a rate which was specifically limited in application to the incumbent, Lewis Deschler. Presently there is no authority in law for the Speaker to raise pay above that amount which existed at time of the resignation of the former Parliamentarian in 1974. This resolution would rectify that situation.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Resignation of the Parliamentarian**§ 18.2 The resignation of the Parliamentarian is laid before the House for the information of Members.⁽¹⁵⁾**

On February 28, 2012,⁽¹⁶⁾ the following occurred:

RESIGNATION AS PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARIAN,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As you know, the skill and dedication of the team with whom I serve in the Office of the Parliamentarian and the Office of Compilation of Precedents are unsurpassed. In my judgment they are ready to continue their commitment to excellence in the procedural practice of the House without me. I appreciate your allowing me to lead the office to this juncture. Please now accept my resignation effective March 31, 2012.

I am grateful to you and your predecessors, Mr. Speaker, for supporting the exercise of independent professional judgment by your parliamentarians. It is a credit to the House that its presiding officers shed their partisan cloaks and follow our considered advice.

It has been my honor to serve in the Office of the Parliamentarian for 25 years. To whatever extent I have made good of the opportunity, I credit the steady support of my wife, Nancy Sands Sullivan, and the inspiration of our children, Michael, Margaret, and Matthew.

Sincerely,

JOHN V. SULLIVAN,
Parliamentarian.

On June 27, 1974,⁽¹⁷⁾ the following resignation was laid before the House:⁽¹⁸⁾

15. *Parliamentarian's Note:* The resignation of a nonelected officer such as the Parliamentarian is not subject to acceptance by the House, but is laid before the House as a matter of information. See Deschler's Precedents Ch. 37 § 9.3.
16. 158 CONG. REC. 2360–61, 112th Cong. 2d Sess.
17. 120 CONG. REC. 21590–92, 21595, 93d Cong. 2d Sess. See also Deschler's Precedents Ch. 37 § 10.4 (resignation of Parliamentarian William Holmes Brown) and Deschler's Precedents Ch. 37 § 10.5 (resignation of Parliamentarian Charles W. Johnson III).
18. *Parliamentarian's Note:* The resignation of a nonelected officer such as the Parliamentarian is not subject to acceptance by the House, but is laid before the House as a matter of information. See Deschler's Precedents Ch. 37 § 9.3. For the appointment of William Holmes Brown as Parliamentarian, see 120 CONG. REC. 21847–48, 93d Cong. 2d Sess. (July 1, 1974).

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 27, 1974.

Hon. CARL ALBERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I hereby submit my resignation as Parliamentarian of the United States House of Representatives effective at the close of June 30, 1974.

I am in my fiftieth year of service for the House of Representatives, having come originally to this body as an employee in 1925. In 1927 I became Assistant Parliamentarian and in January, 1928, I began my service as Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives, service which has covered a period of more than forty-six years.

This has been a wonderful experience, and I consider it to be one of the great privileges which God has granted me that I have served with nine Speakers: Honorable Nicholas Longworth, Honorable John Garner, Honorable Henry Rainey, Honorable Joseph Byrns, Honorable William Bankhead, Honorable Sam Rayburn, Honorable Joseph Martin, Honorable John McCormack, Honorable Carl Albert.

No one ever becomes Speaker of the House of Representatives unless he has great intelligence and ability and high probity, and unless he commands the respect of his colleagues. All of these nine Speakers were eminently qualified to follow and enhance the traditions of the House of Representatives. Their wisdom, fairness, and non-partisanship in filling the high post of Speaker is shown by the fact that from the beginning of the 70th Congress, in 1927, there have been only eight appeals from decisions of the Speaker, and in seven of these eight cases the decision of the Speaker was sustained by the House of Representatives. On the one occasion when the Speaker was overruled (on February 21, 1931), the House was actually following the wishes of Speaker Longworth, for he in effect appealed to the House to overrule him in order to correct what he regarded as an erroneous precedent.

The challenges presented by my work as Parliamentarian have been heightened by the caliber of the men and women who have served in the House of Representatives while I have been associated with it. Truly representing all parts of the country and all their constituents, their individual and collective wisdom and their unceasing dedication to this country and its Constitution have always been a source of inspiration to me. I shall always treasure the many deep and abiding friendships which have developed through my associations with the Members over these years.

Along the way too it has been a pleasure to associate with the talented and loyal officers and employees of this body, and I am deeply grateful for the close friendships and wonderful working relationships which we have had.

I shall cherish the firm and lasting friendships I have had, Mr. Speaker, with the ladies and gentlemen of the media. In my almost daily associations with them over many years, I have come to know and respect their diligent efforts to report the news. I am particularly grateful for the way in which they honored my requests to protect my anonymity on those many occasions when they discussed with me some of the complicated legislative problems which confronted us from time to time.

The time comes in each man's life when he must determine what his future may be under God's guidance and direction. I am approaching my seventieth year, and my doctors have strongly suggested that I retire from my duties as Parliamentarian. It is my

hope, Mr. Speaker, that in your good judgment you will find a position where I may continue to advise and consult with you and with the new Parliamentarian, as well as continuing the important work in which I am presently engaged of compiling the Precedents of the House of Representatives.

I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you all the Members of this great body present and past, for your many kindnesses and considerations.

Most respectfully submitted.

LEWIS DESCHLER,
Parliamentarian, U.S. House of Representatives.

RETIREMENT OF LEWIS DESCHLER AS PARLIAMENTARIAN

Mr. [Thomas] O'NEILL [of Massachusetts]. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the minority leader, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RHODES) and myself, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 1202) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution as follows:

H. RES. 1202

Resolved, That the House of Representatives hereby tenders its gratitude and expresses its abiding affection to Lewis Deschler upon his retirement after more than 46 years as its Parliamentarian, and recognizes that his unsurpassed service and dedication to the House, his impartial counsel to Speakers and Members, and his exceptional contribution to the operation of its rules have immeasurably benefited this institution of government.

The SPEAKER.⁽¹⁹⁾ If the Chair did not stop it, this applause and standing ovation would continue all day. . . .

Mr. O'NEILL. Mr. Speaker, I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Appointment of Parliamentarian

§ 18.3 Pursuant to law,⁽²⁰⁾ the Speaker appoints the Parliamentarian of the House, and such appointment is announced to the House for the information of Members.

On February 28, 2012,⁽²¹⁾ the Speaker appointed Thomas J. Wickham, Jr., as Parliamentarian to succeed John V. Sullivan:

APPOINTMENT AS PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER.⁽²²⁾ Pursuant to section 287(a) of title 2, United States Code, the Chair appoints Thomas J. Wickham, Jr., as Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives to succeed John V. Sullivan, resigned.

19. Carl Albert (OK).

20. 2 U.S.C. § 287(a).

21. 158 CONG. REC. 2360–61, 112th Cong. 2d Sess.

22. John Boehner (OH).

On July 1, 1974,⁽²³⁾ the Speaker appointed William Holmes Brown as Parliamentarian to succeed Lewis Deschler:

The SPEAKER.⁽²⁴⁾ The Chair desires to announce that he has on this date appointed William Holmes Brown as Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives to succeed Lewis Deschler, resigned.

Senate Floor Privileges

§ 18.4 By unanimous consent, the Senate granted to the House Parliamentarian and five Assistant Parliamentarians privileges of the Senate floor for the duration of a Congress.⁽²⁵⁾

On January 6, 2009,⁽²⁶⁾ the following occurred:

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. [Harry] REID [of Nevada]. Mr. President, I send to the desk en bloc 12 unanimous consent requests and I ask for their immediate consideration en bloc; that the requests be agreed to en bloc, that the motion to reconsider the adoption of these requests be laid upon the table and that they appear separately in the record.

Before the Chair rules, I would like to point out these requests are routine, done at the beginning of each new Congress, and they entail issues such as authority for the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to meet, authorizing the Secretary to receive reports at the desk, establishing leader time each day, and floor privileges for House Parliamentarians.

The PRESIDING OFFICER.⁽²⁷⁾ Without objection, it is so ordered.

The requests read as follows: . . .

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives and his five assistants be given the privileges of the floor during the 111th Congress.

§ 19. General Counsel; Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group

The Office of General Counsel is established pursuant to clause 8(a) of rule II.⁽¹⁾ The purpose of the office is to provide “legal assistance and representation to the House . . . without regard to political affiliation.”⁽²⁾ The

23. 120 CONG. REC. 21847–48, 93d Cong. 2d Sess.

24. Carl Albert (OK).

25. *Parliamentarian’s Note*: Although these types of unanimous-consent requests granting Senate floor privileges to House parliamentarians were once routine, they have not occurred in recent Congresses.

26. 155 CONG. REC. 43, 111th Cong. 1st Sess.

27. Jon Tester (MT).

1. *House Rules and Manual* § 670 (2019).

2. *Id.*