

# **American Institute of Parliamentarians**

## **Joint Code of Ethics**

The American Institute of Parliamentarians and the National Association of Parliamentarians join together in approving and supporting this Joint Code of Ethics on behalf of the entire parliamentary profession. Members of both organizations recognize the supreme importance of respect for equal justice, the pursuit of truth, and the nurture of democratic principles. We regard as essential to these goals the protection of freedom of speech, and the guarantee of equal opportunity through the use of parliamentary law. As guardians of parliamentary procedure, we play a vital role in the preservation of a democratic society. A consequent obligation is to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct. Therefore, we must find within our own conscience the touchstone against which to test the extent to which our actions should rise above these established minimum standards.

### **1. Universal Standards for Parliamentarians\***

A parliamentarian shall:

- 1.1 Assist in upgrading and improving the profession.
- 1.2 Assist in maintaining the integrity and competence of the profession.
- 1.3 Maintain high professional standards and keep abreast of the latest research in the field.
- 1.4 Promote a spirit of cooperation, ethical practice, and fair dealing with colleagues.
- 1.5 Conduct oneself so as to reflect credit on the profession and inspire the confidence, respect and trust of clients and the public,
- 1.6 Encourage non-discriminatory standards in all aspects of parliamentary practice.

### **2. Ethical Standards Within the Profession**

A parliamentarian shall:

- 2.1 Refrain from misrepresentation or other conduct that may reflect adversely on the profession.
- 2.2 Avoid attacking the motives of any colleague, and shall refrain from gratuitously making adverse comments about the work, knowledge, fitness, or other qualifying aspect of a colleague.
- 2.3 Immediately report to the ethics committee any known or suspected violation of this code of ethics. When requested, the parliamentarian shall provide testimony to the ethics committee, and shall assist the committee in the fulfillment of its charge.

### **3. Ethical Standards Related to Obtaining Appointments**

A parliamentarian shall:

- 3.1 Not misrepresent credentials, education, or experience to a client,

- 3.2 Refrain from making gratuitously adverse comments about competing applicants,
- 3.3 Refrain from giving anything of value to anyone for recommending the parliamentarian's services, except for the reasonable cost of advertising and the usual charges of a referral service.
- 3.4 Avoid unsolicited bidding for a position known to be filled,
- 3.5 Decline any appointment that the parliamentarian is not competent to handle.
- 3.6 Decline any appointment in which the parliamentarian is likely to be unduly restricted in the exercise of independent professional judgment.

#### 4. Ethical Standards in Relation to Clients

A parliamentarian shall:

- 4.1 Adhere to the terms of any contract or written agreement between the parliamentarian and the client.
- 4.2 Prepare adequately for each job and fulfill all commitments.
- 4.3 Advise the client on the proper application of the accepted rules of parliamentary procedure notwithstanding the client's personal desires in the matter.
- 4.4 Not accept gratuities or favors that might appear to warp professional opinions nor shall parliamentarians offer any favor, service, or thing of value to obtain special advantage,
- 4.5 Keep in confidence any information obtained in the course of professional service.
- 4.6 Maintain a position of objectivity and impartiality and refrain from participating in debate.
- 4.7 Call to the attention of the presiding officer any deviation from the rules that may be harmful to the organization.
- 4.8 Not withdraw from employment without first taking reasonable steps to avoid foreseeable detriment to the client,

\* Section 1 articulates the ideals toward which all parliamentarians aspire. They are not intended to be subject to discipline.

Adopted by AIP July 24, 2001

Adopted by NAP September 11, 2001

# American Institute of Parliamentarians

## Rules for Handling Complaints and Reporting Ethical Violations

- Rule I**     **Complaints.** Complaints alleging a violation of the “Code of Ethics” against a member of AIP:
- A.        shall be in writing, dated and signed by the complainant.
  - B.        shall be sent to the Chairman of the Ethics Committee
  - C.        shall state fully the facts surrounding the acts of omissions complained of and the nature and extent of violations alleged, names of witnesses and/or other documentation, and
  - D.        may be referred to the Committee by the Assembly or the Board of Directors if the violations occurred during those meetings.
- Rule II**     **Processing of Complaint.** Copies of a complaint with any accompanying documents shall be sent by the Chairman to all members of the Ethics Committee who:
- A.        may request that the Chairman obtain any necessary additional information, and
  - B.        shall decide by vote (which may be by mail) one of the following:
    1.        that the complaint be dismissed as clearly failing to present a proper claim of violations of the “Code of Ethics” or
    2.        that efforts be made to resolve the alleged violation without the necessity of a hearing, or
    3.        that the accused be afforded a hearing on charges and specifications growing out of the complaint.
- Rule III**     **Arrangements for Hearing.** When a hearing is to be afforded on an accused:
- A.        The Chairman of the Ethics Committee shall:
    1.        draft appropriate charges and specifications governing the nature and extent of the alleged violations, and
    2.        serve a copy of the charges and specifications signed by the Chairman, on behalf of the committee, to the accused.
  - B.        The Chairman of the committee shall:
    1.        schedule a hearing which may be held at the site of the Annual Session and on the day before the pre-Annual Session Board Meeting, or immediately preceding any other board meeting, or at any other time before those meetings and at a place agreeable to the majority of the committee.
    2.        notify the accused and the complainant no less than thirty (30) days before the hearing of the time and place so that they may appear and present evidence, and that they may be represented by legal counsel, if desired, and
    3.        notify any necessary witnesses to appear and present evidence.
  - C.        The hearing shall be conducted as provided in *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, Trial Procedure*. The committee shall act as the managers for AIP unless another is appointed by the President.

**Rule IV Report of the Committee.**

- A. After the hearing, the committee shall:
  - 1. inform the accused and complainant of its findings
  - 2. prepare a written report of its findings to be presented to the Executive Committee, and
  - 3. recommend appropriate disposition of the matter to the Executive Committee
- B. The committee may recommend dismissal of the complaint, or appropriate penalties, e.g.:
  - 1. require that the accused take certain remedial action, failing which, a further penalty may be imposed
  - 2. reprimand with or without the requirement that an apology be made to an aggrieved party
  - 3. suspension from membership for a definite period
  - 4. suspension from certified membership status for a definite period
  - 5. suspension from certified membership status with or without the right to apply for reinstatement examination after expiration of a definite period, or
  - 6. expulsion from membership.

**Rule V Disposition by the Executive Committee.**

- A. A penalty or any form of expulsion shall require a two-thirds vote for its imposition. Any other action less than expulsion shall be by majority vote.
- B. The Secretary shall inform the accused of the Executive Committee's decision within thirty (30) days.

**Rule VI Appeal.**

- A. An accused may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee by written notice to the Secretary within thirty (30) days of the mailing of the decision of the Executive Committee.
- B. Documents shall be available at the Board of Directors' meeting which is considering the appeal, and
- C. A penalty of any form of expulsion shall require a two-thirds vote for its imposition. Any other action less than expulsion shall be by majority vote.
- D. The Secretary shall promptly notify the accused of the decision of the Board of Directors.

**Rule VII Confidentiality of Proceedings.** All proceedings and documents connected with disciplinary procedures shall be sealed and held at the AIP office in strict confidence except:

- A. Appropriate officers, members or employees of AIP may be given such information regarding a disciplinary proceeding as is necessary for the execution of their responsibilities, and
- B. With respect to any penalty of expulsion, notice shall be published in *The Communicator* that the subject of the penalty is no longer a member or holder of certified membership status, as the case may be.

**Rule VIII Notification to the Accused.** All notices required by these rules to be given an accused shall be by certified mail, to the address of record, return receipt requested. Delivery restricted to addressee.

Adopted by the AIP Board of Directors, November 24, 1985.