

Parliamentary Points

There are two types of Points permitted in Parliamentary style debates: Points of Order and Points of Privilege (which both confer the *right to interrupt*). Points of Order and Privilege may be raised at any time unless there is already another such Point on the floor.

1. Points of Order and Privilege

A Point of Order may be raised whenever a rule of debate has been broken, except for repetition or irrelevance: CSDF Rule 50.(a). The Speaker, if he notices the breach, may call the House to order himself. If the Speaker does not, any of the participating debaters may raise a Point of Order. Rules of the House which often give rise to Points of Order through their breach include:

- (a) Form of Address required. Debaters must refer all remarks to the Speaker and must refer to one another in the third person by title. Hence the objection, “Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister failed to refer to you ...”;
- (b) Language permitted in the House. Unparliamentary language such as “liar” is not allowed;
- (c) Who may hold the floor, in what sequence, and for what length of time;
- (d) What conduct is permitted in the House. (Example: hats may not be worn.)

A Point of Privilege may be raised by a debater whose privileges as a member have been infringed by being misquoted, misrepresented, slandered or referred to incorrectly: CSDF Rule

50.(b). Other privileges of members are the right to be treated with respect, to comment on any matter coming before the House when his turn comes, and to comment on speeches which have already been given. Such a point is “personal” to the member, so only the member whose privilege has been impugned (or the Speaker) may raise it.

The **procedure for raising a Point of Order or Privilege** is as follows:

1. The member rises and says (without waiting to be recognized by the Speaker) “Mr. Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order [or Privilege].,” and remains standing.
2. If another debater has the floor at that time, he or she sits down.
3. The Speaker then calls upon the debater who has raised the point to explain the interruption, saying “I recognize the Honourable, the Leader of the Opposition. Please explain your Point of Order [Privilege].”
4. The debater who has raised the point must then explain it briefly, making specific reference to the rule broken or comment complained of. For example, “Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is in breach of Rule 17 because he is introducing new constructive evidence in his final rebuttal.” The debater raising the point sits down.
5. The Speaker will then rule whether the point was “well taken” (justified) or “not well taken”. Such points and the rulings on them are not debatable.
6. A debater who was interrupted then resumes the floor. If the point was well taken, he should apologize to the House (and withdraw the remark, if applicable), then continue with his speech.