



## How to Make a Motion from the Floor Requesting Union Support for Conference Attendance

### Before THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Usually, the best first step to request financial assistance is to have a conversation with your local union's Business Manager or President before making a motion from the floor at your union's membership meeting. Inform your Business Manager or President of your intention to ask for support from the floor at the next membership meeting, unless they would specifically try to quash that request.

Remember to follow-up your conversation with the Local Union's Business Manager or President with a written request to the Executive Board (E-Board). (See **"How to Write a Letter"** and the **"Example Letter"**).

Attend the E-Board meeting to make sure the recommendation passes! It is good to be at the E-board meeting, to answer questions and get support, but not necessary, however, do not panic if you cannot make the meeting. If the E-board makes the recommendation, great, if not, you will need to make the motion at your next membership meeting.

Many times, a *sister's* Ask is denied by the president, business manager or E-board, but when put on the floor at a general meeting; the membership passes it by a large margin. Give the membership a chance to be supportive if you do not get support at the leadership level.

### PRELIMINARY STEPS

**Rally support beforehand:** Contact other tradeswomen—and men—in your local: talk to your contacts in union leadership and talk to members that you know attend union meetings. Print the document **"The Value of the Women Build Nations Conference"** and bring it with you. Read the bullet points over, to be persuasive as to why attending the conference helps strengthen the union.

**Decide the range of financial support that is appropriate.** You will want to specify a level of support in your motion. How many women in the local, how many want to attend? What are the reasonable expenses? In addition to the registration fee, factor in travel expenses: the cost of air travel, hotel, ground transportation and possibly supplemental meals. Note that it is common for men to ask for their wages to be paid, when attending a conference or event on behalf of the union. It also common for the union to pay for their meals and travel expenses, like a shuttle or taxi. Although a few of the women have been paid wages for attending, you may want to point out, that though common; you are not asking them to do so (if indeed you are not). Your motion might be to send for ten women with all expenses or to send for 10 women to pay for registration and reasonable travel expenses or something else. It will vary depending on so many things: how many women are in the local and how many are active, do you need lodging and transportation, how much support given to other conferences or activities in the last year, etc.

Decide according to your situation. Remember women usually do not ask for enough. You can start your motion for support for ten women, and after discussion, make a motion to amend it to 7 women. The *motion to amend* is perhaps the single most-used of the subsidiary *motions* allowed by Robert's Rules. You use this *motion* when you want to change the wording of the *motion* under consideration. You can use it to make a good idea better or a less popular one more palatable. If you attend union meetings regularly, you will have an idea of what conferences and events the union support financially. If not, you can go to your local and ask to see the log of prior meeting minutes and can see what has been proposed and passed in the last few months or year.

**Motions concerning money may have a particular place on the agenda.** Find out where motions concerning money may be made (usually "New Business.") Attend your meetings; you will see how the meetings are run and be better prepared.

**Rally supporters to attend the meeting.** You need support in the room. First, you need someone designated in advance to second your motion at the membership meeting. Second, you may need support to make sure that the Chair recognizes you from the podium and you need votes to pass the motion.

## THE MOTION FROM THE FLOOR

1. It is usually wise to let the President and Business Manager know before the meeting that you are going to ask for support from the floor unless they would specifically try to quash that request.
2. Knowing when to make the motion is necessary to avoid being called out-of-order and having your motion ignored. You must also have a second to the motion for it to be heard. Below are ways to be in order.
3. Your written request may be mentioned from the podium in Correspondence; in the Business Manager's or the Executive Board Meeting Minutes. The Chair of the Membership Meeting will ask for "Questions of the Report (or Minutes)?" You should rise to be recognized and to request that the matter of the Conference be held out for discussion as new business. Then the item should be called out in New Business. (On the other hand, you may rise to remind the Chair that you have an item under New Business) and then you may make your motion.
4. You may rise to be recognized and make the motion under New Business even if the Conference has not been raised before.
5. If you have not been able to bring the motion under New Business, you may rise under "Good of the Order" or "Good and Welfare." All topics concerning the union are in order. Although you may not be able to bring the motion, you will be able to speak about the importance of the Conference, giving you an opportunity to bring the motion at the next meeting.
6. Remember to tell the membership some reasons that they should support the Conference in your short preamble to the motion. Tradeswomen print several dozen copies of the "**Fax Version**" a one-page overview of Conference information, and hand it out to those that may be supportive at the meeting, to help inform members before the motion, of what you are requesting.

Consult the web for more information about Robert's Rules of Order: <http://robertsrules.com>