

Helpful Insights for Coordinators and Members of State Assemblies

By Anna Von Reitz



We've experienced considerable struggle within the Assemblies regarding "member agreements" and "road maps" and now, "SOPs" --- which have all been attempted to be used as contracts, as if membership in the State Assembly was commensurate with membership in a club. This betrays a basic misunderstanding about the difference between "public" and "private" institutions. Our Assemblies are public and members of the General Public we serve, Americans who have forsworn "US" citizenships, must be allowed to freely participate.

What I early on and somewhat wrongly described as a "Membership Agreement" was in the early Assemblies more commonly called a "Code of Conduct", but that description is again, a sea-going term that doesn't quite get the intent across. In these early Assemblies being carried over from Colonial days, there were prohibitions including things like--- no public urination on the streets immediately surrounding the meeting place, no brandishing of walking canes or sticks against members of the assembly, no "loud talk" or "abusive language" during meetings, and so forth.

The import of these published standards of behavior for the Public attending your meetings and events is to establish a common knowledge of what is acceptable behavior in your meetings. You can do this in a number of ways. You can innumerate the behaviors you wish to curtail, such as, no spitting, no hitting, and no shouting --- which is what our ancestors tended to do, or you can invoke published "Rules of Order" that you adopt for the purposes of establishing and maintaining reasonable standards of behavior at public meetings. Many Assemblies have adopted simplified versions of Robert's Rules of Order for this purpose. Each new member is given a copy and that's that. No signatures or oaths or other individual acceptance is required.

The intent here is not to unreasonably restrict any discussion or interaction but to promote an atmosphere of common civility and common standards of behavior wherein business can be efficiently conducted. We don't want "drunk and disorderly" behavior impinging on the ability of the Assembly to do its work. We don't want people discussing their private court struggles for hours during Assembly meetings. We don't want the group's time wasted on personality conflicts between individuals or infighting by political factions. So the purpose of these published rules is always to promote a common understanding of good behavior leading to the efficient and pleasant conduct of business **for the group**, that is, the Public we serve.

The theory is that the individual rights of the assembly members to conduct their business in safe, pleasant, and efficient conditions somewhat overrides any right of each individual to take up group time with private concerns or spleen-venting. Adult people should understand and agree to abide by reasonable standards of behavior for the benefit of the group as a whole. I hope this gives insight into the purpose of what we ineptly described as a "Membership Agreement". It's not a contract and you aren't joining a club. It's a published standard of behavior for the conduct of public business.

Moving on, we caution everyone that all levels of our government practice separation between church and state. This is part of our immutable law and it exists because our Founders and many of their families had experienced direct religious persecution as a result of belonging to one Christian sect or another. Catholics were persecuted by Protestants, Jews were persecuted by everyone. Our Founders very decisively rejected the idea of forming a theocracy and rejected the idea of allowing the government to enforce any particular form of religion or belief on anyone.

They did this because they realized that they could best safeguard their own religious freedom by guaranteeing the religious freedom of everyone else. Whenever mankind has sought to use the powers of government to oppress the feelings, beliefs, and natural freedom of people to hold their own convictions, it has led to persecutions. Our Forefathers wisely chose to live and let live; as long as people live peaceably among us, they can worship as they please.

There is, however, this caveat: if, for example, a religion requires something that harms others, such as a human blood sacrifice, the crime of murder will not be tolerated as a religious act. It will be prosecuted as murder and that prosecution will be maintained, even if the victim gave their permission to submit to a practice of ritual killing.

There is also the long-standing tradition of our public meetings acknowledging, in some form, the protection and blessing of what the Forefathers termed, "Divine Providence". This "Divine Providence" is not identified with any particular religion per se and participation in any prayer of thanks or moment of silence offered during public meetings is a matter of personal choice.

This brings us to another generalized misunderstanding that is somewhat prevalent. We have observed that our Founders adopted The Ten Commandments as the underlying basis of our Public Law, so that no Public Law we have ever adopted has run counter to the **principles** of The Ten Commandments. By this we mean that our Public Laws do not and cannot enshrine, for example, bearing false witness.

The Founders adopted The Ten Commandments because they offer acceptable standards for all three major western religions -- Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and they are not objected to by Buddhists, Hindus, and other faiths and philosophical doctrines that agree on such fundamentals as "Thou shalt not kill."

That said, though our Public Laws are established in conformity with the principles of The Ten Commandments, they do not prescribe or dictate belief; in keeping with our aforementioned separation of church and state, there is no Public Law requiring anyone to fulfill any particular religious observance or to adopt any religious belief, no Public Law requiring payment of religious tithes, for example, can be forced on the General Public.

So long as people observe the even more fundamental law of doing no harm to others or their property, they may do, think, believe, or not, as they please.

Some people have taken our observation that our Public Law is founded on The Ten Commandments out of context and assumed that we, as a government, impose The Ten Commandments on everyone. This is not true. There is a profound difference between forming the body of Public Law in conformity with the guiding principles of The Ten Commandments and imposing The Ten Commandments themselves as Public Law.

Doing any such thing would obviously break the separation of church and state and ultimately threaten freedom of religion itself.

Yet another misunderstanding involves the limits of discipline that may be imposed on members of the Public engaged in participating in their State Assembly.

Unlike many European countries, Americans do not have an obligation to participate in their public government and are not under citizenship obligations. So the decision to participate in or not participate in public government functions at any level is a choice. Some people take their right and responsibility to participate in and uphold the American Government very seriously; others may go a lifetime and attend no public meetings at all.

Thus when someone voluntarily joins an Assembly at State or County level, they are doing so voluntarily, and their unabridged right to do so must be maintained, so long as they are willing to abide by the "no spitting, not hitting" sorts of standards published by the Assembly as discussed above. If people break these basic "conduct of business" standards after being made aware of them and do so even after being admonished, they can be removed temporarily and restrained by progressively applied "time outs".

They cannot be banished, barred, or permanently removed or prevented from peaceably participating in their own government.

Here are a couple examples to drive the point home.

A man shows up at an Assembly meeting, drunk as a skunk, raving and calling other members names and complaining because they did something or failed to do something, and so, the Marshal at Arms removes him from the meeting, tells him he is drunk and disorderly, go home and sober up, and don't come back for two weeks. That's a time out.

The same man appears a month later, drunk and disorderly, calling other members names, causing a disturbance and disrupting the conduct of business again, so the Marshal at Arms removes him from the meeting, tells him that he is drunk and disorderly and disrupting the flow of business, go home and don't come back for two months. That's a "progressive time out".

At each juncture the problem is made explicit, a disciplinary action is applied, and if the same bad behavior continues unabated, the disciplinary action scales up until the miscreant is discouraged from continuing the bad behavior and they are substantially prevented from harming the Assembly's ability to do business by increasing degrees of removal.

It's crucial to observe that: (1) the disruptive behavior is willful; (2) it substantially harms the conduct of business; (3) the member is explicitly told to stop and continues anyway. The punishment in terms of being unable to participate increases only as the member continues to be willfully disruptive.

When they stop and settle down, cease causing harm to the group's ability to function, they are welcome to return.

Not all disruptive activity is so overt. We've had cases where people simply got far ahead of the group and started working on and considering issues that were outside the current agenda and capability of the Assembly, but when the current agenda and need to progress on those issues was invoked, the man in question persisted in continuing to bring up future issues.

He didn't immediately see it as disruptive to want to discuss things that would naturally become issues in the future, but spending meeting time on things that the Assembly members could not presently address was actually taking valuable time and attention away from the assembling process itself --- so his behavior was in fact "disruptive" and preventing the Assembly from conducting its necessary business.

We mention this to point out that not all disruptions are loud and obnoxious; some perfectly reasonable behaviors that detract from the actual agenda and flow of business can be just as damaging as more obvious interruptions.

We've also had cases of people being in the wrong Assembly and causing disruptions because they had different issues and expectations. This is a common enough phenomenon for us to address your attention to it. People who are Municipal District Assembly members are reasonably expecting religious overtones to meetings and expecting community care issues to be the focus, as the Municipal Government of the United States is a theocracy.

They are alarmed to find that we practice separation of church and state and are disoriented even though this has been the position of our General Government for over 200 years. Such people, or their other brethren, the British Territorial U.S. Citizens, who mistakenly stumble through our doors and expect us to spend the majority of our time studying Federal Code, can be very disruptive and very stubborn in their demands.

It's important for us to recognize where they are coming from and to realize that they are not "wrong" but are simply in the wrong Assembly.

We can't let them take things over; but, we have to redirect them to find and join their own appropriate District Assembly. These other assemblies exist. You often see campaign signs referencing their political elections: "Elect Dick Jones, District 4 Assemblyman" and so on.

Our State Assemblies are based on Counties, not Districts. Our Public Law which includes the Law of the Land, is not fundamentally based on or concerned with Codes and Statutes. When these people come into our Assemblies they can be very loud-mouthed and determined to focus on what they consider to be the key concerns --- religion or Federal Code --- neither one of which are our focus.

If upon having things explained to them they continue to attend our meetings and continue to cause trouble or simply draw attention away from our legitimate business at hand, they have to be removed and time outs applied. There is, apart from their own choices, nothing preventing these people from being valuable members of our State Assemblies, but until they clarify their status in their own minds and make the necessary changes and commitments, they can cause a lot of disruption and be very angry and combative and spread a lot of "information" that does not apply to what we are doing.

Coordinators and Marshals at Arms are asked to fully inform these individuals and to escort them out of our premises and meetings when appropriate. **These are the only cases in which removal can be more or less permanent**, always leaving open the possibility that these men and women who are born in this country or naturalized to it as much as anyone else, may come to recognize that they belong in our Assembly after all, and that lacking federal work commitments, they are eligible to take part in our work.

Please take both the spirit of our government and the facts presented into your minds and hearts as you struggle to organize yourselves into a living, breathing government of and for and by the people of this country. It has taken nine years to accomplish all that has been done at the International, National, and local levels; some states are far advanced and some are limping along, but all are standing as General Assemblies.

Working together with a common understanding of the history, the law, our identity, the duties, and the work to be done, is key to getting on track, being on track, and staying on track. As you ponder this information, you can forward additional questions through your Coordinators. Coordinators are encouraged to contact us directly whenever needed.

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