

Private Member's Resolution Guide

Overview

The House of Commons of Canada (HOC) is unlike all other committees offered at VMUN in that the “resolutions” are submitted before the conference, in keeping with the real House of Commons. The main purpose of the House’s debate is not to create resolutions, but rather to consider and improve pre-written drafts proposed by members of the House. These resolutions are known as **Private Members’ Resolutions (PMRs)**, and are mandatory for all **Members of Parliament (MPs)**. There are no position papers in the HOC. MPs who do not submit a PMR will not be considered for awards.

As such, you are asked to submit two PMRs addressing:

Set Topic (Canada’s Energy Future)

Open Agenda

Treat these PMRs as you would MUN resolutions in their professionalism, detail, and thought. Like representing countries in MUN committees, you should also keep in mind your three main responsibilities that influence your position on any issue in the House:

1. Party

Your PMR should reflect the positions of your party; MPs should write bills that are in accordance with the legislative and political agendas of their parties. A good MP subordinates their real-life opinions to those of their party.

2. Portfolio

Your PMR should contain at least four clauses relating to your portfolio within your party. For example, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change might include a clause relating to reducing fossil fuel-produced carbon emissions.

3. Constituency

Your PMR should contain at least one clause relating to your constituency. For example, the MP from New Westminster—Burnaby might suggest policies restricting oil tanker traffic in environmentally-sensitive coastal waters.

Your PMR must have at least five clauses to meet the minimum requirement for consideration by the House. Set Topic PMRs will be synthesized into each party’s collective draft bill by the House staff; these draft bills will be introduced during the first session.

Open Agenda PMRs will also be individually scrutinized, and the House staff will select a certain number of PMRs from all submissions to be debated, time permitting, in the coming session.

All PMRs submitted by **Sunday, January 13, 2019**, will be considered for the Best Private Member’s Resolution award.

A sample PMR can be found on page 4.

Guidelines

Please adhere to the following formatting rules when writing your PMRs.

1. Typed in 12-point Times New Roman.
2. Typed on a letter-sized template with one-inch margins.
3. No images, diagrams, symbols, watermarks, decorative borders, etc.
4. Saved as a Word document or PDF (.doc, .docx, .pdf) named *Political Party, Constituency, Set Topic/Short Title* (e.g. Bloc Québécois, Manicougan, Canada's Energy Future).

Your PMRs must have the following components only:

Name, Constituency, Portfolio, and Party

Your constituency, portfolio, and party is the country assignment you received from the USGs Delegate Affairs.

Title and Short Title

Only for Open Agenda PMRs. Please keep it short, professional, and clear as to the actions of your PMR.

- Titles begin with “An Act...” (e.g. An Act establishing the Royal Society of Arts).
- Short Titles always end with “...Act” (e.g. Royal Society of Arts Act).

Preambulatory Clauses

Preambulatory clauses outline the reason for your PMR. They should be facts that support the proposal brought forth by the bill. Think of them as answering the question “Why do we need this PMR?” Thus, they should be based on facts, statistics, and research that illustrate the current reality upon which your PMR will improve.

- Each clause starts with “Whereas.”
- Clauses are separated with semicolons.
- Sources should be cited with footnotes.

Enacting Clauses

Enacting clauses are the substantive element of your PMR; the actions that improve the reality described in the preambulatory clauses. The preambulatory clauses are the supporting facts; the enacting clauses are the argument. Keep in mind that they should be specific and realistic, considering the material and legal capabilities of the federal government.

- Always cite the appropriate federal departments or agencies to execute actions (e.g. Environment Canada will conduct a geological survey).
- When amending or repealing previous Acts of Parliament, specify the clauses of the Act affected (e.g. Clause 23(2) of the *Canada Act* is replaced with...).
- All clauses are numbered and in full sentences (ending with a period).
- Sub-clauses are also to be in full sentences and are listed alphabetically.

Submission

All PMRs must be submitted by **Sunday, January 13, 2019**, two weeks prior to the conference. They are mandatory and awards will not be given to those who have not submitted PMRs.

1. Save your PMR as a Word document or PDF named *Political Party, Constituency, Set Topic/Short Title* (e.g. Bloc Québécois, Manicougan, Canada's Energy Future)
2. Email it to *hoc@vmun.com* as an attachment with a subject heading of *Political Party: Name, Constituency* (e.g. Liberal Party: Sheila Jones, Vancouver Centre). **Please do not attach or write anything else in the email.**
3. Verify you have received an email confirming receipt of your PMR.

Open Agenda

One of the most important responsibilities of an MP is to bring issues from their constituency to the national limelight, and to faithfully represent their constituents' concerns in the House. Ministers of the Crown also have a responsibility to draft legislation to address the subject of their departments.

The Open Agenda gives you the opportunity to fulfill the above and to bring issues that are important to you to the table. Each MP is required to submit one Open Agenda PMR on any topic of their choosing. When choosing a topic for your PMR, make sure it is:

1. **Specific:** Something unique to your constituency or unique to your portfolio (e.g. the Minister of Sport would propose a sports-related PMR, or an MP with an agricultural constituency would propose a PMR concerning farming). Try to avoid broad, national issues and focus on smaller, more local issues.
2. **Relevant:** Something current and unresolved, and preferably one that has had recent media attention. Make sure that it is an issue in Canada.
3. **Contentious:** A topic that will cause disagreement between political parties or different regions of Canada. A PMR that attracts universal support will not be considered.

In the interest of time, the House will not accept broad or convoluted PMRs; the purpose of Open Agenda PMRs is to discuss constrained, specific issues that MPs feel are important enough to be addressed by the House of Commons.

Open Agenda PMRs ought to be shorter and less complex than Set Topic PMRs; the maximum length of an Open Agenda PMR is five enacting clauses.

After receiving the Open Agenda PMRs, the House staff will choose a selection of the PMRs based on the above criteria to be considered for debate in the coming session.

These PMRs will be released before the conference in what is known as an Order Paper so that you have ample time to consider them and conduct research.

After the resolution of the Set Topic Bill, the committee will move to discussion of the Open Agenda PMRs. At the discretion of the Speaker, the House may also consider Open Agenda PMRs at other times. The House will have a docket of four Open Agenda PMRs, and will discuss however many time permits.

An Act Granting Tort Privileges to Alien Victims of Human Rights Crimes

Title

[Redacted]

Name

NDP House Leader

Portfolio

Oshawa—Whitby

Riding

Preambulatory Clauses

Whereas: Foreign nationals who are the victim of unethical and criminal behavior by multinational corporations have no legal recourse;

Whereas: Heinous crimes committed against foreign nationals abroad often go unpunished because of a lack of democratic institutions to enforce the law;

Whereas: Nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom have had legal language for the international defence of human rights in place for centuries;

Whereas: The promotion of democracy and human rights is a core value of Canada;

Whereas: Canada remains firmly committed to the rule of international law and norms in order to promote a more just and peaceful world;

Whereas: Oshawa—Whitby has many foreign nationals, many of whom have no recourse for perverse crimes against their human rights perpetrated abroad;

Enacting Clauses

1. Alien nationals who are the victims of human rights crimes committed abroad shall be granted the right of suit in Canadian federal courts.
2. Said heinous crimes against human rights shall be classified as tort under Canadian law.
3. Should the defendant in the case prove to the satisfaction of a federal court that the nation in which the offence originated has legal and political systems capable of hearing the civil case fairly and justly, the court shall dismiss the suit.
4. The defendants in all civil cases filed by alien nationals must have property in Canada, or be incorporated in Canada in order for the plaintiff to have standing to sue.
5. Alien nationals shall have standing to sue irrespective of the geographic origination of the offence or damage against the plaintiff.
6. Courts shall apply all relevant international law, statutes, treaties and pursuant legal materials to the standings of the cases.