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Chapter 10
Chamber, Rooms, and Galleries

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5 Hinds §§ 7270–7311
8 Cannon §§ 3632, 3636–3643
Deschler Ch 4; Deschler-Brown Ch 29 § 85
Manual §§ 677–681, 684

§ 1. In General; Use of the Hall

The Hall of the House and unappropriated rooms in the House (rooms not specifically assigned by action of the House) are under the general control of the Speaker. Rule I clause 3; *Manual* § 623. Control of the appropriated rooms in the House wing is exercised by the House itself. 5 Hinds §§ 7273–7279. Resolutions assigning a room to a committee have been considered as privileged. 5 Hinds § 7273.

Under rule IV clause 1, the Hall may be used only for (1) the legislative business of the House; (2) caucus meetings of its Members, including joint party caucuses; (3) ceremonies in which the House votes to participate; and (4) classified briefings of Members, if authorized by the Speaker, during recesses declared under rule I clause 12. *Manual* §§ 623, 677. In rare instances the House has permitted the Hall to be used for ceremonial or special occasions. 8 Cannon § 3632; Deschler Ch 4 §§ 3.1, 3.4. However, a House and Senate ceremony of religious reconciliation to be conducted in the Hall of the House during a recess requires adoption by both Houses of a concurrent resolution. See, *e.g.*, 107–1, H. Con. Res. 184, Oct. 23, 2001, p ____ (never adopted by the Senate). Members may not entertain guests in the Hall. Deschler Ch 4 § 3.2.

Disorderly or disruptive acts in the Capitol are unlawful, and unauthorized demonstrations are prohibited by law. 40 USC § 193f(b)(4). The unauthorized presence of persons on the floor of either House or in the gallery

of either House is prohibited. 40 USC § 193f(b)(1), (2). Disorder in the House, see CONSIDERATION AND DEBATE.

§ 2. Admission to the Floor

Generally

Rule IV clause 2 enumerates those persons entitled to be admitted to the floor or rooms leading thereto. *Manual* §§ 678–681. Among those who may be admitted to the Hall are Members and Members-elect of Congress, the President and Vice President, Judges of the Supreme Court, governors of States, heads of departments, foreign ministers, contestants in election cases during the pendency of their cases on the floor, one attorney for a Member-respondent during consideration of a disciplinary resolution reported from the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, and other named officials. *Manual* § 678. The term ''heads of departments'' has been construed to mean members of the President's Cabinet, and the term ''foreign ministers'' has been construed to mean the representatives of foreign governments duly accredited to the United States, and not necessarily those with the title of ''minister'' in their own parliaments. 5 Hinds § 7283. The term ''contestants in election cases'' has been construed to include challengers in an election contest, even though the challenger was not a candidate in the election in which the sitting Member was reelected. Deschler Ch 4 § 4.5.

It is not in order to refer to persons temporarily on the floor of the House as guests of the House, such as Members' children, other children, or Senators exercising floor privileges. *Manual* § 678. Although Senators have floor privileges, they are not entitled to address the House. Deschler Ch 4 § 4.8.

The rule is strictly enforced during regular meetings. However, the rule is less strictly enforced on ceremonial occasions (5 Hinds § 7290) or when the House is in recess during a joint meeting with the Senate (Deschler Ch 4 § 4). The Speaker sometimes announces guidelines for enforcement during a recess. During a regular meeting, a point of order will lie to object to the presence of any unauthorized persons. 92–2, June 21, 1972, p 21704. Under rule IV clause 1, motions or unanimous-consent requests to suspend the rule may not be entertained by the Speaker or by the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. 5 Hinds § 7285.

The Speaker has the authority to exclude an individual who abuses the privileges of the floor. 5 Hinds § 7288. An alleged abuse of the privilege of the floor may be made the subject of an inquiry by a special committee. 5 Hinds § 7287.

Former Members

A former Member must observe the rules of proper decorum while on the floor, and the Chair may direct the Sergeant-at-Arms to assist the Chair in maintaining such decorum. *Manual* § 622. The question of banning a former Member engaged in indecorous behavior on the floor gives rise to a question of privileges of the House. *Manual* § 680. A former Member may not manifest approval or disapproval of the proceedings. 8 Cannon § 3635. For more information on floor privileges of former Members, see *Manual* § 680.

Although former Members, officers, and certain former employees have access to the floor under rule IV clause 2, such an individual is not entitled to the privileges of the floor, or rooms leading thereto, if he (1) has a direct personal or pecuniary interest in legislation under consideration in the House or reported by any committee or (2) represents any party or organization for the purpose of influencing the disposition of legislation pending before the House or reported by a committee or under consideration in a committee. *Manual* § 680. For regulations issued by the Speaker under this rule, see 95–1, Jan. 6, 1977, p 321; 95–2, June 7, 1978, p 16625; 103–2, June 9, 1994, p 12387; 104–1, May 24, 1995, p 14300; 104–2, Aug. 1, 1996, p 21031.

Staff; Committee Clerks

Rule IV clause 2(a)(7) permits on the floor staff of a committee when business from their committee is under consideration and no more than one person from the staff of a Member when that Member has an amendment under consideration. This rule has been interpreted by the Speaker to allow the presence on the floor of four professional staff members and one clerk from a committee during consideration of that committee's business and to require that such individuals remain unobtrusively by the committee tables. *Manual* § 678. Rule IV clause 2(a)(7) also permits on the floor staff of the respective party leaderships when so assigned with the approval of the Speaker. The privileges of the floor do not extend to departmental employees assisting committees in the preparation of bills. 6 Cannon § 579. Where several committees are involved with a pending measure, the rule permits authorized majority and minority staff (up to five persons) from each committee. 97–1, June 26, 1981, p 14574. Floor clerks other than those employed by a committee involved in the bill under consideration are not entitled to the floor. Deschler Ch 4 § 4. The Speaker has announced his intention to strictly enforce the rule to prevent a proliferation of staff on the floor and has required committee staff to display staff badges when on the floor. *Manual* § 678. Under rule IV clause 5, and regulations promulgated by the

Speaker thereunder, staff on the floor are not permitted to pass out literature or otherwise attempt to influence Members in their votes or to applaud during debate. *Manual* § 681.

Secret Sessions

Before a secret session of the House commences, the Speaker may direct that the Chamber be cleared of all persons except Members and those officers and employees, specified by the Speaker, whose attendance on the floor is essential to the functioning of the session. Rule XVII clause 9; *Manual* § 969; Deschler-Brown Ch 29 § 85. A point of order will not lie against the presence in the Chamber of those persons whose attendance on the floor is permitted by the Speaker's directive. Deschler-Brown Ch 29 § 85.15; see CONSIDERATION AND DEBATE. Secret classified briefings of Members may be permitted during recesses of the House declared by the Speaker under rule I clause 12. Under rule XXIII clause 13, a Member, officer, or employee must execute an oath of secrecy before having access to classified material. *Manual* § 1095.

§ 3. Electronic Devices; Signals, Bells, and Clocks

Various electronic devices and computer services are used by the House to expedite quorum calls and votes and for other purposes. *Manual* §§ 1012–1016. For example, a legislative bell and light system alerts Members to quorum calls, the taking of certain votes, and other occurrences on the floor. *Manual* §§ 1014, 1016. Changes in the system are announced by the Speaker from time to time. The failure of the signal bells to announce a vote does not warrant repetition of the record vote, nor does such a failure permit a Member to be recorded following the conclusion of the call. *Manual* § 1016; 8 Cannon §§ 3153, 3155, 3157; see also VOTING.

The use of a wireless telephone or personal computer on the floor of the House is prohibited under rule XVII clause 5, and the Chair has admonished Members to disable wireless telephones on entering the Chamber. The Chair has also announced that the use of wireless telephones is not permitted in the gallery. *Manual* § 962.

Microphones have been placed on the floor of the House for the use of Members. A Member making an appropriate request should use one of the floor microphones so that all Members may hear the request. 94–1, Oct. 28, 1975, p 34027. A Member may speak at any microphone on the floor. *Manual* § 364. Rule I clause 2 directs the Speaker to preserve order and decorum in the House, and he is authorized to order the microphones turned off if they are being utilized by a Member who has not been properly recognized and who is disorderly. Deschler-Brown Ch 29 § 11.19.

Where there is a discrepancy in the time shown on the clocks in the House Chamber, the Chair relies on the clock on the north wall in deciding when time has expired. Deschler-Brown Ch 28 § 74.2.

§ 4. Galleries and Corridors

Under rule I clause 3, control over the corridors leading to the House Chamber is vested in the Speaker. *Manual* §§ 622, 623. The Speaker may order the corridors cleared during quorum calls and the taking of votes to ensure unimpeded access to the Chamber. *Manual* § 623. Under rule I clause 2, the Speaker preserves order and decorum in the galleries, and in the event of a disturbance, he may order the galleries cleared. *Manual* § 622. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may exercise similar power in preserving order in the galleries. *Manual* § 970.

Guests in the House gallery must maintain order and refrain from manifestations of approval or disapproval of proceedings on the floor, and admonitions may be expressed either by the Speaker or by the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. Deschler Ch 4 § 5.6. Under rule XVII clause 7, it also is out of order to refer to visitors in the galleries, even with permission to proceed out of order; and the Speaker, on his own initiative, may declare such remarks to be out of order. Deschler Ch 4 §§ 5.3, 5.4.

§ 5. Photographs; Radio and Television Coverage

Photographs

Under the practice of the House, permission must be obtained before photographs may be taken inside the House Chamber. Rules regarding the taking of such pictures may be enforced by the Speaker. Deschler Ch 4 § 3.5 (note). Official photographs of the House while in session may be permitted by resolution. See, *e.g.*, 107–2, June 5, 2002, p ____.

Media Coverage of Floor Proceedings

Prior to the 95th Congress, the rules and precedents of the House did not permit public radio and television broadcasts of House proceedings. In 1977, the House adopted a privileged resolution reported from the Committee on Rules to provide a system of closed-circuit viewing of House proceedings and for the orderly development of a broadcasting system. Under rule V, the Speaker directs the audio and visual broadcasting and recording of the proceedings of the House, including periods of voting. Under this rule, broadcasts are made over closed-circuit television in House offices and have been made available to the news media and to cable television systems.

Broadcasts made available under the rule may not be used for political or commercial purposes. *Manual* § 684.

In 1984, a question arose as to the authority of the Speaker to require wide-angle television coverage of the House Chamber during special-order speeches. In that instance, the Speaker's directive that television cameras covering special-order speeches of the House at the completion of legislative business include periodic wide-angle coverage of the entire House Chamber was held to be consistent with the authority conferred upon the Speaker under rule V. *Manual* § 684. Beginning in the 103d Congress, the Speaker has followed a policy under which television cameras would not ''pan'' the Chamber during morning hour or special-order speeches. However, the Speaker directed that a caption run at the bottom of the screen to show that legislative business has been completed for the day. *Manual* § 684.

Although rule V clause 2 requires complete and unedited broadcast coverage of the proceedings of the House, it does not require in-House microphone amplification of disorderly conduct by a Member following expiration of his recognition for debate. Deschler-Brown Ch 29 § 11.19.