Chapter 15. Documents and petitions

Chapter outline

This chapter provides for material to be presented to the House:

- documents, and
- petitions.

Documents

199 Documents presented

(a) Documents may be presented to the House by Ministers or by the Speaker pursuant to statute or otherwise.

(b) Documents may be presented to the House at any time when other business is not before the House, or they may be delivered to the Clerk who shall record them in the Votes and Proceedings. Documents delivered to the Clerk shall be deemed to have been presented to the House on the day on which they are recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

200 Documents ordered

The House may order documents to be presented. The Clerk shall refer all orders for documents to the relevant Minister, and when the documents are received they shall be presented to the House.

201 Documents quoted shall be presented

If a Minister quotes from a document relating to public affairs, a Member may ask for it to be presented to the House. The document must be presented unless the Minister states that it is of a confidential nature.

202 Motions to take note

(a) When a document is presented to the House, a Minister may move without notice either or both of the following motions—

That the House take note of the document.

That the document be made a Parliamentary Paper.

(b) Alternatively, at the conclusion of the period for presentation of documents, under *standing order 34 (order of business)*, a single motion may be moved that the House take note of certain documents

presented. The resumption of debate on the motion to take note of each of the documents shall then be made a separate order of the day on the Notice Paper.

(c) A motion referred to in paragraph (a) not moved when the document is presented, may be moved by a Member on notice later. *Standing order 39* applies to the presentation of committee and delegation reports.

203 Documents authorised for publication

All documents presented to the House are authorised for publication.

Preparing a petition

204 Rules for the form and content of petitions

(a) A petition must:

(i) be addressed to the House of Representatives;

(ii) refer to a matter on which the House has the power to act;

(iii) state the reasons for petitioning the House; and

(iv) contain a request for action by the House.

(b) The terms of the petition must not contain any alterations and must not exceed 250 words. The terms must be placed at the top of the first page of the petition and the request of the petition must be at the top of every other page.

(c) The terms of the petition must not be illegal or promote illegal acts. The language used must be moderate.

(d) The petition must be in English or be accompanied by a translation certified to be correct. The person certifying the translation must place his or her name and address on the translation.

(e) No letters, affidavits or other documents should be attached to the petition. Any such attachments will be removed before presentation to the House.

(f) A petition from a corporation must be made under its common seal. Otherwise it will be received as the petition of the individuals who signed it.

205 Rules for signatures

(a) Every petition must contain the signature and full name and address of a principal petitioner on the first page of the petition.

(b) All the signatures on a petition must meet the following requirements:

(i) Each signature must be made by the person signing in his or her own handwriting. Only a petitioner incapable of signing may ask another person to sign on his or her behalf.

(ii) Signatures must not be copied, pasted or transferred on to the petition or placed on a blank page on the reverse of a sheet containing the terms of the petition.

(c) A Member must not be a principal petitioner or signatory to a petition.

Presentation of petitions

206 Lodging a petition for presentation

(a) Petitions may be sent directly to the Standing Committee on Petitions or via a Member.

(b) The Standing Committee on Petitions must check that each petition lodged for presentation complies with the standing orders, and if the petition complies it shall be approved for presentation to the House.

207 Presenting a petition

A petition may be presented in one of two ways:

(a) The Chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions shall present petitions and/or reports of that committee, and the Chair and one other Member of the Committee may make statements concerning petitions and/or such reports presented, in accordance with standing order 34 (order of business). The time provided may extend for no more than 10 minutes.

(b) A Member may present a petition during:

(i) the period of Members' statements in the House or in the Federation Chamber, in accordance with *standing order 43*;

(ii) the period of Members' constituency statements in the Federation Chamber, in accordance with *standing order 193*;

(iii) adjournment debate in the House in accordance with *standing order 31*, and in the Federation Chamber in accordance with *standing order 191*; and

(iv) grievance debate in accordance with *standing order 192B*.

Action on petitions

208 Action by the House

(a) Discussion on the subject matter of a petition shall only be allowed at the time of presentation as provided for under *standing order 207(b)*.

(b) Each petition presented shall be received by the House, unless a motion that it not be received is moved immediately and agreed to.

(c) The only other motion relating to a petition that may be moved is a motion on notice that the petition be referred to a particular committee.

(d) The terms of petitions shall be printed in Hansard.

(e) The Standing Committee on Petitions shall respond to petitions on behalf of the House and report to the House.

209 Petition may be referred to a Minister for response

(a) After a petition is presented to the House, the Standing Committee on Petitions may refer a copy of the petition to the Minister responsible for the administration of the matter raised in the petition.

(b) The Minister shall be expected to respond to a referred petition within 90 days of presentation by lodging a written response with the Committee.

(c) The Chair of the Petitions Committee shall announce any ministerial responses to petitions. After the announcement, ministerial responses shall be printed in Hansard and published on the House's website.

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