Robert’s Rules of Order

Motion Makers’ Rights and Responsibilities

In the last few months the Robert’s Rules of Order topics have covered the basics of making motions and getting them seconded. However, what are the rights and responsibilities that go along with making a motion? According to Robert’s Rules of Order, the person who makes the motion has the right to speak first about it in debate after it has been seconded. However, a motion maker may not speak against his or her own motion.

“In debate, the maker of a motion, while he can vote against it, is not allowed to speak against his own motion. He need not speak at all, but if he does he is obliged to take a favorable position. If he changes his mind while the motion he made is pending, he can, in effect, advise the assembly of this by asking permission to withdraw the motion.” *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, Tenth Edition*, p. 381.

Furthermore, the one who makes a motion can also determine whether or not to accept amendments to it, but only if those amendments are made before the mayor states the question. Changes to a motion that are made after the motion has been stated require governing body approval and are called subsidiary motions.