

Congressional Debate Legislation Cover Sheet

STUDENT NAME(S) _____

COACH NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

LEGISLATION SUBMITTED WILL BE USED TO CREATE:

Preliminary Session 1 – 6-8 bills/resolutions

Submitting school name will be listed and authorship speeches will be allowed

Preliminary Session 2 – 6-8 bills/resolutions

Submitting school name will be listed and authorship speeches will be allowed

Semifinals (if needed) – 6-8 bills/resolutions

Submitting school name will be omitted and no authorship speeches will be allowed

Finals – 6-8 bills/resolutions

Submitting school name will be omitted and no authorship speeches will be allowed

This bill/resolution may be used in preliminary sessions	☐ YES ☐ NO
This bill/resolution may be used in advancement sessions	☐ YES ☐ NO

This piece of legislation is my original work. I have made every effort to ensure that it is formatted correctly. To the best of my knowledge, this legislation has not been on the docket at a previous tournament. _____ (Student signature)

To the best of my knowledge, this legislation is this student's original work. To the best of my knowledge, the legislation is formatted correctly and has not been on the docket at a previous tournament. _____ (Coach Signature)

Congressional Debate Legislation Guidelines

Most legislation should have a national/domestic focus that the U.S. Congress would have *jurisdiction* over, taking the form of a **bill**. A bill establishes details behind *how* a particular law must work, including when it takes effect, how much tax levy would be appropriated (if applicable), how infractions/violations will be dealt with, etc. A bill may answer the who, what, when, where—and most specifically how—but it will never answer “why.” Legislators explain rationale behind bills in their speeches, and how a bill implements its solution can spark deeper, more meaningful debate.

Students should consider what the U.S. Congress has jurisdiction over. Since the Executive Branch runs most of the agencies that enforce federal laws, understanding those helps. While foreign affairs often fall under the jurisdiction of the Executive Branch, funding efforts such as USAID can have an impact on the success or failure of United States involvement in other countries, and therefore, can be framed as a bill. Inspiration for legislative ideas can be found at [thomas.loc.gov](https://www.thomas.loc.gov).

Writing an effective bill involves more time and research than researching one written by someone else. Students must ask themselves what the legislation does, who is involved (government agencies), where it happens, when it is feasible to take place and how much time is needed for implementation, and how it should be carried out (a plan of action). All of these questions must be answered in writing the sections of the bill, with thoughtful consideration as to how thoroughly each section explains its plank of implementing the overall bill's plan of action.

Resolutions are simply position statements on issues Congress does not have jurisdiction over (such as a foreign issue, although a bill can suggest foreign aid), or further action (such as amending the Constitution). Resolutions lack the force of law, and never establish enforcement.

Appropriate **topics** exhibit seriousness of purpose. The action proposed should be feasible, and such that the actual United States Congress might debate it. Topics should be debatable, meaning substantive argumentation exists on both sides. Legislation should be typed and double-spaced with line numbers, **not exceeding one page**. Capitalizing the words “WHEREAS” and “RESOLVED” in resolutions, and “SECTION” in bills, as well as inverse-indenting each clause or section helps to distinguish between ideas and concepts.

The samples above show proper formatting. In the resolution, note the semicolon, and how it precedes the word “and” at the end of each “whereas” clause, and the phrase “now, therefore, be it” at the end of the last “whereas” clause.

Note: Legislation that is submitted for consideration at the State Tournament may be rejected if serious issues exist with the adherence to these guidelines.

Templates for bills, resolutions, and resolutions to amend the Constitution are available online at www.speechanddebate.org.

(National Speech & Debate Association, 2018-19)

A Bill to Establish a Specific Policy

BE IT ENACTED BY THIS CONGRESS THAT:

1. **SECTION 1.** State the new policy in a brief declarative sentence, or in as few
2. sentences as possible.
3. **SECTION 2.** Define any ambiguous terms inherent
4. in the first section.
5. **SECTION 3.** Name the government agency that will
6. oversee the enforcement of the bill
7. along with the specific enforcement
8. mechanism.
9. **SECTION 4.** Indicate the implementation
10. date/timeframe.
11. **SECTION 5.** State that all other laws that are in
12. conflict with this new policy shall
13. hereby be declared null and void.
- 14.

Introduced by Name of School

A Resolution to Urge Further Action on a Specific Issue

1. **WHEREAS,** State the current problem (this needs
2. to be accomplished in one brief
3. sentence); and
4. **WHEREAS,** Describe the scope of the problem
5. cited in the first whereas clause (this
6. clause needs to flow logically from the
7. first); and
8. **WHEREAS,** Explain the impact and harms allowed
9. by the current problem (once again,
10. the clause needs to flow in a logical
11. sequence); now, therefore, be it
12. **RESOLVED,** By this Congress that: state your
13. recommendation for dealing with the
14. problem (the resolution should be a
15. clear call for action); and, be it
16. **FURTHER RESOLVED,** That (an *optional* additional
17. recommendation; if not used, end the
18. previous clause with a period).

Introduced by Name of School

TABLE OF PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS

Following is the National Speech & Debate Association motion chart, annotated (non-shaded) to show motions used most often.

Table of Most Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions Adapted for use in National Speech & Debate Association Congressional Debate			Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Required Vote	May Interrupt?
Type	Motion	Purpose					
Privileged	24. Fix time for reassembling	To arrange time of next meeting	Yes	Yes-T	Yes-T	Majority	Yes
	23. Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	Yes	No	Yes-T	Majority	No
	22. Recess	To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	Majority	No
	21. Rise to a question of privilege	To make a personal request during debate	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	20. Call for orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed motion	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
Incidental	19. Appeal a decision of the chair	To reverse a decision	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
	18. Rise to a point of order or parliamentary procedure	To correct a parliamentary error or ask a question	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	17. Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	16. Object to the consideration of a question	To suppress action	No	No	No	2/3	Yes
	15. Divide a motion	To consider its parts separately	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
	14. Leave to modify or withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No
	13. Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Subsidiary	12. Rescind	To repeal previous action	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
	11. Reconsider	To consider a defeated motion again	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	10. Take from the table	To consider tabled motion	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	9. Lay on the table	To defer action	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	8. Previous question	To force an immediate vote	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	7. Limit or extend debate	To modify freedom of debate	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	2/3	No
	6. Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	5. Refer to a committee *	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	4. Amend an amendment *	To modify an amendment	1/3	Yes	No	Majority	No
	3. Amend *	To modify a motion	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
	2. Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
Main	1. Main motion	To introduce a business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No

* No. 5 should include:

1. How appointed?
2. The number
3. Report when or to what standing committee

T = Time

* Nos. 3 and 4 by:

1. Adding (inserting)
2. Striking (deleting)
3. Substituting

VOTING FOR PRESIDING OFFICER

The presiding officer must be elected with a majority of the vote. If one candidate does not receive a majority of votes, eliminate the candidate with the fewest votes and vote again. If candidates are tied for the fewest number of votes, vote to determine which of the tied candidates should remain in contention. Repeat this process until one candidate receives a majority of votes.

[illegible]

VOTING FOR PRESIDING OFFICER

The presiding officer must be elected with a majority of the vote. If one candidate does not receive a majority of votes, eliminate the candidate with the fewest votes and vote again. If candidates are tied for the fewest number of votes, vote to determine which of the tied candidates should remain in contention. Repeat this process until one candidate receives a majority of votes.

[illegible]

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE EVIDENCE PROTEST FORM

34

USE THIS FORM FOR EVIDENCE CHALLENGES IN ROUND

EVIDENCE CHALLENGES IN ROUND:

All evidence challenges must occur during the session of Congressional Debate where an alleged violation took place, and should happen before a vote on the pending legislation. If the concern arises during the last cycle of speeches, the parliamentarian may grant a challenge after the vote, prior to the first speech on a new piece of legislation.

Submit the completed form to the Parliamentarian for consideration.

STUDENT NAME	CODE
SCHOOL	

Please detail the specific piece of evidence that you are challenging, including any cited source information and where in the speech the evidence was used.

Please explain your reasoning and/or proof for challenging this piece of evidence. Please include whether you are in possession of the source and can produce it upon request.

I understand that alleging a violation without merit or to be found inaccurate could lead to censure by the Parliamentarian.

Student's Signature:	
Coach/Supervising Adult's Name:	