

Student Congress
FOR
DUMMIES[®]

A Guide to Surviving Your First
Year in Congress

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION TO CONGRESS	3
Getting Started.....	4
II. HOW TO DO CONGRESS	6
Setting the Agenda	6
Electing the Presiding Officer	10
Motions.....	11
Sponsor/Author	12
Cycles.....	13
Passing Legislation.....	13
Voting	13
III. WRITING SPEECHES	14
General Format	14
Example of a Congress Speech.....	15-17
IV. RESEARCHING	18
V. HOW TO P.O	19-21
VI. WRITING LEGISLATION	22
VII. JUDGING CRITERIA	23
VIII. TERMINOLOGY	24



INTRODUCTION TO CONGRESS

Student Congress is a *FUN* event where students mock the U.S Congress by debating bills and resolutions. The **legislation** that is debated is written and submitted by participating "senators". The multitude of legislation submitted requires some knowledge on various topic areas.. And that is why it is so important to stay up to date with current events. The next time you log into the internet, make the New York Times your homepage, and try to read a few articles everyday. Get a subscription to the Economist. Or to the Foreign Affairs. If that is too much, just make sure you watch the news. This is perhaps the best advice you can be given, because you'll need it once you get your hands on a packet of bills.. Okay not really a packet.. But the legislation that you will be debating in tournaments will be on different topics, for example, nuclear proliferation, social security reform, Iraq, capital punishment, the legalization of prostitution, etc. You will earn NFL (National Forensic League) points from the speeches you give. The score ranges from 1-6, 6 being the highest score.

But don't think that Congress is all about research and never-ending speeches either... Its not. Because you will be in a **chamber** with approximately 20-30 kids, you will be making lots of friends. You will also have the opportunity to enhance your speaking skills, begin to think on your feet, and you'll have acquire the skill of analyzing things FOR REAL.

Congress is basically the BEST EVENT EVER SO IF YOU ARE READING THIS YOU BETTER STICK TO CONGRESS! Anyway, this student congress manual has been prepared basically by the best kids ever.. So enjoy and make this your new bible.

-The Guillotine <3

Oath of Office:

I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, so help me God.

GETTING STARTED...

There is nothing like a new experience to make anyone nervous and although such nerves may be understandable, paralyzing fear is completely unreasonable. Fear will only work against you so it is recommended that you take a deep breath and focus your strength on doing your best. It may be that you feel anxious to participate in a competition but in reality much of the work starts in the safety of your home... far away from the obscure dominion of bloodthirsty psychotic congressmen AND CONGRESSWOMEN!

By the way, don't get a heart attack if by any chance you decide to go to an away competition and you receive a big pile of bills. The best way to go about this is to separate the bills into categories and to have a basic understanding of them. In any case, this previous knowledge allows for you to research the bills and to prepare for competition. Later on you will learn that writing down an entire speech is not a good idea, but more on that later.

GETTING THE BILLS.....let the research begin.

You are most likely to receive the list of bills (which you will debate on) about a week before competition. The list of bills you receive could be just a *collection of titles* or the **complete text** of a bill/resolution.

This basically means that you will either be receiving something like this:

"A Resolution to Discourage State and Local Governments from Hiring Private Contractors to Oversee Administration of Prisons"

(That is only the title of the legislation).

Or you will be receiving the complete text.. An example is shown on the following page.

Contractors to Oversee Administration of Prisons

1. Whereas, many state and local governments are contracting the operation of
2. state and local correctional facilities to private management corporations, and
3. Whereas, numerous allegations of prisoner management have been lodged
4. against corrections officials employed by these corporations, and
5. Whereas, inadequate supervision of prison guards by these private corporations
6. Is contributing to high levels of alleged mistreatment, and
7. Whereas, controlling governments have failed to ensure that basic standards of
8. Humanitarian treatment are being properly observed by these corporations and their
9. employees, and
10. Whereas, continued problems in these facilities could result in such dangerous
11. events as prison riots,
12. THEREFORE, be it resolved by this FFL Student Congress here assembled
that
13. all state and local governments be discouraged from entering future contracts with
14. private corporations to provide management or operations services to correctional
15. facilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Your name would go here.

Whether you get the bill titles or the complete text of the legislation, you should be able to research on them

in order to come up with speeches. As we mentioned earlier, there will be a lot of topics in which you will need to know general information on. Once you receive the bills, you should start practicing and researching right away. If there are way too many bills, then you should separate them into piles, as we stated earlier.

For example, let's say you receive a list of bill titles that looks like this, (without the pretty colors)

A Resolution to invade Iran

A Resolution to devolve Iraq into three semiautonomous regions between the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds.

A Resolution to end diplomatic Relations with Venezuela.

A Bill to legalize prostitution

A Bill to withdraw all troops from Iraq

A Bill to legalize marijuana

A Bill to station national guard troops along the U.S/Mexico Border.

A Bill to create a Border Wall along the U.S/Mexico Border.

A Resolution supporting diplomatic talks with Iran.

A Resolution to impose an economic embargo on Venezuela.

So, what you would do is separate the list into several piles.

Pile A: Bills dealing with Iran.

A Resolution to invade Iran

A Resolution supporting diplomatic talks with Iran.

If you do this, then it will save a lot of time. What you should do is to research on Iran and become familiar with what's been going on with Iran lately. With the information you will get from researching, you will be able to form arguments that you can use when writing speeches for BOTH of those bills.

Then you would continue and do the same, for all the groupings.

(Bills dealing with Iran), (Bills dealing with Iraq), (Bills dealing with domestic issues), (Bills dealing with immigration; Mexico), (Bills dealing with Venezuela), etc. You get the point.

All you would need to do now is to start researching. But more about researching will come later.

HOW TO DO CONGRESS

This is a guide on basically... how to do congress. Once you arrive at your chamber (the room where you will be debating), there will either be a seating chart where you will need to sit, or you can sit wherever you'd like. Depending on the tournament, you will have a few congress sessions. In most tournaments, you have about 2-4 sessions, which usually consist of about 2 to 3 hours.

Anyway, after finding your room, the following is the structure of a congress:

Setting the Agenda

Electing the Presiding Officer (P.O)

Motions

Sponsor/Author

Cycles (Aff/Neg/Aff/Neg)

Passing Legislation

Voting

SETTING THE AGENDA

Setting the agenda basically means deciding in what order the legislative body wants to debate the bills. So, what you obviously want to do is make sure that the bills that you know the most about are at the top of the docket, so you can have a chance to speak on them, and therefore put the bills that you do not know much about at the bottom of the agenda.

Let's say you have the following list of bills to debate in a tournament:

A Resolution condemning the actions of Vladimir Putin

A Bill to Legalize Marijuana

A Bill to raise the minimum wage

A Resolution to remove the electoral college

A Bill to Repeal Estate Taxes

A Resolution to increase aid to Lebanon

A Resolution to institute a flat tax

A Resolution to sanction Venezuelan oil

A Bill banning the use of pharmaceutical triclosan in U.S

A Resolution urging President Bush to deploy troops to Darfur, Sudan.

A Bill to Discourage Misleading Law Enforcement

Officers by Making Obstruction of Justice a Felony

A Bill to Abolish the Federal Minimum Wage

Setting the agenda can be done one of two ways.

1) First, you can create your own docket in whatever order you would like, and write it on the board in the room, for example name it "Docket A". People will ask you to make changes to the docket and try to have their bill closer to the top. If people ask you, just do it to be nice, but make sure you will still be able to dominate in that tournament.

Then, if someone else doesn't like the order of your docket, then they will make their own with the order that will certainly give them an advantage. With this, they'll name it "Docket B". Later the chamber votes on what docket they prefer.

When you are done setting up the dockets and finally trying to negotiate what order you want the legislation in, a motion needs to be made to open the floor for docket nominations.

So, now it would go like:

Senator Guillot: I move to open the floor for agenda nominations.

Senator Castro: I move to nominate Docket A.

Senator Castellanos: I move to nominate Docket B.

Then, the chamber votes on the docket that has the bills they have speeches on at the top of the docket

Senator Guillot: I move to close floor for agenda nominations.

That is the first way that you can set the agenda. In some tournaments, they'll have you do it another way, and that is by setting up congressional committees.

2) Congressional committees are basically a group of senators that will decide the order of the agenda as part of a group dealing with a specific topic. For example, committees are usually the **Economics Committee** (committee that deals with bills concerning the economy), the **Foreign Affairs Committee** (the committee that sets up the order of the bills dealing with our affairs with other countries) , and the **Public Welfare Committee** (which basically deals with domestic bills).

Let's say you're in the Foreign Affairs committee. You will be working with a few other senators to decide what order you want the foreign affairs bills to be in.

After taking everyone's suggestions into consideration, this is an example of what your agenda can look like:

Foreign Affairs Committee (FA)

1. A Resolution to increase aid to Lebanon
2. A Resolution condemning the actions of Vladimir Putin
3. A Resolution urging President Bush to deploy troops to Darfur, Sudan.
4. A Resolution to sanction Venezuelan oil

Then, the **Economics Committee (ECON)** can decide on a docket that looks like this:

1. A Resolution to institute a flat tax
2. A Bill to raise the minimum wage
3. A Bill to Abolish the Federal Minimum Wage
4. A Bill to Repeal Estate Taxes

The **Public Welfare Committee (PW)** can decide on a docket that looks like this:

1. A Bill to Discourage Misleading Law Enforcement Officers by Making Obstruction of Justice a Felony
2. A Resolution to remove the electoral college
3. A Bill to Legalize Marijuana
4. A Bill banning the use of pharmaceutical triclosan in U.S

Then after all the Committees set up their own individual dockets, all their dockets come together to form the docket of the Congress.

The actual docket would look like:

FA 1, Econ 1, PW 1, FA 2, Econ 2, PW 3, FA 3, Econ 3, PW 3,
You get the point.

If you don't, then the actual docket will end up looking like this:

1. A Resolution to increase aid to Lebanon
1. A Resolution to institute a flat tax
1. A Bill to Discourage Misleading Law Enforcement Officers by Making Obstruction of Justice a Felony
2. A Resolution condemning the actions of Vladimir Putin
2. A Bill to raise the minimum wage
2. A Resolution to remove the electoral college
- A Resolution urging President Bush to deploy troops to Darfur, Sudan
3. A Bill to Abolish the Federal Minimum Wage
3. A Bill to Legalize Marijuana
4. A Resolution to sanction Venezuelan oil
4. A Bill to Repeal Estate Taxes
4. A Bill banning the use of pharmaceutical triclosan in U.S

Setting the Agenda
Electing the Presiding Officer (P.O)

Motions
Sponsor/Author
Cycles (Aff/Neg/Aff/Neg)
Passing Legislation
Voting

ELECTING THE PRESIDING OFFICER (P.O)

After the Agenda is voted on and established, either by voting on specific dockets or by the use of congressional committees, the parliamentarian or well, anyone, can conduct the elections for the Presiding Officer.

A P.O or **Presiding Officer** is the senator that will be in charge of running your chamber and making sure there is order for a certain period of time.

In most tournaments the P.O is switched after every two or three hours depending on how long the session is.

A P.O is elected as follows: First the person must be nominated either by themselves or someone else in the chamber to run for P.O, or the senator should have been nominated by their school prior to the tournament. The person nominated must accept this nomination.

For ex.,

Senator Castellanos: I move to open the floor for P.O nominations.

Senator Fernandez: I rise to nominate the honorable Senator Guillot ☺

Senator Guillot: I accept ☺

Senator Guillot: I nominate Senator Zapata

Senator Zapata: I decline ☹

Senator Castro: I move to close floor for P.O nominations.

After nominations are closed each person running for P.O briefly explains why they would make the better P.O and why they should be elected.

For ex., Senator Guillot: Hello my name is Senator Guillot. Please elect me for P.O, blah blah.(you talk about experience and how you're going to make a fast, efficient and FUN chamber)

When every person nominated speaks the chamber must vote. The person with the most votes will be the P.O for

that session.

But more will come on presiding later in the chapter.

MOTIONS

Setting the Agenda
Electing the Presiding Officer (P.O)

Motions

Sponsor/Author
Cycles (Aff/Neg/Aff/Neg)
Passing Legislation
Voting

After the chamber votes on the Presiding Officer,
A motion to open floor for debate follows:

*Senator Rojas: I move to open floor for debate
Newly elected P.O: Granted.*

Now, the debate would start, and the first bill will be introduced by the Author.. But more on that later.

On the following page is a table of the most frequently used motions in Congress. But for now, take note of the following list that has what you should say using congress terminology, and what you actually mean

Congress terminology- what you should say	What you mean; want to do
"I move to...(insert motion here)"	Make a motion
"Second!" (after motion is said by someone else)	If you want to second a motion
"I move to amend..."	Make an amendment to the legislation that you are debating on
You: "Motion" P.O: "State that motion" You: "I rise to a point of personal privilege" P.O: "State that privilege" You: "Exit Chambers" P.O: "Granted" You: "::walks out::"	If you need to go to the bathroom, or leave the chamber for any reason.
"I move to call the previous question"	Stop the debate on the current bill and move on to the next one.

SPONSOR/AUTHOR

The author of the bill is the person that wrote the legislation that the chamber will be debating on. The sponsor also serves as the first affirmative with the role of introducing the legislation. The sponsor may or may not be from the same school as the author. The sponsor will be the first speaker if the author of the legislation is not present. The author or the sponsor, just like everyone else, gives a 3 minute persuasive speech on why the legislative body should vote affirmatively. The speech may be written beforehand, but not thoroughly; make an outline (you'll learn more about that in the Writing Speeches section).

After giving an effective 3 minute speech, the author has a Mandatory 2 minute questioning period where the chamber will ask questions concerning the legislation. At this point, all the other senators will basically try to make you look stupid. Sometimes not being able to answer a question can lower the score you get on your speech, and may possibly even cost you advancing to the semi-final or final round. When you are asked a question, just breathe and relax. While the person is asking the question, you should already be formulating an answer in your head, so by the time they finish speaking you can start answering. Also, try to incorporate interesting facts or bring in a part of your speech to your answer. However, keep in mind that your answer should be short and effective, not a long ramble.

If for some reason, you do not know how to answer the question (THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN!), then DO NOT say "I don't know", try to sound smart without answering the question. You will always think of a good answer though. Don't stress the questioning period that much and actually worry about the content of your speech. If possible, try to mentally practice your speech before going up there to deliver it.

CYCLES :

After the author/sponsor/first affirmative gave a speech to introduce the bill, then the following speaker would be a negative speaker. The negative speaker will also speak for 3 minutes, in an effort to persuade the congress to vote negatively. Within this 3 minute speech, the negative speaker should provide the sufficient evidence to refute the arguments of the affirmative speakers. If you are speaking negatively and you are the first speaker, you should already have some refutations. Although you don't get a mandatory 2 minute cross-examination period, you should still be able to answer questions. This is because if you do not use up your entire 3 minute span, then the remaining time is yielded to questions. For example, if you gave a 2 minute speech, then 1 minute will be yielded to questions from the legislative body. You cannot yield your questioning period time to another senator. Anyway, if other senators feel as if 1 minute of questioning period was not enough, they may suspend the rules and extend the questioning period by whatever time they'd like. Avoid extending questioning periods because it takes up time that can be used for speeches. Remember that you do not earn points by asking questions. The only way you can earn points is by giving good speeches. Also, there are not any two part questions allowed. Do not ask long questions.

PREVIOUS QUESTION & PASSING LEGISLATION

After everyone who wanted to speak had a chance to give a speech on any given bill, the chamber should call the previous question (see table of motions). The previous question should also be called once senators only rehash (repeating arguments that have already been said). Also, sometimes there will be a one-sided debate where there will be 3 affirmative speakers in a row without a negative speaker, or vice-versa. Once this happens, the previous question should be called. In some tournaments, it is a rule to call the previous question once there are 3 cycles without a negative speaker, or without an affirmative speaker.

To call previous question , a 2/3 majority is required. Once this is done, voting procedures to pass the legislation or not, follow. The senators who wish to pass a bill will rise once they are called, and the senators wishing to cast a negative ballot will do the same once the negative speakers are called by the P.O. In order for a legislation to pass or fail, a majority is required. When legislation has been voted on, you will move on to the next

bill in the agenda, and start again with an authorship/sponsorship, and move on to the cycles

WRITING SPEECHES

The affirmative/negative speech should be outlined. NEVER write out a speech thoroughly because you will not make the sufficient eye contact to get a good score (the points you can get range from 1-6) on your delivery...which is one of the judging criteria.. But more on that later. Only write out your key arguments and paraphrased evidence. Leave room on your legal pad for refutations (clashing, disagreeing with previous senators' argumentation).

With 3 minutes, you should be able to convince the legislative body to vote in affirmation or negation (whatever side you're going on) of any given legislation.

GENERAL FORMAT OF A SPEECH:

I. Introduction.

1. *Attention-grabbing statement.*

(a quote, an analogy, or something funny. It is most preferable to just go straight to your point..

Also, if you're going to begin your speech with a joke...make sure it's funny)

2. *Purpose/ thesis-* state position on bill or resolution.

II. Body.

1. *First argument; first reason* for voting affirmative/negative.

-Support argument with evidence; cite sources.

(ex. NY times, Foreign Affairs, etc).

-Include analysis of the evidence

(tell legislative body what impact your argument has)

-Include refutations; clash with previous senators' arguments.

(ex. "Senator Castro's proposed plan is ineffective because....")

Etc.

2. *Second argument; second reason* for voting affirmative/negative.

-Follow the above format for all your arguments. You should have about 3 points/contentions, if not, 2 really strong arguments.

3. *Third argument.*

-Transition into conclusion.

III. Conclusion.

1. Summarize why the legislative body should vote aff/neg by mentioning your key arguments, try to reword your "attention-grabbing statement" in order to have a classy and effective finish ☺

At this point, the P.O will state the time of your speech. If possible, try to mentally practice your speech (don't memorize it though, it will come naturally if you know your points). Make sure you do not go over the usual 10 second grace period that is often offered. If you are the author/sponsor you'll have a 2 minute Cross-Examination (CX) period, if not then you will only be cross-examined if you did not use up your entire 3 minutes (for ex., if you spoke for 2 minutes and 30 seconds, then you would have the remaining 30 seconds allocated to the cross-examination period.

EXAMPLE OF A SPEECH:

The Legislation is:

"A Resolution to devolve Iraq into three semiautonomous regions, divided between the Shiites, Sunnis and the Kurds, with a loose central government".

Negative Speech:

I. Introduction.

1. *Attention-grabbing statement:*

President Bush recently stated that the U.S policy goal in Iraq should be to establish an Iraq that can defend itself, sustain itself, but most importantly, govern itself.

2. *Purpose/ thesis-*

It is because this goal will not be accomplished upon implementing this legislation that we must negate this resolution to devolve Iraq into three semiautonomous regions.

II. Body.

-Devolving Iraq into 3 semiautonomous will only.....

I. Escalate the violence in Iraq...defeating the purpose of the legislation.

⇒ Iraq's population is not neatly separated.

Anthony Cridesman of Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies.

-No meaningful consensus on how factions are separated.

-Passing legislation will require mass population movements- consist of violence, may impoverish those forced to move, & delay economic reforms.

⇒Strengthen militias.

Dividing a country essentially means dividing army, police, and security forces- all of which would strengthen militias.

II. Increase regional instability.

⇒ Neighboring countries can see the partition of Iraq as a plot to carve up the new regions.

John Jay of the Heritage Foundation

-Iran would want the Shiite areas.
-Turkey-Kurds
-Syria-Sunnis

These divisions can spill over the rest of the region- Further destabilize it.

III. Alternative Solution.

- Establish a support structure with Iran & Syria to determine regional solution.

Iraq Study Group

Effective method- all countries have similar goal in future of Iraq: ensure success for stability in region.

IV. Conclusion

-Passage of legislation will escalate violence & harm regional stability.

-Adopt effective alternative method that will establish

"an Iraq that can defend itself, sustain itself, but Most importantly, govern itself".

This is an example of a speech following the aforementioned format. It is only an outline, because as I mentioned earlier, you should avoid **CANNED** speeches, only write one when you are the author.

A **canned speech** is a speech that is written out thoroughly in advance, before the actual debate takes place. Writing one if you are an author of a bill is a good idea, because you're the person that introduces the legislation to the Congress. But, it's not a good idea if you are an affirmative or negative speaker that will speak after the author is done with his affirmative speech. Sometimes, you will not be picked as the first negative speaker, due to recency or geography (more on that later...) This means that maybe the first negative speaker will mention the points that you thought about saying in your speech. Once an argument is said, do not go up there and repeat it again, because you will not advance the debate... this is known as rehash. So, knowing a lot about the topic and focusing on a few arguments without wasting your time writing out an entire speech can save time. It can also reduce the chances of rehashing.

RESEARCHING

If you keep up with current events, you won't need to research that much. However, you still need to know the basics of researching. Once you get the list of bills, don't go crazy researching on every single bill, remember to always separate the bills into different piles according to the topics they deal with, as discussed earlier (e.g. foreign affairs- Iran, Iraq, North Korea, domestic-alternative fuels, electoral college, poverty, line-item veto, economics- minimum wage, taxes, etc.

With this, you can research on general topics, and with the information you learn you can formulate arguments for any given speech that has to do with the topic you researched.

When researching, don't always try to memorize facts and statistics, or try to take in a lot of information, but try to understand why something is happening, why it needs to be changed if it needs to, what would be the outcome of passing the legislation- how will it help the U.S-even if it deals with foreign affairs? Does it advance U.S interests? Etc. You should always have those big picture concepts in your head when researching.

Also, start reading CRS reports NOW.

Here is a list of good websites you can research in:

<http://fpc.state.gov/c4763.htm>

www.foreignaffairs.org

<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>

<http://www.heritage.org/>

<http://www.economist.com/>

www.nytimes.com

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

<http://www.csmonitor.com/>

<http://www.aclu.org/>

<http://www.senate.gov/>

<http://www.house.gov/>

<http://www.boston.com/news/globe/>

<http://www.itools.com/research/>

THE PRESIDING OFFICER

As stated earlier, the **Presiding Officer** is the senator that will be in charge of running your chamber and making sure there is order for a certain period of time.

A P.O automatically receives 2 speeches for a session they preside in. During the session that you will be presiding, you will be ranked from 1-10, 10 being the worst and 1 being the best ☺. The judges will base your score around how well you manage the chamber, how many mistakes you made (if any). To avoid making mistakes, always keep a chart to record speaking order and participation in the chamber (by asking questions).

But always remember the risks. A good job as a P.O may help you advance to Supers (the final round of Congress), but if you do a bad job, not only will you not be advancing to a semi-final round or to supers, but you will basically be disliked by the chamber... So practice a lot before you decide to preside in a tournament.

The duties of the Presiding Officer are as follows:

- Have an accurate seating chart (once you are elected P.O, if there is not already a seating chart given by the tournament staff, then pass it around so students can fill our their names)
- Keep a list with the number of speakers, and their speaking orders (for recency, etc).
- Keep time while senators are giving their speeches (make sure you take a stopwatch and a gavel), and give them time signals (more on gaveling procedures later).

Your records of speaking order (recency), questions (participation) will allow the following P.O to be prepared for the next session.

To be P.O, you NEED to know parliamentary procedures by heart. To do this, what you should do is basically memorize the Table of the Most Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions. This will help you know how many votes you need to pass a motion etc.

While Senators are speaking, you should be keeping a chart in order to decide how to choose speakers.

Speakers are usually chosen according to the following on the next page:

- **Geography**- This is usually the system that a P.O will use in the beginning of a session before precedence and recency (more on that later) is established. By using the method of geography, a P.O will choose speakers, basically according to where they are sitting, in an effort to equally choose students from any given zone in the room. The P.O can separate the room into four quadrants and choose from the back to the front, from sides to sides, all in order to choose an equal number of speakers from every zone. However, only use this to start off a session.
- **Precedence**- This method to choose speakers is the most widely used, and in some tournament leagues it is actually even a rule. By using the method of precedence, the P.O needs to choose the speakers who have spoken the least, or the ones who haven't spoken at all. For example, if Senator Gonzalez has given 2 speeches, Senator Guillot has given 1 speech, and Senator Rojas has not spoken, then the follow speaking order would apply:
 1. Senator Rojas
 1. Senator Guillot
 2. Senator Gonzalez
- **Recency**- Recency is basically mixed with precedence. By using recency, the P.O continues to choose speakers based on the number of speeches they have given. However, if there is a scenario where Senator Castellanos and Senator Castro have both spoken once, then recency will be used. Recency is choosing the speaker who has spoken the least recently. In other words, the P.O officer will choose the speaker that spoke the earliest. If Senator Castro spoke the 1st session, and Senator Castellanos spoke the 2nd session, then Senator Castro will have recency over Senator Castellanos.

In order to choose speakers faster and easier, you should keep a recency chart.

It should look like the one below

* The numbers at the top represent the number of speeches.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Castellanos	Guillot	Guillot	Fernandez		
Castro	Castellanos	Fernandez			
Cecil	Cecil	Cecil			
Fernandez	Fernandez				
Garcia	Gonzalez				
Gonzalez	Merino				
Guillot	Castro				
Hernandez					
Lopez					
Merino					

In the seating chart, you should also record the number of questions that a speaker has given. Participation is another widely-used method in choosing speakers. The most active senator (with the most questions asked) should be chosen over one who doesn't have as much participation recorded, that is only if precedence and recency are not used.

Other than keeping track of the speaking order and participation, a P.O also needs to be recording the times of speeches, giving time signals and letting the judges know the time of the speeches.

Recording the times of the speeches is easy. You only need a stopwatch. You need to be aware of the time in order to ensure time signals (gaveling).

The **Standard NFL Gaveling procedure** for speeches is
One tap at 2 minutes (1 minute remaining)
Two taps at 2 minutes and 30 Seconds (30 seconds remaining)
Three taps at 3:00 (no more time).

P.Os usually allow a 10 second grace period. After 3 minutes, start gaveling the person down by tapping your gavel continuously.

So for example, this is how a session P.O ing looks like.

P.O: Affirmative speakers please rise.

::people stand::

::P.O looks at recency chart and selects the speaker who has yet to speak, has spoken the least recently)

P.O: Senator Soto you have the floor.

::Senator Soto walks to the front of the room, and gives a 2 minute and 55 seconds speech:

P.O: The time of that speech was 2 minutes and 55 seconds, I will absorb the remaining time. Speaker may be seated.

::speaker sits::

P.O: Negative speakers please rise.

...And so on.

WRITING LEGISLATION

The purpose of writing legislation is to create debate; where there are sufficient arguments that can be used in the affirmative side, while also having a sufficient level of controversy for the opposing side as well. Avoid writing legislation that is not debatable. That is basically the primary key to writing good legislation.

You also need to write the legislation in a way that your intent is obvious, because then any flaw in your legislation can be used against you in a negative speech. Make sure you are clearly stating what you want to do, why, and how it's going to be done.

Remember that, A **bill** will become a law if it is passed by the legislative body. As opposed to a bill, a **resolution** does not become a law if it is passed. It only makes a suggestion on how to deal with a specific issue. All a resolution does is send out a message to the branch that holds the authority of which the congress is trying to persuade. It reflects the overall views of the congress.

The only thing you need to do in order to write a legislation is come up with a problem that needs to be solved. In order to do this, research, watch the news, and see what continues to show up.

However, remember that the bill can only be a page long. Your legislation should center around a significant current topic. Also, when you're thinking about the issue you want to write legislation on, think about why it has yet to be solved, why it has taken so long for the real Congress to make a change, think about negative effects, and this can help you have a general idea of what is coming on the negative side.

But anyway, the following two pages are formats of bills and resolutions.

JUDGING CRITERIA

After judging a lot of Congress sessions, Congress can truly get boring for a judge. This is why it is so important for you to work not only on your arguments and the needed evidence, but also on your speaking style.

Speaking style:

A judge is looking for a speaker how can speak with confidence, and knows what he/she is talking about...or well, at least seems to know. This is usually displayed through speaking loudly, for the entire chamber to listen. Not only should you speak loud, but you also need to be clear. Don't let the speech be a little sing-song though. You also need to change your tone throughout the speech. For example, speak more powerful on your key arguments, and less powerful when explaining evidence, etc. You also need to make a lot of eye contact. Do not expect to get a good score if you go up there and read a speech.

The most you'll honestly get is perhaps a 2 or a 3, depending on the judge. If it is not the first speech for any given bill, a speech should always include a lot of refutations and clash with the opposition.

Logic, Organization, Unity of Speech.

The arguments you use in your speech should be clear and well-explained. Your chamber should understand exactly what you are trying to say. Always state your arguments, do not make your speech a big ramble.

For example, you should say "The first key reason why we must negate/affirm today is simply because of...", etc.

Do not just start talking about the legislation, or your evidence, without clearly stating your arguments. With that being said, make sure to have organization in your speeches.

The official FFL student congress speaker ballot is on the following page. In a tournament, the following paper will be the exact same paper that a judge will use when judging your speeches.

TERMINOLOGY

- **Legislation-** A proposal made by a Senator in the form of a bill or a resolution.
- **Bill-** A type of legislation that introduces a policy, and if it is passed by the legislative body it becomes a law.
- **Resolution-** A proposal, or recommendation, that suggests how something should be dealt with, explaining the further action that should be taken by another branch of government who has the authorization to deal on the suggested proposal. Therefore, if a resolution is passed it does not become law.
 - **Docket-** all the legislation that will be debated.
 - **Agenda-** the order in which the legislation will be debated after the congress decides on it by a vote.
 - **Authorship speech-** The first affirmative speech that introduces the legislation. It is three minutes long...it will always be three minutes long. It requires a two minute cross-examination period.
- **Sponsorship Speech-** The first affirmative speech, however not by the actual author of the legislator. It may be of a senator affiliated with the school that the author is from.
- **Cross-Examination-** a period where the members of congress ask questions to the speaker. Two-part questions are not allowed.
- **Amendment-** a change to the text of a legislation. It doesn't actually change the intent of the legislation, but it modifies specific wording.