

Revision 24.08 (August 26, 2024)



Florida Gulf Coast Catholic Forensics League

STUDENT CONGRESS

MANUAL

Legislation templates, tournament materials, and updates to this manual will be posted to the FGCCFL website. Please check regularly! <https://www.fgccfl.net/>

Yellow highlighted text denotes substantive changes adopted following the publication of Revision 24.02.

Gray highlighted text denotes changes adopted between Revisions 23.08 and 24.02.

§ 1 About This Manual

The *FGCCFL Student Congress Manual* is an adaptation of the *NCFL Student Congress Manual* to meet the needs of local competition. **Always consult this manual first.** If a question is not addressed by this manual, consult the *NCFL Student Congress Manual (2023)*,¹ then *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (12th ed.).

The Executive Committee and the Tournament Coordinator shall have the authority to issue any rule interpretations or modifications deemed necessary to ensure a fair and efficient tournament. **Parliamentarians shall have the authority to interpret this manual but not to contradict it.**

Conduct and Decorum

§ 2 Standards of Decorum for Legislators

(a) **Legislators shall maintain a level of decorum befitting Members of Congress on the floor of the House or Senate and shall treat ALL participants with dignity and respect. A legislator who engages in personalities shall be gavelled down and ruled out of order.**

(b) Legislators shall remain silent when others have the floor, except for interruptions permitted by the rules of procedure (and then only in urgent circumstances). Contestants **may** pass notes and materials quietly and discreetly, subject to review by the Parliamentarian.

(c) Speakers' remarks shall be directed to the chamber. Legislators shall refer to one another as "Representative (Senator) [last name]" or as "Mr./Ms. [last name]." The Presiding Officer is referred to (and refers to herself²) as "the Chair" and should be addressed as "Madam/Mr. Speaker (President)," or by another appropriate honorific announced at the start of the session.

(d) Legislators **must** attend all sessions in their assigned chambers, except for **brief** excursions (on a *point of personal privilege*) in cases of manifest need. **A legislator who is absent from a substantial portion of a session without leave from the Tab Room may be disqualified.** The chamber **may not** suspend the rules to permit free exit and entry ("open chambers").

(e) Under no circumstances may legislators argue with the Presiding Officer. The appropriate means of challenging the PO's decision is a *point of order* (and an *appeal* if necessary).

(f) Legislators **may not** address or confer with the officials before, during, or after the session. Questions about procedure are to be brought to the Presiding Officer on a *point of order* or a *parliamentary inquiry*; the PO may then refer the question to the Parliamentarian if necessary. Concerns about rules or judging should be brought to coaches, who may then decide whether to raise the issue with League staff.

¹ Because "NCFL does not restrict the operations of preliminary or qualifier events" (*NCFL Manual*, p. 1), this manual takes precedence over conflicting NCFL rules, including the NCFL legislation templates.

² For consistency, this manual uses *she/her* to refer to Presiding Officers and PO candidates, *he/him* to refer to other legislators, and *they/them* to refer to officials. All pronouns should be construed inclusively.

§ 3 The Presiding Officer (PO)

(a) A new Presiding Officer shall be elected at the start of each session. Nominations shall be taken from the floor and may be declined; legislators may not self-nominate. Once the floor has been closed to nominations, each candidate may give a statement (not to exceed 30 seconds) of her qualifications. The vote is taken by secret ballot; the sitting PO, including a Temporary PO, is entitled to vote. The votes shall be opened and counted **by the Parliamentarian only**.

A **simple majority** (more than half the votes cast **for any person, including those not in contention**) is required to elect a Presiding Officer. If no candidate has a simple majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes is eliminated and a runoff is held among the surviving candidates, subject to the following exceptions:

(1) If the two lowest-ranked candidates have fewer votes *combined* than the candidate immediately ahead of them, **both** trailing candidates shall be eliminated.

(2) If two candidates are tied for last place, a runoff is held between them to eliminate one of them before the runoff among the survivors.

(3) At any time, the remaining candidates may mutually agree to end balloting and decide the election by a coin toss or a similar method of chance to be conducted by the Parliamentarian.

(b) The PO is expected to be *scrupulously fair* while presiding. She **must not** enter into debate and **may not** relinquish the Chair to speak during the session. Legislators **may not** confer privately with the PO or move to approach the Chair, except to present an amendment for review. A PO may serve in only one session unless there are no candidates who have not yet served.

(c) The PO has a duty to keep debate moving. To that end, she **must** rule dilatory and frivolous motions **out of order**, she **must** deny attempts to monopolize the floor, and she **must** deny repeated or excessive requests to exit the chamber. These rulings are subject to appeal, but such appeals may be ruled **out of order** by the Parliamentarian.

(d) The PO **may and should** advise the chamber on matters of procedure not related to the substance of legislation, and she may suggest (“entertain”) motions that will advance business or achieve the chamber’s apparent goals. However, the PO **must not** undertake, permit, or solicit actions prohibited by the rules, nor may she substitute her own strategies for the ordinary use of procedure. *A PO who willfully disregards the rules may be disqualified from the tournament.*

(e) To maintain proper decorum and control of the chamber, the PO is expected to stand while speaking unless doing so is impossible or impracticable.

§ 4 Evidence

(a) Evidence quoted, paraphrased, or summarized in a speech should be identified by, at minimum, author/source and date. Legislators are expected to make clear what material is from their source and what is their own. All content not cited should be considered the legislator’s opinion or interpretation and weighed accordingly in the round.

(b) All evidence should be marked with a complete MLA or APA bibliographic citation (including URI, DOI, or database information where applicable). Cards, if used, should include the source citation and appropriate context for the claim. Legislators must make evidence available for review at the officials’ request upon a claim of falsification, misrepresentation, **or plagiarism**.

(c) Penalties for falsification or misrepresentation of evidence, for plagiarism, or for false or unsubstantiated claims of the same, are at the officials' discretion (up to and including forfeiture of points and nominations in the round), will not be disclosed (except on the ballot), and are not subject to appeal. If the officials believe that disqualification is appropriate, they may bring the matter to the Tab Room, and the student and his coach will have an opportunity to be heard before a final determination is made.

§ 5 Electronic Devices

(a) The *FGCCFL Policy on Electronic Devices* is incorporated herein by reference.

(b) The use of tablets and laptop computers during the session is permitted for purposes of notetaking, evidence retrieval, communication within the chamber, recordkeeping (e.g., recency), and timekeeping only. Cell phone use by students is prohibited, with the following exceptions:

(1) A phone may be configured for use as a hotspot, in which case it must be silenced and put away before the start of the session and **may not** be adjusted during the session.

(2) The Presiding Officer may use her phone as a timer if she demonstrates to the Parliamentarian's satisfaction that the device is silenced and in airplane mode. A device used for timing may not concurrently be used as a hotspot.

Officials in the chamber **MAY NOT** grant additional exceptions to the cell phone rules.

(c) Devices must be run on battery during sessions, must be silenced, and must not be visually distracting to other legislators. There is no guarantee that contestants will have access to AC power, to the internet, or to particular online resources at any time during the tournament.

(d) Internet connectivity (via school network or hotspot) is permitted, but communication with any person outside the chamber is **prohibited**. Recording of any kind is **prohibited**. *Violation of this rule may result in forfeiture of the round or disqualification from the tournament.*

(e) The use of generative artificial intelligence (e.g., Copilot, Gemini, or ChatGPT) is permitted for topic orientation or research assistance. Generative AI should not be used for speechwriting but must be cited appropriately if generated text is incorporated into a speech.

(f) Legislators may use permitted devices while speaking or presiding, but not as visual aids or properties. Judges may consider the impact of a device on the legislator's presence and delivery when awarding points and/or making nominations.

(g) The Parliamentarian may require a legislator to cease use of his devices if he uses them in a manner that disrupts the session or that is not authorized by the rules. (This is a less restrictive alternative to the ordinary penalty of forfeiture or disqualification.)

(h) Rules governing electronic devices are in effect while the chamber is in session, even if legislators are out of the chamber.

(i) The Presiding Officer is required to turn over a copy of all recency records to her successor. If she maintains these records electronically, she must transcribe them onto the seating chart immediately following the session.

Parliamentary Procedure

§ 6 General Rules of Floor Debate

- (a) There is no fixed debate time limit at local tournaments, but the chamber is obligated to consider, **at minimum**, all bills and resolutions (B/R) whose author is present in the chamber. To that end, the chamber should judiciously use motions to order the previous question, to table, to postpone, and/or to limit debate. *No legislator is entitled to a speech on a particular bill or resolution (B/R) other than the author.*
- (b) A legislator who wishes to speak on a B/R must wait until the PO calls for speakers before rising³ to seek recognition for a speech. Once recognized, he may proceed to the rostrum (or other place for speakers) and state his name and code for the judges.
- (c) Legislators shall seek the floor only to oppose the views of the previous speaker so that debate alternates pro and con. However, if no one seeks to oppose the previous speaker, the opportunity is forfeited, and the PO recognizes another speaker on the same side. Legislators are cautioned that one-sided debate is **NOT** a productive use of the chamber's time; if debate becomes one-sided and no opposition is forthcoming, the B/R should either be laid on the table (to allow the opposing side to develop arguments) or put to a vote. The chamber **may not** recess to provide speechwriting time.
- (d) Speeches are a maximum of 3 minutes. Speakers **may not** reserve any part of their time, yield their time to another speaker, or yield to questions during speaking time.
- (e) **Gaveling procedures.** The PO shall time all speeches and provide time signals by gaveling (once at **2 minutes**, twice at **2½ minutes**). At **3 minutes**, the PO shall rise, allow the speaker to complete his sentence, then **gavel down the speaker** and ask him to relinquish the floor. *There is no grace period or "warning tap"; speakers are urged to use the 2½ minute signal as their cue to conclude.* The PO shall announce the time used by the speaker before calling for questioners.
- (f) A speaker who is **out of order** (wrong B/R, wrong side, personalities, or breach of decorum) shall be gavelled down once the PO concludes that the speaker is in the wrong. Members who believe that a speaker is **out of order** may interrupt the speech to rise to a *point of order*.
- (g) Legislators are not prohibited *by rule* from speaking on both sides of the same B/R. However, to do so is discouraged, and the judges may take any apparent inconsistencies or lack of decorum into account in their scoring/ranking.
- (h) If there are no speakers on either side, the PO should ask if the chamber is "ready for the question"; if no one then seeks the floor, she may take a passage vote on the B/R **without the chamber ordering the previous question first**.

³ A raised hand for recognition may be permitted by a suspension of the rules, or by rule if **any** legislator in the chamber is unable to stand with ease for whatever reason.

§ 7 Authorship and Sponsorship

- (a) The author of the B/R, as published on the docket, shall have the opportunity to deliver the first speech on the B/R (*authorship speech*), regardless of other priority considerations. If the author is not present, a legislator from the author's school who does not have a B/R of his own may claim this privilege when the calendar is established.
- (b) If no author (or substitute) is in the chamber, or if the B/R is marked as "unsponsored" or "supplemental," the PO shall select a sponsor from the chamber at large to deliver the first speech. However, if the Presiding Officer was the intended sponsor, she may, at her option, entertain a motion to lay the B/R on the table or to postpone it until the start of a later session.
- (c) If no one wishes to sponsor the B/R, the chamber should lay the item on the table until a sponsor is available. If the chamber exhausts the rest of its agenda and there is still no sponsor, the B/R may be taken from the table and the previous question ordered with no speeches given.

§ 8 Priority System for Speakers

- (a) The PO **must** recognize all speakers, except for authorship speeches, as follows:
- (1) **Number of speeches (precedence).** The PO first recognizes a legislator who has not yet spoken. If all those standing have spoken, the PO selects the one with the fewest speeches on the day.
 - (2) **Recency.** If there is a tie for fewest speeches, the PO recognizes the legislator whose *most recent* speech was given *earliest* in the day.
 - (3) **Priority list.** If multiple legislators rise who have not yet spoken, the PO selects the one whose name appears closest to the top of the randomized priority list given to her by the Parliamentarian. **The priority list does not apply once recency has been established.**
 - (4) **PO's discretion.** If multiple legislators rise who have not yet spoken and no priority list has been provided, she may select at her discretion, but she **must not** consider questions, motions, "standing time," future authorship opportunities, or school affiliation in her decision.
- (b) Only speeches (on legislation and amendments) and presiding count against priority. A speech is recorded the moment it begins, even if the speaker is later ruled **out of order** and gavelled down. The Presiding Officer records her service as the **first two speeches of the session (at Grand Finals, the first speech of the session)**. Questions, motions, and speeches on motions (except amendments to B/R) are not recorded **for purposes of speaker priority (but see § 9(c) for priority in questioning periods)**.
- (c) Priority accrues over the entire day and **MAY NOT** be reset to zero.
- (d) An error in recognition may be challenged on an **immediate** point of order (made before the speech begins) by the person entitled to the speech, stating the accurate precedence and recency. In making future selections, the PO **may not** ignore priority to compensate for an error.
- (e) The PO is responsible for keeping accurate priority records for herself and any successors. She **must not** pre-plan speaker selections because new people may rise each time. **Errors in recognition that, in the opinion of the Parliamentarian, demonstrate gross negligence or systematic bias shall constitute sufficient grounds to reduce the Presiding Officer's score to the minimum.**

§ 9 Questioning Periods (Cross-Examination)

(a) Questioning periods are **2 minutes** in length following a sponsorship speech and the first negative speaking opportunity. Questioning periods are **1 minute** in length following all other speeches. There are no questioning periods during debate on an amendment. All questioning periods will use the “direct questioning” method. The chamber **may not** suspend the rules to extend questioning, to alter the regular questioning periods, or to **abolish** “direct questioning.”

(b) The PO shall recognize all questioners unless the chamber suspends the rules to permit speakers to do so themselves. The PO always has the power to cut off a questioner or speaker and to select a new questioner, or to direct the speaker to do so.

(c) **Priority system for direct questioning.** The Presiding Officer must track *questioning* recency separately from *speaking* recency using the seating chart or another means. The system is similar to the priority system used for speakers:

(1) **Number of questioning periods (precedence).** The PO must recognize a legislator who has not yet asked questions. If all those standing have asked questions, the PO selects the one who has had the fewest questioning opportunities on the day.

(2) **Recency.** If there is a tie for fewest questioning periods, the PO recognizes the legislator whose *most recent* questioning period was *earliest* in the day.

(3) **Priority list.** If multiple legislators rise who have not yet asked questions, the PO selects the one whose name appears closest to the **bottom** of the randomized priority list given to her by the Parliamentarian. The priority list does not apply once recency has been established.

(4) **PO’s discretion.** If multiple legislators rise who have not yet asked questions and no priority list has been provided, she may select at her discretion, but she **must not** consider questions, motions, “standing time,” or school affiliation in her decision.

(d) **Procedure for direct questioning.** Questioners shall rise (or raise their hands) to seek recognition. Upon being recognized, the questioner shall have a maximum of **30 seconds** to ask questions and receive responses. Questions and responses must be kept brief, but the speaker may not be limited to a “yes” or “no” response. Clarifications may be requested and given as appropriate. The speaker may refuse to answer a question offered in bad faith.

(d) Personal attacks, repetitive questions (“asked and answered”), irrelevant questions, and requests to engage in prohibited conduct **must** be gavelled down and ruled **out of order**. Serial questions and cross-debate are permitted within the 30-second window for the questioner. Additionally, the PO **must** cut off excessive commentary or oration by the questioner or the speaker. A questioner who engages in prohibited conduct or solicits prohibited conduct from the speaker forfeits any remaining questioning time.

(e) At the end of 30 seconds of direct questioning (or if the questioner has no further questions or is gavelled down), the PO should gavel once, then recognize the next questioner if there is time remaining. The overall questioning time continues to run while the PO is selecting the next questioner. At the end of 1 or 2 minutes, the PO should rise and gavel twice to signal the end of the questioning period. If there is a lack of questioners with time remaining, the PO should rise, end the questioning period early, and dismiss the speaker.

§ 10 Consideration of Parliamentary Motions

- (a) Parliamentary procedure is essential to Student Congress. However, time spent on motions might otherwise be used for debate, so procedure **must not** be used simply to demonstrate one's knowledge (or others' lack thereof). *Parliamentary games and similar abuses will be penalized by the officials.*
- (b) The Presiding Officer shall rule **out of order** all motions she considers dilatory (intended to waste time) or frivolous (without serious purpose). The PO **may not** reject an appeal or a call for a division (checks on her power), but the Parliamentarian may act to prevent abuse of these motions.
- (c) Legislation whose author (or same-school substitute) is willing and able to speak is entitled to a sponsorship speech, a first negative speaking opportunity, and a regular affirmative and negative speaking opportunity before it is voted on or set aside. There are no other speech or cycle requirements.
- (d) The order of precedence is reflected in the Table of Parliamentary Motions. The chamber disposes of one motion at a time, from highest to lowest precedence. The particular rules governing each motion appear in § 11 of this manual or in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

This is the general process for considering motions:

(1) Recognition. A legislator may rise (or raise his hand) for a motion at any time when the floor is not claimed by a speaker.⁴ (The PO **should not** call for motions after speeches; it is legislators' responsibility to seek the floor.) If necessary, the legislator may speak out ("*Madam/Mr. Speaker (President)!*" or "*Motion!*") to attract the PO's attention.

(2) Statement of the motion. The PO recognizes the speaker and asks him to what point he rises. The legislator then states the motion, and the PO determines whether the motion is in order.

(3) Second. If necessary, the PO will call for a second; another legislator must then indicate support for the motion ("*Second!*") for the motion to be in order. This prevents a single rogue legislator from derailing the chamber. (By rule, legislation on the calendar is considered moved and seconded.)

(4) Debate and amendment. Debatable motions may be discussed pro and con if necessary. Except for amendments to B/R, remarks on motions are delivered from members' desks, should not exceed 30 seconds, are not scored, and do not count against priority. Debate should thus be kept to a minimum. No legislator should be allowed to monopolize the floor. Amendable motions may be amended with a motion, second, and majority vote.

(5) Vote or decision. Once debate (if any) is exhausted or closed, the appropriate vote is taken. Certain incidental and privileged motions are decided by the Chair without a vote.

⁴ *Exception:* A motion that permits interruption may be made at any time, even during a speech. However, interrupting a speech or vote is **strongly discouraged** unless there is an emergency or a breach of the rules requiring immediate action.

§ 11 Ordinary Motions in Student Congress

NOTE: These are the motions most likely to be used in Student Congress. Presiding Officers are expected to be able to dispose of these motions without extensive review of the rules.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

- (a) **Adjourn.** A motion to adjourn ends the session and dismisses the chamber until a time specified. It requires a second and a simple majority (usually by voice vote). NCFL practice, which FGCCFL has adopted, is to use this motion only at the end of the day, i.e., to adjourn *sine die*,⁵ dissolving the chamber and defeating items not put to a vote. For the procedure at the end of other sessions, see § 11(b), “Recess.”
- (b) **Recess.** A motion to recess allows the chamber to suspend business for a specified period. It is permissible but **not** necessary to “reopen the floor” upon returning from a recess. The motion requires a second and a simple majority (usually by voice vote). NCFL practice, which FGCCFL has adopted, is for all sessions except the last to end with a motion to recess until the start time of the following session. **By rule, motions to recess in mid-session must be limited to a maximum of ten minutes total per session** except in cases of extreme need, supported by the Parliamentarian.
- (c) **Point of personal privilege.** This motion allows a legislator to make a personal request during debate (usually to exit or enter the chamber or to approach the Chair with an amendment). It **may not** be used to address or inquire of the chamber.
- (d) **Call for the orders of the day.** This motion compels the chamber to take up scheduled business (so-called general or special orders, established either by rule or by certain motions). It is only required if the PO does not take up the business at the scheduled time. All other business is suspended while the chamber considers the orders of the day.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

- (e) **Division of the chamber.** Used to verify a voice vote. See § 13(f).
- (f) **Suspend the rules.** Suspensions of the rules are permitted *only* for matters either authorized by this manual or not contemplated by the FGCCFL and NCFL rules. A motion to suspend the rules must specify a limited purpose, e.g., allowing speakers to recognize their own questioners. It requires a second and a two-thirds vote of the members *present*; it expires when the chamber **recesses**.
- (g) **Point of order.** A legislator may rise to a point of order to correct a procedural error that affects the interests of members. The motion must be made **immediately** following the error, i.e., before the next speech or vote. The legislator may interrupt the PO (“*Point of order!*”) if necessary. When asked to state his point, the legislator states what the ruling should have been (citing any relevant rules), then takes his seat. The PO determines if the point is “*well taken*” (valid) and either takes corrective action or explains the basis for her ruling.

A *point of order* may be used to inquire of the PO; this is also known as a *parliamentary inquiry*. However, inquiries about time remaining, speaker/questioner priority, or any other matter that legislators should be tracking themselves should be considered dilatory.

⁵ Latin for “without day.” It’s pronounced *SIGH-nee-DIE-ee*, following the conventions of Law Latin.

(h) Appeal. If a point of order is not resolved to legislators' satisfaction, they may appeal the PO's ruling to the full chamber. A motion to appeal (phrased "*I appeal the decision of the Chair*") must be made **immediately**, interrupting the PO ("*Madam/Mr. Speaker (President)!*") if necessary. It requires a second and is not debatable, though the moving legislator and the PO may *briefly* state the basis for reversing or affirming the ruling, respectively.

This motion has an unusual voting procedure: The PO takes a recorded vote on the question "*Shall the decision of the Chair stand?*" Those voting to *sustain* the PO are counted first, followed by those voting to *overrule* her. The PO may not vote, but a tie vote sustains the PO's decision. Once the results of the appeal have been announced, the matter is no longer subject to discussion.

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

(i) Lay a B/R on the table. The motion to lay the item under consideration on the table (colloquially, to "table the B/R") sets the legislation aside *with the intent of returning to it after considering other business*. It requires a second and a simple majority. Legislation **may** be laid on the table in one session and taken up again in a later session. Debate time, if it has been limited, is paused while a B/R is tabled.

(j) Take a B/R from the table. When no other B/R is on the floor, a motion to take a tabled B/R from the table (colloquially, to "untable the B/R") and resume consideration is in order. The motion requires a second and a simple majority; if the motion passes, debate on the B/R continues where it left off, and debate time, if it was previously limited, continues to run.

(k) The previous question (close debate). The *previous question* is a motion to close debate and vote immediately on the item being considered. The proper phrasing is "*I move the previous question,*" and POs should accept no other phrasing as valid.⁶ This motion requires a second and a two-thirds vote of those *present*.

Legislators should not overuse this motion, but neither should they neglect it. When debate grows stale or one-sided, it is usually in the chamber's best interest to close debate and move on to a fresh topic. (Your judges will thank you.)

(l) Limit (or extend the limits of) debate. This motion allows debate on a B/R to be limited to a fixed period of time or a set number of speeches. Because it affects freedom of debate, it requires a second and a two-thirds vote of those *present*. It is not debatable, but it is amendable as to time. This motion **MAY NOT** be used to extend a debate time limit established by rule, **nor may it be used to eliminate any of the minimum speaking opportunities for a sponsored item.**

(m) Postpone to a specific time. This motion allows the chamber to set a B/R aside until a specified time, such as postponing the PO's bill to the start of a later session. This is a majority question and requires a second. Once the specified time has come and no B/R is on the floor, debate on the postponed item (a general order) continues where it left off.

⁶ It's not "motion for previous question" or "move to previous question," and it's **especially** not "motion to move the/to previous question." This probably made sense in 1604, when the motion was introduced in the House of Commons. It might have made sense in 1789, when it was adopted by the House of Representatives. It might even have made some sense in 1876, when Gen. Henry Martyn Robert included it in his *Rules of Order*, though even *he* questioned whether it should just be called a "motion to close debate."

§ 12 Amending Process for Legislation

(a) An amendment **must** be germane to the legislation and **must not** alter its intent. The amendment is written as a single imperative sentence directing **one** of these:

- (1) **Strike out** one or more occurrences of a word/phrase/passage
- (2) **Insert** one or more occurrences of a word/phrase/passage
- (3) **Substitute** new material for part or all of the existing text

An amendment to legislation may be amended using the same format, but an amendment *to an amendment* **may not** be amended further.

(b) The amendment must be written out (use of the Amendment Form in this manual is encouraged but not required) and submitted to the Parliamentarian (via the Presiding Officer) for review before the motion to amend can be in order. The author **may** rise to a point of personal privilege to approach the Chair with an amendment.

(c) While the B/R to be amended is on the floor, the author of the amendment should seek recognition for a motion and move to amend the legislation. The PO will ensure that the amendment is satisfactory, read it to the chamber, and call for a second by recorded vote. One-third of the members *present* must second the amendment for it to be in order.

(d) If the amendment receives the required second, it may be debated. However, the chamber **may** instead move the *previous question* immediately and vote on the amendment without debate. Debate, if any, begins with a regular affirmative speech, assigned according to the usual rules of priority. The author of the amendment is **not** automatically entitled to a speech.

(e) Speeches on amendments alternate pro and con, are given from the rostrum, are 3 minutes in duration, are scored, and are subject to the priority rules. **However, by NCFL rule, there are no questioning periods during debate on an amendment.** Furthermore, debate is limited to the amendment and its effect on the legislation; speeches on the merits of the underlying legislation are **out of order** while the amendment is on the floor.

(f) When debate on the amendment has been exhausted or closed, a recorded vote is taken on the adoption of the amendment. An amendment requires a simple majority. Debate on the legislation (or the legislation *as amended*) then resumes where it left off.

§ 13 Voting Procedures

(a) A vote must be taken on all questions requiring a vote, even if the outcome appears obvious. The PO **must not** simply call for objections or “assume unanimous consent.”

(b) A recorded vote (standing or show of hands) is required for all passage votes on legislation and amendments thereto, all appeals, and any question requiring a vote other than a simple majority. Voice votes may be taken on other questions, but the PO should consider taking a recorded vote on any question whose outcome is in doubt.

(c) Before all votes, the PO shall state the question and the vote needed for passage.

(d) **Recorded votes requiring a simple majority.** The PO calls for legislators in favor to rise (or raise their hands) and counts the votes; she then calls for those opposed, and finally those **abstaining**, to do likewise. **(A 2023 NCFL rule requires abstentions to be taken, but legislators are not required to vote, and there is no quorum requirement. However, failure to participate in the**

session may be taken into account by the officials in making their nominations.) If there are more legislators in favor than opposed, the motion passes; otherwise, it fails. A tie vote defeats the question.⁷ The result is announced: “By a vote of ___ in favor to ___ opposed, with ___ abstaining, the question [motion, bill, resolution, amendment] is adopted/defeated.”

(e) Recorded votes requiring a fraction of members present ($\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, or $\frac{1}{5}$). The PO calls for legislators in favor to rise (or raise their hands) and counts the votes; she then determines the total number of legislators present in the chamber, excluding herself. If the required fraction of this number has voted in favor of the question, it passes; otherwise, it fails. The result is announced: “By a vote of ___ in favor out of ___ present, the motion is adopted/defeated/seconded.”

(f) Voice votes. The PO calls for legislators in favor to say “aye,” then for those opposed to say “no.” She then uses good judgment to determine the prevailing side and announces the results: “In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes (noes) have it, and the motion/question is adopted (defeated).” If the PO is unable to determine the outcome, she may order a recorded vote on her own authority.

If members disagree with the Chair’s ruling on a voice vote, they may call for a *division of the chamber* (“Division!”) **immediately** after the vote. A second is required (this is an NCFL rule). If a division is called for and seconded, the PO **must** take a recorded vote on the disputed question.

(g) Roll call votes. A roll call vote may be demanded by one-fifth of the members *present*. **This is strongly discouraged unless there have been repeated irregularities in a recorded vote.** The PO calls the roll from her seating chart, and each member responds by saying **only** “aye” or “no.”

Legislation

§ 14 Subject Matter

(a) Threshold requirement. All legislation **MUST** constitute a valid legislative response to a timely and significant issue of national interest. Legislation must propose a change from the status quo, offer a reasonable division of ground for debate, and be comprehensible to an informed audience. A resolution that simply calls for “reform,” “improvement,” or the like without identifying a specific change to the status quo **does not** satisfy the threshold requirement. A bill that allocates funds without specifying a policy objective **does not** satisfy the threshold requirement.

(b) Legislation that addresses frequently debated topics must be *especially* timely, significant, and/or novel, such that debate will necessarily focus on the particulars of the legislation and not the issue generally. A list of suspect topics appears near the end of this manual.

(c) Legislation that does not meet the above criteria or that is poorly written, inadequately researched, biased or prejudiced, vulgar or profane, or otherwise unsuitable for interscholastic debate **shall not** be considered at any FGCCFL tournament. Where possible, the League shall ask coaches to have unacceptable legislation rewritten.

⁷ **Tiebreaking:** The PO may vote if her vote will affect the outcome—either an “aye” vote to break a tie or a “no” vote to create one. In either instance, the PO must announce her vote before stating the result.

(d) Legislation that has been placed on the docket at an FGCCFL tournament, or that is strikingly similar to such, **shall not** be entitled to consideration at subsequent FGCCFL tournaments but **may** be placed on the docket at the Tournament Coordinator’s discretion. A resolution rewritten as a bill (or vice versa) is considered a new item.

§ 15 Template and Format Requirements

(a) FGCCFL requires the use of the legislation templates linked on the League website. Other templates and formats (including NCFL and NSDA) are **NOT** authorized. The templates may be edited in any application (including Google Docs), but the finished product must be saved in Microsoft Word format for submission on Tabroom. Legislation that is not submitted in the approved template, used as directed, **shall not** be considered at any FGCCFL tournament.

The templates **are not** “examples” to be replicated in a blank document. They have been designed to enable legislators to focus on the content rather than formatting. Simply download the template, edit, and save. The highlighted guide text will help explain what is required. Text that is not highlighted **should not** be changed without good cause.

(b) Legislation must include a descriptive title, i.e., a title that would allow a casual observer to understand the intent of the legislation, and a “Respectfully submitted” closing block or line with the name of the author and school. The maximum length of an item of legislation is one side of a U.S. letter-size page **without** any changes to the template’s margins, spacing, or formatting.

§ 16 Content Guidance for Bills

(a) **Overview.** A bill proposes a change in public policy and specifies how the federal government will implement the change. If enacted, bills carry the force of law. Bills do not explain *why* a course of action is desirable; rather, their focus is *how* the policy will be carried out.

(b) Bills are to be written in the five-section format set forth in the template. No sections may be added or removed, but Sections 2 and 3 may be divided into subsections (A, B, etc.) as needed.

(c) **Section 1** states the action to be taken or policy change to be made in one sentence, or as briefly as possible. Provisions may not be incorporated by reference unless explained elsewhere in the bill. *It should be possible to understand the bill’s intent from this section alone.*

(d) **Section 2** clarifies terminology **actually used elsewhere in the bill** through definitions and/or other provisions not related to the means of enforcement. Words and phrases used for their plain meaning or otherwise defined in relevant law need not be defined in the bill. **Remember:** Definitions in a bill are *prescriptive* (what X shall mean), not *descriptive* (what others say X means).

(e) **Section 3** identifies the enforcing agency or agencies and provides a means of enforcement (penalties, funding, resolution of jurisdictional issues, etc.); both are required for the bill to have force. Enforcing agencies **must** be federal agencies, almost always in the Executive Branch and usually at the Cabinet level.⁸ The Congress is **not** a proper enforcing agency.

⁸ Independent agencies such as the Social Security Administration or specific legislative branch entities such as the Government Accountability Office may sometimes be appropriate enforcing bodies.

(f) If a bill confers a private right of action (allowing **private parties**, as opposed to a federal agency, to sue in federal court), the Section 3.A may be replaced by a declaration that “The federal courts shall have jurisdiction over all cases arising under the provisions of this bill,” with the remedies available explained elsewhere in Section 3. (This is one of the few occasions when the standard text may be changed.)

(g) Legislation addressing traditional state or local matters **must** resolve jurisdictional concerns. Some means of exercising federal authority must be specified in the bill; the legitimacy and feasibility of those means are issues that may be raised in floor debate.

(h) **Section 4** establishes when the bill takes effect: immediately upon passage (which should be avoided for burdensome legislation), a period of time (e.g., 90 days) after passage, or a date certain (e.g., on January 1, 2026). **These are the only permissible formats for an effective date, and nothing else should appear in this section.** “Fiscal year” or “school year” effective dates are not acceptable.

(i) **Section 5** declares that all laws in conflict with the bill are null and void, which is intended to prioritize the bill’s provisions over existing law. **This section’s text must not be changed.**

§ 17 Content Guidance for Resolutions

(a) **Overview.** A resolution expresses a conviction or makes a suggestion about a current issue. Resolutions do not carry the force of law; rather, passage means that the Congress endorses the position stated. In contrast to bills, resolutions explain *why* a position deserves official support, but not *how* the proposal will be implemented.

(b) All resolutions must be written in the “simple resolution” format in the FGCCFL template. This format consists of a series of one-sentence “*whereas*” clauses that state a basis for the resolution, followed by one or more one-sentence *resolving clauses* that state the position taken.

(c) To be debatable, a resolution **must** state a specific suggestion and **may not** simply call for “reform,” “improvement,” “modification,” etc. (Calling for repeal or reversal of an existing law or policy will generally be sufficient.) Moreover, a resolution may not simply call for passage of a particular bill, although it may call for adoption of the bill’s policies (set forth in the resolution).

(d) Because resolutions do not carry the force of law, they may be directed toward federal, state, local, foreign, private, corporate, or other entities’ conduct. The propriety of addressing a particular party is a legitimate issue to be raised in floor debate.

(e) **Constitutional amendments.** Because constitutional amendments do not carry the force of law unless ratified by the states, they are treated as resolutions. FGCCFL provides a special version of the simple resolution template for constitutional amendments which incorporates standard amendment language and formatting. In general, legislators need only **write “whereas” clauses and** add the text of their amendment to Section 1 (adding other sections if necessary); they may optionally change the ratification method from legislatures to conventions and/or modify or remove the seven-year ratification window. *Adoption of a constitutional amendment requires a two-thirds vote.*

Tournament Operations

§ 18 Submission and Review of Legislation

(a) Schools **must** submit at least one item of legislation to enter students in Congress.⁹ All of a school's Congress entries are waitlisted in Tabroom until an item of legislation is submitted and approved. Schools may submit up to six items, but not more than one item per student. **All legislation must be personally reviewed by coaches and submitted via Tabroom.**

(b) **Optional advance review.** Coaches may submit legislation to the Tournament Coordinator for review no later than the **Monday before tournament week**. **Coaches should email submissions (as attachments, not links) to <josh@fgccfl.net>. This does not submit the legislation for the tournament; this is ONLY for review.** The submitting coach will receive a reply within 48 hours.

(c) **Final submission.** To be considered for the tournament, legislation must be uploaded to Tabroom no later than 9:00 PM on the **Thursday preceding tournament week** (i.e., 9 days before the tournament). Legislation must be written using the FGCCFL template in the manner directed in § 15 of this manual and saved in Microsoft Word (.docx) format, one item per document.

Legislation that does not satisfy these requirements will receive no further consideration.

(d) **Standard of review.** Legislation will be reviewed to ensure that it meets the requirements of §§ 14-17 of this manual. This includes appropriate subject matter, proper use of the template, and the inclusion of all required elements of a bill or resolution. Legislation that does not meet these requirements **will not** be placed on the docket.

Legislation will not be excluded *solely* because it is unconstitutional, unworkable, or ill-advised. These are legitimate issues to be addressed in floor debate. *The inclusion of an item on the docket does not constitute a "clean bill of health" from the Tournament Coordinator!*

(e) The Tournament Coordinator shall compile a docket of 6-12 items per chamber from the approved legislation. Supplemental items, if required, shall be placed last. The docket will be published on Tabroom and/or the FGCCFL site by **9:00 PM on the Friday before tournament week** (8 days before the tournament), or as soon as practicable. Legislation text is subject to technical corrections, and titles will be edited as appropriate.

§ 19 Chamber Assignments and Calendars

(a) The number of chambers will be determined based upon the number of legislators registered at the close of registration. The preferred chamber size is **16-18 legislators; the maximum size is 22. Chambers are given a letter or number designation and may elect to operate as Houses or Senates.**

(b) The Tournament Coordinator will assign legislators to chambers; requests from coaches that students be paired together or separated **will not** be entertained. Initial assignments are made

⁹ The Tournament Coordinator may waive this requirement for early tournaments and on a case-by-case basis where schools have been unable to submit legislation despite demonstrated efforts to do so. Furthermore, the Tournament Coordinator may accept legislation for purposes of admitting a school's entries to a tournament while rejecting it for the docket.

using Tabroom's sectioning algorithm; legislators are then swapped between chambers until delegations and agendas are balanced. At early tournaments, the Tournament Coordinator may seek to balance novice and experienced competitors. At large tournaments, delegations may be excluded from some chambers to facilitate judge assignment.

- (c) The Tournament Coordinator will generate seating charts for each chamber to facilitate priority tracking. Special seating requests will only be entertained if the coach has made an accessibility note for the student in the school's Tabroom registration.
- (d) The calendar shall be finalized by the chamber during Preliminary Business. Every school with legislation on the docket and an author in the chamber shall be entitled to present one B/R before any school presents additional items.
- (e) Chamber assignments and seating charts shall be published on Tabroom and/or the FGCCFL site 24 hours after the close of registration, or as soon as practicable.

§ 20 Session Procedures

- (a) Each chamber shall convene for Preliminary Business before the start of Session 1. Attendance shall be taken, and the Parliamentarian shall lead the chamber in finalizing its calendar and electing its PO.
- (b) Each chamber shall convene for three sessions, each of which shall consist of two hours to be used for the PO election, floor debate, and special orders. The chamber shall recess at the end of each session except the last; all other recesses should be considered dilatory in the absence of extenuating circumstances.
- (c) The chamber may consider modifications to the calendar at the start of each session. Such modifications are a *suspension of the rules* and require a second and a two-thirds vote of those present. Once the PO calls for a speaker, modifications to the calendar are *out of order* for the rest of the session.
- (d) At the end of Session 3, or when the chamber has voted on all B/R, whichever comes first, the chamber shall adjourn *sine die*.

§ 21 Scoring and Tabulation

- (a) Each chamber shall have two Scorers per session, who shall evaluate all speeches and the Presiding Officer. Each chamber shall additionally be assigned a Parliamentarian, who will critique the Presiding Officers and advise the chamber on matters of procedure. The Parliamentarian generally will not intervene in procedural matters, but they should do so at the PO's request or if a major error has been made that affects the session. Rulings made in the chamber **will not** be overturned by the Tournament Coordinator unless clearly erroneous.
- (b) Scorers will score each speech on a scale from 1 (unacceptable) to 6 (exemplary) and shall write two ballots for the Presiding Officer (one for each hour) using the same scale. These scores may be recorded with NSDA for merit points. However, speaker/PO points are not a factor in determining legislators' finishing order.
- (c) At the end of the session, each Scorer will select and rank the eight (8) legislators they believe contributed the most to the session. At the end of the day, the Parliamentarian will rank all the legislators in the chamber based on their total contributions to all sessions. These are holistic

assessments, and Scorers will be advised that they should not simply nominate the students who earned the most points. The Presiding Officers **are eligible** for selection, and officials will be admonished to consider them. Officials may rank students from their school in any position. Students not ranked by a Scorer will be assigned a rank of 9.

(d) Finishing order will be determined by low total ranks, followed by judge preference, high total reciprocals, low total ranks with the best and worst ranks excluded, **high total reciprocals with the best and worst ranks excluded**, and finally the Parliamentarian's ranking. For all criteria except the last, the Parliamentarian's rank will be capped at 9. The Presiding Officers and the first, second, and third place speakers in each chamber shall be recognized.

Grand Finals

At Grand Finals, rules in this section shall supersede conflicting rules elsewhere in this manual.

§ 22 Legislation for Grand Finals

Schools must submit at least **one satisfactory item** of legislation to enter students in Congress. All Congress entries are waitlisted in Tabroom until an item of legislation is **submitted from** the school. Schools may submit up to four items, but not more than one item per student. *All legislation must be personally reviewed by coaches and submitted via Tabroom.*

(a) **Optional advance review.** Legislation may be submitted to the Tournament Coordinator for review **following the method in § 18(b)**. The submitting coach will receive an reply within 48 hours detailing necessary repairs and suggested revisions.

(b) **Final submission.** To be considered for the tournament, legislation must be uploaded to Tabroom no later than 9:00 PM on the **Thursday before tournament week (9 days before the tournament)**. Legislation must be written using the FGCCFL template in the manner directed in § 15 of this manual and saved in Microsoft Word (.docx) format, one item per document. **Legislation that does not satisfy these requirements will receive no further consideration.**

(c) **Standard of review.** Legislation will be reviewed to ensure that it meets the requirements of §§ 14-17 of this manual. This includes appropriate subject matter, proper use of the template, and the inclusion of all required elements of a bill or resolution. **Legislation that does not meet these requirements will not be placed on the docket.**

Legislation will not be excluded *solely* because it is unconstitutional, unworkable, or ill-advised. These are legitimate issues to be addressed in floor debate. *The inclusion of an item on the docket does not constitute a "clean bill of health" from the Congress Coordinator!*

(d) The Tournament Coordinator shall compile a docket of 6-8 items per preliminary chamber from the approved legislation. **Supplemental items, if required, shall be placed last on the calendar.** The Tournament Coordinator shall additionally draft and/or curate a Super Congress docket of 4-8 items.

(e) The docket will be published on Tabroom and/or the FGCCFL site by 9:00 PM on the **Friday before tournament week (8 days before the tournament)**, or as soon as practicable. Legislation text may be subject to technical corrections, and titles may be edited.

§ 23 Preliminary Session Assignments and Calendars

- (a) The number of chambers will be determined based upon the number of legislators registered at the close of registration. **The preferred chamber size is 15-16 legislators; the maximum chamber size is 20.** Preliminary chambers are given a letter or number designation and shall operate as Houses.
- (b) The Tournament Coordinator will assign legislators to chambers; requests from coaches will not be entertained. Initial assignments are made by random draw; legislators are then swapped (anonymously) between chambers until delegations, PO candidates, and agendas are balanced.
- (c) The Tournament Coordinator will generate seating charts for each chamber to facilitate priority tracking.
- (d) The calendar shall be finalized by the chamber during Preliminary Business. Every school with legislation on the docket shall be entitled to present one B/R before any school presents **additional items**. Other chambers' legislation and supplemental items shall be considered last.
- (e) Chamber assignments and seating charts shall be published on Tabroom and/or the FGCCFL site 24 hours after the close of registration, or as soon as practicable.

§ 24 Small Division Procedures

If there are **twenty** or fewer participants in Congress, no Super Congress shall be required. Chambers shall convene following the procedures in § 20 of this manual, and the event shall be tabulated following the procedures in § 21 to produce a ranked list of qualifiers and alternates.

§ 25 Preliminary Session Procedures

- (a) Each chamber shall convene for Preliminary Business before the start of Session 1. Attendance shall be taken, and the Parliamentarian shall lead the chamber in finalizing its calendar and electing its PO. The calendar order shall be sent to the Tab Room before floor debate may begin.
- (b) Each chamber shall convene for **three** sessions, each of which shall consist of **90 minutes** to be used for the PO election, floor debate, and special orders. **The chamber shall recess at the end of each session except the last; all other recesses should be considered dilatory in the absence of extenuating circumstances.** No item of legislation shall be debated for longer than 45 minutes.
- (c) The chamber **may** consider modifications to the calendar at the start of each session. Such modifications are a *suspension of the rules* and require a second and a two-thirds vote of those **present**. Once the PO calls for a speaker, modifications to the calendar are *out of order* for the rest of the session.
- (d) At the end of Session **3**, or when the chamber has voted on all preliminary session B/R, whichever comes first, the chamber shall adjourn *sine die*.

§ 26 Preliminary Session Scoring and Tabulation

- (a) Each chamber shall have **two Scorers** per session, who shall evaluate all speeches and the Presiding Officer. Each chamber shall additionally be assigned a Parliamentarian, who will critique

all three Presiding Officers and advise the chamber on matters of procedure. The Parliamentarian generally will not intervene in procedural matters, but they should do so at the PO's request or if a major error has been made that adversely affects the session. Rulings made in the chamber **will not** be overturned by the Tournament Coordinator unless clearly erroneous.

(b) Scorers will score each speech on a scale from 1 (unacceptable) to 6 (exemplary) and shall score the Presiding Officer on the same scale. These scores may be averaged and recorded as NSDA merit points. *However, points are not a factor in determining Super Congress participants.*

(c) At the end of the session, each Scorer will select and rank the eight (8) legislators they believe contributed the most to the session. At the end of the day, the Parliamentarian will rank **all** the legislators in the chamber. These are to be holistic assessments, and Scorers will be advised that they should not simply nominate the students who earned the most points. The Presiding Officer **is eligible** for selection, and officials will be admonished to consider her. Officials may rank students from their school in any position. Students not ranked by a Scorer will be given a rank of 9.

(d) Finishing order in each chamber will be determined by low total ranks (with the Parliamentarian's ranks capped at 9), then judge preference, then high total reciprocals, then low total ranks with the best and worst rank excluded, then the Parliamentarian's preference. The top twelve (if there is one preliminary chamber), six (if there are two), or four (if there are three) legislators in each chamber will advance to the Super Congress.

§ 27 Super Congress Procedures and National Qualifying

(a) The Super Congress shall operate as a Senate. The Super Congress shall convene for one session of 2 hours and 15 minutes. The chamber shall recess for 5-10 minutes after one hour of floor debate to facilitate a change in Presiding Officers; all other recesses should be considered dilatory in the absence of extenuating circumstances.

(b) Legislation for the Super Congress shall be drafted and/or curated by the Congress Coordinator and shall be included with the docket. The chamber's calendar shall be set by the chamber. No item of legislation shall be debated for longer than 30 minutes.

(c) The chamber shall elect two Presiding Officers by secret ballot at the start of the Super Congress. The winner of the first election may choose whether to preside over the first or the second hour. Service as Presiding Officer counts as one speech (recorded at the beginning of PO service) for purposes of scoring and priority. Both Presiding Officers will receive gavels.

(d) The Super Congress will have three Scorers and a Parliamentarian. All officials will rank all legislators in the chamber, including the Presiding Officers. The finishing order for qualifiers and alternates will be determined by low adjusted total ranks (with ranks capped at 9), judge preference (with ranks capped at 9), and finally cumulative Parliamentarians' preference (with prelim ranks truncated to the size of the smallest chamber). The top six finishers will be national qualifiers; the seventh and eighth will be first and second alternates respectively.

Sample Bill

**NOTE: Use of the FGCCFL legislation template is required.
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REPRODUCE THIS FORMAT IN A BLANK DOCUMENT.**

A Bill to Require Immediate Disclosure of Campaign Contributions

1 BE IT ENACTED BY THE STUDENT CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

2 **SECTION 1.** Political committees shall be required to report and publish all contributions received to
3 the Federal Election Commission within 72 hours of receipt.

4 **SECTION 2.** A. As used herein, “political committees” shall include all political action committees,
5 campaign committees, joint fundraising committees, and any other type of organization
6 currently in existence or created in the future whose purpose is to influence the outcome
7 of a congressional or presidential election.

8 B. The form and method of reporting and publication shall be determined by the Federal
9 Election Commission, but said report must include, at minimum, the value of the
10 contribution and the donor’s name and address.

11 **SECTION 3.** A. The Federal Election Commission shall be responsible for enforcing the provisions of
12 this bill.

13 B. Failure to disclose a contribution within 72 hours of receipt shall be punishable by a
14 fine of three times the amount of the undisclosed contribution.

15 **SECTION 4.** The provisions of this bill shall take effect 180 days after passage.

16 **SECTION 5.** All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.

Respectfully submitted,

*Josh Schneider
Pine Meadow High School*

Sample Resolution

**NOTE: Use of the FGCCFL legislation template is required.
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REPRODUCE THIS FORMAT IN A BLANK DOCUMENT.**

A Resolution to Abolish the Debt Ceiling

1 **WHEREAS,** The United States is the only developed nation that imposes an arbitrary borrowing limit
2 on itself; and

3 **WHEREAS,** The nature of the debt ceiling makes it possible for one faction in the Congress to hold
4 the rest of the government hostage; and

5 **WHEREAS,** The debt ceiling conflicts with federal spending bills, creating the potential for recurring
6 crises; and

7 **WHEREAS,** The absence of a debt ceiling would not result in a debt crisis, as is obvious from the low
8 yields on U.S. Treasury securities; now, therefore, be it

9 **RESOLVED,** That the Student Congress here assembled calls for the federal debt ceiling to be
10 abolished; and be it

11 **FURTHER RESOLVED,** that any borrowing necessary to execute spending legislation adopted by the
12 Congress be deemed authorized upon passage of such legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sandy Grenner
Mercer Academy*

Sample Constitutional Amendment

**NOTE: Use of the FGCCFL legislation template is required.
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REPRODUCE THIS FORMAT IN A BLANK DOCUMENT.**

A Resolution to Propose a Constitutional Amendment to Protect the Right to Vote

1 **WHEREAS,** It is axiomatic that a republican form of government demands zealous protection of the
2 people's right to choose who exercises power on their behalf; and

3 **WHEREAS,** The right to vote, while presumed by the Constitution, is not explicitly protected except
4 with respect to race, sex, and age; and

5 **WHEREAS,** Public officials have imposed arbitrary and often discriminatory restrictions on the right
6 to vote; now, therefore, be it

7 **RESOLVED,** By two-thirds of the Congress here assembled, that the following article is proposed as an
8 amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and
9 purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by conventions in three-fourths of the
10 several states within seven years from the date of its submission by the Congress:

11 **ARTICLE --.**

12 SECTION 1: The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age
13 or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or
14 by any State.

15 SECTION 2: The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate
16 legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

*Adrian Kanat
Southgranite High School*

List of Suspect Legislation Topics

This is NOT a list of prohibited topics.

*It IS an admonition to **be careful, thoughtful, and creative.***

It has been the experience of the League that legislation on the topics below tends to lead to debate of poor quality and/or frequent use of canned speeches, so legislation on these topics will be held to a higher standard of timeliness, significance, and originality.

- Legalize marijuana
- Legalize euthanasia/medically assisted dying
- Legalize prostitution/sex work
- Ban firearms/handguns
- Ban/protect abortion
- Ban/protect contraception
- Ban/protect same-sex marriage
- Ban animal testing
- Abolish capital punishment
- Abolish the Electoral College
- Abolish birthright citizenship
- Eliminate the penny
- Replace dollar bill with coin
- Raise/lower voting age
- Raise/lower drinking age
- Change school start times (or similar)
- Abolish standardized testing
- Provide aid to a specific foreign country

Table of Parliamentary Motions

Class	Name of Motion	Purpose	Interrupt	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Privileged	18. Fix time for reassembling	To arrange the time of next meeting	Yes	Yes	Time	Time	Majority
	17. Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	No	Yes	No	Time	Majority
	16. Recess	To dismiss the meeting briefly	No	Yes	Yes	Time	Majority
	15. Point of personal privilege	To make a personal request during debate	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
	14. Call for the orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed item	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
Incidental	13g. Appeal	To reverse the Presiding Officer's ruling	Yes	Yes	No	No	Maj. neg.
	13f. Point of order	To correct a procedural error	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
	13e. Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	Yes	Yes	No	No	None
	13d. Object to consideration	To completely suppress action	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 neg.
	13c. Divide a motion	To consider a motion's parts separately	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
	13b. Modify/withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a pending motion	No	No	No	No	Majority
	13a. Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Subsidiary	12. Rescind	To repeal previous action	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3
	11. Reconsider	To consider a defeated motion again	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	10. Take from the table	To consider a tabled motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	9. Lay on the table	To defer action	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	8. Previous question	To close debate and vote immediately	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
	7. Limit or extend the limits of debate	To modify freedom of debate	No	Yes	No	Time	2/3
	6. Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Time	Majority
	5. Refer to committee	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	4. Amend an amendment	To modify an amendment	No	1/3	Yes	No	Majority
	3. Amend	To modify a motion	No	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority
Main	2. Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	1. Main motion (B/R)	To introduce business	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Notes

- The shaded motions are generally not applicable to Student Congress and are included for historical reasons.
- The incidental motions have no order of precedence among themselves (that's why they're all numbered 13).
- Legislation placed on the calendar is presumed to have been moved and seconded.
- Consult this manual and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (12th ed.) for detailed rules of procedure.

Amendment Form (use of this form is recommended but not required)

AMENDMENT AUTHOR (name and school)	
B/R to be amended (number and/or title)	Line #s amendment will affect
Text of Amendment (mark x one space below and write in the text to be stricken, added, or changed.) <i>An amendment must be germane to the legislation and may not alter its intent.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strike out (existing text) <input type="checkbox"/> Insert (new text) (circle one) before / after (existing text)	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute (new text) for (existing text) <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute the attached item for the B/R (MUST be germane!)

PARLIAMENTARIAN – Is the amendment approved for consideration?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Give this amendment form to the PO when the motion to amend has been made.	<input type="checkbox"/> No. Explain any deficiencies below and return to the author.

PRESIDING OFFICER – Is the amendment adopted?	
Second. 1/3 of members <i>present</i> (excluding PO) must vote to second the amendment: # present 7-9 10-12 13-15 16-18 19-20 # required 3 4 5 6 7 # seconds received _____ Debate, if any, begins with a regular affirmative. There are no questioning periods.	Vote. A simple majority is needed to adopt an amendment. <i>Take a recorded vote.</i> # ayes _____ # noes _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other disposition , e.g., tabled— <i>explain</i> :