

Maine Forensic Association
Congressional Debate Manual
2011-2012

2010-2011 Maine Forensic Association Congressional Debate Manual

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An Overview of Congressional Debate

Congressional Debate is a Maine Forensic Association (MFA) and National Forensic League (NFL) sanctioned oratorical event in which students serve as legislators (either “senators” or “representatives”) and debate current issues facing the United States. Representative of the United States Congress, legislators learn how to research, debate, and use parliamentary procedure in order to affect positive change at the grassroots level and understand the political process and its inner workings. By participating in this event, students also become educated as to the process by which bills and resolutions become a law. Every session, legislators are presented with a new “docket,” or listing of bills and resolutions to be considered for passage.

Participating in Congressional Debate

Similar to the United States Congress, Congressional Debate participants are subdivided into two categories: Senators and Representatives. Designation is based upon experience as well as registration in the event. In the Senate, each participating school may register no more than two (2) students for any competition. All remaining participants should be registered in the House of Representatives, where there is no cap on the amount of students registered per school. For consideration as an NFL sanctioned event, at least four (4) schools must participate in the event. Students may qualify for the NFL National Tournament each year.

Changes in the 2011-2012 Debate Year

- Each Congressional Debate tournament will now feature two sessions each that are three hours long. This conforms to the NFL’s new six-hour requirement for consideration as a sanctioned event; the six hour minimum is **not** inclusive of elections and recesses.
- In an effort to expand the debate community, the Maine Forensic Association has invited elected and appointed state and municipal officials to serve as distinguished judges for one session of Congressional Debate during the season.
- Voting is no longer based solely on the cumulative total of speeches given. Rather, judges should preferentially rank their top eight (8) legislators based on participation, speech quality and content, and decorum at the end of each session. The parliamentarian will rank all legislators in the chamber only once, at the end of the second (final) session.
- A legislator may no longer nominate himself or herself to audition for the office of Presiding Officer. Note: certain regulations concerning the eligibility of candidates in Presiding Officer elections have been chosen – see Voting Procedures and Guidelines: Session One and Voting Procedures and Guidelines: Session Two.

Bills, Resolutions, and Amendments

The following table represents the basic similarities and differences between bills, resolutions, and Constitutional amendments. For more information, see the NFL Congressional Debate Manual at www.nflonline.org.

Type of Legislation	Purpose	Format (see pgs. 3-5)
Bill	<p>Mandate a certain action (or inaction) by passage; amend/change an existing law; or fulfill another specific duty.</p> <p>. A bill is made up of several statements that have the power of law. When debating a bill, current law should be taken into consideration. Format of a bill has the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A title b. Clause indicating who is debating it c. A series of statements that create/outline the intricacies of the law to be passed. d. Finished with the author’s name. e. It needs to be submitted typed <p>2. According to the NFL Manual, a bill must be “an enumeration of specific provisions, which if enacted must be very specific about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> α. What is to be done β. How it will be done χ. Who will be responsible for carrying out or enforcing the law δ. Penalties for non-compliance ε. Sources of funding φ. The date(s) various provisions of the law will take effect <p>3. Limit the bill to specific provisions. Do not include argumentation in the bill (save that for speeches). “Whereas clauses” should not appear in bills.</p> <p>4. Bills must have a short descriptive title.</p> <p>5. When sending your Bills to your coach you must identify the author of the bill, the author’s phone number or email address, and the date of the Congress for which the bill is being submitted</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>Enacting Clause</p> <p>Supporting Sections</p> <p>“Null and Void” Clause</p> <p>Submission Clause</p>
Resolution	<p>Support or condemn a certain action (or inaction) without the force of law; or state the general opinion of the Congress.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are usually generalized statements expressing the belief of the group adopting them, and they do not have the force of law. A resolution is the government going on record stating that something should be done about the problem. 2. Resolutions have the same requirements as bills with the following exceptions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Resolutions begin: “Be it resolved by the Student Congress here assembled that...” b. Resolutions may include whereas clauses. Whereas clauses provide the principle for adopting the resolution 	<p>Title</p> <p>“Whereas” Clauses</p> <p>Resolved Clause(s)</p> <p>Further Resolved Clause*</p> <p>Submission Clause</p>
Constitutional Amendment	<p>Amend an amendment; add a Constitutional amendment; or repeal a constitutional amendment.</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>“Whereas” Clause(s)*</p> <p>Amendment Clause</p> <p>Submission Clause</p>

Writing Legislation

Most legislation should concern issues over which Congress would have jurisdiction. When writing a bill, one must know that it (a bill) establishes details behind how a particular law must work, including when it takes effect, how much tax levy would be appropriate (if applicable), how infractions/violations will be

dealt with, etc. A bill may answer who, what, when, where, and how – but it will never answer “why.” Legislators explain rationale behind bills in their speeches, and how a bill attempts to effectuate its changes can spark deeper, more meaningful debate.

Since bills attempt to solve problems faced by our country, brainstorming in the area of domestic or international issues is a good place to start. Students should be mindful of how controversial an issue is. For example, how likely students would oppose a bill to assist orphaned children in Darfur? Frequently, arguments over bills stem from the amount of funding. Since, according to the economizing problem, there are unlimited wants and limited resources, funding projects often comes down to whether one item should be prioritized over another.

Next, make sure that the legislation concerns an issue over which Congress has jurisdiction. Since the Executive Branch runs most of the agencies that enforce federal laws, understanding the role of said agencies helps; for more information, visit www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/Executive.shtml. Note: while foreign affairs often fall under the jurisdiction of the Executive Branch, funding effort such as USAID can have an impact on the success or failure of United States involvement in other countries, and therefore, can be framed as a bill, along with treaties. (However, it is important to remember that treaties may only be proposed in the Senate.) Inspiration for legislative ideas can be found at Thomas.loc.gov.

Writing an effective bill or resolution involves more time and research than researching a piece of legislation written by a fellow competitor. When writing legislation, one must ask himself/herself what the legislation does, who is involved (government agencies), where it happens, whether it is feasible to enact, how much time is needed for implementation, and how it should be carried out (a plan of action). All of these questions must be answered in writing the sections of the bill, with thoughtful consideration as to how thoroughly each section explains its plank of implementing the overall bill’s plan of action.

Unlike bills, resolutions are simply position statements on issues congress does not have jurisdiction over. Resolutions lack the force of law, and never establish enforcement. Note: Constitutional amendments should be submitted in a special resolution format.

Attacking and Defending Legislation

- Structure your speech in five-paragraph essay format. This includes an introduction, body and conclusion. (It is not, however, necessary to prepare a full speech).
- Analysis:
 - Will the legislation solve the problem it was intended to solve?
 - Does the cost-benefit analysis show that the costs outweigh the benefits?
 - Is the premise of the legislation based on flawed or incorrect data? (If so, be able to present evidence to the contrary.)
 - Is it possible to implement the legislation?
 - Would the United States congress actually consider this piece of legislation?

Example A: A Bill to Partially De-Fund the National Aeronautics and Space Administration

1. BE IN ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:
2. **SECTION 1.** The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (hereinafter
3. “NASA”) budget for space exploration shall be cut by 50 percent.
4. **SECTION 2.** A) NASA’s budget for the current fiscal year shall not be effected
5. by the passage of this bill.

6. B) Only programs related to NASA's space exploration divisions
7. shall receive funding cuts.
8. **SECTION 3.** NASA shall oversee the implementation of this legislation.
9. **SECTION 4.** All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null
10. and void.

Introduced by (author's initials), Maine District

Example B: Resolution to Decrease Congressional Salaries

1. **WHEREAS**, United States Congresspersons receive exorbitant compensation packages; and
2. **WHEREAS**, the United States debt is spiraling out of control to the point of total economic
3. meltdown; and
4. **WHEREAS**, the United States Congress and its members should set an example of fiscal
5. responsibility; now, therefore, be it
6. **RESOLVED**, that the United States Congress here assembled recommend the passage of
7. legislation aimed at halving current congressional salaries.

Introduced by (author's initials), Maine District

Example C: Resolution Amending the 2nd Amendment

1. **WHEREAS**, the second amendment to the United States Constitution can be incorrectly
2. interpreted because of its vagueness; and
3. **WHEREAS**, in order to ensure the right to bear arms is protected under the Constitution;
4. now, therefore, be it
5. **RESOLVED**, That upon approval of two thirds of this United States Congress here
6. assembled, the following Constitutional Amendment be sent to the

7. legislatures for state approval:
8. **SECTION 1:** The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution shall henceforth
9. read, “A
10. well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, it shall
11. be the
12. right of every non-felony convicted United States citizen to carry arms for
13. the purposes of protection, sport, or collection.”
14. **SECTION 2:** The ratification of this amendment would replace the current text of the
15. second amendment, which reads, “A well regulated Militia, being necessary
16. to the security a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms,
17. shall not be infringed.”
18. **SECTION 3:** This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as a
19. Constitutional amendment by the legislatures of three fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the
20. several states within seven (7) years from the date of its submission to the
21. States by Congress.

Introduced by: (author’s initials), Maine District

The Docket and Its Guidelines

- Appropriate topics exhibit seriousness of purpose.
- The action proposed should be feasible, and such an action that Congress might debate.
- Topics should be debatable, meaning substantive argumentation should exist on both sides.
- Legislation should be typed and double-spaced with line numbers, 12 point, Times new Roman font and one inch margins, **not exceeding one page**.
- Capitalizing the words “WHEREAS” and “RESOLVED” in resolutions, and “SECTION” in bills, as well as inverse-indenting each clause or section helps to distinguish between ideas and concepts. (The samples above show proper formatting.)
- Items considered for debate at a given tournament **must be e-mailed to Mrs. Aurelie Bush**, the Congressional Debate moderator, **at least ten (10) days prior the tournament** at edbush1@gmail.com.
- Bills **must be submitted by coaches only**. Student submissions will not be accepted.
- Typically twelve (12) to twenty-five (25) pieces of legislation are featured on any given docket; however, at the beginning of each session, a chamber rearranges to legislation to form a new docket except for States and National Qualifiers; the Moderator prior to

distribution will set the docket for those tournaments. Note: the docket for the National Catholic Forensic League National Qualifying Tournament will be rearranged in chambers.

- Prior to the convening of each session, each body (House or Senate) will rearrange the legislation in an order conducive to “cyclical” debate. Items with authors present will have precedence when setting the docket for the session. Following authorships, other legislation may be added to the docket. The Moderator will set the docket prior to its publication for the Maine State and NFL Nation Qualifying Tournaments.
- Only one student may give an authorship speech per house on a given piece of legislation. All other affirmative speeches are considered “sponsorship” speeches. In the event that there is not author present, the first affirmative speech is known as the first sponsorship speech.
- One set, the docket can be amended (see “Procedures and Motions”).
- The docket for each tournament will be established with input from the Congressional Debate coaches and students, except for the Maine State and National Qualifying Tournaments, whose dockets the Moderator will establish. The moderator will accept input up until the day on which legislation is due. The docket will be posted no later than the Monday before each meet on the Maine Forensic Association’s website, www.maine forensic.com; in addition, the docket will be emailed to all coaches.
- Bills technically receive preference over resolutions when a docket is established; however, this rule may be disregarded if no bills have been submitted. The order of the docket per chamber will be set up as follows:
 - Bills written by students in each chamber will be placed first on the docket. (Remember, chambers determine the order based on these guidelines, except for at the Maine State and National Qualifying Tournaments.) For example, if three people have written a bill in a chamber, then the members can determine the order of those three, showing deference to the fact that the three bills must be considered prior to any other item(s).
 - Resolutions (including amendments to the Constitution) that students sitting in the chamber have authored should receive placement following all authored bills.
 - After all authored legislation received placement on the docket, legislation without an author may receive placement.

Procedures and Motions

1. The parliamentarian convenes the session.
2. The parliamentarian conducts nominations for Presiding Officer. Note: no more than four (4) legislators may be nominated to serve as Presiding Officer; each nomination must be seconded.
3. Presiding Officer Candidate 1 begins by recording attendance, delivers any introductory comments, and states his/her procedures, requests, and admonitions to the chamber.
4. Oath of Office (see below).
5. Chamber sets the docket for the legislative session.
6. Debate begins with an authorship (or sponsorship) speech followed by a first negative speech.
7. Cyclical debate continues on each piece of legislation that is to be debated in the given session.
8. Debate continues until a motion for a recess or required break for lunch (around noon or 12:30p).
9. Session recesses for lunch, typically forty-five (45) minutes in length.

10. Session reconvenes and debate continues until required stoppage point.

11. Session adjourns for the day and the tournament.

Procedures and Motions

Motion	Notes	Second Required?	Votes Required
Table a bill	Ends debate on a bill, tabling it until un-tabled by a reverse motion.	Yes	Simple Majority
Un-table a bill	Reopen debate on a previously tabled motion.	Yes	Simple Majority
Call the previous question	End debate and proceed immediately to voting. This motion is not debatable.	Yes	2/3
Recess	Adjourns session for a specified amount of time.	Yes	Simple Majority
Adjourn	Adjourns session at to end a tournament.	Yes	Simple Majority
Rise to a point of personal privilege	Correct a parliamentary error, clarify an action, or leave the chamber.	No	Decision of the Chair
Call for a "Division of the Chamber"	Verification by standing vote. (Note: may only be called for after a voice vote has been taken.)	No	Decision of the Chair
Modify or withdraw a motion	Amend or rescind an un-seconded motion.	Yes	2/3
Suspend the rules	Set the docket or lengthen the questioning period.	Yes	Simple Majority
Appeal the decision of the Chair	Force the Chair to entertain a motion deemed "dilatatory".	Yes	2/3
Call for a "Roll Call Vote"	Voice voting by each member of Congress.	Yes	Simple Majority
Suspend the rules to set the docket	Suspend the rules and set the docket.	Yes	Simple Majority
Reinstate the rules	Reinstate the rules.	Yes	Simple Majority
Reconvene	Restart the session.	Yes	Simple Majority
Rescind a previous action	Rescind a previous action.	Yes	2/3

*The Presiding Officer reserves the right to rule certain actions dilatatory.

Presiding Officer Guidelines

- The Presiding Officer (hereinafter "P.O.") should adhere to the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* when running the chamber.
- As P.O., one is responsible for the general well being of the Congress and is charged with efficiently running the chamber to facilitate fluid and continuous debate.
- The P.O. keeps the official precedence and recency table. Note: while legislators may create their own table, the official table used to mediate any disputes is the table kept by the Presiding Officer; there are **no exceptions** to this rule.
- The P.O. shall be elected by greater than one half (½) of his/her chamber.
- The P.O. shall begin the session by calling it to order.
- Seat legislators using the pre-approved seating chart provided by the parliamentarian.
- State the policies of the P.O., the procedures, and the schedule of the day.
- State gaveling procedure. Note: standard NFL procedures call for one (1) tap at one minute remaining, two (2) taps at thirty seconds remaining, and three (3) taps at five seconds

remaining; after a ten (10) second grace period, state that you shall commence gaveling down the speak.

- Administer the Oath of Office, which reads, **“I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, 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.”**
- Begin the session by requesting a motion from the chamber (the motion should be to suspend the rules and set the docket).
- Arrange the docket, first recognizing the legislation whose author is present, followed by legislation being sponsored by a legislator. When setting the docket, fairly and equitably call upon members of the chamber who wish to add legislation to the docket.
- Ask for a motion to reinstate the rules and proceed to the first item on the docket.
- When recognizing speakers, use the third person. **For example:** “The chair recognizes Senator Bush for a period of three minutes followed by a mandatory two minute questioning period.” Following the speech, the P.O. should announce the time of the speech to the chamber. Then, the P.O. should ask legislators to stand to be recognized for questions. S/he should begin to recognize questioners equitably, based upon recency, activity, and geography.
- The P.O. may gesture for questioners to sit down when it is apparent time is running out. After the speaker has answered the question, he/she should inform the questioners that the questioning period has expired (and that the speaker may be seated).
 - Note: the P.O. may reserve the right to absorb negligible time (e.g. four seconds remaining).
- Next, ask for opposition speakers to rise. Call on a speaker, using precedence and recency to promote equity. It is appropriate to first recognize speakers who have consecutively sought to speak earliest.
- When calling on the last person seeking recognition to speak on a bill/resolution, it is appropriate to inform the chamber that since the last senator/representative who wishes to speak on this issue is preparing to speak, if no one objects following his/her speech, the chamber will move to the immediate previous question following his/her speech. This way, a separate vote to call “previous questions” is unnecessary.
 - Note: any objection must be raised prior to the speech and must be orally communicated.
- When moving to the previous question, first ask legislators to rise in support of the legislation. Next, ask those in opposition. Finally, ask those who have chosen to abstain.
 - Note: when voting on main motions (i.e. legislation), a voice vote may **not** occur.
- Legislation should be considered in the order established on the docket, unless it has been placed “on the table.” Tabling should only be done to allow a legislator time to construct a speech to continue two-sided debate, or introduce new information. (It should **not** be abused to allow another legislator an earlier opportunity to get to a later item considered by the Congress.)
- Time and prudence is spent by the entire chamber to set a fair and balanced agenda that provides everyone with an equal opportunity to debate authored legislation. Attempts to circumvent this should not be allowed.
- Use of the motion for previous question should generally be discouraged, particularly when legislators have something new to contribute to discussion.
- When debate or discussion becomes repetitive, the P.O. should allow the previous question without reservation; when debate becomes one-sided, the previous question may be considered immediately, and should be encouraged.

- After a lunch/recess, the P.O. should call the chamber to order and proceed with a motion to reconvene.

Voting Procedures and Guidelines: First Session

- No candidate for the Office of Presiding Officer may be self-nominated; however, he/she may provide the second for his/her nomination.
- Each nominee is given the opportunity to address the chamber for a period of 30 seconds. The speeches follow the required half-hour trial session (if applicable) for each nominee.
- No more than four (4) competitors may be nominated to run for the Office of Presiding Officer.
- Following the trial period (if applicable), the Chamber should move immediately into voting, which is conducted by the parliamentarian.
- Using secret ballots, each legislator should vote for one of the candidates for the Office of Presiding Officer, only using the last name of the candidate.
- Students vote by paper for **one** nominee at a time. After each vote conducted, unless **one** candidate has received a **majority** of the votes cast, the following procedure **must** be followed:
 1. Separate the ballots into piles by candidate. Void ballots not containing names of candidates, or containing more than one name.
 2. The one candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped.
 3. If the **combined votes** of the **two lowest** candidates do **not equal** all votes of the **next** lowest candidate, **both** are eliminated.
 4. If a tie exists for the lowest candidates and their total votes **exceeds** those of the candidate above them, have the chamber vote for the tied candidates (called a run – off election). If the chamber is still tied, keep voting.
 5. If after casting five votes, the chamber still cannot break a tie; have the parliamentarian complete a preferential ballot, ranking all candidates nominated at the beginning of the election.
 6. A single ballot election can only determine one winner at a time. If subsequent places need to be determined, a new election process must begin, considering the remaining candidates. (Otherwise, their vote for majority is skewed because of the earlier winner's share in the previous election.)

Voting Procedures and Guidelines: Second Session

- At the beginning of the second session, the chamber should vote on the remaining candidates for Presiding Officer.
- Note: if only two candidates are in the election, an election **must** still occur.
- If more than one candidate remains, then the chamber must choose from among the remaining candidates.
 - Note: only when there is one other candidate (for a total of two – one competitor and the incumbent Presiding Officer) may the Presiding Officer of the first session be reelected to serve in the same capacity for the second session. Only under extreme circumstances may the Congressional Debate Moderator reserve the right to temporarily suspend the above rules (the first two bullets of Voting Procedures and Guidelines: Second Session only).

Voting Procedures for Legislation

- Following the last negation speaker, the Presiding Officer will proceed to the voting phase of the motion/legislation consideration.
- Voting on legislation may be done by roll call voting or standing voting.
- Roll call voting, standing voting, or “division of the chamber” voting may do voting on motions.
 - Note: each legislator may only cast one (1) vote.
- Legislators vote in affirmation or negation, or abstain from voting on a motion or a piece of legislation.
- Legislators not present when voting occurs should be counted as abstention votes.
 - Note: abstention votes count as votes in negation for tallying purposes.

Amendment Procedures

The following procedures **must** be followed in order to move to amend a piece of legislation:

1. To amend legislation, a legislator must wait until a natural break in debate (i.e. the time between two speeches). Then, he/she should move to amend the legislation.
2. The parliamentarian will receive the amendment and recommend whether the amendment is **germane** (the original intent of the legislation remains unchanged even with the amendment).
3. Otherwise, it is considered **dilatory**.
 - Note: the title of the legislation may be changed and a dilatory designation may **not** be appealed.
4. A legislator can only move to amend between floor speeches. Once that motion is made and ruled germane, the P.O. will read the proposed amendment aloud and call for a second by one-third of those members present.
5. Should legislators wish to speak on the proposed amendment, the P. O. will recognize each legislator as per standing precedence in the chamber, noting that each speech will **count** towards precedence/recency.
6. Simply proposing an amendment does **not** guarantee an authorship speech; further, any speeches on amendments are followed by the normal one (1) minute of questioning.
7. Note: Amendments are considered neutral and do not constitute an affirmative or negative speech on the original legislation.
8. If there are no speakers or the previous question is moved, the chamber may vote on a proposed amendment without debate.

Submission of Legislation

- All legislation **must** be submitted in **NFL format**. Any legislation submitted in an incorrect format will be rejected from consideration.
- It is expected that each participating school will submit at least **one** (1) item of legislation for consideration each tournament. It is strongly suggested, though, that each school submits more than one piece of legislation for consideration.
- In the event of an insufficient amount of new legislation, it is the prerogative of the Congressional Debate Moderator to add older, previously debated legislation to the docket.
 - Note: once authored legislation has appeared on a docket, it becomes the sole property of the Maine Forensic Association and cannot be resubmitted for consideration by a team at a future tournament.

- Only one (1) authorship speech may be given on a piece of legislation in each house. That is, a piece of legislation may only have an authorship speech **once**.
 - Note: if the legislation appears on a future docket, the first affirmative will be considered a **sponsorship** speech.
- Submitting previously submitted legislation is **prohibited**. To submit legislation identical to that of previously debated legislation, there must have been **significant** changes made.
 - Note: the Congressional Debate Moderator shall determine whether or not said burden shall have been met.
- If submitting a bill authored by a school in a different NFL district (i.e. Idaho Gem of the Mountain District), then one must denote the legislation's origin and will be guaranteed the **first sponsorship speech** (it will not be considered an authorship).

Questioning the Speaker in Congressional Debate

- Authorship, first affirmative sponsorship, and first negative speeches are followed by a mandatory two (2) minute cross-examination period. All subsequent speeches shall be followed by a one (1) minute cross-examination period.
- All speakers receive up to three (3) minutes (not inclusive of the grace period) to present their arguments.
- If a speaker does not use his/her fully allotted time, he/she may either add the remaining time to the questioning period or give it to the Presiding Officer.
- Compound questions are strictly prohibited in order to facilitate fluid debate. Any compound question should be ruled as such by the P.O.
- If a negligible amount of time remains (i.e. 5 seconds remain), the P.O. may "absorb" the remainder of time in accordance with the interests of the chamber.
- To question, a legislator must rise and wait to be recognized by the P.O.
- Questions should be interrogative in nature.
 - Note: clarification questions are permissible, but most "yes/no" questions should not be asked.
- Ask relevant questions. Judges are encouraged to keep a running tally as to relevant questions asked by each legislator.
- Judges consider the responses to questions when determining the overall score of the speaker. Responses to questions may negatively impact a speaker's score.
- The speaker may ask the P.O. to ask the questioner to rephrase a question; however, this request should not be used in order to attempt evade answering a question.
- Suspending the rules to yield to a two-part question is strictly prohibited.
- Questions asked should only pertain to the speaker's speech. Do **not** present contradictory evidence in a question; that information should be saved for speeches.
- When more than one speaker seeks the floor, the P.O. must follow the precedence/recency method. First, he/she should recognize legislators who have not spoken during the session, then those who have spoken fewer times, then those who have spoken least recently.

Judging Requirements for Congressional Debate

- For every **five** (5) competitors, **one** (1) judge **or** parliamentarian must be provided.
- Judges provided **should be** unaffiliated; it is expected that judges disclose any potential conflicts of interest to the tab room staff and moderator prior to their designation to a certain chamber. Note the moderator and tab room staff reserve the right to assign judges to each chamber.

- Judges are expected to rank students on the preferential ballot **holistically**. Overall scores should **not** be the sole factor in determining the first, second, third, etc. place competitors.
- The Maine Forensic Association or the host school may penalize schools registered in Congressional Debate who do not fulfill their judging requirements.

Scoring

Per NFL rules, two methods may be used to determine placement in a chamber: judge score (cumulative) or judge selection. Either method is acceptable; however, judge score (cumulative) is preferred, as it more closely resembles the process employed at the NFL National Tournament.

- **Judge Score (Cumulative):** the Moderator inputs the scores each competitor received from
- each judge by using:
 - One day Congress *or* final session: sum of each student’s three (3) highest scores.

Example of Total Cumulative Scoring in a One-Day Congress

Speaker X gave 4 speeches and was scored the following by the judges:

	Speech 1	Speech 2	Speech 3	Speech 4
Judge A	4	6	8	4
Judge B	5	6	7	4
Judge C	4	7	7	8
Cumulative Total	13	19	22	16

Speaker X’s total score is 57, which represents the cumulative total of the 3 highest cumulative scores of three of the four speeches presented (19, 22, and 16). The cumulative score on speech number one was 13, and is thrown out as it is the lowest cumulative score and is not one of the three highest. **Maine for this debate year will be using the judge score cumulative scoring. If there are only two judges in the chamber the Parliamentarian will also score each student for each speech except for National Qualifiers. If there are three judges in the chamber than the Parliamentarian will not score each speech.**

- **Judge Selection Only:** the Moderator will present to the judges a list of the top eight competitors in each chamber. Each judge will rank the slate of nominees from one to eight with the ranking of one reserved for the judge’s most outstanding legislator. The total ranks of the three judges will be added to determine the placement of the finalists. Ties will be broken in the following order:
 - Judge’s preference of the converted ranks and reciprocals;
 - The judges’ preference using the actual ranks; and
 - Parliamentarian’s ranking.

Clashing in Congressional Debate

- To create debate, it is important that legislators **clash** during the questioning period and in speeches.
- Clashing is the juxtaposition of evidence contrary to that previously presented that analyzes why one piece of evidence is empirical to another piece of evidence.
- Legislators should leave a certain amount of time to address arguments made by the opposing side. However, the majority of a speech should not be devoted to clashing.

- Successful clashing does not simply present contradictory evidence that is well juxtaposed against the previously presented evidence. Additionally, it analyzes the empirical nature of certain evidence over other evidence
- Judges should consider clashing when scoring a speech given by a legislator; however, it is not the job of the author or the first affirmative (sponsorship) speech to clash; however, the authorship or first affirmative (sponsorship) speech should set the stage for a clash during cyclical debate.
- It is impossible to address all evidence and claims offered by the opposing legislators. While it is not the burden of a legislator to address all claims offered by the opposition, he/she should attempt to address as many as possible by grouping the arguments.

Miscellaneous

- The use of visual aids is permitted in the chamber during the session; however, said aids must **not** require electronic retrieval devices, such as a projector or laptop computer.
- All evidence used is subject to verification. The falsification or deliberate misuse of evidence is strictly prohibited and will be prosecuted by tournament officials accordingly.
- All electronic devices **must** remain off at all times during the legislative session. Texting or using a cellular phone is strictly prohibited during a session. Traditional timing devices (i.e. stopwatches, watches, etc.) are permitted.
 - Note: with permission, the Presiding Officer may use a nontraditional timing device.
- The Presiding Officer receives between one to six points per hour; each legislator receives a score from one to six points per speech. The one to six point scales will be used at all tournaments **excluding** the National Forensic League National Qualifying Tournament, which uses a one to eight point scale. At the National Forensic League National Qualifying Tournament, the Presiding Officer will receive four to eight points per hour. Also, at all tournaments **excluding** National Qualifiers, the maximum number of points one can receive is twenty-four (24). **Judges should score all speeches given. The Parliamentarian will also score the Presiding Officer if there are only two judges in the chamber. If there are three judges than the Parliamentarian will not score.**
- At each tournament, a legislator may speak as many times he/she wants; each speech given counts for precedence and recency, including speeches on amendments.
- No more than two legislators can receive the same score (i.e. Senators Bush and Lapoint can receive 24 points but Senators Fiske may only receive 23 points).

Registration for Tournaments

- Timely pre-registration helps the host school make adequate preparations for Congressional Debate.
- Online registration should indicate whether each student should be placed in the Senate or the House. When registering competitors, indicate how experienced each competitor is so that he/she can be placed in the appropriate chamber.
 - Note: while the moderator will attempt to place competitors accordingly, he/she also reserves the right to move competitors to or from the House and Senate.
- More experienced students should be in the Senate. Each school cannot place more than two (2) competitors in the Senate. Any competitor, who has attended the National tournament, including the previous year's delegate to the NFL National Tournament's House of Representatives, is required to register in the Senate.

- Please contact the tournament director or state moderator with adds, drops, and substitutions no later than Thursday before the meet.
 - Note: The moderator reserves the right to charge a nuisance fee for drops after Thursday.
- Also, teams should be prepared to pay all necessary fees and fines at the time of tournament registration.

Preparing Speeches

- **Brainstorm:** if you were going to describe this bill, then what would you say? A key to giving a speech is a conversational tone. In the introduction, tell the audience what you are about to say:
- **Your Topic:** is this speech about something you already know? If so, take a blank piece of paper and write down as many facts as you can think about this subject.
- If this is a topic you don't know much about, do a search using one of the website in this manual. Visit the sites that seem to speak to the topic and write down individual thoughts or ideas on a blank sheet of paper.
 - In three subsections, the body, expand on your introduction. What is the first most important thing you want your audience to know? The second most important? The third? Keep referring back to your brainstorm page.
- In the introduction you told people what you're viewpoints on the topic were. In the body, you told them again in detail. Now, you must conclude. In the conclusion, begin to wrap it all up. You want to finish your speech with a statement that persuades the chamber to vote your way. As a rule of thumb, a single-spaced, typed page should take 3 to 4 minutes to read through at the correct pace. If it takes less, you're going too fast.

Methods of Practice

- Stand in front of a full-length mirror and try to look like a public speaker. Keep your posture straight, your hands in sight, and look into your own eyes. Tell yourself, "People want to hear what I have to say!" and then begin delivering your speech. Be conscious of the way you look in the mirror and adjust yourself accordingly as you talk. Make sure that you are not being stiff, but always maintain an alert posture; if not, then the audience may imitate your slump. Look into your eyes whenever you look up from your notes, and look up from your notes often. Also tape record or videotape yourself delivering the presentation. When you replay the tape, listen to determine if everything sounds coherent and logical, and watch the way you look while speaking. Look for eye contact, gestures, and unique facial expressions.
- Gather friends, family, and pets together, sit them down, and deliver your spiel to them. After finishing, ask them to give you some constructive feedback. Ask them to tell you about what you did well and what you need to improve. Further, you should ask if they needed clarification at any point during your presentation.
- Rehearse small sections of your speech throughout the day. If you have extra time, go over parts of the speech in your mind. As you improve, see if you can memorize sections without relying on the notes at all. These memorized sections will give you prolonged time to connect to the audience.
- Once you feel very comfortable with the material, do not hesitate to ad-lib some parts when you feel like it. This is your speech; you can say whatever you want, as long as you are sure that you

can get back on track. Next, try speaking off-the-cuff. It will help you sound more conversational and authoritative.

Public Relations and Preparation

- Your focus is to get along well with other people and work together to achieve a common goal. Introduce yourself to everyone at the tournament.
- You should not insult your fellow legislators; don't make derogatory comments.
- Compliment people if they deserve it.
- Dress appropriately and respectfully. Clothing such as jeans or Aerosmith t-shirts should not be worn. In short, dress for success.
- Come with prepared research on the bills and be prepared to deliver good speeches.
- Answer questions intelligently, but **do not** fabricate facts or distort information.
- Vote for the **best and most qualified** candidate for Presiding Officer. The position is a highly prestigious elected office only to which the most experienced competitors should be elected.
- Bring all materials needed for success. This includes books, articles, notes, prepared speeches, pens, and/or pencils, extra paper, a placard, the docket, some type of plastic box, Almanac, quotation books, and pocket dictionaries are great to use in speeches, etc.
- Most importantly, smile and enjoy yourself!

Code of Speaker Conduct Regulations

The Maine Forensic Association believes that successful competition is dependent upon the students acting as ethical and responsible citizens. In order to underscore and clarify the value of these attributes, the following Maine Forensic Association's **Code of Ethics** has been adopted. The expectations of this code apply to every speaker, spectator, volunteer, judge and coach and extend to all forensic activities including the time a speaker is not in a round and any other situation in which the student's behavior directly affects the school discipline or the safety and welfare of others.

Code of Ethics

An ethical person is defined by the MFA as being/exhibiting:

Respectful of others and self;

Honest in all academic endeavors and interpersonal relationships;

Compassionate and tolerant in dealing with the limitations and suffering of others;

Responsible for personal actions as an individual and a member of the community;

Fair and equitable in their treatment toward others;

Courageous in the face of ethical challenges;

Respectful Conduct: People are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly. Mutual respect among students and adults in the learning environment is the standard; and

Honest Conduct: Seek to speak the truth, respectfully. Education should be a cooperative, collaborative activity where process is as important as product.

Respect: *I will treat others and myself with respect at all times.*

Offenses include, but are not restricted to:

- Use of profane language or gestures directed at other participants that are offensive and/or intimidating;
- Unwanted physical contact;
- Direct or indirect bullying behavior;
- Damaging or defacing either school property or personal property of others; and/or

- Threatening or demeaning others by words or actions.

Honesty: *I will not lie, cheat or steal and will discourage others from doing so.*

Offenses include, but are not restricted to:

- Theft of intellectual materials or plagiarism;
- Theft or unauthorized use of others' property;
- Unauthorized operation of computer (or similar device), password or account of another user; or
- Unauthorized searching on the computer (or similar device).

Compassion: *I will treat others with kindness, understanding, and tolerance.*

Offenses include, but are not restricted to:

- Dialogue directed at another participant, or actions that communicate intolerance of differences in the beliefs, opinions or appearance of others.

Fairness: *I will treat others, as I would like to be treated.*

Offenses include but are not restricted to:

- Inequitable treatment of others.

Responsibility: *I will accept the responsibility for my actions.*

Offenses include, but are not restricted to:

- Violation of MFA or school rules;
- Withholding information that could harm individuals, the MFA, or school property;
- Inappropriate dress or behavior that interferes with competition; and/or
- Violation of the law (local, state and federal laws/statutes).

Courage: *I will strive for the courage to live by this code of ethics everyday.*

Membership Requirements for MFA and NFL

1. In order to participate in MFA (Maine Forensic Association), there is a membership fee that should be paid to the MFA treasurer.
2. For NFL membership, an organizational membership that the school must hold in order to compete in the National Forensic League National Qualifying Tournament, please contact the Chair of the National Forensic League's Maine District.
3. To become a member of the NFL, a school must pay a one-time fee of \$99. Each time a student is registered, the team must pay a lifetime membership fee of \$15 per registrant. **THIS MUST BE PAID IN FULL BEFORE DECEMBER 1, OF EACH YEAR IN ORDER TO PARTICPATE IN NFL QUALIFIERS. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT AFTER EACH MEET YOUR STUDENTS NFL POINTS ARE LOG IN WITH NFL.** You can go on line at www.nflonline.org, to register your team and place the NFL points after each meet.
4. The State Moderator (at the end of each meet) will give each coach a copy of the NFL points for their team. It is the individual coaches' responsibility to log those points. In order for a student to participate in the National Forensic League National Qualifying Tournament, the student must have at least 25 points.

Note

While this is the official manual of Congressional Debate as sponsored by the Maine Forensic Association, significant policies and procedures have been adapted for use from the National Forensic League Congressional Debate Manual. In the event that an issue cannot be resolved based on this manual's policies and procedures, the National Forensic League Congressional Debate Manual's procedures and policies shall be employed.

Resources

- Useful for writing and researching bills:
 - www.publicagenda.org
 - www.speakout.com
 - <http://206.10.173.197/>
 - www.NYT.com
 - www.WashingtonPost.com

Resources on Parliamentary Procedure and Congress

- Dickson, Paul. *The Official Rules*. New York: Delacorte, 1978. Print.
- Fryar, Maridell, David Allen Thomas, Lynn Goodnight, and Carmendale Fernandes. *Basic Debate*. Lincolnwood, Ill., U.S.A.: National Textbook, 1989. Print.
- Keesey, Ray E. *Modern Parliamentary Procedure*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1994. Print.
- Robert, Henry M. *Webster's New World Robert's Rules of Order: Simplified and Applied*. New York: Hungry Minds, 2001. Print.

Resources for Congressional Oratory

- Baker, Daniel B. *Power Quotes*. Melbourne: Information Australia, 1992. Print.
- Camp, Wesley Douglass. *What a Piece of Work Is Man!: Camp's Unfamiliar Quotations from 2000 B.C. to the Present*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989. Print.
- Harnsberger, Caroline Thomas. *Treasury of Presidential Quotations*. Chicago: Follet Pub., 1964. Print.
- Henning, Charles. *The Wit and Wisdom of Politics*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Pub., 1992. Print.

Glossary

Abstention: a vote to remain indifferent as to the passage of an item of legislation or a motion. Abstention votes are considered votes in negation of the bill or motion.

Activity: a criterion used by the P.O. in order to determine questioners and speakers until precedence has been established based upon the amount of questions and speeches given.

Adjourn: to permanently recess the chamber at the end of the session.

Affirmation: a vote to support the passage of an item of legislation or a motion.

Amendment: a piece of legislation that must be passed by two thirds (2/3) of the Congress and by three fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the states in order to become a Constitutional amendment.

Audible Opposition: verbal opposition to a motion that must be seconded before being vote on by the chamber (After calling for a second, the P.O. should call for audible opposition). If present, the P.O. should request a motion for the division of the chamber.

Bill: a piece of legislation mandating a specific action by the Congress that has the force of law.

Clash: the juxtaposition of evidence contrary to that (evidence) previously submitted for consideration by a speaker that analyzes why the given piece of evidence is empirical in nature when compared to that (evidence), which has been previously presented.

Chair: alternate term used to refer to the P.O.

Cyclical Debate: debate occurring that follows the procedure of recognizing an affirmative speaker followed by a negative speaker.

Dilatory: the designation given to a motion that the P.O. deems inappropriate or irrelevant to the debate or the business of the chamber. Dilatory motions die with the designation of dilatory from the P.O.

Division of the Chamber: a standing, recorded vote taken only after audible opposition to a motion has occurred. To occur, a motion must be made for the division of the chamber.

Docket: the compilation of prospective legislation to be debated at a given tournament during a session of Congressional Debate. The term **docket** may also refer to the set of bills, amendments, and resolutions that are to be debated during a given session that have been requested to be placed upon it.

Geography: a criterion used by the P.O. in order to determine questioners and speakers until precedence has been established by using location.

Germane: the designation given to a motion that the P.O. deems relevant or appropriate to the debate or the business of the chamber. Germane motions proceed to the seconding and voting phases.

Grace Period: a period of five to ten seconds (as determined by the P.O.) during which a legislator may speak without receiving a scoring penalty from the judges.

House of Representatives: the lower body of Congress where an unlimited number of legislators from a given school can compete. Competitors in the lower chamber should be referred to as **representatives**; the P.O. in the House may be referred to as Mr. or Madam Speaker (of the House).

MFA: the acronym for the Maine Forensic Association, the association of schools that makes up the Maine District at the NFL National Tournament.

Motion: an action proposed by a legislator that must be seconded and voted on by the chamber.

Negation: a vote to negate the passage of an item of legislation or a motion.

NFL: acronym for the National Forensic League, the oldest national honors society devoted to recognizing middle and high school students who compete and excel in sanctioned events at the district level and at the national tournament.

Parliamentarian: a coach, parent, or tournament official tasked with running the chamber. S/he should guide the chamber and answer any questions concerning procedure or rules.

Point of Personal Privilege: a motion made to clarify a procedural action, question the decision of the Chair, or exit the chamber. To exit the chamber, one should say, "I rise to a point of personal privilege" and state the reason (i.e. "I rise to a point of personal privilege: exit chambers").

Preferential Ballot: the ballot provided to each judge in order holistically rank the eight (8) preferred legislators based on multiple factors, including oration ability, participation, cordiality, questioning, etc.

Presiding Officer: the student legislator elected by the chamber to oversee and maintain the chamber and its activities during the session.

Questioning Period (Cross Examination): the time period following a speech during which the speaker is questioned by the chamber at the discretion of the P.O.

Recency: a criterion used to by the P.O. in order to determine the next speaker or questioner once precedence has been established. It recognizes speakers who have spoken least recently first.

Recess: to adjourn the chamber for a specified amount of time, usually during a natural break in debate or for lunch.

Representative: a legislator who is a member of the lower chamber of congress, the House of Representatives. Schools may have an unlimited number of representatives.

Resolution: a piece of legislation without the force of law that expresses the general belief or will of the chamber only.

Roll Call Vote: a vote where each legislator individually orates his vote in affirmation, negation, or abstention or a piece of legislation.

Senate: the upper chamber of Congress, which is more informal in its procedures. Only two (2) legislators from a given school may compete; legislators in the upper chamber are referred to as **senators**, and the P.O. in the upper chamber can be referred to as Mr. or Madam President (of the Senate).

Senator: a legislator who is a member of the upper chamber of congress, the Senate. There should be only two (2) senators per school.

Session: a period of no more and no less than five (5) hours during which debate of legislation on the set docket occurs.

Setting the Docket: the process by which the P.O. calls on legislators to create a docket based upon the legislation presented on the full docket. The P.O. will add legislation with authors present first, followed by sponsored legislation.

Sponsor: the subsequent affirmative speakers after the authorship speech and the first negative speech. Legislation with no author present shall have a first sponsorship speech.

Table: to vote to set aside a piece of legislation for further consideration at a later time during the session. Prior to adjournment, all tabled legislation must be considered.

Un-Table: to (re) consider a piece of legislation that was previously tabled by the vote of the chamber.

Yield to a Two-Part Question: a motion made to suspend the rules to allow for a questioner to ask a follow-up question to the speaker after s/he answers his first question. A motion to yield to a two-part question is strictly prohibited. If made, the Chair should deem the motion dilatory