

Student Congress Manual

What is Student Congress?

Student Congress is basically a derivative from our own Legislature government. Students form a legislative body (House of Representatives and Senate), which in turn debate and pass laws as if they were real legislature. The students are to be called either Representatives or Senators while attending a meet. The event should always be treated as if they were actually sitting in the United States Congress. By participating in this a student can learn all about how a bill becomes a law. They also learn about government, the constitution, and what it is like to be in a government position. Students are the most important element of Student Congress. They write the bills that are considered in session and determine the course of the proceedings through a variety of motions and the decisions of their presiding officer. A minimum number of students and schools (4) are needed in order for the Congress to be sanctioned by the NFL. Each school can send up to two in the Senate(those should be your top debaters from your school) and as many as you would like to the House. **One judge or Parliamentarian per 5 students is required.**

What is a bill?

1. 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;
 - 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
2. According to the NFL Manual, a bill must be "an enumeration of specific provisions, which if enacted must be very specific about:
 - a. What is to be done
 - b. How it will be done
 - c. Who will be responsible for carrying out or enforcing the law
 - d. Penalties for non-compliance
 - e. Sources of funding
 - f. The date(s) various provisions of the law will take effect
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.
4. Bills must have a short descriptive title.
5. Bills 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
6. Bills must be submitted as text pasted into an email
7. Submit bills e-mail to Aurelie Bush at ebush1@gmail.com
8. Format your bills so that it could be printed with 12-pt font, Times, on an 8.5"X11" page with 1-inch margins. Bills not submitted by email in the appropriate format will be returned to the coach.
9. Each line of the bill must be numbered
10. Double space and use "hard returns" at the end of each line.
11. Bills should be submitted to the State Moderator (Aurelie Bush) on or before the due date for each session.
- 12. Bills must be reviewed and submitted by coaches. Bills sent directly by a student will not be accepted.**
13. Bills should follow NFL & MFA guidelines (website for NFL Manual is: <http://debate.uvm.edu/nfl.html>).
14. Those who write a bill may present an authorship speech.
15. Bills are typically due ten days before a tournament (***) please look at the schedule below for due dates. There are some times where two sets of bills will be due)
16. Once bills are submitted they become the property of the Congress and may be debated at any upcoming tournament.
17. The docket for each tournament will be established with input from the STUCO coaches & students. The moderator will accept input up until the day the bills/resolutions are due. The docket will be posted no later than

the Monday before each meet on the Maine Forensic which is; www.maine forensic.com and they will also be emailed to all coaches.

18. Bills get preference over resolutions when a docket is established at a Student Congress meet. Bills have the force of law while resolutions merely express the general beliefs of the Congress. The order of the docket per chamber will be set up as follows:

a. Bills written by students in each chamber will be debated first (chambers can determine the order. For example if three people have written a bill in your chamber then the members can determine the order of those three, but they must be done prior to any other item).

b. Resolutions that students sitting in that Chamber have written will be second

19. Each team participating in Student Congress per meet is required to submit a minimum amount of bills or resolutions:

A. one to three students = one bill or resolution

b. four to six students = two bills or resolutions

c. seven to nine students = three bills or resolutions

d. ten to twelve students = four bills or resolutions

Each team is more than welcome to submit more. Please keep in mind that those students who submit a bill or resolution have a greater chance of speaking more.

Example of a Bill

A Bill Privatizing American Prisons

1. Be it enacted by the Student Congress here assembled that,
2. Section I: America's prisons will be gradually privatized.
3. Section II: there shall be two forms of privatization, Standard Contract
4. Operation (SCO) and Contracting to House Prisoners (CHP).
5. Subsection A: SCO shall be defined as a private management firm hired to run a Gov. owned prison.
6. Subsection B: CHP shall be defined as private firms who own their own prisons or leases excess space
7. in local jails and house prisoners from many different jurisdictions in return for payments.
8. Section III: From the date this piece of legislation goes into effect (as specified in the final section) the
9. direction of all publicly owned prisons (be them county, state, federal or otherwise) will be for sale.
10. Subsection A: The direction of all prisons shall remain for sale until every prison in America been sold.
11. Subsection B: Until a prison has been sold, it will operate under normal jurisdiction and direction.
12. Subsection C: Prisons that finish construction or are constructed entirely after the date of passage will
13. begin as privately run prisons.
14. Section IV: Once the direction of a prison has been sol, the newly acquired prison must abide by the
15. laws of the government that previously ran the prison.
16. Section V: This bill will go into effect 5 years from the date of passage

What is a Resolution?

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:
 - a. Resolutions begin: "Be it resolved by the Student Congress here assembled that..."
 - b. Resolutions may include whereas clauses. Whereas clauses provide the principal for adapting the resolution

Example of a Resolution

A Resolution to Reduce the Spread of AIDS in Africa

1. Whereas, the spread of the AIDS virus in Africa is on the rise, and
2. Whereas, many African governments have done nothing to stop the proliferation of this disease, and
3. Whereas, the United States Government has an obligation as a world leader to help those who cannot
4. help themselves, therefore
5. BE IT RESOLVED by the Student Congress here assembled that the
6. United States Government should take steps to reduce the spread of this disease.

Defending a Bill or Resolution

Structure your speech-intro, body, and conclusion. Respond to criticism first, then build your new arguments, and **use as much evidence as possible**. Don't think you have to think in black and white, be ready to acknowledge minor flaws, and weigh benefits against costs/flaws, etc.

Attacking a bill or resolution

- a. Structure your speech-intro, body, conclusion
- b. Don't think you have to think in black and white
- c. Suggestions for analysis
 1. Is the legislation too vague or unclear
 2. Will the legislation solve the problem it was designed to
 3. Will the bill cost too much for the benefits (Cost can be \$, social trade-offs, security risks, etc)
 4. Is the premise of the legislation based on incorrect data (Be sure you can document the correct data)
 5. Is it possible to put the legislation into effect
 6. Will the problems (trade-offs) created by the legislation outweigh the benefits
 7. Is the legislation really within the jurisdiction of the federal government

Question and Answer section after each negative /affirmative speech

After each Authorship speech you have a mandatory two minute questioning and answer period. Each speech after that one is three minutes and then a mandatory one minute cross-examination time, **which must relate to what the person has talked about in their speech.**

When asking questions you should ask questions that are clarifying something you did not understand.

Questions are for clarification purposes, and are useful tools, but should they become abused, they only serve to hinder the congress.

When answering questions be truthful. Falsification of evidence or even loose statements is not acceptable in any event, and judges will mark you down for that. If you do not know the specific answer to specific questions, just say something like, "I don't have that information" or even "I don't know."

COACHES

Coaches are expected to provide their students with the knowledge and support they need to be effective, contributing members of Student Congress. Coaches must also support host schools by registering in a timely manner and by supplying the personnel and financial resources needed to run the tournament.

Help students meet their responsibilities

Review and Submit Bills from your school on or before the Due Dates

Provide Judges and Parliamentarians:

- a. Schools are required to provide at least one judge or Parliamentarian for every five students (**minimum of one, six students means 2 judges/parliamentarians**).
- b. There is a fee that will be charged in lieu of providing a judge (**which generally is determined by the hosting school**). This is a privilege and not a right.

Register Students and arrive at the event on time

- a. Timely pre-registration helps the host school make adequate preparations for Student Congress
- b. **Pre-registration should indicate whether each student should be placed in the Senate or the House,** Those students who are in the House please indicate how many years they have debated before so that they are placed in the appropriate chamber. Moderator will make every effort to honor these requests.
- c. More experienced students should be in the Senate. Each school needs to place no more than two people in the Senate.
- d. Please contact the Tournament Director/ and State Moderator with drops and substitutions no later than Thursday before the meet (**there is a nuisance fee if you drop after Thursday**)
- e. Pay your fees

In order to participate in MFA (Maine Forensic Association) there is a membership fee that should be sent to the MFA treasurer

f. For membership in the NFL, which you must be in order to participate in the NFL qualifiers please contact Maine's NFL Chairperson.

g. The fee is \$99.00 a team plus \$10.00 a student for NFL. 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. 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. In order to participate in NFL qualifiers for Student Congress the student must have 25 points.

Running a Student Congress:

The Host School and the Congress Moderator

A successful Student Congress requires the cooperation of the Host School and the congress Moderator. In general, the Host School is responsible for the advance preparation for the event while the Moderator assumes responsibility for the activity on the day of the event. The Moderator and the Host School should work together to make sure the event runs smoothly. Typically the Host School and the Moderator assume the following responsibilities.

HOST SCHOOL:

Send out invitation and registration forms to interested schools

- a. Schools are required to designate 2 students for the Senate. All other students will be in the House. Please indicate whether your students have debated before in the House.
- b. Schools are required to provide judges/ and or parliamentarians. One judge/parliamentarian covers as many as five participants.
- c. Charge the standard student fee.

Order Awards

- a. Awards have traditionally been presented to the “Most Outstanding” and the “Outstanding” member of each chamber (Senate and House) at the closing award ceremonies. Awards are also given for honorable mention.

Compile Registration

- a. Collect names of participants, judges, and parliamentarians and email a complied list to the Moderator by Thursday before the meet.

Provide Suitable rooms

Prepare Rooms

- a. Student Congress generally requires three rooms. The rooms could have up to 25 people in them.
- b. Ideally Students would sit at tables organized in a semi circle around a podium.
- c. Provide a seat near the podium for the Presiding Officer.
- d. Provide a seat and desk near the podium for the Parliamentarian.
- e. Provide seats and desks for the two judges that give them a clear view of the podium.
- f. Organize seats so students can see one another and gain access to the podium.
- g. Provide lots of scrap paper for messages and voting.

Locate Pages

- a. Pages carry messages between chambers and between congress people within a chamber.

Present Awards

- a. Awards have traditionally been presented to the most outstanding, outstanding member, and honorable mention in each chamber at the closing awards ceremony.

CONGRESS MODERATOR

The moderator is responsible for coordinating all of the details of running Student Congress. The moderator is responsible for overseeing the final preparations of the Congress on the day of the event. Coaches, judges, parliamentarians and students are expected to help the moderator set up the event. Moderator makes sure that everyone involved in Student Congress knows their roles and understands their responsibilities. The moderator:

Coordinates Parliamentarians

- a. A Parliamentarian is needed to oversee the proceedings in each chamber.
- b. This position requires knowledge of parliamentary procedure and, with inexperienced groups, the ability to teach parliamentary procedure.
- c. Experienced parliamentarians include; Candace Gleason, Aurelie Bush, Rich Roedner, Robert Goddard.

Coordinate Judges:

- a. 2 judges are needed in each chamber.
- b. Schools are required to provide qualified judges.
- c. Provide judges with a copy of the scoring and awards procedure and a set of ballots.
- d. It is inevitable that judges will be scoring students from their schools; however keep an eye out for obvious conflicts of interest.

Prepare Materials

- a. Allocate students to Senate and House (Be sure to consider NFL requirements for the minimum number of schools and participants).
- b. Consider creating an additional House when there are more than 15 representatives.
- c. Compile name of judges and Parliamentarian.
- d. Copy Seat charts. 5 for each chamber (Parliamentarian, Presiding Officer, and 2 judges, spare).
- e. Copy ballots for the judges. Triple the number of students and add ten.
- f. Provide a copy of the bills being debated for each judge and Parliamentarian.
- g. Copy of the scoring procedure and provide one for each judge.
- h. Copy lots of amendment sheets.
- i. Copy awards forms (2).

Coordinate the start of the Congress

- a. Check preparation of the Host School.
- b. Greet Parliamentarians and judges.
- c. Identify experienced Judges and Parliamentarians and enlist their help.
- d. Provide or arrange for briefing of new Parliamentarians and judges.
- e. Determine scratches and make appropriate adjustments to list and seat charts. This can be frustrating if there are a lot of scratches or changes. Consider waiting until the morning of the tournament to prepare final seat charts.
- f. Make sure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.
- g. Make sure everyone has his or her required materials. Seating Charts for each Judge, Parliamentarian, and Presiding officer. A copy of the bills being debated for each Judge and Parliamentarian. Scoring procedure for each Judge and Parliamentarian. Blank ballots for each judge (they will need one for each student they are judging).
- h. Pass along responsibility for running event to the Parliamentarian of each chamber.

Responsibilities after the set up;

- a. Once Student Congress has been set up the Moderator is free to pursue other activities.
- b. Parliamentarians are responsible for addressing issues that arise in their respective chambers.
- c. Questions and concerns that cannot be addresses should be brought to the attention of the MFA Student Congress Moderator.

Coordinate the end of the Congress

- a. Make sure Judges and Parliamentarians understand their responsibilities.
- b. Make sure completed ballots are distributed to participating schools through the Tab Room.
- c. Make sure that NFL points are properly calculated, recorded and distributed.
- d. Make sure the awards are properly recorded and presented.
- e. Collect records of proceedings from each Parliamentarian.

PARLIAMENTARIANS ROLE:

Each chamber of Student Congress must have a Parliamentarian who acts as a final source of information and authority on Parliamentary Procedure. Parliamentarians should have a reasonable good understanding of parliamentary procedure and the rules of Student Congress. Parliamentarians are often required to do some teaching. Inexperienced groups will occasionally need some instruction in the basic procedures of Student Congress, and experienced group may need help understanding the proper and ethical use of procedure. Additionally, the Parliamentarian is expected to perform various administrative duties including starting the proceedings, keeping time, recording the actions of the chamber, and holding various elections.

This is a series of rules that the Congress follows to get the work completed. It is particularly made up of motion, and rules of precedence.

In order to speak once in session you must be recognized by the Presiding Officer.

Each House and Senate elects a presiding officer to fairly and efficiently run each session according to the rules of Parliamentary procedure

Students should become familiar with parliamentary procedures and the rules for debate as outlined in the NFL handbook, and Robert's Rules of Order.

In the morning four people are elected to be Presiding Officer for 30 minutes each. Right before lunch a vote is taken with the Parliamentarian over seeing who will be the Presiding Officer for the afternoon session?

Begin Proceedings

- a. Focus attention on the group.
- b. Offer introductory comments if there is one issue that needs to be addressed.
- c. Establish initial Presiding Officers (P.O.). Generally four students will each volunteer to serve for 30 minutes during the morning session. The chamber will subsequently vote for the student they would like to see as P.O. during the afternoon session.
- d. At this point the presiding officer is responsible for running the Congress. Inexperienced Presiding Officers may require more guidance.

Keep Time or Locate a Timekeeper

- a. Student Congress **must** be in session for five (5) hours in order to qualify as an NFL event. Recesses, setting the docket do not count. Committee time does count. See Congress Manual for details.
- b. **Schedule for debate:**
 - Gather in chamber, take attendance, and take nominations for Presiding officer
 - Presiding officer begins by having everyone say the oath.
 - Set the docket for the day
 - 3 hrs. Debate in the am
 - Lunch = 1/2 hour to an 1 hour (this will depend on how much more time needs to be put of debate after lunch
 - 2hr debate in the pm
 - Judges and parliamentarians meet in tab room
 - Awards ceremony
- c. Student's speeches may be no longer than three minutes long. Every student now has a one minute mandatory cross-examination time

Record Keeping

- a. The Parliamentarian should keep a record of the number of speeches made.
- b. Parliamentarian keeps track of precedent of students speaking
- c. The Parliamentarian must keep a record of proceedings that take place including: motions made, bills and resolutions offered, amendments made, and votes taken.
- d. The Parliamentarian should communicate the outcome of bills and resolutions to the other chamber(s). Bills and resolutions must pass in all chambers in order to become a law.

Insure that the proceedings follow parliamentary procedure If necessary, teach parliamentary procedure:

Rule on contested points

- a. The Parliamentarian is the final authority on all parliamentary matters occurring within a chamber.
- b. Contested points may be brought to the attention of the Congress Moderator at the end of the day's proceedings.

- c. Trouble shooting issues will be referred to the MFA Congress Moderator who, in consultation with the coaches of participating schools, will work to clarify the issue for future Student Congresses.

Run elections for presiding officer

- a. This is done after all those who had an opportunity (no more than four students) to be Presiding Officer for thirty minutes.
- b. Students vote by paper on who they would like to run the rest of the session as their Presiding Officer.

Procedure for voting for Presiding Officer

- a. 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, follows this priority:
- b. Separate the ballots into piles by candidate. Void ballots not containing names of candidates, or containing more than one name
 - c. The one candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped.
- d. If the **COMBINED VOTES** of the **TWO LOWEST** candidates do **NOT EQUAL** all votes of the **NEXT** lowest candidate, **BOTH** are eliminated
- e. 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. After three votes, ask the candidates to briefly address the chamber with reasons why they should be considered.
- f. 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
- g. 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 candidate (otherwise their vote for majority is skewed because of the earlier winners’ share in the previous election).

Role of the Presiding Officer

1. Runs the session according to Robert’s Rules of Order
2. They are responsible for the general well being of the congress
3. They need to keep the congress running smoothly and efficiently, so as to make the best use of everyone’s time
4. It is best to follow the rules of Parliamentary Procedure and to maintain a sense of fairness in the congress
5. They need to keep records on precedence of each person in congress. An example of how to do this would be:

List Congress Members	Speech 1	Speech 2	Speech 3	Speech 4	etc.
Rep. Bush	2	5	8		
Rep. Jones	3	6	9		
Rep. Smith		1	4	7	

AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments must be presented to the presiding officer in writing (an official form needs to be used), with specific references to lines and clauses that change. This must be done in advance of moving to amend.
2. The parliamentarian will recommend whether the amendment is “germane”- that is, it upholds the original intent of the legislation – otherwise, it is considered “dilatatory.” The title of the legislation may be changed.
3. A legislator can only move to amend between floor speeches. Once that motion is made, the presiding officer will read the proposed amendment aloud and call for a second by one-third of those members present, unless he/she rules it dilatatory.
4. Should students wish to speak on the proposed amendment, the presiding officer will recognize them as per the standing precedence in the chamber, and the speech will be counted toward their total, accordingly.

5. Simply proposing an amendment does NOT guarantee an “authorship/sponsor” speech, and any speeches on amendments are followed by the normal ONE minute of questioning.
6. Amendments are considered neutral and do not constitute an affirmative or negative speech on the original legislation.
7. If there are no speakers or the previous question is moved, the chamber may vote on a proposed amendment without debating it.

Evidence and Use of Electronic Devices

1. Visual aids are permitted in Student Congress provided they do not require electronic retrieval devices in the chamber.
2. All evidence used is subject to verification. Honesty and integrity are of utmost important in legislative debate. Falsification or deliberate misuse of evidence may result in the legislator being suspended by tournament officials.
3. Computers, cell phones, music players and games are not to be used in the chamber during a session. Traditional timing devices are permitted.

Run elections for Outstanding and Most Outstanding Congresspersons

- a. At the end of the afternoon session the Parliamentarian and each judge independently and without consultation rank the top six students in their chamber.
- b. The names are then presented to the Moderator who will add and determine the placement of each student selected. The student with the most points is Most Outstanding for the chamber and Outstanding is the next student with the most points.

Please note that during NFL qualifiers none of the rules can be suspended.

Typical Session & the Role of the Presiding Officer

Should a use a calm, controlled and caring voice to show a genuine interest in the chamber's business

1. Calling to order by the presiding officer
2. PO say, **"This session will come to order."**
3. **State that you will use your best effort to recognize speakers around the chamber in a fair and balanced manner**
4. Invocation and /or opening comments
5. Roll call of members and confirmation of seating charts
6. Oath of Office

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

7. Special orders

a. Review of special rules

b. Review of congress procedures

- * Explain your knocking system. Example would be "1 knock for 1 min. left, 2 knocks for 30sec. Left, and 3 knocks over
- * At the end of each speech I will let you know how long you spoke for
- * At the end of a speech if you would like to ask questions you need to stand and wait to be recognized
- * I will notify everyone when the questioning period is over for each speech
- * When I have called on the last person to speak on each bill I will say, "The questioning period has concluded, and the _____ speaker may be seated.
- * NFL Qualifier (You will need to say that if you are interested in speaking you will need to stand and wait to be called upon)
- * Voting will be done by standing
- * All voting is done only by members present at the time the vote is taken
- * **Negative** votes and **abstentions ARE** counted for majority votes; votes taken where a fraction of members are needed are based on those seated in the chamber at the beginning of the session, **so counting nay votes and abstentions is unnecessary**
- * **Representative/Senators need to rise to vote**

C. Special announcements and/or questions

1. Committee meetings (optional) and consideration of the agenda
2. Ask someone to make a motion to suspend the rules for ten minutes to set the docket
3. Have someone make a motion to accept the docket as stated
4. Ask someone to make a motion to consider the first bill
5. Is it the wish of the chamber that I read the bill?
6. When you are ready to begin say, "Who **would like to sponsor the first item of legislation?**" *** When you recognize speakers, use the third person: **The chair recognizes.....**

7. **When a speaker concludes, say** "Time of that speech was ___ minutes and ___ seconds. **Questioners, please rise,**" Call on one legislator at a time, until the questioning period is over. You should keep track of questions to allow a fair distribution.

8. **Authorship speech has precedence (definition of authorship is, "a student from the school who wrote the legislation gets the privilege of recognition (called authorship), regardless of precedence: otherwise the presiding officer may recognize a "sponsor" from the chamber, provided this recognition follows the precedence guidelines. Regardless, this speech of introduction must be followed by two minutes of questions.") This requires a 3 minute speech with a 2 minute mandatory question period.**

9. Affirmative must go first in order to debate the bill/resolution. Every person who speaks after the sponsorship speech has a mandatory 1 minute cross examination.

10. After the affirmation speech you say, "Those wishing to speak in opposition please rise, and continue back and forth

11. **When you call on the last person seeking recognition to speak on a bill/resolution, say, "Since this is the last senator/representative who wishes to speak on this issue, if no one objects following his/her speech, we will mover to the immediate previous question following his/her speech." (That way, a separate vote to call "previous question" is unnecessary).**

12. VOTING ON A BILL/RESOLUTION

13. After one complete round you then ask if there are any motions

14. **To vote on a bill and stop debate a person must say, "I move to previous questions." You must have 2/3 for the motion to pass**

15. Adjournment

CROSS EXAMINATION = they must be for clarifying only

3 minute speeches = If they do not use all of their time ask them how they yield the rest either by questions or to the chair. **YOU CAN NOT GIVE UP YOUR 1 MINUTE CROSS EXAMINATION TIME**

Second an amendment: 1/3 Previous Question: 2/3, Pass main motion or amendment: Majority (PO breaks the tie)

Rescind a previous action: 2/3, Suspend the rules: 2/3

Total	1/3	2/3	Total	1/3	2/3
6	2	4	14 or 15	5	10
7	3	5	16	6	11
8 or 9	3	6	17 or 18	6	12
10	4	7	19	7	13
11 or 12	4	8	20 & 21	7	14
13	5	9			

NFL Points can be earned in the following ways:

- All students who participate in Congress earn 2 points as long as they have spoken at least once on a bill/or resolution..
- The Parliamentarian can award presiding officers up to eight points per hour.
- Students earn up to eight points for the first five speeches they give at each meet. Two judges score each speech.
- At the end of the day they conference and reach a consensus on the appropriate score (must be a whole number) for each speech.
- At the end of the day the judges complete a score sheet for each student in their chamber that documents their NFL points and comments.
- A student who presides in the morning for ½ an hour can not be awarded any NFL points

Judges are responsible for evaluating student speeches, awarding NFL point and providing nominations for the outstanding and most outstanding congress people in their chamber.

Preparation

- Locate a seat chart.
- Review scoring criteria and judging rules.
- Understand what constitutes a scored speech.

Score Student Speeches

- This should be done independently, without consultation with the other judges or parliamentarian.
- Record comments for each speech. Judges are expected to provide comments on the ballots that are returned to each student at the end of the day.
- Periodically check with the other judges or the Parliamentarian to make sure that you have recorded the same number of speeches for each student.

Provide nominations for outstanding participants

1. Individually and without consultation, rank the top six (6) Congress people in your chamber at the end of the session. Be sure to consider effective use of parliamentary procedures, and collegiality in addition to pure speaking ability. **The presiding officer may be nominated.**
2. Nominations are then given to the Moderator or person who is over seeing Student Congress.

Calculate NFL point for each participant

1. The judges must prepare a final ballot for each participant that indicates a single score for each of their speeches, and the total number of NFL points earned.
2. Judges must wait until the end of the afternoon session to begin this process.
3. All scores must be a whole number.
4. When the two judges award different scores for a given speech they must come to agreement on a single score.
5. The judges must review the NFL points earned by each participant to be sure that no more than two students may earn the same number of NFL points. The judges must collaboratively adjust scores to break these ties.
6. Results need to be given to the appropriate people for distribution to the participating schools.

Scoring and Awards Procedures

Student Congress participants are recognized in two ways:

- a. National Forensic League Points to students based on their level of participation and the quality of their speeches.
- b. Awards presented at each event for the “Most Outstanding” and “Outstanding” congressperson in each chamber.

List of some great public policy websites and books that you and your students may want use.

Useful for writing and researching bills:

www.publicagenda.org

www.speakout.com

<http://206.10.173.197/> this site is from Issues 2000 which was kept going after the elections of two years ago. Check out the “issues” link for some well-written backgrounds on significant issues.

www.NYT.com

www.WashingtonPost.com

Website for coaches: Maine Principals Association = www.MPA.cc and the NFISDSA www.nfhs.org, and phone number is 1-317-972-6900.

Resources on Parliamentary Procedure and Congress

Dickson, Paul, The Official Rules, Dell Publishing, 1979

Fryer and Thomas, Basic Debate, National Textbook Co. 1980

Keesey, Ray E., Modern Parliamentary Procedure, Barnes and Nobles, 1974

Robert, Gen. Henry M., Robert’s Rules of Order, Scott, Foresman and Co. 1915

Resources for Congress Speaking:

Baker, Daniel B., Power Quotes, Visible Ink Press., 1992

Camp, Wesley D., What a Piece of Work Is Man!, Prentice Hall 1990

Harnsberger, Caroline Thomas, Treasury of Presidential Quotations, Follett Publishing Co., 1964

Henning, Charles, The Wit and Wisdom of Politics, Fulcrum Publishing, 1989

Student Congress Points Description

8 pts. =Phenomenal (All of the speech criteria are demonstrated with mastery. This score is rarely awarded).

- 1) **Speaks for 2 ¾ to 3 minutes**
- 2) **Briefly glancing at notes – does not read from prepared speech**; strong eye contact to entire chamber
- 3) Clearly states their opinion at the beginning of their speech; closing statement is clear & strong
- 4) **Speaks with conviction**, varying tone/volume of delivery; uses gesture in context
- 5) Presents many instances of documented research to support points of view
- 6) Advances the debate by raising new points and referencing prior speakers' points either affirmatively or in negation (if they are not the first speaker on either side)
- 7) If there are cross examination questions he/she is prepared to answer the questions with informative and authoritative responses; handles questioning with professional demeanor and tone.
- 8) Presents persuasive speech in a well organized manner.

7 pts. = Superior (Most of the speech criteria are demonstrated with mastery. Very minor suggestions for improvement)

- 1) **Speaks for 2 ½ to 3 minutes**
- 2) **Occasionally glancing at notes – reads occasionally from prepared speech**; strong eye contact to entire chamber
- 3) Clearly states their opinion at the beginning of their speech; closing statement is clear & strong
- 4) Speaks **occasionally** with conviction, varying tone/volume of delivery; uses gesture **occasionally** in context
- 5) Presents many instances of documented research to support points of view
- 6) Advances the debate by raising new points and referencing prior speakers' points either affirmatively or in negation (if they are not the first speaker on either side)
- 7) If there are cross examination questions he/she is prepared to answer the questions with informative and authoritative responses; handles questioning with professional demeanor and tone.
- 8) Presents persuasive speech in a well organized manner.

6pts= Excellent (Most of the speech criteria are demonstrated with proficiency. Some suggestions for improvement)

- 1) **Speaks for 2 ½ to 3 minutes**
- 2) **Frequently reads from prepared speech or notes; frequent eye contact** to entire chamber
- 3) Clearly states their opinion at the beginning of their speech; closing statement is clear & strong
- 4) Speaks **frequently** with conviction, varying tone/volume of delivery; uses gesture **frequently** in context
- 5) Presents many instances of documented research to support points of view
- 6) Advances the debate by raising new points and referencing prior speakers' points either affirmatively or in negation (if they are not the first speaker on either side)
- 7) If there are cross examination questions he/she is prepared to answer the questions with informative and authoritative responses; handles questioning with professional demeanor and tone.
- 8) Presents persuasive speech in a well organized manner

5pts. = Very Good (Most of the speech criteria are demonstrated with proficiency. Some suggestions for improvement)

- 1) **Speaks for 2 to 3 minutes**
- 2) **Quite frequently read from prepared speech or notes; some eye contact** to entire chamber
- 3) Clearly states their opinion at the beginning of their speech; closing statement is clear
- 4) Speaks **frequently** with conviction, varying tone/volume of delivery; uses gesture **frequently** in context
- 5) Presents many instances of documented research to support points of view
- 6) Advances the debate by raising new points and referencing prior speakers' points either affirmatively or in negation (if they are not the first speaker on either side)
- 7) If there are cross examination questions he/she is prepared to answer the questions with informative and authoritative responses; handles questioning with professional demeanor and tone.
- 8) Presents persuasive speech in a well organized manner

4pts.=Average (Speech is persuasive, well-organized, advances debate and shows knowledge of the subject)

- 1) **Speaks for 1 ½ to 3 minutes**
- 2) **Mostly reads from prepared speech or notes; some eye contact** to entire chamber
- 3) Clearly states their opinion at the beginning of their speech; closing statement is clear
- 4) Speaks with **some** conviction, varying tone/volume of delivery; uses **some** gesture in context
- 5) Presents many instances of documented research to support points of view
- 6) Advances the debate by raising new points and referencing prior speakers' points either affirmatively or in negation (if they are not the first speaker on either side)
- 7) If there are cross examination questions he/she is prepared to answer the questions with informative and authoritative responses; handles questioning with professional demeanor and tone.
- 8) Presents persuasive speech in a well organized manner

3 pts. = Fair (Some criteria partially met. Speech shows effort to contribute to the debate)

1) **Speaks for ½ to 3 minutes**

2) **Mostly reads from prepared speech or notes**; minimal eye contact to entire chamber

3) **States** their opinion at the beginning of their speech; closing statement is **unclear**

4) Speaks with **some** conviction, varying tone/volume of delivery; uses **some** gesture in context

5) Presents **minimal** instances of documented research to support points of view

6) **Is unable to advance the debate**

7) If there are cross examination questions he/she is **minimally** prepared to answer the questions with **minimal** informative and authoritative responses; handles questioning with **minimal** professional demeanor and tone.

8) Presents persuasive speech in a **minimal** organized manner

2 pt. = Weak (Overall presentation weak; score recognizes an effort to contribute)

1) **Speaks for ½ to 3 minutes**

In some respect the speech did not meet minimum requirements (for example the speech may have been extremely short, or included poor taste). However, a minimal effort to contribute was made.

1 pts. = The speech did not meet requirements in any respect, or included material that is frivolous or in poor taste

1) **Speaks for less than 30 second**

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:

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.

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 myself and others 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
- 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
- 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
- Dialogue directed at another participant, or actions that communicate intolerance of differences in abilities 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
- 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.*

Here is one way of preparing your speeches

1. **Your Topic:** is this speech about something you already know? Then take a blank piece of paper and write down as many facts as you can think about this subject.
2. If this is a topic you don't know much about, do a search using one of the website in your Student Congress manual. Visit the sites that seem to speak to the topic and again write down individual thoughts or ideas on a blank sheet of paper.
3. **Your Introduction:** Take your sheet of ideas and write a 3-sentence introduction. If you were going to describe this to me at practice what would you say? A key to giving a speech is a conversational tone. In the introduction tell your audience what you're about to say.
4. **Body:** In three subsections (A, B, C or I, II, III or i, ii, iii) 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.
5. **Conclusion:** In the introduction you told people what you're view points on the topic were. In the body, you told them again in detail. In the conclusion now 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, "Gosh darn it, 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're talking. Make sure that you're not being stiff, but always maintain an alert posture, or the audience will end up imitating your slump. Look into your eyes whenever you look up from your notes, and look up from your notes often.
- **Tape record or (even better) 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 weird facial tics.
- **Gather together some friends, family, nuns and pets together, sit them down, and deliver your whole spiel to them.** After it's over, ask them to give you some **constructive** feedback. Ask them to tell you about what you did well and what you need work on. Ask them to tell you what they didn't understand.
- **Rehearse small sections of your speech throughout the day.** If you've got 5 or 10 minutes 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, don't be afraid to **ad-lib some parts** when you feel like it. This is your speech and you can say whatever you want; as long as you're sure you can get back on track, try speaking off the cuff. It'll help you sound conversational instead of like a robot.

Public Relations & preparing for the day

Your focus is to get along well with other people and work together to achieve a common goal.

You should not insult you fellow legislators

Compliment people if they deserve it

Dress appropriately with nice clothes on

Say "Hi" to a lot of people

Shake Hands

Ask questions that support the speaker

Don't say derogatory comments about someone else

Stay alert and know what's going on

Have an extra pen or pencil

Come with prepared research on the bills

Give well thought speeches

Answer questions intelligently, but don't make up facts

Vote for the best Presiding Officer

Organize all of you material in some type of plastic box, Almanac, quotation books, and pocket dictionaries are great to use in speeches

Scratch paper

Smile and enjoy yourself