



**Young Genius  
Elementary & Middle School  
Congressional Debate  
Tournament Docket and  
Procedures Handbook**

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

### **Tournament location:**

505 East Charleston Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

### **Tournament Date:**

Saturday, October 12, 2019

### **Questions/Requests for Additional Information:**

Feel free to contact us at [info@bayareadebate.com](mailto:info@bayareadebate.com).

Judges will be provided for this tournament by Bay Area Speech and Debate Academy.

A pizza lunch and snacks will be provided for all judges, chaperones, and competitors.

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## TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

10:00 - 10:30AM: Welcome Assembly

10:30AM - 12:00PM: Round 1

12:00 - 12:30PM: Pizza Lunch

12:30 - 2:00PM: Round 2

2:00 - 2:30PM: Break

2:30 - 4:00PM: Round 3

4:00 - 4:30PM: Break

4:30PM: Award Ceremony

## HOW YOUNG GENIUS CONGRESS WILL WORK:

- There will be three (3) rounds and students will debate one (1) bill/resolution per round. Students can give a second speech on a bill or resolution only if time allows, **and everyone in the chamber has had a chance to speak.**
- The docket has been pre-set (please see the order of the legislation set below), so there will be no need to set the docket.
- Speakers must stand up to be recognized to speak or ask questions.
- In order to vote or complete motions, students must either stand up or raise their hands (this is at the discretion of the Presiding Officer).
- Presiding Officers will be provided by the tournament; so that students can focus on their speeches and learn by example.
- Students should give speeches of 3 minutes (with 10 seconds grace period) in length either in affirmation or in negation of the bill or resolution being debated.
- Students in the chamber deliver their speeches in cycles (a cycle comprises of one affirmative speech and one negative speech) until the students decide to vote on the legislation (or table it for possible later additional discussion).
- Students should wait for a cycle to complete before introducing a motion to the chamber.
- If the chamber runs out of either affirmative or negative speeches to complete a cycle, students should motion for an “open podium,” meaning that if an affirmative speaker has just spoken, it is permissible to give another affirmative speaker the floor over a negation speaker, provided that the affirmative speaker has precedence based on recency. The motion should be structured as follows: “I motion for open podium.” or “I move for open podium.” The motion must then be seconded and voted upon by the chamber. If it receives 2/3 majority of the votes in the chamber, then it is passed.
- After a student completes his/her 3 minute speech, the presiding officer calls on other students to ask short (generally 10 seconds or so in length) questions of the speaker who has just spoken, with only one question per each student being called upon at any one time. However, that same student may ask another question(s) once other students who have not asked questions have gone and there is still time left in the questioning period.
- The speaker answers those questions very briefly (generally roughly 10 seconds per response). The questioning period goes on for 2 minutes for the first affirmative speech and the first negative speech and 1 minute for every speaker afterwards regardless if it is an affirmative or negative speech with as many students as possible asking questions.

- Standard questioning procedures will be used; prefacing/leading questions and two-part questions are not allowed.
- The students are permitted to motion to extend the time of the questioning period. The motion should be structured as follows: "I motion to extend the questioning period by (state by what amount of time, usually by 1 minute or 30 seconds)." The motion must then be seconded and voted upon by the chamber. If it receives a majority of the votes in the chamber, then it is passed.
- Presiding Officers are required to follow standard recency/precedence procedures. First priority is given to speakers who have given the fewest speeches. Between speakers who have given the same number of speeches, the speaker who has spoken the least recently is given priority. Before recency is established, ties must be broken randomly. **Standing time will NOT be used during the rounds.**
- Recency, precedence, and questions reset between sessions.
- To end the session, a motion to close Congress must be passed. The motion should be structured as follows: "I move for the previous question." or "I motion to close Congress." The motion must then be seconded and voted upon by the chamber. If it receives a majority of the votes in the chamber, then it is passed.
- Legislation may not be debated between sessions. If debate begins on a bill in one session, it must end in the same session and may not be continued to other sessions.
- The use of any electronic devices such as laptop computers, iPads, and/or cell phones during Congressional debate rounds is not permitted.
- All competitors must be polite and respectful to each other in the rounds and outside of them.

**THE YOUNG GENIUS STAFF WILL DISQUALIFY  
ANY STUDENT THAT DOES NOT COMPLY  
WITH THESE RULES.**

# HELPFUL PHRASES AND TERMINOLOGY

**Make a motion** – “I move that (or to)…” or “I motion to…”

**Second a motion** – “Second!”

**Open debate on the current issue** – “I move/motion to open Congress.”

**Divide the house** – “I motion to split Congress.

**Leave the room** (toilet, drink water, etc.) – “I motion for personal privilege. To leave the room.” *The chamber does not need to vote on this motion, it is up to the discretion of the Presiding Officer.*

**Coming back into the room** – (wait outside the door until the speaker is done talking and the questioning time is complete) open the door and say, “Permission to enter the chamber.” Wait for the Presiding Officer to grant you permission to enter the chamber.

**Ask about an error** – “Motion! Point of Order…”

**Address the Presiding Officer if you would like to bring up a discrepancy or an issue** (like the PO only picking students from his/her school to speak) “I motion to address the PO.”

**Table** – “I move to table the legislation.”

**Close debate on the current issue** – “I move/motion for the previous question.” or “I move/motion to close Congress.”

**Presiding Officer/Chair:** the leader of a legislative assembly who runs its meetings by recognizing members to speak or move. Also called the “presiding officer,” or “P.O.” Modeled after the Speaker of the House, or the Vice President or President *pro tempore* of the Senate.

**Chamber:** the group of students in a single room.

**Cross-examination:** period where the members of the assembly ask individual questions of the speaker. Multiple-part (or two-part) questions are not allowed because they take time from other members who may wish to question the speaker.

**Divide the House:** division of the house in parliamentary procedure refers to a vote. However, the motion to divide the house in student congress is more commonly used to determine how many speakers wish to speak on each side of a bill or resolution.

**Docket:** the complete packet of legislation (as titles or full text) distributed by a tournament.

**Floor:** when a member has the full attention of the assembly to speak (also refers to the area where the assembly meets, where its members speak, and where it conducts its business).

**Legislation:** a specific, written proposal (in the form of a “bill” or “resolution”) made by a member or committee for assembly to debate.

**Leading Question:** any question that begins with a preface (“according to the *New York Times*...”) or suggests the answer or contains the information the examiner is looking for (“wouldn’t you agree that this bill would...”).

**Motion:** a formal proposal to an assembly to take a certain action.

**Open Podium:** refers to a situation when the order of speeches does not matter; for example, only affirmative speakers will be giving speeches.

**Priority or Precedence:** standard rule in most leagues (including NSDA and NCFL), which requires the presiding officer to choose speakers who have spoken least (or not at all).

**Recency:** widely-used system (not a rule NCFL or NFL), where the presiding officer not only employs precedence, but also selects speakers based on who has spoken least recently (or earlier).

**Standing Time or “Longest Standing”:** denotes when students first seek recognition to speak; those who were standing earlier but were not called on initially will be recognized before students who wait until later in the debate to stand.

**Resolution:** an expression of conviction, or value belief of an assembly, which may urge, request or suggest further action by another decision-making authority or amend the Constitution.

**Bill:** type of legislation that describes the details of how a policy would be enacted, if voted into law by the assembly.

**Table:** to put a piece of legislation aside and move on without voting on the legislation.

**Voting:** there are three types of votes in congress:

- Voice Vote : the most efficient but least accurate. “All those in favor say ‘Aye,’ opposed say ‘Nay’.
- Standing Vote : More accurate than a voice vote and the most common manner of voting in congress. Students will raise their hands or stand up.

**Yield:** an action in which a member is called on to speak but declines recognition thus yielding his time to another member who wishes to speak. Members who yield should lose their standing time.

## **YOUNG GENIUS CONGRESS DOCKET ORDER:**

1. A Resolution to Mandate Extended Producer Responsibility for the Petrochemical Industry
2. A Resolution to Create a Two-Track American Public School Education System
3. A Bill to Rebuild our Failing Water System



# A RESOLUTION TO MANDATE EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY

**Adapted from the Udall, Lowenthal Outline of Legislation to  
Tackle our Plastic Waste Pollution Crisis**

1. Whereas, the growing reliance on plastic products for packaging has created a human
2. health and environmental crisis with an estimated 40% of plastic waste items
3. designed as single-use; and
4. Whereas, the current level of plastic litter and debris is threatening our waterways, wildlife,
5. and food chain, with experts estimating that 300,000 metric tons of plastic waste
6. from the U.S. pollute the ocean every year, which is equivalent to about 65 dump
7. trucks of plastic waste per day; and
8. Whereas, the current rate of plastic production is expected to double by 2030; and
9. Whereas, under the current system, there is no incentive for producers to reduce and reuse
10. plastic, or to use recycled plastics; now, therefore, be it
11. Resolved, by the Congress here assembled, that the United States Federal Government
12. implement a program of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) on the
13. Petrochemical Industry, mandating producers be required to design, manage, and
14. finance programs for end-of-life management of their products and packaging as
15. a condition of sale.

## A RESOLUTION TO CREATE A TWO-TRACK AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

1.       Whereas,       hundreds of thousands of positions in skilled trades industries, including welders,
2.                       electricians, machinists, etc. remain vacant; and
  
3.       Whereas,       middle-skill jobs account for 53 percent of United States' labor market, but only
4.                       43 percent of the country's workers are trained to the middle-skill level; and
  
5.       Resolved,       by the Congress here assembled, that the United States Federal Government
6.                       instate a nation-wide academic test for all students in the public school system
7.                       which will be levied at the grade 10 level that will assess their critical thinking s
8.                       kills and academic subject mastery.
- 9.
10.                      Those students who do not receive a passing score will be placed on a track to
11.                      advance them towards middle-skill and skilled trades jobs training, prepaing these
12.                      students to attend trades schools and middle-skill jobs training programs after
13.                      high school rather than universities.
- 14.
15.                      Funding for this program will be sourced under the Carl D. Perkins Career and
16.                      Technical Education Act.

# A BILL TO INVEST \$600B TO REBUILD OUR FAILING WATER SYSTEM

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

1. SECTION 1: The water infrastructure of the US, no longer considered acceptable, must be
2. rebuilt and upgraded to prevent further leaks and contamination.
3. SECTION 2: The water infrastructure of the United States includes dams, reservoirs, water
4. treatment plants, pipes, and pumping stations, along with any other transportation method
5. necessary to carry water for use nationwide.
6. SECTION 3: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be responsible for overseeing the
7. implementation of this bill.
8.       A. The total money invested is \$600B in \$30B increments added to the Federal Budget
9.       January 1 of every year
10.       B. The money will then be allocated to regions determined to have the most need for
11.       repair, as decided by the EPA in the manner with which they see fit.
12.       C. The money will be used to gather data on the status of the infrastructure, and then
13.       by physically repairing the infrastructure gradually.
14.       D. The \$30B can be taken from the military budget, or any other budget exceeding its
15.       necessary amount in proportion to the rest of the budget breakdown.
16. SECTION 4: This proposal will be implemented over a 20 year period, with the first \$30 billion
17. increment issued January 1, 2020.
18. SECTION 5: All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.