

2021
Martin Luther King Jr. Invitational
James Logan High School
Congressional Debate
Procedures, Rules, and Schedule:

**30TH
ANNUAL**

**JAMES LOGAN HIGH SCHOOL
FORENSICS SPEECH & DEBATE
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
INVITATIONAL 2021**

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MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE RULES AND PROCEDURES

*Welcome to Congressional Debate at the Martin Luther King Jr. Tournament hosted by James Logan Forensics! We are excited for a great weekend. This year's tournament will obviously look different in many ways but some of the biggest changes come in the area of Congressional Debate. We are honored to offer a bid to the Tournament of Champions to all students who place in the **Top 16** at the tournament. This was due in part to the overall success of the 2019 MLK tournament as we implemented enhancements to the structure and format of our Congressional Debate offering and we are looking forward to building on that success this year!*

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As we strive to become one of the nation's premier Congressional Debate tournaments, we've made some significant modifications and improvements to the event.

- 1) We no longer offer cross entry (both Speech & Debate events) for any student that is entered in Congressional Debate, as we will operate under TOC Congress guidelines for round times.*
- 2) Our schedule for Congress is now more student and judge oriented and provides more speaking opportunities per round, as well as longer down times between rounds.
See schedule below*
- 3) We are striving to provide a Semi-final & Final Rounds judging pool of fully vetted (for their Congressional Debate experience), handpicked, and hired judges. Our goal is to be the first TOC Bid Tournament in the nation to offer this exclusive level of evaluation to our competitors in their out rounds of competition.*
- 4) We are also piloting a new, more equitable & fair, final round experience. For details on how this exclusive new final round parliamentary change will be implemented please see Sessions & Chambers, Rule 1.3 below.*

Fairness and equity have been the driving force behind the MLK Invitational Tournament for the past 30 years. We are excited to continue to push the envelope by pioneering new ideas and policies that we hope the whole circuit will appreciate, as they are based on feedback that we have received from multiple student competitors and Congressional Debate coaches from around the country. We take great pride in our tournament experience, and especially in this event, and our hope is that every student finishes our tournament with a profound sense of validation and pride in their overall experience. We hope you'll join us on MLK weekend for what should be a fantastic showcase of Congressional Debate!

-The Martin Luther King Jr. Congressional Debate Tabstaff

The rules below are consistent with the guidelines and standards suggested by the Tournament of Champions and the National Speech and Debate Association. Any tournament-based discrepancies will be outlined below. We welcome all of your questions as we approach the tournament.

1.0 SESSIONS & CHAMBERS

1.1 Number of Sessions: The tournament will consist of three preliminary sessions, one semi-final session, and a final session. Based on the number of entries, we reserve the right to change the number of elimination rounds, but we do not anticipate this being necessary.

1.2 Length of non-final sessions: The preliminary sessions will be two and a half hours each. The semi-final sessions will be allocated three hours, with the expectation that the chambers will adjourn once all competitors have given two speeches.

1.3 Length of Final Session: The final session will have no time limit.

There will be three (3) debatable pieces of legislation for the final round and a docket of two (2) pieces of legislation will be debated in round. EVERY competitor will be allocated one (1) speech PER piece of legislation on the accepted final round docket. Students will have the option to forfeit any/all of their speeches, should they choose to, and those forfeitures will be documented on the record by the round's parliamentarian. No competitor may speak more than once on the same piece of legislation. The round must adjourn once all of the allocated, non-forfeited, speeches for every competitor have been delivered.

During the final session, the chamber may take no more than a total of ten (10) minutes of recess time.

For every full three (3) minutes that the chamber sits in dead time (*Defined as time when the chamber is waiting for someone to seek the floor, triggered only when the presiding officer has called for a speech and no has sought the floor, meaning the chamber must sit and wait for a speaker. Normal parliamentary procedures are not considered dead time*), one (1) speech will be deducted from the total number of allocated speeches remaining in the round. For example, if there were twelve (12) speeches allocated to each piece of legislation on the docket and three (3) minutes of deadtime is reached on the first piece of legislation, the designated tournament official would deduct one speech from the remaining available speech pool. For every subsequent three (3) minutes of deadtime, another speech will be deducted until no speeches remain in the availability pool. Should all available speeches be exhausted due to dead time forfeitures, then the Previous Question shall automatically be triggered for that piece of legislation and either the chamber would open debate on the remaining legislation on the docket, or the round will automatically be adjourned.

We do not anticipate this actually occurring in the final round of a TOC Bid invitational, but we have established this rule to prevent the unlikely scenario of the round going on in perpetuity. Either the parliamentarian, or a designated tournament official, will be monitoring the entire round to identify occurrences of dead time in the round. They will verbally notify all competitors in the round when the dead time tracking process officially begins and if the full three minutes has been reached triggering the forfeiture process referenced above.

These rules are subject to change, prior to the start of the tournament, by the tournament directors to ensure a fair and balanced experience for everyone. Once the tournament has begun these rules shall not be circumvented nor amended.

***We realize that the rules outlined in Section 1.3 are unusual and may be controversial, so we decided to explain our rationale. For a long time, Congressional Debate has operated off of time limits rather than a designated number of speeches, which has traditionally set it apart from every other event under the Speech & Debate umbrella. In preliminary rounds this makes sense, as there are always some competitors who choose not to speak on every piece of legislation, usually resulting in everyone getting to speak at least a few times who wants to.*

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Out-rounds are a different story. In almost every major tournament, at least a few competitors in elimination rounds are shut out of giving an equal number of speeches, which greatly impedes their possibility for advancement in the tournament.

*As has been demonstrated at virtually every major tournament for over a decade, competitors who get fewer speeches tend to receive lower ranks. To make things worse, the competitors who get fewer speeches tend to be from smaller, less advantaged, schools who may lack the “clout” to get their students and allies elected to become presiding officers in these highly competitive invitational out-rounds. As stated in the introduction to this packet, the Martin Luther King Jr. Invitational strives to maximize equity and fairness at our tournament. We believe that at a tournament such as this, with bids to the Tournament of Champions on the line, a student’s rank should not be impacted by the random (at best) draw of who gets more speeches. We aim to attack that problem by ensuring that every student has an equal chance to participate, as they would in any other Speech & Debate event, and preventing the clock, or unscrupulous presiding officers, from tanking a competitor’s chances. That being said, we call upon the competitors in this tournament to be prepared to speak early on each piece of legislation, and to maximize efficiency in the round, to ensure that we minimize any potential occurrences of dead time that could result in loss of participation by any of our competitors.***

1.4 Assignment to Preliminary Chambers: Students will be assigned to preliminary chambers ideally of a size ranging from 10-13 students, never to exceed 16. Where possible, students from the same school will be placed evenly in chambers. However, students may be placed together to leave chambers open such that judges from that school can be assigned without conflicts.

2.0 LEGISLATION

2.1 Legislation to be Debated: There will be three (3) pieces of legislation assigned to every round. The chamber may decide the order in which, i.e. the round specific docket, they will debate the legislation in each round.

2.2 Publishing of Legislation: The legislation docket will be published on the tournament website by December 15, 2020. Because of this, we expect that there will be no issue with students being prepared to give sponsorship and first negative speeches.

3.0 ESTABLISHING THE AGENDA

3.1 Determining the Agenda: Prior to the beginning of each session, each chamber will act as a committee of the whole to determine the order of legislation to be debated in the round. The chamber may do this by unanimous consent or by voting on multiple proposed agendas.

3.2 Freedom of Debate: Suspensions of the rules to allow for changes to the agenda are not permitted. Once the chamber has set an agenda for the round, they may not deviate from that agenda. This ensures fair competition. Debate on a bill will continue until time expires in the session during which it began, or the previous question is called, whichever comes first. **There is no minimum or maximum time (i.e. no one-hour limit) for each agenda item to be debated.**

4.0 ELECTION OF PRESIDING OFFICERS AND SESSION STRUCTURE

4.1 Election Procedures: The parliamentarian will conduct elections for presiding officers via secret ballot. Each student within the chamber may cast one vote. Voting will continue, dropping the lowest vote-getter(s), until one person receives a majority. The presiding officer election shall be held at the beginning of each session.

4.2 Progression of Speeches and Cross-Examination: Debate on each bill or resolution will begin with a call for a three (3) minute authorship speech by its signed author, or in their absence by a representative from their school. An

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author or student(s) from the author's school may decline to stand for this speech. In the absence of such a speech, the presiding officer will call for any representative to deliver the first affirmative speech, functionally sponsoring the legislation. Following the delivery of the first affirmative speech, the chair will allow for two (2) minutes of cross-examination of the speaker. Following the questioning, the chair will ask for a speech in opposition to the bill. This speech will be three (3) minutes in length followed by a two (2) minute period of cross-examination. All subsequent speeches shall be three (3) minutes in length followed by a one (1) minute cross-examination period. Cross-examination in all rounds will be by direct questioning. The chair will yield time to members of the chamber wishing to cross-examine the speaker in blocks of thirty (30) seconds based on recency and followed by direct clash (i.e. prioritization of speakers who may have been directly refuted during the previous speech).

4.3 Final Appeal: For each piece of legislation, the Sponsor/Author of the bill will also have a ninety (90) second Final Appeal (AFF) speech at the end of legislative debate. The Final Appeal is triggered when the chamber moves to previous question. The first Negative speaker WILL NOT be allowed to give a Final Appeal (NEG) speech in response.

4.4 Time Signals: The tournament strongly suggests that presiding officers use placards to signal the amount of time remaining in a speech or cross-examination block.

4.5 One-Sided Debate: In the unlikely absence of a first affirmative speech, debate may also begin on a new piece of legislation with a negative speech. There will be a limit of three (3) consecutive affirmative or negative speeches that can be given.

4.6 Recognizing Speakers: There will be no preset recency or precedence for this tournament. When more than one debater seeks the floor, the presiding officer must follow the precedence/recency method, that is:

- First, recognize students who have not spoken during the session. Choose between these students at random.
- Next, recognize students who have spoken fewer times during the session.
- Finally, recognize students who spoke earlier (least recently) during the session.

4.7 Penalty for Speeches Exceeding Time Limits: Any regular floor speech that extends more than ten (10) seconds beyond the maximum speaking time of three (3) minutes shall be penalized one full point on the speech score by the judge evaluating the session (does not need to affect their in round ranking). The Presiding Officer is required to keep accurate time of each speech and report it to the judges when the speaker has finished. However, judges and parliamentarians should consider the possibility of online lag when determining penalties for time violations.

4.8 Precedence and the Legislative Day: Within each session precedence/recency do not reset to ensure that all students in a chamber have opportunities to speak and receive evaluation from the scorers. When each new session begins precedence/recency will be reset.

5.0 OTHER NOTES OF DECORUM

5.1 Amendments: Legislators may submit amendments to the Presiding Officer in the chat section of the online platform. A motion to amend is necessary to consider the written amendment; such a motion is in order any time after the first affirmative speech. Once the motion is made, the Parliamentarian decides if the amendment is germane. If the amendment is deemed non-germane, the chair rules it out-of-order and the amendment process stops. If the chair rules the amendment germane, they shall read the contents of the amendment to the chamber. A 1/3 second of the members present in the chamber is required to debate the amendment. If the chamber votes a second, debate on the amendment commences immediately. Legislators may make a motion to table or call the previous question on the amendment at any time. The first speech on the amendment is a sponsorship speech. The chair determines speaker recognition for the sponsorship speech based on priority; the author of the amendment is not guaranteed the sponsorship speech. The sponsor accepts responsibility for the mechanics of the amendment and yields to two (2) minutes of cross-examination. All amendment speeches receive a score and count towards priority.

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A majority vote is necessary for the chamber to adopt the amendment (this after a 2/3 vote has been achieved to call previous question on the amendment).

5.2 Voting by Unanimous Consent: When a motion is unlikely to be contested, it is appropriate for the Chair to call for unanimous consent by asking, “are there any objections” before executing the motion. Members may then respond by announcing “objection” to the chamber. This is not an automatic recognition to explain the substance of that objection. Proper expression of your objection is to then vote “Nay” in the subsequent division of the chamber. It is imperative that Presiding Officers cease the inefficient practice of allowing explanations of objections ad nauseam.

5.3 Personal Privileges: Competitors may request the privilege to turn off their cameras or leave the “chamber” by messaging the presiding officer in the chat section of the online platform. The presiding officer reserves the right to limit the number of competitors permitted to leave the chamber at one time to prevent abuses.

5.4 Designation as a House of Representatives or a Senate: The MLK tournament strives to be a contest with the highest standards of behavior at all times among attending students. Debate modeling the work of the United States Congress should be enjoyable, but also taken seriously and engaged with professionally. All preliminary chambers are designated as a House of Representatives, while semi-final chambers and the final chamber are designated as Senates. A member of a Senate is always referred to as “Senator,” while a member of a House of Representatives is always referred to as “Representative.” The Presiding Officer of a Senate is addressed as President, while the Presiding Officer of a House of Representatives is addressed as Speaker. The Presiding Officer is responsible for enforcing proper decorum.

5.5 Advocates in Good Faith: A debater may not speak on both sides of the same legislation but may speak as many times on the same piece of legislation as their priority permits and the chamber allows before calling the question.

6.0 JUDGE AND PARLIAMENTARIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Number of Judges: Two qualified judges will serve for each preliminary session, five for semi-final sessions, and nine for the final session. There will be one parliamentarian serving in each session from prelims through finals. A judge will not be assigned to evaluate a student from their school(s).

6.2 Instructions to Judges: Judges should rank the students as "legislators" and not merely as "speakers," considering their argumentative skill, oratorical skill and overall effectiveness as a leader in the chamber. Brief guidelines are specified on the speech ballots.

6.3 Judges' Scoring of Speeches and Preferential Rankings: In the preliminary session, each judge will score every speech on a scale of 1-6 points (6 is best. Only give scores of 1-3 in the event of an especially offensive speech or question). At the end of each session, the two judges will each independently rank the top eight students who advanced the debate most effectively (1st is best). All unranked students will receive a rank of ninth. The 1-6 speech score and the 1-8 independent ranking are separate, one doesn't necessarily need to influence the other. The Presiding Officer may be ranked in the top eight and should be if they provide outstanding service to the chamber. All judges will be instructed that they must consider the Presiding Officer and award speech scores for the equivalent of two speeches..

6.4 Parliamentarians: A Parliamentarian will be appointed to serve continuously for the three preliminary sessions. The Parliamentarians ensure order, allowing the chamber to run itself but correcting significant procedural errors that affect fairness.

6.5 Parliamentarians' Preferential Rankings: Once at the end of all preliminary sessions, the semi-final session, or the final session as appropriate, the parliamentarian will rank all of the legislators in the chamber. The parliamentarian's top eight rankings will be included in the calculation of which legislators advance from each chamber, and his/her rankings beyond eighth will be used as a possible tiebreaker.

7.0 THE SEMI-FINAL & FINAL SESSIONS

7.1 Number of Students Advancing: Consistent with TOC guidelines, the tournament intends to advance no more than one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of all preliminary contestants to the semi-final session. The number of students advancing is dependent on the number of preliminary chambers and the optimum number of students in each of the semi-final chambers. The exact number of students advancing from each preliminary chamber will be announced before the tournament begins.

7.2 Determining Advancing Students: Each individual preliminary chamber is tabulated independent of the others. Legislators with the lowest cumulative rank total [each judge's' top eight (8) plus the parliamentarian's top eight(8)] advance to the next level of competition. We will use NSDA procedures to break all ties. Ranks do not carry forward from preliminary sessions to the semi-final session, or from the semi-final session to the final session.

7.3 Balancing the Semi-final Chambers: Advancing students shall be assigned to one of the semi-final chambers with an effort made to disperse students from the same preliminary chamber, and balance the strength of competition based on preliminary rankings. Students from the same school will be evenly placed in different semi-final chambers to avoid conflicts.

7.4 Judges and the Parliamentarian: At least five (5) judges will be assigned to the semi-final session and will be responsible for evaluating the participants' speeches. At least nine (9) judges will be assigned to the final session.

7.5 Presiding Officer: Each parliamentarian and/or the Director of Congress will act as the temporary presiding officer of the semifinal and final sessions respectively, accepting nominations for the Presiding Officer. In semi-finals the presiding officer election and scoring will mirror prelims and finals. In finals, the members will vote immediately after each nominee has the opportunity to address the chamber. The top two vote-getters will each preside for one half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the round, with the expectation that they will give one speech in the other half as a debater. The first half presiding officer will have top precedence in the second half as they have not spoken at all in that round. The top vote-getter will be allowed to decide which half of the round they preside in. The first half is all debate on the first piece of legislation and the second half is all debate on the second piece of legislation.

7.6 Legislation and Authorship Speeches: Tournament directors have selected the legislation to be debated in the semi-final and final sessions. The chamber will meet as a committee of the whole to choose the order in which the legislation will be debated. There are no authorship speeches in the semi-final or final sessions. Any student may give the sponsorship speech.

8.0 ETHICAL AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

8.1 Observers: There will be no observers allowed for the preliminary and semi-final sessions, but the final session will be live-streamed.

8.2 Electronic Devices and Internet Usage: Students are allowed to utilize the internet for research purposes during the round itself. While in session, debaters are forbidden to communicate with any observer or person outside the chamber. If it is found that a competitor has done this, they are subject to disqualification.

8.3 Ethical Use of Evidence: The tournament will utilize the National Speech and Debate Association's evidence rules found beginning on page 38 of its *High School Unified Manual*. The tournament directors will rule on any appeal of a parliamentarian's decision.

8.4 General Tournament Rules: Beyond the rules and procedures specific to Congressional debate outlined above, James Logan High School Forensics also requires that you observe the following general standards of conduct.

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- Inappropriate language will not be allowed.
- Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.
- All school district policies, local, and state laws regarding harassment must be observed.
- All school district policies, local, and state laws prohibiting smoking (including vaping), alcohol, and weapons must be observed.

8.5 Penalties: Consequences for infractions may result in any or all of the following actions at the sole discretion of tournament directors whose decisions are final.

- Disqualification from the tournament
- Loss of participation points
- Forfeiture of awards
- School administrators being notified of any misconduct
- Any additional consequences deemed appropriate to the severity of the infraction

Schools will be held financially responsible for all damages incurred.

9.0 EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

9.1 Equipment Recommendations:

- A laptop, netbook, or tablet to participate in online debate.
 - Device must have a camera capability.
- Ensure that the camera and microphone are permissioned to run on your web browser
 - Google Chrome is recommended
- An external microphone or headset with microphone included to ensure you can be heard.
 - Headphones (e.g. corded cellphone ear buds or gaming headphones) attached to the computer via audio jack or USB.
 - Ear pods (e.g. Samsung Galaxy buds, AirPods) connected to the device.
 - Please note the bluetooth devices may create a delay of voice and video connection.

9.2 Competition Location Recommendations

- A private space free of external distraction (e.g. bedroom, living room, classroom).
 - We understand that ambient noise may come through during competition.
- Setting up in a desk area with comfortable seating and a solid background behind you (e.g. wall, curtain, sheet).
- Lighting that allows the speaker to be seen on screen.
 - Recommend that you avoid setting up in front of windows or large light sources so as not be backlit.
 - Congressional Debate does not require or depend on media grade lighting.
- **Judges Note:** Unless it is a case of extreme distraction (e.g. loud noises, extreme glare from lighting), scorers are not to consider the student's surroundings as part of their scoring rubrik.

9.3 In-Chamber Details

- All participants are required to be on camera unless instructed otherwise by the parliamentarian or a tournament official (unless exercising a Point of Personal Privilege).
 - Participants are defined as Students, Parliamentarian, and Scorers.
 - If there is difficulty with the on camera requirement, competitors should report issues to the Parli or directly to the Tab Staff.
- If a Chamber participant is required to go off camera:
 - **Students:** Please notify the P.O. using Robert's Rule of Order verbally or through the chat feature.
 - **Parli and Scorer:** Please use the appropriate discretion and notify each other through the chat should something come up.

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- When going off camera, please mute the camera and microphone.
- When not speaking, all competitors should have their microphone muted.
- Placards - Student placards must be visible to the chamber (competitors, scorers, and Parli).
 - Tournament recommends printing a placard in black ink, all caps, in at least a fifty (50) pt font.
 - If printing is not available, competitors can create a placard using black marker, in all caps.
- Service Outages or Equipment Issues - It is expected that all tech and logins be tested at least the week before the tournament. However, we understand that things happen. Should a speaker lose connection with the platform, the Chamber shall give them a five (5) minute reconnection period.
 - **If the reconnect time exceeds (five) 5 minutes**, the Chamber should move on. The Parli should notify the Tournament Staff about the issue. The Congressional Debate Tab Staff will determine on how to proceed (e.g. recoup the speech).
- Sit or stand or stand for speeches?
 - There is no “required” way to deliver the speech. Competitors may choose to deliver in a traditional (standing) or commentary (seated) style.
 - Although there is no requirement for delivery, scorers may take this into account for the effectiveness of the delivery for scoring purposes.

9.4 Pre-Tournament Checklist:

- Confirm competitors, parlis, and scorers can access the online format
- Test audio and visual compatibility of electronic devices with the online format
- Test run a speech on screen
- Print/create placard and test visibility on screen.
- It is strongly recommended that competitors do not wait until the day of the tournament to test their equipment. An excessive delay in Chamber start time is a detriment to the tournament schedule

These rules and guidelines were derived from that of the Tournament of Champions, National Speech and Debate Association, Glenbrooks Speech and Debate Invitational, and the Yale Speech and Debate Invitational.

We look forward to a great weekend of Congressional Debate!

-The Martin Luther King Jr Congressional Debate Tabstaff

MLK Congressional Debate Schedule (All Times are Pacific Standard Time)

Friday, January 15th

9:00 a.m. Congress Opening Meeting (All debaters and judges should be present)

10:00 a.m. Round 1

2:00 p.m. Round 2

Saturday, January 16th

9:00 a.m. Round 3

2:00 p.m. Semi-Finals

Sunday, January 17th

9:00 am Finals