

Incubate.Debate

Dear Coaches,

You and your students are cordially invited to Incubate Debate's first Congressional Classic via Zoom on **Saturday, September 26th (registration deadline: Monday, September 21st)**.

Our tournament is exclusively a congress tournament, and **is free to all schools and students. There is absolutely no cost to participate.** Our tournament is a bit different. Here's how:

- **No judging obligations:** The tournament will supply all judges. Judges include college professors, think tank researchers, professionals, and former competitors (at least four years out). Coaches are free to spectate, but your attendance at the tournament is not required.
- **Limited legislation:** To ensure students aren't swamped with a larger bill packet (and consequently can spend more time researching and preparing), there will be a total of 3 bills for 3 preliminary sessions (one bill per session) and 1 bill for the super session. Bills will be written by tournament staff, and will be released 2 full weeks before the tournament.
- **Direct questioning in all rounds:** Like crossfire in public forum, direct questioning allows students to ask multiple back-to-back questions, allowing for deeper debate. After the authorship and first negation speech, there are four 30-second direct questioning slots. After every other speech, there are two 30-second slots.
- **Closing appeals:** Both the authorship and first negation speakers will deliver a 90-second closing appeal speech at the end of debate for a given bill. Similar to final focus in Public Forum, the closing appeal should address and refute arguments made throughout the debate, not advance new ones.
- **Non-competitor presiding officers:** Non-competitor presiding officers (P.O.) are former congressional debaters adept at presiding. In a virtual setting, it's difficult for a P.O. to conduct their duties and even harder to be recognized by judges for their contribution. Our experienced presiding officers will run fast, efficient, and fair chambers.
- **Workshop:** We are offering a free virtual pre-tournament workshop to each school registered for the tournament beginning the day bills are released (Sep 10th). Simply reach out via email to schedule a time that works best for you and your students. Additionally, all students who compete at the tournament are invited to a free 4-hour (there will be breaks!) virtual Congress workshop on Saturday, Oct 3rd via Zoom.

Students in extemp & public forum are encouraged to compete, as well!

Why public forum debaters?

- All sessions will include direct questioning that allows multiple back-to-back questions for 30-seconds. Similar to crossfire in PF.
- Closing appeals, which guarantees the author and first negation speaker the opportunity to address and refute other arguments for 90-seconds at the end of each debate. Similar to final focus in PF.
- Many in PF rightly take issue with too many bills in a congress chamber, many of which are never even debated. As such, students will be given a total of 4 bills (1 bill per session) a full two weeks before the tournament. Students will only have to prep bills that they will actually debate.

Why extempers?

- Like extemp questions, all bills (written by tournament staff) will reflect current events, allowing extempers to leverage their existing knowledge. Extempers are also encouraged to speak without a pad if they'd like.
- Equal number of foreign and domestic bills.

Dates:

Tournament: Saturday, Sep 26th

Registration Deadline: Monday, Sep 21st (5pm)

Bill Packet and Tournament Schedule Released: Thursday, Sep 10th (8am)

Final Notes:

Chambers will be released at the tournament. Novice and varsity will compete in the same division. The outstanding novice in each chamber will be recognized.

Each school can register 6 students, but the pre-tournament workshop is open to all students from a team.

For those students who don't yet have formal debate attire, we have blazers, blouses, shirts, ties, pants, etc that we can ship directly to your students for free.

Please reach out with any questions!

James T. Fishback

james@incubatedebate.org