**Rules for Revolutionary Rhetoric’s Congress Event**

**Introduction**

Thank you for reviewing the rules for this unique version of a Congressional event. **These rules are subject to change as errors are caught and issues are brought to our attention,** but there is no expectation of any broad changes to the overall format. A change log is on the next page.

While this is a long document, if you have experience with Congress in other settings, you will likely see that much of this will be familiar to you. It is also long in the hope of trying to address as many scenarios and questions as possible.

Some of the biggest changes are related to the goal that, in this tournament, every aspect of the Congressional event impacts the scoring outcome.

* The quality of legislation that each entrant puts in will be read and judged as part of the overall score. This should give competitors added motivation to write strong bills.
* The committee process is now much more formalized with structured meetings and assignment of entrants to committees by the tournament. The committee process constitutes part of the overall score. Getting a bill docketed will also impact a competitor’s score positively, not just allow them an authorship speech.
* We are adding political parties to (the Loyalists and the Patriots) to the mix. The success of the party as a group can impact scores. But being too partisan can result in gridlock in committee and in the House which can hurt all competitors’ scores.
* Whether a competitor’s their bill passes, fails, or dies in committee, will now impact their scoring outcome. Votes have meaning.
* Presiding officers in committee and in the full chamber will be adult non-competitors who will also be the parli.
* There will be a time limit for the committee or full chamber to consider each bill. All bills on the docket WILL be heard.

A lot of these changes will impact how competitors strategize their approach this event.

Will this help my bill? What about my party? Am I creating gridlock? Am I being too bipartisan to avoid gridlock? These are just some of the issues entrants will wrestle with. And as always there are speeches, questions, motions, and amendments at the center of this event.

This is going to be a lot of fun. If you have any questions about these rules, just email me at brett@richmondforum.org.

**Change Log**

9/12: Initial version loaded.

9/17: Changes:

* Rubric Overview document updated to add bonus points to the total points available and otherwise reflect relevant changes made to the rules document.
* There will now be three committees per chamber, rather than four. This should reduce some of the pre-event preparation required while making individual committees more robust. All committees now must pass out a minimum of three bills to avoid gridlock. Brief is also updated to reflect this.
* Most bonus scoring percentages have been reconstituted as points for ease of calculation.
* Rule numbering has been added to make any discussions about the rules easier to reference back.
* Adds information that the depending on the judge pool for the full chamber session, the speaker/parli may be the same for both sessions on Saturday or may switch between the morning and afternoon. Also includes how that will be handed for balloting.
* Adds one additional criterion for judging legislation to evaluate the bill’s potential to stimulate debate, discussion and clash. Also clarifies that scores are rounded UP if averaging results in a partial point (like a score of 25.5).
* Minimum number of speeches expected from competitors are clarified in 6.8 and in
* Other minor clarifications and typographical corrections.

1. **Chamber, Committee and Party Assignments**
   1. **Chamber assignment:** Each competitor[[1]](#footnote-1) will be assigned by the tournament to one of the four chambers.
   2. **Committee assignment:** Within each chamber, a competitor will be assigned by the tournament to sit on one of the three standing committees.
   3. **Party assignment:** Within each chamber, a competitor will be assigned by the tournament to one of the two political parties.
   4. **Distribution of competitors:** Tournament staff will endeavor to the extent possible to ensure that students from the same school are not seated in the same chamber and if in the same chamber, not on the same party.
      1. No two students from the same school may sit on one committee.
   5. **Requests for reassignment:** No requests for reassignments or trades will be considered by the tournament except for the most urgent of circumstances.
      1. Coaches are the only individuals allowed to make a request on behalf of their competitors.
      2. Urgent circumstances are for issues such as chamber accessibility, and other issues that would impact the ability of a competitor to fully participate in the event if they remained in their current assignments.
      3. Please contact the tournament director with any requests no later than 10PM on Thursday, October 10. There are NO exceptions.
      4. The decision of the tournament director is final.
2. **Judge and Clerk Needs**
   1. **Judge roles:** Judges may be called upon to handle different roles on Friday and Saturday
      1. 2 judges will be assigned to read and judge legislation submitted on Friday. (8 spots)
      2. 1 judge plus a 1 chair/parli will be assigned to each committee (24 spots)
      3. 2 judges for each chamber plus a Speaker/parli for each chamber session (12 spots per session).
         1. Depending on the final pool of judges, the same Speaker/parli may chair BOTH sessions, or there may be different Speaker/parli for each session.
      4. Ideally, there will be one clerk in each committee and two clerks in the full session to assist the chair and Speaker with timing, recency, frequency, amendment tracking, as well as typical clerk duties.
3. **Parties**
   1. **Party profiles:** Students will be assigned to one of two political parties[[2]](#footnote-2) in this event:
      1. **Loyalists:** Loyalists generally support the British government position as put forth by the King, Parliament and the colonial Governor. They are loyal to the King and will generally not tolerate criticism of him or the Governor. They typically support British military forces, British imperialism, legislation that benefits Britain (if not unreasonably skewed against the colonies) and the Church of England. For the purposes of this competition, they are also more conservative on economic and social issues not directly related to Crown/Colony relations. For a Patriot to get a Loyalist to cross the aisle, they must persuade the Loyalist the bill has some benefits for the Loyalist point of view or amend their bill to gain Loyalist support without losing any of their Patriot members.
      2. **Patriots.** Patriots generally oppose the British position. While not openly disloyal to the King, they are willing to attack the Governor and the British Parliament in debate and in legislation. They want more colonial autonomy if not outright independence. For the purposes of this competition, they are also more liberal on economic and social issues not directly related to Crown/Colony relations. For a Loyalist to get a Patriot to cross the aisle, they must persuade the Patriot the bill has some benefits for the Patriot point of view or amend their bill to gain Patriot support without losing any of their Loyalist members.
   2. **Parties are evenly split:** Chambers and committees will be equally split[[3]](#footnote-3) between two parties, the Loyalists and the Patriots.
4. **Committee Jurisdiction**
   1. **Each House chamber has three committees.** Students will be assigned by the tournament to one of the three committees in their chamber:
      1. **Committee on Colonial Defense and Security** (6 members split evenly between the two parties). This committee deals with the defense and security of the colony. Jurisdiction includes:
         1. Goals for the creation, coordination, and operations of any potential colonial militia.
         2. Construction of fortifications, armories and magazines for local use in defense of the colony.
         3. Purchase of arms or defensive equipment for use by local militias.
         4. Local relations between Virginia and British military personal stationed in the colony.
         5. Defense of the colony against unfriendly Native American tribes.
         6. Combatting piracy.6
         7. Other bills that are ruled by the Chair to be germane to this committee.
      2. **Committee on Courts of Justice, Commerce and General Laws** (8 members split evenly between the two parties). This committee deals with the internal governmental operations of the colony unrelated to the other two committees. Jurisdiction includes:
         1. Criminal law, including penalties and jails.
         2. Law enforcement and colonial courts,
         3. Locally imposed (not British/London-imposed) taxation and spending.
         4. Local business and commerce, including labor laws.[[4]](#footnote-4)
         5. Construction of non-defense public works such as, but not limited to, roads, water and sanitation, buildings for local government operations, and public hospitals.
         6. Local laws related to agriculture, education, postal service, elections to positions in colonial government,
         7. Laws related to religion EXCEPT this committee may *not* hear bills concerning relations between Virginia and the Church of England.
         8. Any other bills that do not clearly fall under the jurisdiction of the other two committees.
   2. **Committee on Crown/Colonial Relations** (6 members split evenly between the two parties) This committee deals with relations between the colonists and Kingdom of Great Britain entities like the Governor, Parliament, the British military stationed locally, etc. Jurisdiction includes:
      * 1. Virginia’s response to any bills passed in the British parliament that impact the colonies.
        2. Relations between Virginia and other colonies of the Kingdom of Great Britain.[[5]](#footnote-5)
        3. The relationship between the governing bodies of the Kingdom of Great Britain and the colonies.
        4. Trade between Virginia and the Kingdom of Great Britain, and between Virginia and other British colonies.
        5. Alliances and relations with friendly Native American tribes.
        6. Relations with the Church of England.
        7. Other bills that are ruled by the Chair to be germane to this committee.
5. **Legislation**
   1. **Legislation will be scored:** In this tournament, the quality of legislation submitted makes up a portion of the competitor’s score.
   2. **Submission of legislation:** Every competitor is expected to submit one piece of legislation that is relevant to the committee they are assigned.
      1. There will be time to work on legislation at the tournament site prior to the submission deadline. In addition to any time competitors want to use on Thursday evening, a block of dedicated time for legislative drafting and speech writing has been designated for Friday morning.
      2. The deadline to submit legislation to the tournament is 12PM on Friday, October 11. There are no grace periods or extensions of this deadline for *any* circumstances.
      3. All legislation must be submitted electronically as a .pdf or .docx document to an email address to be provided once check-in for the tournament begins.
   3. **Subject matter limitations.** In addition to relevance to the committee the competitor is assigned to, all legislation must adhere to the following limitations:
      1. Legislation must relate to events, real or imagined,[[6]](#footnote-6) that would have occurred between 1770 and 1775, and be credible to the period’s technology and other realities.
      2. While specific costs and budgetary numbers are not expected, expenditures should be realistic in scope and likely costs.
      3. Additionally, the following subject matter will be prohibited in legislation for this competition:
         1. Legislation may NOT take up or mention the issue of enslavement[[7]](#footnote-7) in any form or fashion[[8]](#footnote-8).
         2. Legislation may NOT call for, imply or mention the concept of complete and total independence[[9]](#footnote-9) from the Kingdom of Great Britain.[[10]](#footnote-10)
   4. **Formatting:** Legislation submitted must be in the format laid out on pages 47 and 48 in the National Speech and Debate Association’s (NSDA) *High School Unified Manual (HSUM)* for 2024-2025 which is available [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hq7-DE6ls2ryVtOttxR4BNpRdP7xUbBr0M3SMYefek8/edit). Templates for these formats are available on the NSDA website [here](https://www.speechanddebate.org/legislation-templates/).
   5. **Scoring criteria:** Two judges will independently read and score each submitted piece of legislation in a separate location while the competition is occurring.
      1. Judge’s score will be based on the following factors:
         1. Is the legislation something that could be accomplished given the technological and historic limitations of the period?
         2. Is the legislation in line with the goals and beliefs of the competitor’s party?
         3. Is the legislation relevant to the committee assignment?
         4. Does the legislation discuss which government organizations are involved? Timing? A broad plan of action to implement? Any penalties involved? Any need to raise taxes and/or spend money?
         5. Is the legislation thought out and logical? Is it clear and well-written? Does it meet the form requirements?
         6. Does the bill offer meaningful opportunities for competitors to speak in both support and opposition to the bill?
      2. Each judge will give the legislation a score of 0-25 along the following lines:
         1. 0: Participant has no legislation submitted.
         2. 1-5: The bill is offensive and unacceptable—hate legislation or otherwise demonstrating contempt for the event and the participants. This score will also be given if the legislation clearly does not fall under the jurisdiction of the legislator’s assigned committee.
         3. 6-10: While non-offensive, the legislation is otherwise nonsensical or absurd showing little to no effort from the competitor.[[11]](#footnote-11)
         4. 11-15: Basic legislation without much detail or substance. Leaves many loopholes or unanswered questions.
         5. 16-20: Solid legislation. May have some flaws but demonstrates real effort to solve a problem or create a sound a law.
         6. 21-25: This is an amazing bill. Purpose is clear, solution is specific, form is perfect. Cannot be significantly improved in any way the judge can see.
      3. The two scores will be averaged to become the base legislation score. Any partial points from averaging will be rounded UP.
      4. The fate of the bill in committee will add bonus points and penalties.
         1. 0 bonus points: No bill submitted, or bill ruled not germane to the committee by the tournament director under Rule 6.17.
         2. 1 bonus point: Bill failed in committee with more than 50% “Nay” or was tabled and never taken up again.
         3. 2 bonus points: Bill failed on a 50/50 vote
         4. 4 bonus points: Bill passed but was amended.
         5. 5 bonus point: Bill passed in original form.
         6. All bonus points are reduced by 50% (rounded DOWN) if the committee did not pass the minimum number of bills to meet the goal in the rules.
      5. The fate of the bill in the full House chamber will add bonus points and penalties.
         1. 0 bonus points: No bill submitted, or bill ruled not germane to the committee by the tournament director under rule 6.17.
         2. 2 bonus points: Bill considered in committee but not passed
         3. 4 bonus points: Bill passed from committee but was not heard on the floor due to docketing limits
         4. 6 bonus points: Bill failed to pass or was tabled and never taken up again
         5. 8 bonus points: Bill passed with amendments
         6. 10 bonus points: Bill passed unamended
         7. All bonus points are reduced (rounded DOWN) by 50% if the chamber did not pass the minimum number of bills to meet the goal in the rules.
6. **Committee Procedure**
   1. **Committee purpose:** The goal of the committee process is to consider which bills under its jurisdiction will advance to the full chamber’s docket.
   2. **Chair and judge assignment:** Each committee will be chaired by a non-competitor assigned by the Tournament who will also serve as parliamentarian with a ballot. A second judge will also be assigned.
   3. **Clerk:** A clerk will be assigned to each committee. The clerk is responsible for assisting with tracking frequency and recency, keeping time, calling and recording the roll, and managing completed ballots. The clerk will bring the ballots to tabroom along with any other tournament supplies they were assigned.
   4. **No electronic devices in the committee room.** No electronic devices are allowed in the committee room for any competitor. Competitors may step out of the committee room if they need to use an electronic device for research.[[12]](#footnote-12)
      1. The tournament will provide clipboards to competitors to use as needed.
   5. **The committee room operates an open chamber:** No motion to have an open chamber is necessary. No motion to close the chamber will be in order.
      1. The chamber may be closed at the sole discretion of the chair if there is too much extraneous noise interfering with the proceedings.
   6. **Committee size and composition:** Each committee will have either six or eight members as noted in Section 4. Each committee will be equally split between the two parties.
      1. Given the even partisan make-up of the committees, bills can only come out through compromise and cross-aisle support. Competitors whose bills are passed by the committee will receive a bonus to their final competition score.[[13]](#footnote-13)
   7. **Bill passage goals:** Each committee has a goal to pass out a minimum three of bills to avoid penalties for being gridlocked.
   8. **Minimum number of speeches expected.** During the committee portion of the event, competitors are expected to give one authorship speech on the bill they submitted plus they are expected to speak on at least one other bill that comes before the committee
      1. Members may give more than the minimum number of speeches if they so desire and if time permits given recency and frequency.
      2. Speeches given by authors to close out consideration of their bill under the provisions of 6.23 are not counted toward the minimums.
      3. Speeches related to amendments do not count toward these minimums.
   9. **Call to order:** The chair will call the meeting to order and call the roll. No motion is necessary to open debate.
      1. *Sample*: “I now call the Committee on Crown/Colonial Relations to order. The clerk will call the roll.”
      2. At least 50% of the chamber’s members must be present to constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present by 10 minutes after the start time, please inform tabroom. The committee will be “at ease” until tabroom can resolve the issue.
      3. The clerk will announce “Madame/Mister chair, we (have/do not have) a quorum.”
   10. **Oath of office to be administered in committee.** Competitors will take the oath of office in committee rather than in the chamber[[14]](#footnote-14). The chair will administer the oath, asking all competitors that are able to do so to stand and raise their right hand. The oath to be read by the chair and repeated by the competitors is:
       1. "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 same: that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."
   11. **Order of bills for consideration:** Each competitor will present their bill to the committee in the order of a randomized list that is provided to the chair.
   12. **Time limits for bill consideration:** So that all bills may be heard, each bill will receive a maximum of 15 minutes for speeches, questions, amendments, and other matters.
       1. Should the question not be called successfully before the 15 minute time limit expires, the chair will use their gavel to signal that time for consideration of the bill is expired and immediately move to voting
   13. **Beginning consideration of a bill:** The chair will call the first competitor on the randomized list to present their bill. The chair will also read the title of the bill.
       1. *Sample*: “I now call on Representative Jane Congress to present their bill, “forming local militias,” to the committee.
       2. If the competitor is not present, the chair is to place the missing competitor at the bottom of the list to be called later in the committee meeting and call the next member on the list.
   14. **Timekeeping:** There will be a timer in front of the chair showing the 15 minute period for a bill to be considered that will be visible to the committee. The clerk will be responsible for timing bill consideration periods, individual speeches and question time and signaling time remaining as needed.
       1. The 15 minute timer will start once the bill sponsor begins to speak and will stay on continuously until the question is called or time expires for bill consideration, unless paused for reasons mentioned in other sections of these rules.
   15. **Bill germaneness.** A bill being presented to the committee MUST meet the subject matter limitations and requirements listed in the Legislation section of these rules. Additionally, the bill must clearly relate to subjects under jurisdiction of the committee to which the member has been assigned to. Bills in violation of these requirements are not germane and may be ruled out of order by the chair. A bill ruled as not germane will not be considered by the Committee for passage.
       1. If a member feels a bill is not germane, they may rise for a point of order at any time between the moment when the chair calls up a bill for consideration and the sponsor is seated at the end of authorship speech. The 15-minute clock is stopped by the clerk.
          1. A bill not being germane represents a serious consequence to the sponsor and other competitors who are prepared to speak on the bill. Accordingly, rising to make an obviously frivolous point of order on germaneness when it is crystal clear the bill IS germane, is dilatory, behavior unbecoming the legislative process, and will be considered a flagrant breach of the tournament rules. This could negatively impact the score the member raising the frivolous point receives on the chair’s ballot.
             1. With the exception of the provisions in 6.16c, the chair may not rule on or comment as to the germaneness of a bill without a point of order first being made by a committee member.
          2. The chair will review the legislation and make a ruling on germaneness. As part of this review, the chair and/or the Tournament Director (see below) may, if they choose, ask the sponsor to make a brief explanation as to why they believe the bill is germane
             1. If the bill is ruled germane by the chair, consideration will resume as normal, and the clock will continue. If this chair views the point of order on germaneness as being raised frivolously, this will be announced as well.
             2. If the chair believes the bill is likely not germane, the committee will be placed at ease. The Tournament Director must be called to the committee room to confer with the chair before a final ruling is made. The 15 minute clock remains stopped until a ruling is made, and the committee will stand at ease. If the final decision is that the bill is NOT germane, the bill will no longer be taken up for consideration. The next bill will be called, and committee work will continue.
       2. Ruling a bill as not germane is a very serious consequence to a member who wrote the bill and to other members who prepared speeches on that bill. Both the chair and the Tournament Director are to endeavor to rule a bill germane if there is any reason to do. If there is ANY case at all to be made for germaneness, the chair, in conference with the Tournament Director should always grant the bill sponsor the benefit of the doubt and rule FOR germaneness.
       3. Should the chair believe that a bill is not germane due to it discussing subject matter specifically prohibited in these rules, the chair will place the committee at ease for the purpose of consideration of germaneness. The Tournament Director must be called to the committee room to confer with the chair before a final ruling is made. The 15 minute clock remains stopped until a ruling is made, and the committee will stand at ease. If the final decision is that the bill is NOT germane, the bill will no longer be taken up for consideration. The next bill will be called, and committee work will continue.
   16. **Authorship/sponsorship[[15]](#footnote-15) speech and questions:** Each member presenting a bill as its sponsor may speak for up to three minutes explaining the nature of the bill and why it is worthy of passage.
       1. Following their speech, the bill sponsor will then have a two minute period during which other members may ask them questions.
       2. Members seeking to ask a question will stand at their seat to seek recognition from the chair. Members should be seated once another competitor begins speaking. They may stand again, once the member speaking has finished.
       3. A motion to suspend the rules to extend question time directed to the bill sponsor for an additional minute *is* in order. This motion may be made up to three consecutive times per authorship speech. This is the *only* time a motion to suspend the rules is in order in this event.
          1. *Example:* “Madam Speaker, I move that we suspend the rules and extend time for questioning of the bill sponsor by one additional minute”
       4. If the bill sponsor does not use all three minutes of their speaking time, any time remaining is appended to their question time.
       5. If there are no more questions, and time remains, the chair will thank the bill sponsor and ask them to return to their seat.
       6. If the three minute period to speak expires and/or the time for questions expires, the chair will use their gavel and announce that time has expired. Members gaveled mid-sentence may complete their sentence. There is no grace period.
   17. **Traditional questioning will be in use:** All questions, motions, amendments, and other business must be addressed to and/or through the chair, rather than to another competitor.
       1. *Sample:* “Madame Chair, I would ask Representative Congress how she plans to raise revenue to pay for the militia she proposes in her bill?”
       2. Questions should be brief. Two-part/multiple part questions are not permitted nor are immediate follow-up questions.
       3. A member may rise again to be recognized to ask an additional or follow-up question. They may only be recognized if all other members seeking to ask questions of the speaker have done so and if time for questions remains.
       4. Permission to preface is NOT required when asking a question, however the chair may gavel down any member whose question becomes more akin to a speech and rule them out of order and for misusing limited committee time and dilatory behavior. There is no obligation for the member being questioned to respond to any question ruled out of order unless they desire to do so.
   18. **Proceedings following the conclusion of the authorship/sponsorship speech and questions.** At this point the floor is open for motions, amendments and additional speeches.
       1. To be recognized by the chair, a member should stand once they or another competitor stops speaking. The chair will use recency and frequency as guides for recognizing members but will always give precedence to the bill’s author when their bill is currently on the floor.
          1. The second speech on each bill under debate must come from a member in opposition to the bill unless no members wish to speak in opposition. The chair will ask if there is anyone in opposition to the bill.
             1. *Sample:* “Having heard a speech in support of the bill, does any Representative wish to speak in opposition?
             2. If no member rises to speak in opposition, the chair may recognize another member who wants to speak in support of the bill.
          2. The chair should recognize members to give speeches by alternating pro and con on the legislation following the first two speakers, to the extent possible. If one side of the debate exhausts its speakers, the other side may continue, with the chair continuing to check to see if anyone wants to speak on the other side of the bill, unless the question is successfully called or the total time for consideration of the bill runs out.[[16]](#footnote-16)
          3. A motion to extend questioning for any speaker NOT the author is out of order and will not be considered.
       2. Members may give speeches in support of, or in opposition to the bill that are a maximum of 2 minutes in length. Each speaker will then have a 1 minute question period.
          1. A motion to extend questioning for any speaker EXCEPT the bill sponsor is out of order.
             1. If the speaker does not use all two minutes of their speaking time, any time remaining is appended to their question time.
   19. **Amendments.** Members of the committee—including authors--may offer amendments to a bill under consideration on amendment forms that will be provided. Instructions for how to write the amendment will be on the form but must include references to line numbers and clauses to be deleted, added and altered.
       1. Time used for the amendment process is part of the 15 minute total time for bill consideration.
       2. The member proposing the amendment, once recognized, should read their amendment to the committee and then hand the form to the chair.
       3. The chair may rule the amendment out of order if the amendment is, in their sole judgement, not germane to the original bill. The chair may also rule the amendment is out of order if the amendment causes the entire bill to become not germane to the committee’s jurisdiction or to no longer comply with the tournament’s subject matter rules.
          1. *Example:* A germane amendment to a road bill can change the path of the road, eliminate its funding clause, or anything else related to the road, positive or negative. It could add more roads, eliminate some roads.
          2. *Example:* Using the same example of a road bill, if an amendment was proposed to build a harbor, the chair would make a ruling as to whether the harbor was germane to the bill. Would the road connect to the harbor or is the harbor a separate issue entirely?
          3. *Example:* Using the same example of the road bill, if an amendment were proposed to form a militia and tagged onto the bill, this is not germane and would be out of order.
       4. Once the chair receives the amendment form, the chair then recognizes the amendment writer to speak to their amendment for no more than one minute.
       5. The chair then recognizes the bill sponsor[[17]](#footnote-17) for one minute to state whether they view the amendment as friendly and one they support, or unfriendly and one they oppose, and giving their reasons.
       6. The chair then recognizes any other member who may wish to speak for or against the amendment for a period of no more than 1 minute.
       7. The question on the amendment may be called at any time once the amendment’s author has spoken to it initially.
          1. Once there are no members seeking to speak for or against the amendment, the chair may call the question without a vote.
       8. Vote will be by the chair having the clerk call the roll per the procedure outlined later in this section.
       9. No bill may be amended once it has received a roll call vote to pass or defeat it.
   20. **Motions:** Certain motions may be made in ways are handled in ways specific to this event:
       1. Motions that may be in order include, but are not limited to:
          1. A motion to recess for no more than 5 minutes. Requires a second and a majority vote by show of hands of members present and seated.
             1. This motion can be passed by the committee no more than two times during the committee meeting.
             2. The chair can call a recess as often and for as long as needed at their discretion.
             3. If a recess is called while a bill is on the floor, The 15 minute bill debate clock will be stopped.
          2. A motion to appeal the decision of the chair. Must be made within 2 minutes of the decision for which an appeal is sought. Requires a second. Not debatable.
             1. An appeal of the chair’s decision is not subject to vote once a second is received. The appeal is to the tournament director, who will be called to attend to the matter as quickly as possible. The chamber will stand at ease until the appeal is resolved.
             2. The 15 minute bill debate clock will be stopped.
             3. No member can appeal more than once during the committee meeting.
          3. Motion to call the previous question. Requires a second. Not debatable. Requires a 2/3 majority of members present and seated by show of hands.
             1. The question is automatically called without need for a motion when the 15 minute bill debate clock expires.
          4. Motions to lay a bill or an amendment on the table or take it off the table. Requires a second. Debatable. Requires a majority of members present and seated voting by show of hands.
             1. A motion to take a bill off the table may only be made if no bill is currently under consideration on the floor.
             2. Any tabled amendment must be taken off the table before a roll call vote on passage of the bill is made.
          5. Motion to reconsider a previous vote. Requires a second. Debatable. Requires a majority of members present and seated voting by show of hands.
             1. Motion is in order only when there is no bill currently under consideration, such as between bills.
             2. Motion may only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side of the original vote.[[18]](#footnote-18)

*Example:* “Mr. Chair, having voted on the prevailing side, I move that the vote on the militia bill be reconsidered.”

* + - * 1. Motion may only be made to reconsider votes on the final passage or failure of a bill.
        2. If the motion passes, a new roll call vote on the measure under reconsideration must be immediately taken and recorded without further debate.
    1. Motions NOT in order include, but are not limited to:
       1. Motion to suspend the rules.
          1. The only exception is that a motion to suspend the rules and extend question time IS in order following the question period for authorship/sponsorship speech only as detailed previously.
          2. Motion to extend debate.
  1. **Private Negotiations:** Members seeking to negotiate votes or amendments may move to the back of the committee space and confer quietly.
     1. Members should be mindful to keep their conversations quiet so as not interfere with main committee meeting.
     2. The chair may gavel the chamber to order and/or require members to return to their seats if side conversations become disruptive to the proceedings.
        1. Should the chair have to gavel a member to order more than once, the chair may, at their discretion, factor those incidents into their ballot scoring.
     3. Membership of one party or the other may want to meet as a group off the floor in Caucus. As noted in Section 7 of these rules, a motion made be made to recess for 5 minutes per 6.21a(1) with mention that it is for the purpose of caucusing.
  2. **Closing speech from the bill sponsor:** If all members seeking to speak on the bill have done so, the sponsor may, if they wish, use any time remaining on the 15 minute bill consideration clock to make a closing speech and summarize why the committee should vote for the bill out of committee.
     1. This is speech is optional and the sponsor may decline to deliver it if they so choose.
     2. The opportunity to give a closing speech, even if the sponsor desires to, is not guaranteed. It will not be available to the sponsor if no time remains, ort the question is successfully called.
     3. This speech is NOT scored by the second judge, nor does it count toward the member’s minimum speech goals. It exists, when time allows, as a benefit to the sponsor so they may rebut attacks on the legislation and make a final pitch for passage.
  3. **Voting on the bill:** Once the question has been successfully called or the 15 minute period for consideration of the bill has expired, a roll call vote will be taken. A member must be present and seated in order to vote.
     1. The chair will announce the vote to be taken.
        1. *Sample:* “The committee will now vote on the question of whether to pass Representative Jane Congress’ bill. The clerk will call the roll.”
     2. The clerk will call the roll in alphabetical order.
     3. Members will respond when their name is called with “aye” “nay or “abstain.” A member in their seat must vote.
     4. When the roll is complete, the chair will ask, “does any member wish to change their vote?”
        1. A member who entered the room after their name was called and is seated may record their vote by raising their hand to get the attention of the clerk.
        2. A member wishing to change their vote who is present and is seated may do so by raising their hand to get the attention of the clerk.
     5. When the vote is completed, the chair will state, “The clerk will close the roll.”
        1. The clerk will announce the vote total.
           1. *Example:* “4 yes. 2 no”
        2. The chair repeats the vote and announces the bill’s fate.
           1. *Example:* “4 yes. 2 no. The bill passes/fails.”
           2. On a tie vote, the bill always fails.
  4. **Process repeats for each subsequent bill:** Once this is done, the chair will call the next bill author from their list and the same process as above will ensue.
  5. **Final business of the committee:** Once all bills have been heard and acted on, the chair will ask if any member of the committee has outstanding business.
     1. This is the final opportunity for committee members to ask to reconsider a vote, remove a bill from the table or other outstanding business.
     2. Once any final business is completed, the chair will announce the committee is adjourned. No motion is necessary.
  6. **Committee score impact on overall event score:** Activity in committee will constitute 25% of the competitor’s final overall score for the Congress event.
  7. **Committee chair’s ballot (35% of final score for committee work):** The chair’s ballot will score the competitors for their overall participation ad effectiveness in committee:
     1. Was the competitor an active and courteous participant throughout the committee meeting by being actively engaged and asking quality questions? (scored 1-20)
     2. Did the competitor show a strong understanding of the rules through use of motions, amendments and their general familiarity with procedure? (scored 1-20)
     3. Did the competitor work effectively to further their personal legislative goals? (scored 1-20)
     4. Did the competitor work effectively to further the goals of their party? (scored 1-20)
     5. Did the competitor make a good faith effort to find compromises in order to achieve the chamber legislation goals even if they ultimately could not vote for a bipartisan agreement? (scored 1-20)
     6. The committee Chair is to bring their ballots, any amendment forms that were adopted by the committee, and all supplies to tabroom. The committee chair needs to remain available to answer any questions about amendment forms until cleared to leave by tabroom, as tabroom will need to update the legislation for the sessions on Saturday.
  8. **Second judge’s ballot (65% of final score for committee work):** The second judge will submit a ballot for each speech made that is followed by a question period.
     1. As in a standard Congressional debate tournament, the second judge will write a ballot for each speech.
        1. Judges should consider persuasiveness, organization, evidence, analysis, and delivery in judging the quality of the speech.
        2. Each competitor is expected to deliver one authorship speech (worth two speeches), plus an additional speech on another bill heard in committee. These will be averaged for the overall committee score.
        3. Speeches are scored on a 1-25 point scale.
           1. Lower scoring speeches will be dropped if the competitor gave more speeches than the one authorship speech and one speech on another.
           2. A competitor not giving an authorship speech and/or not completing onother speeches, will receive a score of zero for each speech not given factored into their average.
     2. The second judge will give the ballots to the clerk to bring to tabroom along with any other tournament supplies they were assigned.
  9. **Scoring modifiers:** Scoring bonuses and penalties will be factored into the ballots from the committee session to cause a stake in whether legislation passes or fails, and whether the two parties are incentivized to work across the aisle or pursue partisan aims.
     1. Per 6.7, each committee should pass 3 or more bills out to the floor to avoid being gridlocked. Members’ total committee scores, including any bonuses from 6.29b will incur a 50% penalty for gridlock if the committee does pass out a minimum of three bills.
     2. If one party passes more bills than the other in a committee, members of that party serving in that committee will receive a 10 point bonus.

1. **Caucusing**
   1. **Caucusing purpose:** Caucus time exists so that the members of each party in each chamber can meet to discuss legislation, amendments, opportunities to cut deal with the other party, and plan strategy.
      1. Parties may choose to caucus any time the chamber is not in session. Breakfast and lunch time may be used for example.
      2. Parties will need to find a free space to caucus if they are not caucusing while eating breakfast or lunch.
   2. **Caucusing during session:** This is permitted using a motion to recess as noted under the rules for committees and for the chamber.
2. **Chamber Docketing**
   1. **Docket is limited to 8 bills:** No matter how many bills are sent to the floor by the committees, no more than 8 bills will be docketed for consideration by the full chamber.
      1. If fewer than eight bills were passed out of committee, the docket will be less than eight. However, the chamber minimum bill passage goal will remain the same.
   2. **Docket composition:** As the docket is driven by what passes out of committee, there is no requirement that that there be an equal number of bills from each party or from each committee.
   3. **Tabroom will pare the docket to 8 bills when necessary:** If there are more than 8 bills passed out of committees, tabroom will reduce the number of bills to 8.
      1. Tabroom will eliminate bills from any party with more than 4 bills docketed to bring the docket down to 8 bills. bills with the lowest legislation scores.
         1. *Example 1:* The Loyalists pass 6 bills from committee and the Patriots pass 5. The lowest scoring two bills from Loyalists will drop and the lowest scoring bill from the Patriots will drop, resulting in 8 bills, 4 from each party.
         2. *Example 2*: The Loyalists pass 6 bills from committee and the Patriots pass 4. All Patriot bills are docketed but the lowest scoring two bills from the Loyalists will be cut, resulting in 8 bills, 4 from each party.
         3. *Example 3*: The Loyalists pass 6 bills from committee and the Patriots pass 3. All Patriot bills are docketed but the lowest scoring bill from the Loyalists will be cut, resulting in 8 bills, 3 from the Patriots and 5 from the Loyalists.
         4. *Example 4*: The Loyalists pass 4 bills from committee and the Patriots pass 2. All six bills are docketed.
3. **Full Chamber Procedure**
   1. **Full Chamber Operations:** Many of the chamber rules mirror how committee operated and are reiterated here. However, there are some differences. Coaches and competitors should review this section to see the differences.
   2. **Speaker and judge Assignment:** Each chamber will be chaired by a non-competitor assigned by the Tournament who will addressed as Mr. Speaker or Madame Speaker, as appropriate. The Speaker will also serve as parliamentarian with a ballot. Two other judges and two clerks will also be assigned.
      1. Depending on the number of judges and Speakers in the pool some chambers may see a different Speaker in the afternoon session than the Speaker in the chair during the morning. How this impacts balloting is addressed in
   3. **Clerk:** Two clerks will be assigned to each chamber. One clerk will assist the Speaker and the other will assist the other judges The clerks are responsible for assisting with tracking frequency and recency, keeping time, calling and recording the roll, and managing completed ballots The Clerks will bring the ballots to tabroom along with any other tournament supplies they were assigned.
   4. **No electronic devices in the chamber.** No electronic devices are allowed in the chamber for any competitor. Competitors may step out of the committee room if they need to use an electronic device. [[19]](#footnote-19)
   5. **Chambers will be open:** Proceedings will take place in open chambers. No motion to have an open chamber is necessary. No motion to close the chamber will be in order.
      1. The chamber may be closed at the sole discretion of the chair if there is too much extraneous noise interfering with the proceedings.
   6. **Bill passage goals:** The chamber should pass out four or more bills out to the floor over the course of two sessions to avoid penalties for being gridlocked.
   7. **Quorum:** The Speaker will call the meeting to order and as the clerk to call the roll. No motion is necessary to open debate.
      1. *Sample*: “I now call this House to order. The clerk will call the roll.”
      2. At least 50% of the chamber’s members must be present to constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present by 10 minutes after the start time, please inform tabroom. The committee will be “at ease” until tabroom can resolve the issue.
      3. The clerk will announce “Madame Chair, we (have/do not have) a quorum.”
   8. **Introductions:** Once a quorum is met or the committee is instructed by tabroom to commence its business without a quorum, brief introductions are appropriate.
      1. The chair should briefly introduce themselves and allow the clerks and other judges the chance to introduce themselves. Competitors do NOT introduce themselves.
   9. **Pledge of Allegiance[[20]](#footnote-20).** The Speaker will lead the chamber in the Pledge.
      1. No oath is required as it was taken in committee.
   10. **Order of bill consideration:** Each competitor will present their bill to the Chamber in the order of a randomized list that is provided to the Speaker by tabroom.
   11. **Time limits for bill consideration:** So that all bills may be heard, each bill will receive a maximum of 30 minutes for speeches, questions, amendments, and other matters.
       1. Should the question not be called (a motion to close debate) successfully before the time limit expires, the Speaker will use their gavel to signal that time for consideration of the bill has expired and immediately move to voting.
   12. **Beginning consideration of a bill:** The Speaker will call the first competitor on the randomized list to present their bill. The Speaker will also read the title of the bill.
       1. *Sample*: “I now call on Representative Jane Congress to present their bill, “forming local militias,” to the House.
       2. If the competitor is not present, place the missing competitor at the bottom of the list to be called later in the session and call the next member on the list.
   13. **Timekeeping:** There will be a timer in front of the chamber showing the 30 minute period for a bill to be considered that will be visible to the committee. A clerk will be responsible for timing individual speeches and question time.
       1. The 30 minute timer will start once the bill sponsor begins to speak and will stay on continuously until the question is called or time expires for bill consideration, unless paused for reasons mentioned in other sections of these rules.
   14. **Authorship/sponsorship speech and questions:** Each competitor presenting a bill as its author may speak for up to three minutes explaining the nature of the bill and why it is worthy of passage.
       1. Following their speech, the sponsor will then have a two minute period during which other competitors may ask them questions.
       2. Competitors seeking to ask a question will stand at their seat to seek recognition from the Speaker. Competitors should be seated once another competitor begins speaking.
       3. A motion to suspend the rules to extend question time for the sponsor for an additional minute *is* in order. This motion may be made up to three consecutive times per authorship speech. This is the only time a motion to suspend the rules is in order in this event.
          1. *Example:* “Madam Speaker, I move that we suspend the rules and extend time for questioning of the bill sponsor by one additional minute”
       4. If the author does not use all three minutes of their speaking time, any time remaining is appended to their question time.
       5. If there are no questions, and time remains, the Speaker will thank the author and ask them to return to their seat.
       6. If the three minute period to speak expires and/or the time for questions expires, the Speaker will use their gavel and announce that time has expired. Members gaveled mid-sentence may complete their sentence. There is no grace period.
   15. **Traditional questioning required:** All questions, motions, amendments, and other business must be addressed to and/or through the Speaker, rather than to another competitor.
       1. *Sample:* “Madame Speaker, I would ask Representative Congress how she plans to raise revenue to pay for the militia she proposes in her bill?”
       2. Questions should be brief. Two-part/multiple part questions are not permitted nor are immediate follow-up questions.
       3. A member may rise again to be recognized to ask an additional or follow-up question. They may only be recognized if all other members seeking to ask questions of the speaker have done so and if time for questions remains.
       4. Permission to preface is NOT required when asking a question, however the chair may gavel down any member whose question becomes more akin to a speech and rule them out of order for misusing limited committee time and dilatory behavior. There is no obligation for the member being questioned to respond to any question ruled out of order unless they desire to do so.
   16. **Proceedings following the conclusion of the authorship/sponsorship speech and questions.** At this point the floor is open for motions, amendments and additional speeches.
       1. To be recognized by the Speaker, a member should stand once they or another competitor stops speaking. The Speaker, working with the clerk, will use recency and frequency as guides for recognizing members but will always give precedence to the bill’s author when their bill is currently on the floor.
       2. Members may give speeches in support of, or in opposition to, the bill that are a maximum of 2 minutes in length. Each speaker will then have a 1 minute question period.
          1. The second speech on each bill under debate must come from a member in opposition to the bill unless no member wishes to speak in opposition. The Speaker will ask if there is anyone in opposition to the bill.
             1. *Sample:* “Having heard a speech in support of the bill, does any Representative wish to speak in opposition?
             2. If no member rises to speak in opposition, the Speaker may recognize another member who wants to speak in support of the bill.
          2. The Speaker should recognize members to give speeches by alternating pro and con on the legislation following the first two speakers, to the extent possible. If one side of the debate exhausts its speakers, the other side may continue, with the Speaker continuing to check to see if anyone wants to speak on the other side of the bill, unless the question is successfully called or the total time for consideration of the bill runs out.[[21]](#footnote-21)
          3. A motion to extend questioning for any speaker NOT the author is out of order and will not be considered.
             1. If the speaker does not use all two minutes of their speaking time, any time remaining is appended to their question time.
   17. **Amendments:** Members—including authors--may offer amendments to a bill under consideration on amendment forms that will be provided. Instructions for how to write the amendment will be on the form.
       1. Time used for the amendment process is part of the 30 minute total time for bill consideration.
       2. The member, once recognized, should read their amendment to the Chamber and then hand the form to the form to the Speaker
       3. The Speaker may rule the amendment out of order if the amendment is, in their sole judgement, not germane to the original bill. The Speaker may also rule the amendment out of order if the amendment causes the entire bill to no longer comply with the tournament’s subject matter rules.
          1. *Example:* An amendment to a road bill can change the path of the road, eliminate its funding clause, or anything else related to the road, positive or negative. It could add more roads, eliminate some roads.
          2. *Example:* Using the same example of a road bill, if an amendment was proposed to build a harbor, the chair would make a ruling as to whether the canal was relevant to the bill. Would the road connect to the harbor or is the harbor a separate issue entirely.
          3. *Example:* Using the same example of the road bill, if an amendment were proposed to form a militia and tagged onto the bill, this is not germane and would be out of order.
       4. Once the Speaker receives the amendment form, the Speaker then recognizes the amendment writer to speak to their amendment for no more than one minute.
       5. The Speaker then recognizes the bill author[[22]](#footnote-22) for one minute to state whether they view the amendment as friendly and one they support, or unfriendly and one they oppose, and giving their reasons.
       6. The Speaker then recognizes any other member who may wish to speak for or against the amendment for a period of no more than 1 minute.
       7. The question on the amendment may be called at any time once the amendment’s author has spoken to it initially.
          1. Once there are no members seeking to speak for or against the amendment, the chair may call the question without a vote.
       8. Vote will be by the clerk calling the roll per the procedure outlined later in this section.
       9. No bill may be amended once it has received a roll call vote to pass or defeat it.
   18. **Motions:** Certain motions that may be made are handled in specific ways for the event.
       1. Motions that may be in order include, but are not limited to:
          1. A motion to recess for no more than 5 minutes. Requires a second and a majority vote by show of hands of members present and seated.
             1. This motion can be passed by the Chamber no more than two times during each session, morning and afternoon.
             2. The Speaker can call a recess as often and for as long as needed at their discretion.
             3. If a recess is called while a bill is on the floor, The 30 minute bill debate clock will be stopped.
          2. A motion to appeal the decision of the chair. Must be made within 2 minutes of the decision for which an appeal is sought. Requires a second. Not debatable.
             1. An appeal of the chair’s decision is not subject to vote once a second is received. The appeal is to the tournament director, who will be called to attend to the matter as quickly as possible. The chamber will stand at ease until the appeal is resolved.
             2. The 30 minute bill debate clock will be stopped.
             3. No member can appeal more than once during each session of Congress, morning and afternoon.
          3. Motion to call the previous question. Requires a second. Not debatable. Requires a 2/3 majority of members present and seated by show of hands.
             1. The question is automatically called without need for a motion when the 30 minute bill debate clock expires.
          4. Motions to lay a bill or an amendment on the table or take it off the table. Requires a second. Debatable. Requires a majority of members present and seated voting by show of hands.
             1. A motion to take an item off the table may only be made if no bill is currently under consideration on the floor.
          5. Motion to reconsider a previous vote. Requires a second. Debatable. Requires a majority of members present and seated voting by show of hands.
             1. Motion is in order only when there is no bill currently under consideration, such as between bills.
             2. Motion may only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side of the original vote.[[23]](#footnote-23)

*Example:* “Mr. Speaker, having voted on the prevailing side, I move that the vote on the militia bill be reconsidered.”

* + - * 1. Motion may only be made to reconsider votes on the final passage or failure of a bill.
        2. If the motion passes, a new roll call vote on the measure under reconsideration must be immediately taken and recorded without further debate.
    1. Motions NOT in order include, but are not limited to:
       1. Motion to suspend the rules.
          1. The only exception is that a motion to suspend the rules and extend question time IS in order following the question period for authorship/sponsorship speech only as detailed previously.
       2. Motion to extend debate
  1. **Private Negotiations:** Members seeking to negotiate votes or amendments may move to the back of the Chamber and confer quietly.
     1. Members should be mindful to keep their conversations quiet so as not interfere with Chamber proceedings.
     2. The Speaker may gavel the chamber to order and/or require members to return to their seats if side conversations become disruptive to the proceedings.
        1. Should the Speaker have to gavel a member to order more than once, the Speaker may, at their discretion, factor those incidents into their ballot scoring.
  2. **Closing speech from the bill author:** If all members seeking to speak on the bill have done so, the author may use any time remaining for the bill’s consideration to make a closing speech and summarize why the committee should vote for the bill
     1. This is speech is optional. A sponsor may decline to give it if they choose.
     2. The opportunity to give a closing speech is not guaranteed, even if the sponsor desires to. It will not be available if no time remains, ort the question is successfully called.
     3. This speech is NOT scored by the judges, nor does it count toward the member’s minimum speech goals. It exists, when time allows, as a benefit to the sponsor so they may rebut attacks on the legislation and make a final pitch for passage.
  3. **Voting on the bill:** Once the question has been successfully called, a roll call vote will be taken. A member must be present and seated in order to vote.
     1. The Speaker will announce the vote to be taken.
        1. *Sample:* “The House will now vote on the question of whether to pass Representative Jane Congress’ bill. The Clerk will call the roll”
     2. The clerk will call the roll in alphabetical order.
     3. Members will respond when their name is called with “aye” “nay or “abstain.”
     4. When the roll is complete, the clerk will ask, “does anyone wish to change their vote?”
        1. A member who entered the room after their name was called and is seated may record their vote by raising their hand to get the attention of the clerk.
        2. A member wishing to change their vote who is present and is seated may do so by raising their hand to get the attention of the Clerk.
     5. When the vote is completed, the Speaker will state, “The clerk may close the roll.”
        1. The clerk will announce the vote total.
           1. *Example:* “12 yes. 8 no.”
        2. The Speaker repeats the vote and announces the bill’s fate.
           1. *Example:* “12 yes. 8 no. The bill passes/fails”
  4. **Process repeats for each subsequent bill:** Once this is done, the Speaker will call the next bill author from their list and the same process as above will ensue.
  5. **Final business of the chamber:** Once all bills have been heard, the Speaker will ask if any member has outstanding business.
     1. This is the final opportunity for members to ask to reconsider a vote, remove a bill from the table or other outstanding business.
     2. Once any final business is completed, the Speaker will announce the chamber is adjourned. No motion is necessary.
  6. **Chamber score impact on overall event score:** Activity in committee will constitute 50% of the competitor’s final score.
  7. **Speaker’s ballot:** The Speaker’s ballot will score the competitors for their overall participation ad effectiveness in committee:
     1. Was the competitor an active participant throughout both sessions by being actively engage and asking quality questions? (scored 1-20)
     2. Did the competitor show a strong understanding of the rules through use of motions, amendments and their general familiarity with procedure? (scored 1-20)
     3. Did the competitor work effectively to further their personal legislative goals? (scored 1-20)
     4. Did the competitor work effectively to further the goals of their party? (scored 1-20)
     5. Did the competitor make a good faith effort to find compromises to achieve the chamber legislation goals even if they ultimately could not vote for a bipartisan agreement? (scored 1-20)
  8. **Additional judge’s ballot:** The additional judges will submit ballot for each speech made that is followed by a question period.
     1. As in a standard Congressional debate, the second judge will write a ballot for each speech.
        1. Judges should consider persuasiveness, organization, evidence, and delivery in judging the quality of the speech
        2. *For competitors with docketed legislation only*: The authorship speech (counted twice as two speeches), plus the top additional speech from each competitor will be averaged for the overall chamber score.
        3. *For competitors without docketed legislation only*: The top three additional speeches from each competitor will be averaged for the overall event score.
     2. Authorship speeches will be scored on a 1-50 point scale. Other speeches are scored on a 1-25 point scale.
        1. Lower scoring speeches will be dropped if the competitor gave more speeches than the one authorship speech and two speeches on other bills, or if they gave three non-authorship speeches because they did not have a bill on the docket
        2. A competitor with a docketed bill not giving an authorship speech and at least one other speech on a bill not their own will receive a score of zero for each speech not given factored into their average.
        3. A competitor who does not have a docketed bill and does not deliver at least three speeches on bills sponsored by other competitors will receive a score of zero for each speech not given factored into their average.
  9. **Scoring criteria:** Scoring bonuses and penalties will be factored into the ballots from the committee session to cause a stake in whether legislation passes or fails, and whether the two parties are incentivized to work across the aisle or pursue partisan aims.
     1. As mentioned earlier, the chamber should pass a minimum of four bills to avoid being gridlocked. Members’ total committee scores will incur a 50% penalty for gridlock if the committee does not meet its goal for bill passage.
     2. If one party passes more bills than the other, members of that party will receive a 20 point bonus.

1. This document uses the terms “competitor,” “member,” and “representative” depending on the situation. They all refer to the students competing in the Congress event. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Revolutionary Rhetoric has added parties to the event which is a new wrinkle for most Congress competitors. In Congress, parties are motivated to push their legislation and block the other party’s legislation. In this event, each member of a party that passes more legislation in committee or in the full chamber session will receive a 25% bonus to their scores for the committee session or the full chamber session.

   However, each committee and the full chamber are evenly split between the two parties. There is no mathematical way to pass a bill without someone crossing the aisle or the parties cutting a deal, or a member not being in the room when the vote is cast. A chamber that can pass little or no legislation is gridlocked and ineffective. In the real world, voters can, in theory, punish members of a gridlocked Congress at the polls. Since competitors in this event are not standing for election, there is a penalty on ALL members of a committee or chamber when the committee or chamber fails to pass a minimum number of bills as specified in the committee and chamber rules below.

   This also means that if a competitor really wants their bill to pass (and there are significant benefits for bill passage in this competition) they may have to cut a deal with the other party that could require them to vote against their own party at an inopportune time. Passing bills may avoid gridlock but it may hurt a competitor’s own party too.

   The bottom line is, if competitors can keep their party together and outmaneuver the other party in either or both committee and chamber, there bonuses to be had. But if parties are too zealously partisan, no bills will pass, and everyone will be penalized. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It is possible that due to last minute drops or other issues beyond the control of the Tournament that a committee may have fewer members or an uneven partisan balance. The Tournament will do everything it can to avoid this and will be able to make some rules adjustments to resolve that issue for fair scoring. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Committee members are reminded that the any bill that mentions or addresses enslavement in any way will be ruled by the Chair as not germane, and out of order. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Committee members are reminded that the any bill that mentions or calls for full independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain will be ruled by the Chair as not germane, and out of order. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For example, a competitor can propose an infrastructure project appropriate to the period, even if it is not one that actually came before the House of Burgesses. Provided a resolution is plausibly relevant to events or realities of the time period and abides by the subject matter limitations related to enslavement or independence, the legislation will be considered. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Tournament believes debating enslavement in any form or fashion would inherently require some participants to attempt to defend slavery. In the interest of having a tournament that is a welcoming space for all participants, it was felt this would be an unacceptable topic in the context of this competition. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Mentions of, or legislation pertaining to, indentured servitude is in order and fully allowed. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The event organizers believe that if legislation calling for total independence were permitted, it would overwhelmingly dominate discussion in the event, limiting the variety of legislative topics that would be presented. It is too obvious a go-to for competitors if the tournament were to allow full independence resolutions to be debated. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Mentions of, or legislation pertaining to, modifications in the relationship between the colonies and the Kingdom of Great Britain such as greater colonial control, increased local decision-making, limitations on the power of the colonial government, greater power for the legislature. or various forms of home rule, are in order and fully allowed. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This is for the stupid form of absurd. The tournament is more than happy for judges to consider (and give strong scores to) humorous legislation that is clever, thought-provoking, and has a point of commentary that is relevant to the goals of the event. Parody and humor, used constructively and appropriately, have always been a part of political process. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This is being done due to concerns that historic buildings, including the Capitol building, at Colonial Williamsburg do not have the infrastructure to support competitors with their laptops, need for simultaneous wi-fi, etc. Competitors may step out of the chamber to temporarily use a laptop or cell phone as needed, understanding that space and power access for such use may be limited given the number of competitors in the building. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The goal of this bullet and the next are two-fold. First, it gives importance to whether the bill passes—which is a key goal in the “real” Congress. Second, by penalizing competitors for *not* getting a specified minimum number of bills out of committee, it simulates the tension between the need for bipartisan cooperation and the need for partisan fidelity, as well as the individual need to win, while avoiding gridlock. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Since the full chamber will not meet prior to committee work, and a member not duly sworn in would not be able to vote, a decision was made to issue the oath at this juncture. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The terms “author” and “sponsor” are both used to describe the competitor who wrote the legislation under consideration. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The statement from the presiding officer that, “the chair frowns on a one-sided debate, but debate must continue,” oft used in NSDA congressional debate events, will NOT be in use in this tournament for either committee or full chamber debate. This tournament is fine with one-sided debate if that is the will of the competitors. After all, many bills actually do receive broad support in Congress. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. If the bill sponsor is offering the amendment, this bullet does not apply. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. If a member supports a bill that looks as if it may fail, they may want to vote on the prevailing negative side. This will allow them to see if they can do one-on-one politicking to see if someone will change their vote and, in a re-vote, change the outcome. It is also a way to allow a member who may have been out of the room when the original vote was taken to have their vote recorded on the record, provided a member om the prevailing side is willing to make the motion for reconsideration. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This is being done due to concerns that historic buildings, including the Capitol building, at Colonial Williamsburg do not have the infrastructure to support competitors with their laptops, need for simultaneous wi-fi, etc. Competitors may step out of the chamber to temporarily use a laptop or cell phone as needed, understanding that space and power access for such use may be limited given the number of competitors in the building. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. This will only occur during the morning session. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The statement from the presiding officer that, “the chair frowns on a one-sided debate, but debate must continue,” oft used in NSDA congressional debate events, will NOT be in use in this tournament for either committee or full chamber debate. This tournament is fine with one-sided debate if that is the will of the competitors. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. If the bill author is offering the amendment, this bullet does not apply. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. If a member supports a bill that looks as if it may fail, they may want to vote on the prevailing negative side. This will allow them to see if they can do one-on-one politicking to see if someone will change their vote and, in a re-vote, change the outcome. It is also a way to allow a member who may have been out of the room when the original vote was taken to have their vote recorded on the record, provided a member om the prevailing side is willing to make the motion for reconsideration. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)