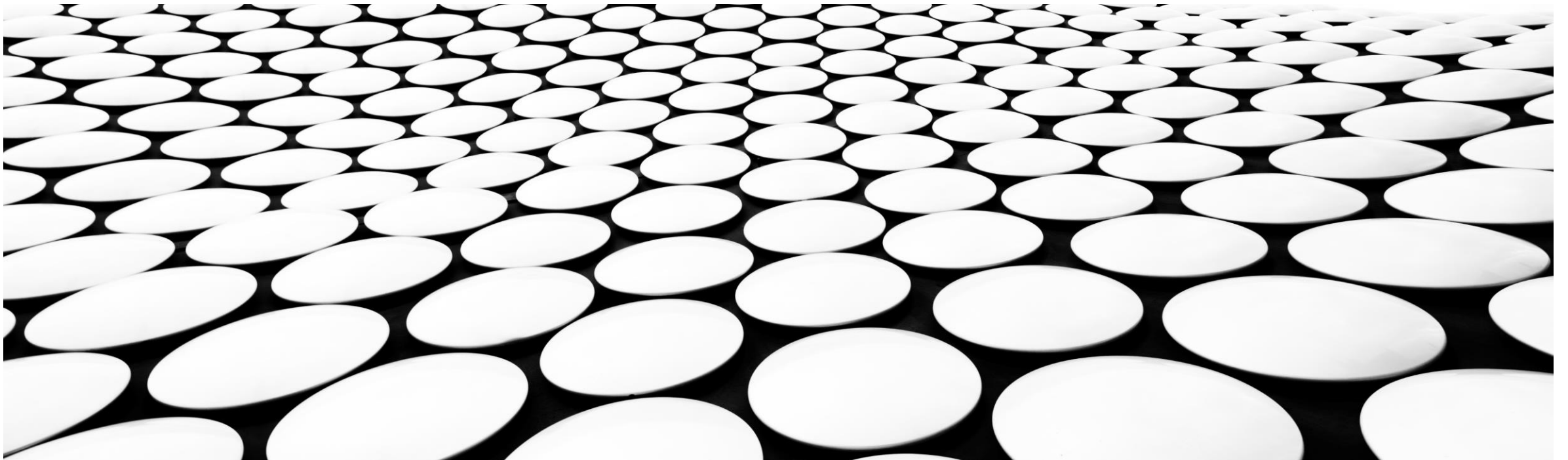

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND JUDGES



PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

The Basics of Congressional Debate

Legislation: Bills & Resolutions

Presiding Officer & Parliamentary Procedure

Congressional Debate Process

Congressional Debate Speeches

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The Role of the Judge

THE BASICS OF CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

- Students assume the roles of Senators in congress
- Debate is held on student produced legislation
- Students debate in “chambers” (rooms) of 10-20 competitors
- Turn style of debate:
 - Affirmation
 - Negation
- Elected Presiding Officer runs the chamber
- Process for debate follows parliamentary procedure

LEGISLATION: BILLS & RESOLUTIONS

- All legislation should have a *national* focus
- Bills:
 - Must have a national *jurisdiction* (i.e.-when passed into law, the federal government would have the authority to implement it)
- Resolutions:
 - Positions statements on issues Congress does not have jurisdiction over, a recommendation to another party, or further action. These lack the force of law.
- Legislation should address
 - A perceived harm & provide solvency
 - Often focus on current national or international issues
 - Be debatable, meaning substantive argumentation exists on both sides

LEGISLATION: BILLS & RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED

A Bill to Enact a Federal Limit on the Co-Pay for Insulin

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

1. SECTION 1: In all fifty states, the maximum co-pay that an individual covered by
2. commercial health insurance will pay for a prescription insulin drug is \$100 per month.
3. SECTION 2: The individual will pay a maximum of \$100 per month regardless of the
4. amount of insulin that they require. If the amount of insulin required exceeds \$100 per
5. month, the insurance company will be responsible to pay for the excess amount.
6. Companies found in violation of this bill will pay a fine equal to 15% of their monthly
7. profit for each month of violation.
8. SECTION 3: The Department of Health and Human Services will oversee and enforce this
9. bill and provide funds to ensure that all commercial health insurance companies
10. comply with this bill.
11. SECTION 4: This bill will go into effect by January 1, 2021.
12. SECTION 5: All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.

A Resolution Amending the Constitution to Allow for the Creation of a Complete Martial State in Times of Crisis

- 1 WHEREAS, the current Constitutional system does not allow the executive branch to
- 2 assume sufficient emergency powers in times of serious need;
- 3 WHEREAS, the president of the United States should have the ability to control the full
- 4 power of his nation; therefore, be it:
- 5 **RESOLVED**, that upon approval of two-thirds of the chamber of this Student Congress
- 6 here assembled, the following Constitutional amendment be sent to the
- 7 state legislatures for approval:
- 8 SECTION 1: Article II of the Constitution be amended to allow for the
- 9 president to, by his own discretion, and by approval of a
- 10 majority of Congress, declare a state of martial law in
- 11 which he alone shall exercise governmental powers
- 12 pertaining to the military, public order, and necessary
- 13 resource distribution. Let the Constitution be further
- 14 amended to specify that such a state cannot last for longer
- 15 than six months without a reinstatement of Congress, in
- 16 order that said body can vote on the continuation of the
- 17 martial state.
- 18 SECTION 2: The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by
- 19 appropriate legislation.

PRESIDING OFFICER

- Caucusing prior to the start of a round:
 - Students will often determine who will PO & how many speeches exist on each side of the legislation for the round
- Election of Presiding Officer (PO)
 - Conducted by one of the judges
 - Nominations are requested from the floor
 - Must be seconded & accepted
 - If more than one nomination is accepted, each nominee gets 1 minute to address the chamber for their vote
 - Open vote is held for PO
 - Simple majority determines winner
 - Nominations that are unopposed automatically receive the chair
- PO take control of chamber
 - Post election, the PO will run through their policies and procedures
 - They will solicit the floor to officially begin the round of debate

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

TABLE OF PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS

Following is the National Speech & Debate Association motion chart, annotated (non-shaded) to show motions used most often.

Table of Most Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions Adapted for use in National Speech & Debate Association Congressional Debate			Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Required Vote	May Interrupt?
Type	Motion	Purpose					
Privileged	24. Fix time for reassembling	To arrange time of next meeting	Yes	Yes-T	Yes-T	Majority	Yes
	23. Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	Yes	No	Yes-T	Majority	No
	22. Recess	To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	Majority	No
	21. Rise to a question of privilege	To make a personal request during debate	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	20. Call for orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed motion	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
Incidental	19. Appeal a decision of the chair	To reverse a decision	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
	18. Rise to a point of order or parliamentary procedure	To correct a parliamentary error or ask a question	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	17. Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	16. Object to the consideration of a question	To suppress action	No	No	No	2/3	Yes
	15. Divide a motion	To consider its parts separately	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
	14. Leave to modify or withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No
Subsidiary	13. Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	12. Rescind	To repeal previous action	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
	11. Reconsider	To consider a defeated motion again	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	10. Take from the table	To consider tabled motion	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	9. Lay on the table	To defer action	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	8. Previous question	To force an immediate vote	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	7. Limit or extend debate	To modify freedom of debate	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	2/3	No
	6. Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	5. Refer to a committee *	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	4. Amend an amendment *	To modify an amendment	1/3	Yes	No	Majority	No
Main	3. Amend *	To modify a motion	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
	2. Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	1. Main motion	To introduce a business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No

* No. 5 should include:

1. How appointed?
2. The number
3. Report when or to what standing committee

T = Time

* Nos. 3 and 4 by:

1. Adding (inserting)
2. Striking (deleting)
3. Substituting

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE PROCESS

- Chamber begins by opening debate on a particular bill
- Debate happens in cycles:
 - Affirmation/Negation
 - 3 minutes to speak
 - 2 min cross-ex after first cycle
 - 1 min cross-ex after each subsequent cycle
- Affirmation begin the speech cycle
 - Authorship, sponsorship, or first affirmation are solicited
- Negation follows the affirmation
 - Cannot being a cycle with negation
- Suspension of rules to have debate on the same side
 - Occurs when you don't have balance on sides of debate
 - Should not be allowed by the PO in excess
- Move to the previous question
 - Ends the cycle of debate and asks the chamber to vote on the legislation

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE SPEECHES

- Expectations of Congressional Debate Speeches:
 - Senators should speak extemporaneously referencing speeches they have prepared
 - Clear organization, evidence, & language
 - It is expected that speakers are well researched
 - Structure should signpost ideas (outline the audience can follow)
 - Strong argumentation & refutation
 - Senators should directly address arguments made by senators in opposition
 - The refutation should be directly and address the senator and their argument specifically
 - Effective, persuasive delivery

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE SPEECHES CONTINUED

Speech Organization

Below is a possible time allocation and structure for speeches in Congressional Debate

I. Introduction (15 to 30 seconds)

- A. Relate the speech to ideas that are, or might be, brought to the floor for debate
 - 1. Use a quotation; and/or
 - 2. Use an analogy; and/or
 - 3. Use statistics to raise awareness of a problem
- B. State purpose/thesis/position on the legislation

II. Body (approx. 2 minutes)

Each claim made (whether constructive or refuting the opposition) should be *supported* with analytical reasoning and/or evidence with a good combination of quantitative statistics or facts, and qualitative case studies and quotations from experts. Statements recognizing the importance, or *impact* the claim has for the overall topic of debate and why it supports or opposes those views.

Example structure:

- 1. **Claim:** issue of debate; point or points that are in conflict.
- 2. **Proof:** evidence and reasoning to support the argument; *explain* how the proof relates to the claim (link).
- 3. **Impact:** why the argument is important/significant, especially to the particular side debated. Challenge the opposition to respond to an issue.
- 4. **Refutation/rebuttal:** direct clash of arguments/claims presented by the opposition.

III. Conclusion (approx. 30 seconds)

- A. State primary points and issues
- B. Summarize key arguments and refutations

CROSS-EXAMINATION

- Cross-examination follows each speech in the form of direct questioning:
 - Questioners are selected by the PO
 - Each questioner has 30 seconds to ask questions (2 mins in first cycle, 1 minute in following cycles)
 - The questioning period should allow for responses
 - Questioners are allowed to interrupt speakers with further questioning
 - Decorum must be maintained by the questioner when attempting to ask further questions
 - PO will announce when 30 seconds are finished



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- Judges are observers and adjudicators of the debate
 - Unless egregious errors exist or questioned by the PO, judges should not insert themselves into debate
 - Adjudication:
 - Arguments presented during speeches
 - Engagement within the chamber
 - Contribution to the overall process of debate (speaking, motions, cross-ex, etc.)
 - Responsible for ranking every member of the chamber
 - Provide constructive feedback:
 - Positives should be provided reflecting those elements of speeches/argumentation/participation you felt were strong
 - Constructive suggestions should be provided identifying weaknesses in speeches/argumentation/participation within the chamber
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THE ROLE OF THE JUDGE

THE ROLE OF THE JUDGE: ADJUDICATION

- Judges rank all competitors from the round
- Rank 1 thru 8 all subsequent debaters receive a rank of 9
- Points are giving for each speech from 1 (poor) to 6 (superior)
- Determination of ranking should primarily focus on the evaluation of speeches/debate within the chamber
- Engagement in chamber through motions, cross-ex, etc. can also be considered when ranking
- PO should be ranked based on their control of the chamber, efficiency in maintaining a balanced debate, knowledge of parliamentary procedure, ability to further the process
- **The PO must be ranked amongst the speakers as well**
- Comments provided to senator should reflect a justification for the ranking provided

THE ROLE OF THE JUDGE: ASSIGNING POINTS RUBRICS

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE RUBRIC: SPEAKING

This table of evaluation standards may be used by any judge who would like assistance in determining scores for speeches. Each scorer independently (without collaborating) awards 1 to 6 points for each speech. Each speaker has up to three minutes to present arguments followed by a questioning period (the time length for which will vary, depending on specific league rules).

Points →	3	4	5	6
	Mediocre	Good	Excellent	Superior
Content: Organization, Evidence & Language	The speech lacked a clear thesis and organizational structure. Claims are only asserted with generalizations and no real evidence. Language use is unclear or ineffective.	While the speaker's purpose is present, the speech lacks logical organization and/or developed ideas. Analysis of evidence, if present, fails to connect its relevance to the speaker's claims. Use of language is weak.	While a clear purpose is apparent, organization may be somewhat loose (weak introduction/conclusion; no transitions between points). Diction represents a grasp of language. Much evidence is presented, but not in a persuasive or effective manner; or the speaker relies on <i>one</i> piece of evidence, but does so effectively.	Content is clearly and logically organized, and characterized by depth of thought and development of ideas, supported by a variety of credible quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (testimony) evidence analyzed effectively to draw conclusions. Compelling language, a poignant introduction and conclusion and lucid transitions clearly establish the speaker's purpose and frame the perspective of the issue's significance.
Argument & Refutation	The speaker offers mostly unwarranted assertions, which often simply repeat/rehash previous arguments.	The speaker fails to <i>either</i> introduce new arguments (simply repeating previous arguments) <i>or</i> the speaker fails to refute previous opposing arguments; in other words, no real <i>clash</i> is present.	New ideas and response to previous arguments are offered, but in an unbalanced manner (too much refutation or too many new arguments). Questions are answered adequately.	The speaker contributes to the spontaneity of debate, effectively synthesizing response and refutation of previous ideas with new arguments. If the speaker fields questions, he/she responds with confidence and clarity.
Delivery	Little eye contact, gestures and/or movement are present. Vocal presentation is inarticulate due to soft volume or lack of enunciation.	Presentation is satisfactory, yet unimpressively read (perhaps monotonously) from prepared notes, with errors in pronunciation and/or minimal eye contact. Awkward gestures/movement may be distracting.	The presentation is strong, but contains a few mistakes, including problems with pronunciation and enunciation. The speech may be partially read with satisfactory fluency. Physical presence may be awkward at times.	The speaker's vocal control and physical poise are polished, deliberate, crisp and confident. Delivery should be extemporaneous, with few errors in pronunciation. Eye contact is effective and consistent.

Scores of less than three (3) are rarely encouraged, and should be reserved for such circumstances as abusive language, a degrading personal attack on another legislator, or for a speech that is extremely brief (less than 45 seconds) or delivered without purpose or dignity for the cause exhorting by the legislation. Substantial written comments and description of specific incidents should accompany such scores.

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE RUBRIC: PRESIDING

This table of evaluation standards may be used by any judge who would like assistance in determining scores for a presiding officer (PO). Each scorer independently (without collaborating) awards 1 to 6 points for each hour of presiding.

Points →	1-2	3-4	5-6
	Weak – Mediocre	Good	Excellent – Superior
Speaker Recognition	The PO needs to improve his/her communication with fellow delegates to gain their trust and respect relating to the rationale for rulings made. Frequent errors are made in speaker recognition, which lacks consistent method or impartiality.	While the PO does not adequately explain his/her preferences for running the chamber in advance, he/she does clearly explain rulings, when necessary. Speaker recognition may be somewhat inconsistent or biased.	Presiding preferences are clearly explained at the beginning of the session and executed consistently. The PO is universally respected and trusted by his/her peers, and is consistent in recognition (<i>very few</i> errors) and rulings, distributing speeches throughout the room geographically, equally between schools of the same size, and among individuals.
Parliamentary Procedure	The PO's knowledge of parliamentary procedure is lacking, and he/she shows negligible effort to correct errors and/or consult written rules.	The PO demonstrates competency in procedure, but makes mistakes in determining the results of motions and votes, etc.	The PO has command of parliamentary procedure (motions) and uses this almost transparently to run a fair and efficient chamber, seldom consulting written rules and ruling immediately on whether motions pass or fail.
Delivery/ Presence	The PO needs to improve his/her vocal and physical presence and professional demeanor.	The PO displays a satisfactory command of the chamber in his/her vocal and physical presence. Word choice is usually concise.	The PO dynamically displays a command and relates well to the chamber through his/her vocal and physical presence. Word choice is economical and eloquent.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE!!

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