



Rules for Revolutionary Rhetoric's 2025 Congress Event

VERSION 1.1

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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. **Additionally, there is a “quick start” document on tabroom.com that gives a solid overview of the event to get you up to speed in less than 15 minutes.**

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 mix (the Loyalists and the Patriots). 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 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 parliamentarians with ballots.
- There will be a time limit for the committee or the 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 to 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.

We had a blast with this last year, and this is going to be a lot of fun once again. If you have any questions about these rules, just email me at brett@richmondforum.org.

Let the politicking begin!

Change log

9/1: 2025 V1 Complete

10/24: Updates to how questioning in the chamber is conducted and other minor edits

The Detailed Rule Set for Revolutionary Rhetoric's Congress Event

Section 1 The Speaker of the House and the Speaker's Office

- 1.1 **The Speaker of the House.** The Congress tournament director serves administratively as the Speaker of the House.
- 1.2 **The Speaker's Office.** Tournament staff, including the tabroom for Congress, clerks, and presiding officers of chambers and committees, are considered part of the Speaker's Office. The Speaker's Office may offer interpretations and clarification of the rules and make decisions and rulings in the Speaker's name when the Speaker is not available.
 - 1.2a When serving as presiding officer of a chamber or committee, rulings may be made in the Speaker's name without regard to the availability of the Speaker.
- 1.3 **Responsibilities of the Speaker and the Speaker's Office.** As in most US legislative bodies, the Speaker and their office are responsible for chamber operations, committee assignments, seating, and other administrative and operational functions. For the purposes of this tournament, this includes oversight of presiding officers, scoring, and tabroom operations related to Congress, and other functions and duties as assigned by the Speaker.
- 1.4 **Appealing to the Speaker's Office.** Decisions made by the Speaker's Office in the immediate absence of the Speaker of the House are appealable to the Speaker of the House. Appeals to the Speaker of the House of a Speaker's Office decision that are, in the opinion of the Speaker, dilatory, are subject to a scoring penalty.
- 1.5 **Decisions of the Speaker of the House are final.** The decision of the Speaker of the House on any matter is final, not subject to further appeal, and non-debatable, unless otherwise noted in these rules.
- 1.6 **The Speaker of the House is to chair the final round.** The Speaker of the House will serve as the presiding officer of the final chamber.
- 1.7 **Oath of office to be administered by the Speaker of the House.** At a time and location to be designated by the Speaker of the House, all competitors¹ will come together to take the oath of office as administered by the Speaker of the House.

¹ This document uses the terms "competitor," "member," and "representative" depending on the situation. They *all* refer to the individuals competing in the Congress event.

- 1.7a The oath to be used is: "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."
- 1.7b The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by the Speaker immediately following the administration of the oath.

Section 2 **Electronic Devices, Internet Usage, and Use of Props**

- 2.1 **Electronic device usage.** Electronic devices such as computers, tablets, smartwatches, and phones are permitted for use in committees and in all chambers.
- 2.2 **Internet usage is prohibited during competition.** While electronic devices are permitted, during competition, all wireless functions must be turned off. No software may be connected to the internet, including for access to Google Docs or other web services.
- 2.3 **Artificial intelligence.** Artificial intelligence may not be used to draft legislation or speeches.
- 2.4 **Props and visual aids.** Props and visual aids are only permitted if period-appropriate. If it existed during the time period of 1750-1769, it may be used. If not, it is not in order.
 - 2.4a Props and visual aids not in order may be called out of order by the presiding officer without a motion from the floor.
 - 2.4b Props or visual aids not in order may also be brought to the attention of the presiding officer by a competitor via a point of order. If the point of order is upheld by the presiding officer, the competitor in violation will be asked to return to their seat, and no score will be given for that speech.

Section 3 Parties²

- 3.1 **Party assignment.** Students will be assigned by the Speaker's Office, as noted in rule 5.3, to one of two political parties in this event. Party assignments will be made once registration is closed to ensure balance.
- 3.2 **Loyalist Party description.** Loyalists generally defend the royal prerogative and support the British government's position as articulated by the King, Parliament, and the colonial Governor. They are loyal to the King and will not tolerate direct criticism of him, the Royal Family, Parliament, the Peerage, or the Governor generally. They typically support British military forces, especially in times of war, British imperialism, and legislation that benefits Britain (as long as it is not unreasonably skewed against the interests of the Colony), and the Church of England. They will generally argue that taxes imposed by Britain are legal, and they will oppose efforts to defy the King, the Governor, Parliament, or the colonial administration.
- 3.2a **Additional Loyalist ideological considerations.** For the purposes of this competition, Loyalists are also more ideologically conservative (right) on economic, cultural, and social issues not directly related to Crown/Colony relations.
- 3.3 **Patriot Party description.** Patriots generally oppose the King, Parliament, and the colonial Governor when they believe that Virginians' rights and interests are being damaged. While not openly disloyal to the King³, they are willing to openly criticize and attack the Governor and the British Parliament in debate and in legislation. They want more colonial autonomy, although, within the context of this event, they never

² Revolutionary Rhetoric has added parties to the event which is a new wrinkle for most Congress competitors. In "real" 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 10 point bonus to their scores for the committee session or the full chamber session to reflect this motivation.

However, unlike in "real" Congress, 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 or committee 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* scoring 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 are bonuses to be had. But if parties are too zealously partisan, no bills will pass, and everyone will be penalized.

³ Lèse-majesté would not have been legally tolerated.

seek full independence. They firmly believe that royal or parliamentary taxation of the colonies without representation of the colonies in the British Parliament is illegitimate.

3.3a **Additional Patriot ideological considerations.** For the purposes of this competition, Patriots are also more liberal (left) on economic and social issues not directly related to Crown/Colony relations.

3.4 **Parties are evenly split.** Chambers and committees will be equally split between two parties, the Loyalists and the Patriots.

3.4a It is possible that due to last-minute drops or other issues beyond the control of the Tournament that a committee or chamber may have fewer members or an uneven partisan balance. Section 13 of these rules resolves these imbalances should they occur.

Section 4 Committee Jurisdiction

- 4.1 **Each House chamber has three committees.** Competitors will be assigned by the Speaker's Office at the time specified in Rule 5.2 to one of the three committees in their chamber:
- 4.1a The Committee on Courts of Justice, Elections, Indian Affairs, Militia, and Police deals with the goals and operations of a potential militia, the construction of fortifications, any purchase of arms or defensive equipment, as well as defense from piracy, defense against hostile Native American tribes, diplomacy with friendly tribes, and similar matters. This committee also handles criminal justice issues and legislation related to the judiciary. Finally, any issues related to elections to the House of Burgesses or other offices are within the committee's jurisdiction.
 - 4.1b The Committee on Finance, Commerce, Agriculture, and General Laws deals with local (proposed by the House of Burgesses or the Governor) tax bills and colonial budget issues. It oversees legislation related to managing the economy and non-defense infrastructure of the colony and handles bills related to business, commerce, roads, public hospitals, and agricultural policy. Legislation relating to the operation of government in areas not covered by one of the other two committees is handled here.
 - 4.1c The Committee on Crown/Colonial Relations deals with relations between the colonists and the Kingdom of Great Britain, entities like the Governor, Parliament, the British military stationed locally, etc. Issues like bills passed in parliament, royal proclamations or orders in council⁴ that impact the colonies are debated here, as are bills about the relationship between the Kingdom of Great Britain and the colonies, relations between the Burgesses and the Governor, trade between Virginia and the Kingdom of Great Britain, trade with other colonies and countries other than the Kingdom of Great Britain, and inter-colonial political coordination.

⁴ Orders in Council are executive orders from the Crown through a body known as the Privy Council

Section 5 Chamber, Committee and Party Assignments

- 5.1 **Chamber assignment.** Each competitor will be assigned to one of the preliminary chambers by the Speaker's Office. Chamber assignments will be posted shortly after the close of check-in on the first day of the tournament to allow the Speaker's Office to ensure chamber balance to meet the requirements of Rule 5.4.
- 5.2 **Committee assignment.** Within each chamber, a competitor will be assigned to sit on one of the three standing committees by the Speaker's Office. Committee assignments will be posted shortly after the close of check-in on the first day of the tournament to allow the Speaker's Office to ensure chamber balance to meet the requirements of Rule 5.4.⁵
- 5.3 **Party assignment.** Within each chamber, a competitor will be assigned to one of the two political parties by the Speaker's Office. Party assignments will be posted shortly after the close of check-in on the first day of the tournament to allow the Speaker's Office to ensure chamber balance to meet the requirements of Rule 5.4.
- 5.4 **Distribution of competitors.** The Speaker's Office will endeavor to the extent possible to ensure that competitors from the same school are not seated in the same chamber and, if in the same chamber, not on the same party.
 - 5.4a No two competitors from the same school may sit on one committee unless it is mathematically unavoidable.
- 5.5 **Requests for reassignment.** No requests for reassignments or trades will be considered by the Speaker's Office except for the most urgent of circumstances.
 - 5.5a Coaches are the only individuals allowed to make a reassignment request on behalf of their competitors.
 - 5.5b 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.
 - 5.5c Please contact the tournament director with any requests no later than 2 hours after assignments have been released. There are NO exceptions.
 - 5.5d The decision of the Speaker's Office is final.

⁵ Competitors may be assigned to sit on a committee that is different from the committee to which their legislation is assigned. See Section 9 for more details.

Section 6 Judge and Clerk Needs

- 6.1 **Judge roles.** Judges may be called upon to handle different roles as the tournament progresses. This may include judging legislation, acting as judges in committees or in full chambers, serving as a clerk, or taking the chair in a committee or a chamber.
- 6.2 **Judge Needs.** The needs for judges will be as follows. Notwithstanding the requirements below, additional judges may be needed in the event of absences, conflicts of interest, or other issues.
 - 6.2a 2 or more judges will be assigned to read and judge legislation as it is submitted prior to the tournament. (8 spots)
 - 6.2b 1 judge, 1 clerk, plus a 1 presiding officer (Committee Chair/parliamentarian) will be assigned to each committee.
 - 6.2c 2 judges for each preliminary chamber plus 2 clerks and a presiding officer (Speaker)/parliamentarian for each chamber session.
 - 6.2d 2 judges for the final chamber, plus 2 clerks and the Speaker of the House for the final chamber.
 - 6.2e Ideally, there will be one clerk in each committee and two clerks in the full session, one to assist the chair and Speaker with timing, recency, frequency, amendment tracking, and the other to handle typical clerk duties assisting the judges.

Section 7 Legislation

- 7.1 **Legislation to be scored.** In this tournament, the quality of legislation submitted will be independently judged and will make up a portion of the competitor's overall tournament score.
- 7.2 **Competitors are expected to submit legislation.** Every competitor is expected to submit one piece of legislation that conforms to the period and subject matter outlined in the 2025 Revolutionary Rhetoric Congress Brief as posted on Tabroom.com.
- 7.3 **Artificial intelligence is banned from use in drafting legislation.** As noted in Rule 2.3, artificial intelligence may not be used to draft legislation for submission. If it is suspected that artificial intelligence was used in your submitted legislation, it may be rejected at the discretion of the Speaker.
- 7.4 **Period for submitting legislation.** The period to submit legislation to the Speaker's Office will be communicated by the tournament prior to the submission period opening.
- 7.5 **No late submissions.** Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- 7.6 **Competitors are responsible for confirming that their legislation has been received.** It is the responsibility of competitors to confirm that the Speaker's Office received their legislation in a timely manner if they have not received confirmation from the Speaker's Office via email.
- 7.7 **Legislation submitted may not be changed prior to the opening of competition.** Once legislation is submitted, it may not be changed until competition begins, and then it may only be changed by amendment.⁶
- 7.8 **Assignment of legislation to a committee.** Upon receipt, the Speaker's Office will assign and refer legislation to the appropriate committee of jurisdiction.⁷ This decision is not subject to appeal
- 7.8a The order that bills will be heard in the committee of assignment will be in the order that legislation is received.
- 7.9 **Legislation format.** 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*

⁶ This includes any amendments allowable under Rule 9.18, Author amendments in the nature of a substitute.

⁷ Competitors may be assigned to sit on a committee that is different than the committee to which their bill is assigned.

Unified Manual (HSUM) for 2025-2026.⁸ All legislation must be submitted electronically as a .pdf or .docx⁹ document attachment to an email address that will be provided when the legislation submission period opens. All legislation must be submitted using the National Speech & Debate Association template¹⁰ for bills or resolutions as appropriate.

7.10 Subject matter limitations. All legislation must adhere to the following limitations:

- 7.10a Legislation must relate to events, real or imagined,¹¹ that would have occurred between 1750 and 1769, and be credible to the period's technology and other realities.
- 7.10b While specific costs and budgetary numbers are not expected, expenditures should be realistic both in scope and likely costs.
- 7.10c Additionally, the following subject matter will be *prohibited* in legislation for this competition:
 - 7.10c(1) Legislation may NOT take up or mention the issue of enslavement¹² in any form or fashion.¹³
 - 7.10c(2) Legislation may NOT call for, imply, or mention the concept of complete and total independence¹⁴ from the Kingdom of Great Britain.¹⁵

⁸ The Manual is available here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hq7-DE6ls2ryVtOttxR4BNpRdP7xUbBr0M3SMYefek8/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.111kx3o>

⁹ If you use Google Sheets, you can save your file as a docx. You may NOT submit your legislation as a Google Sheets document or link. The Speaker's Office will reject the submission and request you resubmit in the required format. Depending on when you submit, you may run the risk of missing the deadline.

¹⁰ The templates are available at <https://www.speechanddebate.org/legislation-templates>

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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, enslavement is an unacceptable topic in the context of this competition.

¹³ Mentions of, or legislation pertaining to, indentured servitude is in order and fully allowed.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

- 7.11 **Judging of legislation.** Two judges will independently read and score each submitted piece of legislation in a separate location before or during the competition.
- 7.12 **The original bill submitted will be judged.** The original bill submitted to the competition under Rule 7.4 is the version that will be judged under this section. Amendments made to this bill, including an author amendment in the nature of a substitute under rule 9.18, and other revisions, will not be considered for the purpose of this scoring. The final partisan assignment of the competitors has no bearing on scoring under this section.
- 7.13 **Legislation to be scored without consideration of party.** As legislation will be submitted before the party is assigned, the final party affiliation of the competitor has no bearing on the legislation score.
- 7.14 **Legislation scoring criteria.** Legislation score will be based on the following factors:
- 7.14a(1) Is the legislation something that could be accomplished given the technological and historical limitations of the period?
 - 7.14a(2) 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?
 - 7.14a(3) Is the legislation thought out and logical? Is it clear and well-written? Does it meet the form requirements?
 - 7.14a(4) Does the bill offer meaningful opportunities for competitors to speak in both support and opposition to the bill?
- 7.15 **Scoring methodology.** Each judge will give the legislation a score of 0-25 along the following lines:
- 7.15a(1) Score of 0 (zero): Participant has no legislation submitted.
 - 7.15a(2) Score of 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 meet Rule 7.9.¹⁶

¹⁶ Scores given in this range will automatically be reviewed by the Speaker of the House who may choose to adjust it at their sole discretion.

- 7.15a(3) Score of 6-10: While non-offensive, the legislation is otherwise nonsensical or absurd, showing little to no effort from the competitor.¹⁷
- 7.15a(4) Score of 11-15: Basic legislation without much detail or substance. Leaves many loopholes or unanswered questions.
- 7.15a(5) Score of 16-20: Solid legislation. May have some flaws but demonstrates real effort to solve a problem or create a sound law.
- 7.15a(6) Score of 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.
- 7.15a(7) The two scores will be averaged to become the base legislation score. Any partial points from averaging will be rounded UP.
- 7.16 **Committee scoring modifiers and bonuses for legislation.** The fate of the bill in committee will add bonus points and penalties.
 - 7.16a 0 bonus points: No bill submitted
 - 7.16b 1 bonus point: Bill failed in committee with more than 50% “Nay” or was tabled and never taken up again.
 - 7.16c 2 bonus points: Bill failed on a 50/50 tie vote
 - 7.16d 4 bonus points: Bill passed, but was amended by the committee unless amendments were proposed by the sponsor.¹⁸
 - 7.16d(1) Each amendment sponsor whose amendment is successfully adopted will receive 2 bonus points to their legislative score if the amended bill is passed by the committee and 1 bonus point if the bill was successfully amended, but the amended bill failed to pass out of committee.
 - 7.16e 5 bonus points: Bill passed in original form.
- 7.17 **Preliminary chamber scoring modifiers and bonuses for legislation.** The fate of the bill in the Preliminary House chamber will add bonus points and penalties.

¹⁷ This is for the “stupid/inane” form of absurd. The tournament is more than happy for judges to consider (and, when warranted, 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, satire and humor, used constructively and appropriately, have always been a part of political process. Scores given in this range will automatically be reviewed by the Speaker of the House who may choose to adjust it at their sole discretion.

¹⁸ The terms “author” and “sponsor” are both used to describe the competitor who wrote the legislation under consideration.

- 7.17a 0 bonus points: No bill submitted, or the bill did not pass out of committee.
- 7.17b 3 bonus points: Bill passed from committee but was not heard on the floor due to docketing limits.
- 7.17c 6 bonus points: Bill failed to pass the preliminary chamber or was tabled and never taken up again.
- 7.17d 8 bonus points: Bill passed with amendments by the chamber unless amendments were proposed by the sponsor.
- 7.17d(1) Each amendment sponsor whose amendment is successfully adopted will receive 2 bonus points to their legislative score if the amendment is passed by the chamber and 1 bonus point if the bill was successfully amended, but the amended bill failed to pass the preliminary chamber.
- 7.17e 10 bonus points: Bill passed the preliminary chamber in form originally on the chamber docket.
- 7.18 **Final chamber scoring modifiers and bonuses for legislation.** The fate of the bill in the final House chamber will add bonus points and penalties.¹⁹
- 7.18a 0 bonus points: No bill submitted, or the bill did not pass out of committee.
- 7.18b 6 bonus points: Bill passed from the preliminary chamber but was not heard on the floor due to docketing limits.
- 7.18c 12 bonus points: Bill failed to pass in the final chamber or was tabled and never taken up again.
- 7.18d 16 bonus points: Bill passed, but was amended by the chamber unless amendments were proposed by the sponsor.
- 7.18d(1) Each amendment sponsor whose amendment is successfully adopted will receive 4 bonus points to their legislative score if the amendment is passed by the chamber and 2 bonus points if the bill was successfully amended, but the amended bill failed to pass the preliminary chamber.
- 7.18e 20 bonus points: Bill passed in form originally on the chamber docket.

¹⁹ This is only used if a final chamber is necessary.

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Section 9 Committee Procedure

- 9.1 **Committee purpose.** The goal of the committee process is to consider which bills under its jurisdiction will advance to the preliminary chamber's docket.
- 9.2 **Chair and judge assignment.** Each committee will be chaired by a non-competitor assigned by the Speaker's Office, who will also serve as parliamentarian with a ballot. A second judge will also be assigned.
- 9.2a The Chair will be addressed during the committee round as Mr. Chairman, Madam Chairwoman, or simply as Chairperson, as they prefer.
- 9.3 **Clerk.** A clerk will be assigned to each committee. The clerk is responsible for assisting the Chair with tracking frequency and recency, keeping time, calling and recording the roll when necessary to tally votes, tracking legislative outcomes and amendments, and managing completed ballots. The clerk will bring the ballots to the Speaker's Office, along with any other tournament supplies they were assigned.
- 9.4 **The committee room operates as an open chamber.** No motion to have an open chamber is necessary. No motion to close the chamber will be in order.
- 9.4a The chamber may be closed at the sole discretion of the chair if there is too much extraneous noise interfering with the proceedings.
- 9.5 **Committee size and composition.** Each committee will be sized by the Speaker's Office based on the size of the full chamber the committee's membership is drawn from. Each committee will be equally split between the two parties.^{20 21}
- 9.6 **Bill passage goals.** Each committee has a goal to pass out a minimum of three bills to avoid penalties for being gridlocked.²²
- 9.7 **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.

²⁰ Given the even partisan makeup 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 per Rule 7.15

²¹ Should there be an uneven number of participants or if drops cause a committee to have a partisan imbalance, this will be rebalanced per Section 13.

²² The goal of this rule: First, it gives importance to whether the bill passes—which is a key goal in the “real” Congress. Second, by penalizing competitors on a committee²² 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.

- 9.7a The authorship speech is delivered and judged in the committee to which the Speaker's Office has assigned the bill. This may be different than the committee on which the competitor sits as a member.
- 9.7b Members may choose which other bills come before their committee to speak on if time permits, given recency and frequency.
 - 9.7b(1) Members should keep in mind that they should speak the minimum number of times as noted in 9.28.a(2).
- 9.7c Speeches given by authors to close out consideration of their bill under the provisions of Rule 9.22 are not counted toward the minimums.
- 9.7d Speeches related to amendments do not count toward these minimums.
- 9.8 **Procedure when the sponsor is not a member of the committee.** In some cases, the sponsor of a bill before the committee may not sit on the committee. This is the procedure to manage these situations.
 - 9.8a If a member is sponsoring a bill being heard in a committee other than the one on which they sit, the clerk of the committee considering the sponsor's bill will contact the member when it is time to present their bill.
 - 9.8b The member must inform the clerk of their assigned committee before leaving to present their bill in the other committee.
 - 9.8c While absent to present their bill, the member may designate another member of their party in their assigned committee to vote by proxy on their behalf.
 - 9.8d The proxy authorization remains in effect until the member returns to their assigned committee.
 - 9.8e The proxy is used in roll call votes. The proxy holder simply announces the vote they want to cast when the member whose proxy they hold's name is called.
 - 9.8f To designate a proxy, the member must inform the clerk of their assigned committee of the proxy designation before leaving. The proxy holder must be present and seated in the committee.
- 9.9 **Call to order.** The chair will call the meeting to order and ask the clerk to call the roll. No motion is necessary to open debate.
 - 9.9a *Sample:* "I now call the Committee on Crown/Colonial Relations to order. The clerk will call the roll."

- 9.9b At least 50% of the committee’s members must be present to constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present by 10 minutes after the start time, please inform the Speaker’s Office. The committee will be “at ease” until the Speaker’s Office can resolve the issue.
- 9.9c Should a quorum be present, the clerk will announce, “Madam/Mister chair, we (have/do not have) a quorum.”
- 9.10 **Order of bills for consideration.** Each competitor will present their bill to the committee in the order that it was received by the tournament and entered on the committee docket.
- 9.11 **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.²³
- 9.11a 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
- 9.12 **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.
- 9.12a *Sample:* “I now call on Representative Jane Congress to present their bill, “forming local militias,” to the committee.
- 9.12b 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.
- 9.13 **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 the bill consideration periods, individual speeches, and question time, and signaling time remaining as needed.
- 9.13a 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.
- 9.14 **Bill germaneness.** As bills are assigned to the committee by the Speaker’s Office, germaneness objections as they relate to committee placement are not in order under any circumstance.

²³ Depending on the final length of the committee docket, the Speaker’s Office may reduce or extend this limit.

- 9.15 **Authorship/sponsorship 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.
- 9.15a Following their speech, the bill sponsor will then have a two-minute period during which other members may ask them questions.
- 9.15b Members seeking to ask a question will stand at their seats 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.
- 9.15c A motion to suspend the rules to extend question time directed to the bill sponsor for an additional two minutes *is* in order. This motion may be one time per authorship speech. This is the *only* time a motion to suspend the rules is in order in this event.
- 9.15c(1) *Example:* “Madam Chair, I move that we suspend the rules and extend time for questioning of the bill sponsor by two additional minutes.”
- 9.15d If the bill sponsor does not use all three minutes of their speaking time, any time remaining is appended to their question time.
- 9.15e If there are no more questions, and if time remains, the chair will thank the bill sponsor and ask them to return to their seat.
- 9.15f 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 gavelled mid-sentence may complete their sentence. There is no grace period.
- 9.16 **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.
- 9.16a *Sample:* “Madam Chair, I would ask Representative Congress how she plans to raise revenue to pay for the militia she proposes in her bill?”
- 9.16b Questions should be brief so as not to monopolize floor time. Two-part/multiple-part questions are not permitted, nor are immediate follow-up questions.
- 9.16c 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.
- 9.16d 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.

9.17 Proceedings following the conclusion of the authorship/sponsorship speech and questions. At this point, the floor is open for motions, amendments, and additional speeches.

9.17a 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.

9.17a(1) The second speech on each bill under debate must come from a member in opposition to the bill who is from the party opposite the bill sponsor unless no members wish to speak in opposition. The chair will ask if there is anyone in opposition to the bill.

9.17a(1)(a) *Sample:* "Having heard a speech in support of the bill, does any Representative wish to speak in opposition?"

9.17a(1)(b) If no member rises to speak in opposition, the chair may recognize another member who wants to speak in support of the bill.

9.17a(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.²⁴

9.17b Members may give speeches in support of, or in opposition to the bill that are a maximum of 2 minutes in length.

9.17b(1) Speeches subsequent to the authorship speech given by committee members in support or in opposition to the bill are not subject to a questioning period.

9.18 Author amendments in the nature of a substitute. Because legislation is due to the Speaker's Office before the assignment of party, a competitor may find that their bill is out of alignment with their partisan assignment. To address that issue, once the

²⁴ 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.

party is assigned, an author may, if they choose, submit a revision of their original bill to the Speaker's Office, amended to align the bill with their partisan assignment.

9.18a Amendments of this nature are accepted without debate by the committee of assignment. The author's amendment in the nature of the substitute replaces the original bill on the committee docket.

9.18b Amendments under this rule are limited to aligning the original bill with the competitors' partisan assignment. The subject of the legislation must remain as close as is reasonably possible to the original bill.

9.19 **Other amendments.** Members of the committee—including authors who are members of the committee--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.

9.19a Bill sponsors who are not members of the committee in which the bill is assigned may NOT offer amendments to their own bill in committee other than as allowed in rule 9.18.²⁵

9.19b Time used for the amendment process is part of the 15-minute total time for bill consideration.

9.19c The member proposing the amendment, once recognized by the chair, must state that they rise to offer an amendment to the pending legislation. Once the chair acknowledges their requests and authorizes them to proceed, the member will then read their amendment to the committee and then hand the form to the chair.

9.19c(1) *Sample:*

COMPETITOR: Madam Chair, I rise for the purpose of proposing an amendment to the pending legislation.

CHAIR: Proceed

COMPETITOR: (Reads the amendment and then brings the amendment form to the chair)

9.19d The chair may rule the amendment out of order if the amendment is, in their sole judgment, 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

²⁵ A bill sponsored by a member that it heard in a committee where the sponsor is not a member, can only be amended by members of the committee, not by the author. In a situation like this, an author seeking to amend their own bill should seek out a committee member who is willing to offer the amendment on their behalf.

germane to the committee's jurisdiction or to no longer comply with the tournament's subject matter rules.

- 9.19d(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.
- 9.19d(2) *Example:* Using the same example of a road bill, if an amendment were 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?
- 9.19d(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.
- 9.19d(4) The ruling of the Chair in this matter is final, not subject to appeal to the Speaker or subject to being overruled by a vote of the committee.
- 9.19e Once the chair receives the amendment form, if germane, the chair then recognizes the amendment writer to speak to their amendment for no more than one minute.
- 9.19f The chair then recognizes the bill sponsor²⁶ for one minute to state whether they view the amendment as friendly and one they support, or unfriendly and one they oppose, giving their reasons.
- 9.19g 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.
- 9.19h The question on the amendment may be called at any time once the bill sponsor indicates whether they view the amendment as friendly or unfriendly.
 - 9.19h(1) Once there are no members seeking to speak for or against the amendment, the chair may call the question without a vote.
- 9.19i The vote will be taken by the chair having the clerk call the roll per the procedure outlined later in this section.
- 9.19j No bill may be amended once it has received a roll call vote to pass or defeat it.
- 9.20 **Motions.** Certain motions may be made in ways that are handled in ways specific to this event:

9.20a Motions that may be in order include, but are not limited to:

²⁶ If the bill sponsor is offering the amendment, this bullet does not apply.

9.20a(1) **A motion to recess** for no more than 5 minutes. Requires a second and a majority vote by a show of hands of members present and seated.

9.20a(1)(a) This motion can be passed by the committee no more than two times during the committee meeting.

9.20a(1)(b) The chair can call a recess as often and for as long as needed at their discretion.

9.20a(1)(c) If a recess is called while a bill is on the floor, the 15-minute bill debate clock will be stopped.

9.20a(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.

9.20a(2)(a) An appeal of the chair's decision is not subject to a 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.

9.20a(2)(b) The 15-minute bill debate clock will be stopped.

9.20a(2)(c) No member can appeal more than once during the committee meeting.

9.20a(3) **Motion to call the previous question.** Requires a second. Not debatable. Requires a 2/3 majority of members present and seated by a show of hands.

9.20a(3)(a) The question is automatically called without the need for a motion when the 15-minute bill debate clock expires.

9.20a(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 to pass, voting by a show of hands.

9.20a(4)(a) A motion to take a bill off the table may only be made if no bill is currently under consideration on the floor.

9.20a(4)(b) Any tabled amendment must be taken off the table before a roll call vote on passage of the bill is made.

- 9.20a(5) **Motion to reconsider a previous vote.** Requires a second. Debatable. Requires a majority of members present and seated to pass, voting by a show of hands.
- 9.20a(5)(a) Motion is in order only when there is no bill currently under consideration, such as between bills.
- 9.20a(5)(b) Motion may only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side of the original vote.²⁷
- 9.20a(5)(b)i *Example:* “Mr. Chair, having voted on the prevailing side, I move that the vote on the militia bill be reconsidered.”
- 9.20a(5)(c) Motion may only be made to reconsider votes on the final passage or failure of a bill.
- 9.20a(5)(d) If the motion passes, a new roll call vote on the measure under reconsideration must be immediately taken and recorded without further debate.
- 9.20b Motions NOT in order include, but are not limited to:
- 9.20b(1) Motion to suspend the rules.
- 9.20b(1)(a) The only exception is that a motion to suspend the rules and extend question time IS in order following the question period for an authorship/sponsorship speech only, as detailed previously.
- 9.20b(2) Motion to extend debate.
- 9.21 **Private Negotiations.** Members seeking to negotiate votes or amendments may move to the back of the committee space and confer quietly.
- 9.21a Members should be mindful to keep their conversations quiet so as not to interfere with the main committee meeting.
- 9.21b 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.

²⁷ 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 on the prevailing side is willing to make the motion for reconsideration.

- 9.21b(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.
- 9.21c Members of one party or the other may want to meet as a group off the floor in caucus. As noted in Section 10 of these rules, a motion may be made to recess for 5 minutes per 9.20a(1) with mention that it is for caucusing.
- 9.22 **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.
- 9.22a This speech is optional, and the sponsor may decline to deliver it if they so choose.
- 9.22b 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 or the question is successfully called.
- 9.22c 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.
- 9.23 **Voting on the bill.** Once the question has been successfully called or the 15 minutes for consideration of the bill have expired, a roll call vote will be taken. A member must be present and seated to vote.
- 9.23a The chair will announce the vote to be taken.
- 9.23a(1) *Sample:* "The committee will now vote on the question of whether to pass Representative Jane Congress's bill. The clerk will call the roll."
- 9.23b The clerk will call the roll in alphabetical order.
- 9.23c Members will respond when their name is called with "aye," "nay" or "abstain." A member must be in their seat to vote.
- 9.23d When the roll is complete, the chair will ask, "Does any member wish to change their vote?"
- 9.23d(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.

- 9.23d(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.
- 9.23e When the vote is completed, the chair will state, “The clerk will close the roll.”
- 9.23e(1) The clerk will announce the vote total.
- 9.23e(1)(a) *Example:* “4 yes. 2 no.”
- 9.23e(2) The chair repeats the vote and announces the bill’s fate.
- 9.23e(2)(a) *Example:* “4 yes. 2 no. The bill passes/fails.”
- 9.23e(2)(b) On a tie vote, the bill always fails.
- 9.24 **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.
- 9.25 **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.
- 9.25a This is the final opportunity for committee members to ask to reconsider a vote, remove a bill from the table, or address other outstanding business.
- 9.25b Once any final business is completed, the chair will announce the committee is adjourned. No motion is necessary.
- 9.26 **Committee score impact on overall event score.** Activity in committee will constitute 25% of the competitor’s final overall score for the Congress event.
- 9.27 **Committee chair’s ballot (35% of final score for committee work).** The chair’s ballot will score the competitors for their overall participation and effectiveness in committee:
- 9.27a Was the competitor an active and courteous participant throughout the committee meeting by being actively engaged and asking quality questions? (scored 1-20)
- 9.27b Did the competitor show a strong understanding of the rules through use of motions, amendments and their general familiarity with procedure? (scored 1-20)
- 9.27c Did the competitor work effectively to further their personal legislative goals? (scored 1-20)
- 9.27d Did the competitor work effectively to further the goals of their party? (scored 1-20)

- 9.27e 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)
- 9.27f The committee Chair is to bring their ballots, any amendment forms that were adopted by the committee,²⁸ and all supplies to the Speaker's Office. The committee chair needs to remain available to answer any questions about amendment forms until cleared to leave by the Speaker's Office, as the Speaker's Office will need to update the legislation for the full chamber sessions.
- 9.28 **Second judge's ballot (65% of final score for committee work).** The second judge will submit a ballot for each speech made other than a closing speech made by a bill sponsor.
- 9.28a As in a standard Congressional debate tournament, the second judge will write a ballot for each speech.
- 9.28a(1) Judges should consider persuasiveness, organization, evidence, analysis, and delivery in judging the quality of the speech.
- 9.28a(2) Each competitor is expected to deliver one authorship speech (worth two speeches) to the committee hearing their bill, plus an additional speech on another bill heard in committee. These will be averaged for the overall committee score.
- 9.28a(3) Speeches are scored on a 1-25 point scale.
- 9.28a(3)(a) Lower-scoring speeches will be dropped if the competitor gave more speeches than one authorship speech and one speech on another bill.
- 9.28a(3)(b) A competitor not giving an authorship speech and/or not completing other speeches will receive a score of zero for each speech not given, factored into their average.
- 9.28b The second judge will give the ballots to the clerk to bring to the Speaker's Office along with any other tournament supplies they were assigned.
- 9.29 **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.

²⁸ This is critical. The Speaker's Office must update the amended legislation in tabroom.com so that it is available in amended form for debate in the full chamber.

- 9.29a Per Rule 9.6, each committee must pass 3 or more bills out to the floor to avoid being gridlocked. Members' total committee scores, including any bonuses from Rule 9.29b will incur a 50% penalty for gridlock if the committee does not pass out a minimum of three bills.
- 9.29b 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.

Section 10 Caucusing

- 10.1 **Caucusing purpose.** Caucus time exists so that the members of each party in each chamber can meet to discuss legislation, amendments, opportunities to cut a deal with the other party, and plan strategy.
 - 10.1a Parties may choose to caucus any time the chamber is not in session. Breakfast and lunch time may be used, for example.
 - 10.1b Parties will need to find a free space to caucus if they are not caucusing while eating breakfast or lunch.
- 10.2 **Caucusing during the session.** This is permitted using a motion to recess as noted under the rules for committees and for the chamber.

Section 11 Chamber Docketing

- 11.1 **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.
- 11.1a 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.
- 11.2 **Docket composition.** As the docket is driven by what passes out of committee, there is no requirement that there be an equal number of bills from each party or from each committee.
- 11.3 **The Speaker's Office will pare the docket to 8 bills when necessary.** If there are more than 8 bills passed out of committees, the Speaker's Office will reduce the number of bills to 8.
- 11.3a The Speaker's Office 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 will be dropped first as noted below.
- 11.3a(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.
- 11.3a(2) *Example 2:* The Loyalists pass 6 bills out of 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.
- 11.3a(3) *Example 3:* The Loyalists pass 6 bills out of 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.
- 11.3a(4) *Example 4:* The Loyalists pass 4 bills out of committee and the Patriots pass 2. All six bills are docketed.

Section 12 Full Chamber Procedure (Preliminary and Final Rounds)

- 12.1 **Full preliminary chamber operations.** Many of the chamber rules mirror how committees operated and are reiterated here. However, there are some differences. Coaches and competitors should review this section to see the differences.
- 12.2 **Speaker and judge assignment.** Each chamber will be chaired by a non-competitor assigned by the Speaker's Office who will be addressed as Mr. Speaker or Madam Speaker, as appropriate. The Speaker assigned to the chamber will also serve as parliamentarian with a ballot. Two other judges and two clerks will also be assigned.
 - 12.2a The Speaker will be addressed as Mr. Speaker, Madam Speaker, or simply as Speaker, as the individual in the Chair prefers.
 - 12.2b 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.
- 12.3 **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 the Speaker's Office along with any other tournament supplies they were assigned.
- 12.4 **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.
 - 12.4a The chamber may be closed at the sole discretion of the chair if there is too much extraneous noise interfering with the proceedings.
- 12.5 **Bill passage goals.** The chamber should pass out four or more bills over the course of two sessions to avoid penalties for being gridlocked.
 - 12.5a If the chamber is a preliminary chamber with a subsequent final chamber to follow, bills that are passed will end up on the docket for the final chamber in accordance with the procedure outlined for committees in Rule 11.3
- 12.6 **Quorum.** The Speaker will call the meeting to order and ask the clerk to call the roll. No motion is necessary to open debate.
 - 12.6a *Sample:* "I now call this House to order. The clerk will call the roll."
 - 12.6b 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 The Speaker's Office. The committee will be "at ease" until The Speaker's Office can resolve the issue.

- 12.6c The clerk will announce, “Madam Speaker, we (have/do not have) a quorum.”
- 12.7 **Introductions of officials.** Once a quorum is met or the chamber is instructed by the Speaker’s Office to commence its business without a quorum, brief introductions of the officials are appropriate.
- 12.7a The Speaker should briefly introduce themselves and allow the clerks and other judges the chance to introduce themselves. Competitors do NOT introduce themselves.
- 12.8 **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 the Speaker’s Office.
- 12.9 **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.
- 12.9a 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.
- 12.10 **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.
- 12.10a *Sample:* “I now call on Representative Jane Congress to present their bill, ‘forming local militias,’ to the House.
- 12.10b 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.
- 12.11 **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 chamber. A clerk will be responsible for timing individual speeches and question time.
- 12.11a 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.
- 12.12 **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.
- 12.12a Following their speech, the sponsor will then have a two-minute period during which other competitors may ask them questions.

- 12.12b Competitors seeking to ask a question will stand at their seats to seek recognition from the Speaker. Competitors should be seated once another competitor begins speaking.
- 12.12c A motion to suspend the rules to extend question time for the sponsor for an additional two minutes *is* in order. This motion may be made one time per authorship speech. This is the only time a motion to suspend the rules is in order in this event.
- 12.12c(1) *Example*: “Madam Speaker, I move that we suspend the rules and extend time for questioning of the bill sponsor by two additional minutes.”
- 12.12d If the author does not use all three minutes of their speaking time, any time remaining is appended to their question time.
- 12.12e If there are no questions, and if time remains, the Speaker will thank the author and ask them to return to their seat.
- 12.12f 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.
- 12.13 **Traditional questioning is required.** All questions, motions, amendments, and other business must be addressed to and/or through the Speaker, rather than to another competitor.
- 12.13a *Sample*: “Madam Speaker, I would ask Representative Congress how she plans to raise revenue to pay for the militia she proposes in her bill?”
- 12.13b Questions should be brief. Two-part/multiple-part questions are not permitted, nor are immediate follow-up questions.
- 12.13c 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.
- 12.14 **Permission to preface is not required when asking a question.** However, the Speaker may gavel down any member whose question becomes more akin to a speech and rule them out of order for misusing limited chamber time and dilatory behavior. There is no obligation for the member being questioned to respond to any question ruled out of order unless they choose to do so.
- 12.15 **First negation speech and questions.** Following an authorship speech, a first negation from a member of the party opposite to the sponsor may speak for up to three minutes, explaining why the bill should fail.

- 12.15a Following their speech, the first negation speaker will then have a two-minute period during which other competitors may ask them questions.
- 12.15b Competitors seeking to ask a question will stand at their seats to seek recognition from the Speaker. Competitors should be seated once another competitor begins speaking.
- 12.15c A motion to suspend the rules to extend question time for the first negation speaker for an additional two minutes *is* in order. This motion may be made one time per authorship speech. This is the only time a motion to suspend the rules is in order in this event.
- 12.15c(1) *Example:* “Madam Speaker, I move that we suspend the rules and extend time for questioning by two additional minutes.”
- 12.15d If the author does not use all three minutes of their speaking time, any time remaining is appended to their question time.
- 12.15e If there are no questions, and if time remains, the Speaker will thank the author and ask them to return to their seat.
- 12.15f 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.
- 12.16 **Proceedings following conclusion of authorship and first negation speeches and questions.** At this point, the floor is open for motions, amendments, and additional speeches.
- 12.16a 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.
- 12.16b Members may give speeches in support of, or in opposition to, the bill that are a maximum of 2 minutes in length. There is no question-and-answer period after these speeches.
- 12.16b(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.
- 12.16b(1)(a) *Sample:* “Having heard a speech in support of the bill, does any Representative wish to speak in opposition?”

12.16b(1)(b) If no member rises to speak in opposition, the Speaker may recognize another member who wants to speak in support of the bill.

12.16b(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.²⁹

12.17 **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.

12.17a Time used for the amendment process is part of the 30-minute total time for bill consideration.

12.17b The member, once recognized, should read their amendment to the Chamber and then hand the form to the Speaker

12.17c The Speaker may rule the amendment out of order if the amendment is, in their sole judgment, 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.

12.17c(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.

12.17c(2) *Example:* Using the same example of a road bill, if an amendment were 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?

12.17c(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.

12.17d 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.

²⁹ The traditional 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.

12.17e The Speaker then recognizes the bill author³⁰ for one minute to state whether they view the amendment as friendly and one they support, or unfriendly and one they oppose, and give their reasons.

12.17f 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.

12.17g The question on the amendment may be called at any time once the amendment's author has spoken to it initially.

12.17g(1) Once there are no members seeking to speak for or against the amendment, the chair may call the question without a vote.

12.17h The vote will be taken by the clerk calling the roll per the procedure outlined later in this section.

12.17i No bill may be amended once it has received a roll call vote to pass or defeat it.

12.18 **Motions.** Certain motions that may be made are handled in specific ways for the event.

12.18a Motions that may be in order include, but are not limited to:

12.18a(1) A motion to recess for no more than 5 minutes. Requires a second and a majority vote by a show of hands of members present and seated.

12.18a(1)(a) This motion can be passed by the Chamber no more than two times during each session, morning and afternoon.

12.18a(1)(b) The Speaker can call a recess, or place the chamber at ease as often and for as long as needed at their discretion.

12.18a(1)(c) If a recess is called while a bill is on the floor, The 30-minute bill debate clock will be stopped.

12.18a(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.

12.18a(2)(a) An appeal of the chair's decision is not subject to a 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.

³⁰ If the bill author is offering the amendment, this bullet does not apply.

- 12.18a(2)(b) The 30-minute bill debate clock will be stopped.
- 12.18a(2)(c) No member can appeal more than once during each session of Congress, morning and afternoon.
- 12.18a(3) Motion to call the previous question. Requires a second. Not debatable. Requires a 2/3 majority of members present and seated by a show of hands.
 - 12.18a(3)(a) The question is automatically called without the need for a motion when the 30-minute bill debate clock expires.
- 12.18a(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 to vote by a show of hands.
 - 12.18a(4)(a) A motion to take an item off the table may only be made if no bill is currently under consideration on the floor.
- 12.18a(5) Motion to reconsider a previous vote. Requires a second. Debatable. Requires a majority of members present and seated to vote by a show of hands.
 - 12.18a(5)(a) Motion is in order only when there is no bill currently under consideration, such as between bills.
 - 12.18a(5)(b) Motion may only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side of the original vote.³¹
 - 12.18a(5)(b)i *Example:* “Mr. Speaker, having voted on the prevailing side, I move that the vote on the militia bill be reconsidered.”
 - 12.18a(5)(c) Motion may only be made to reconsider votes on the final passage or failure of a bill.
 - 12.18a(5)(d) If the motion passes, a new roll call vote on the measure under reconsideration must be immediately taken and recorded without further debate.

³¹ 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 find to 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 on the prevailing side is willing to make the motion for reconsideration. It is generally considered a traditional parliamentary courtesy for all members to vote yes on this motion the first time it is offered on a specific vote. Subsequent motions to reconsider the same specific vote are not subject to the same traditional courtesy.

12.18b Motions NOT in order include, but are not limited to:

12.18b(1) Motion to suspend the rules.

12.18b(1)(a) 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.

12.18b(2) Motion to extend debate

12.19 **Private Negotiations.** Members seeking to negotiate votes or amendments may move to the back of the Chamber and confer quietly.

12.19a Members should be mindful to keep their conversations quiet so as not to interfere with Chamber proceedings.

12.19b 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.

12.19b(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.

12.20 **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 summarizing why the chamber should vote for the bill

12.20a This speech is optional. A sponsor may decline to give it if they choose.

12.20b 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, or the question is successfully called.

12.20c 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.

12.21 **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 to vote.

12.21a The Speaker will announce the vote to be taken.

12.21a(1) *Sample:* "The House will now vote on the question of whether to pass Representative Jane Congress' bill. The Clerk will call the roll"

12.21b The clerk will call the roll in alphabetical order.

12.21c Members will respond when their name is called with “aye” “nay or “abstain.”

12.21d When the roll is complete, the clerk will ask, “does anyone wish to change their vote?”

12.21d(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.

12.21d(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.

12.21e When the vote is completed, the Speaker will state, “The clerk may close the roll.”

12.21e(1) The clerk will announce the vote total.

12.21e(1)(a) *Example:* “12 yes. 8 no.”

12.21e(2) The Speaker repeats the vote and announces the bill’s fate.

12.21e(2)(a) *Example:* “12 yes. 8 no. The bill passes/fails.”

12.22 **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.

12.23 **Final business of the chamber.** Once all bills have been heard, the Speaker will ask if any member has outstanding business.

12.23a This is the final opportunity for members to ask to reconsider a vote, remove a bill from the table, or address other outstanding business.

12.23b Once any final business is completed, the Speaker will announce that the chamber is adjourned. No motion is necessary.

12.24 **Chamber score impact on overall event score.** Activity in committee will constitute 50% of the competitor’s final score.

12.25 **Speaker’s ballot (35% of the chamber round score).** The Speaker’s ballot will score the competitors for their overall participation and effectiveness in committee:

12.25a Was the competitor an active participant throughout both sessions by being actively engaged and asking quality questions? (scored 1-20)

12.25b Did the competitor show a strong understanding of the rules through use of motions, amendments and their general familiarity with procedure? (scored 1-20)

12.25c Did the competitor work effectively to further their personal legislative goals? (scored 1-20)

12.25d Did the competitor work effectively to further the goals of their party? (scored 1-20)

12.25e Did the competitor make a good faith effort to find compromises to achieve the chamber's legislation goals, even if they ultimately could not vote for a bipartisan agreement? (scored 1-20)

12.26 Additional judge's ballot (65% of the chamber round score). The additional judges will submit a ballot for each speech, other than a final summation speech from a bill sponsor.

12.26a As in a standard Congressional debate, the second judge will write a ballot for each speech.

12.26a(1) Judges should consider persuasiveness, organization, evidence, and delivery in judging the quality of the speech

12.26a(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.

12.26a(3) *For competitors without docketed legislation only:* The top three additional speeches from each competitor will be averaged for the overall event score.

12.26b Authorship speeches will be scored on a 1-50 point scale. Other speeches are scored on a 1-25 point scale.

12.26b(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

12.26b(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.

12.26b(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.

- 12.27 **Scoring adjustments.** 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.
- 12.27a 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.
- 12.27b If one party passes more bills than the other, members of that party will receive a 20-point bonus.
- 12.28 **Final chamber differences.** If a final chamber is necessary, the same rules will be followed as for a preliminary full chamber, with the following differences.
- 12.28a In the final round of the tournament, the Speaker of the House, as designated in rule 1.1, will sit in the chair.
- 12.28b Should a bill advance to the final chamber without a sponsor advancing with it, any member in the final chamber from the original sponsor's party may make the authorship speech.
- 12.28c In the event a final round is needed, the 50% of the overall score that is earned in the chamber will be divided with 25% coming from the preliminary chamber and 25% coming from the final chamber.
- 12.28d The top 6 competitors in each party from each preliminary chamber will advance to the finals.

Section 13 Adjustments for Partisan Imbalance in Committee or the Chamber

- 13.1 **Partisan split goal.** It is the goal for every chamber and committee to be evenly split between the two parties. However, certain circumstances may preclude this in specific situations.
- 13.2 **Chair or Speaker to vote to resolve partisan imbalance.** A vote by the Chair or Speaker will be used to even up any partisan imbalance among the participants in the round. The Chair or Speaker will cast votes equal in number to the imbalance between the parties in the chamber or committee.
- 13.3 **Determining partisan imbalance.** An imbalance occurs when the number of participants assigned to the round is out of balance due to the unavailability of a member to take part in the entire round they are assigned to.
 - 13.3a A participant who is checked in for the round but happens not to be in their seat when a vote is cast does not create a partisan imbalance.
 - 13.3b A participant who checks into the chamber but, during the round, tells the Speaker or Chair via a point of personal privilege that they are unable to continue for the remainder of the round, creates a partisan imbalance from the point they leave the chamber.
 - 13.3b(1) The participant may not return to the round in this instance.
- 13.4 **Rules for casting the Chair or Speaker's Vote.** The Chair or Speaker's vote is cast in accordance with an ironclad set of rules. The Chair or Speaker has absolutely no discretion over how their vote is to be cast. It must be cast as follows in the subrules below.
 - 13.4a After a roll call vote, the Speaker/Chair will review how the minority party voted. The Speaker/Chair will then cast all of their votes in accordance with the majority position of minority party voters.
 - 13.4b Should the minority party's vote be tied on the question, the Speaker or Chair must cast their vote as follows:
 - 13.4b(1) On a motion to table a measure, the Speaker or Chair always votes no.
 - 13.4b(2) On a motion to remove a measure from the table, the Speaker or Chair always votes yes.
 - 13.4b(3) On a motion to call the previous question, the Speaker or Chair always votes no.

13.4b(4) On the question of whether to adopt an amendment, the Speaker or Chair always votes no.

13.4b(5) On the question of whether to pass a bill, the Speaker or Chair always votes no.

13.4b(6) On a motion to reconsider the previous vote, the Speaker or Chair always votes yes.

13.4b(7) On a motion to recess, the Speaker or Chair always votes yes.

Comprehensive Scoring Summary

Overview

This tournament features a comprehensive scoring system where every element of participation contributes to the final score. The scoring is divided into three major components:

1. **Legislation (25% of total score):** Quality of written legislation plus bonuses/penalties based on bill outcomes
2. **Committee Work (25% of total score):** Performance in committee sessions including speeches and participation
3. **Chamber Performance (50% of total score):** Performance in preliminary and/or final chamber sessions

Legislation Scoring Breakdown (25% of Total)

Base Score (0-25 points per judge, averaged)

- Judged by 2 independent judges before/during the competition
- Averaged score becomes base legislation score
- Rounded UP if partial points result

Committee Outcome Modifiers:

- 0 points: No bill submitted
- 1 point: Bill failed in committee (>50% Nay) or tabled permanently
- 2 points: Bill failed on 50/50 tie
- 4 points: Bill passed but amended (unless sponsor's amendments)
- 5 points: Bill passed in original form
- Amendment sponsors: +2 points if amended bill passes committee, +1 if fails

Preliminary Chamber Outcome Modifiers:

- 0 points: No bill or didn't pass committee
- 3 points: Passed committee but not heard on floor
- 6 points: Failed in preliminary chamber or tabled permanently
- 8 points: Passed with amendments (unless sponsor's amendments)
- 10 points: Passed in original form
- Amendment sponsors: +2 points if amended bill passes, +1 if fails

Final Chamber Outcome Modifiers:

- 0 points: No bill or didn't pass committee

- 6 points: Passed preliminary but not heard in final
- 12 points: Failed in final chamber or tabled permanently
- 16 points: Passed with amendments (unless sponsor's amendments)
- 20 points: Passed in original form
- Amendment sponsors: +4 points if amended bill passes, +2 if fails

Committee Scoring Breakdown (25% of Total)

Committee Chair's Ballot (35% of committee score) Scored 1-20 on each criterion:

- Active and courteous participation, quality questions
- Understanding of rules through motions/amendments
- Effectiveness furthering personal legislative goals
- Effectiveness furthering party goals
- Good faith effort to find compromises

Second Judge's Ballot (65% of committee score)

- Authorship speech (counted as 2 speeches): 1-25 points
- Additional speeches on other bills: 1-25 points each
- Minimum expectation: 1 authorship + 1 additional speech
- Lower scores dropped if extra speeches given
- Zero score for missing required speeches

Committee Scoring Modifiers:

- **Gridlock Penalty:** 50% reduction if committee passes fewer than 3 bills
- **Party Bonus:** +10 points if your party passes more bills than opposing party

Chamber Scoring Breakdown (50% of Total)

Distribution:

- Without preliminary rounds: Full 50% from one chamber
- With preliminary rounds: 25% preliminary + 25% final chamber

Speaker's Ballot (35% of chamber score) Scored 1-20 on each criterion:

- Active participation and quality questions
- Understanding of rules and procedure
- Effectiveness furthering personal goals
- Effectiveness furthering party goals
- Good faith effort to find compromises

Judges' Ballots (65% of chamber score)

For competitors with docketed bills:

- Authorship speech (counted as 2 speeches): 1-50 points
- Top 1 additional speech: 1-25 points
- Additional speeches beyond minimum may be dropped for low score

For competitors without docketed bills:

- Top 3 speeches: 1-25 points each
- Additional speeches beyond minimum may be dropped
- Zero score for missing required speeches

Chamber Scoring Modifiers:

- **Gridlock Penalty:** 50% reduction if chamber passes fewer than 4 bills
- **Party Bonus:** +20 points if your party passes more bills than opposing party

Summary Scoring Tables

Legislation Score Components

Component	Points
Base score (averaged)	0-25
Committee modifier	0-5
Preliminary chamber modifier	0-10
Final chamber modifier	0-20
Amendment bonuses	Variable
Maximum possible	60+

Committee Score Components

Component	Weight	Scoring Range
Chair's ballot	35%	5-100 (5 criteria × 1-20)
Judge's ballots	65%	Based on speech scores
Party bonus	Modifier	+10 points
Gridlock penalty	Modifier	-50% of total

Chamber Score Components

Component	Weight	Scoring Range
Speaker's ballot	35%	5-100 (5 criteria × 1-20)
Judges' ballots	65%	Based on speech scores
Party bonus	Modifier	+20 points
Gridlock penalty	Modifier	-50% of total

Appendix A: Sample Motion Chart

Motion	Requires Second?	Debatable?	Vote Required	When Allowed
Motion to Recess (≤ 5 min)	Yes	No	Majority (show of hands)	Limited: 2 \times in committee, 2 \times per chamber session
Appeal Decision of Chair	Yes	No	N/A - appeals to the Speaker of the House	Within 2 minutes of decision; 1 \times per session
Call the Previous Question	Yes	No	2/3 majority (show of hands)	Any time during debate
Lay on Table / Take from Table	Yes	Yes	Majority (show of hands)	Table: any time; Untable: only when no bill on floor
Reconsider Previous Vote	Yes	Yes	Majority (show of hands)	Only between bills; mover must have voted on prevailing side; only for final passage votes
Suspend Rules (extend questions)	Yes	No	Majority (show of hands)	ONLY after authorship in committee and only after authorship and first negation in the full chamber: 1 \times in committee per allowable speech, \times in chamber per allowable speech,

Motions NOT in Order:

- Motion to suspend rules (except for extending question time)
- Motion to extend debate
- Motion to close the chamber

Appendix B: Timing Chart

Activity	Committee	Chamber
Bill Consideration (Total)	15 minutes	30 minutes
Authorship speech	Up to 3 minutes	Up to 3 minutes
First negation speech	None	Up to 3 minutes
Question time in committee following authorship speech	2 minutes	2 minutes
Question time in committee following authorship and first negation speech	2 minutes	2 minutes
Question time extensions	+2 min each (max 1×)	+2 min each (max 1×)
Subsequent speeches	Up to 2 minutes	Up to 2 minutes
Amendment speech	Up to 1 minute	Up to 1 minute
Sponsor response to amendment	1 minute	1 minute
Debate on amendment	1 minute per speaker	1 minute per speaker
Closing speech (optional)	Remaining time	Remaining time

Notes:

- All times count toward the total bill consideration time
- Timer starts when authorship speech begins
- Timer runs continuously except during recesses or appeals
- Grace period: Members gaveled mid-sentence, may complete their sentence
- Unused authorship speaking time appends to question time

Appendix C: Committee vs Chamber Comparison

Element	Committee	Preliminary Chamber	Final Chamber
Presiding Officer	Committee Chair	Speaker	Speaker of the House
Judges	1 Chair + 1 judge	1 Speaker + 2 judges	Speaker of House + 2 judges
Clerks	1	2	2
Bill Time Limit	15 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Question after speeches	Only after authorship speech	Only after authorship speech and first negation speech	Only after authorship speech and first negation speech
Question Extensions	Max 1 (2 min each) on authorship speech only	Max 1 (2 min each) on authorship and first negation speeches only	Max 1 (2 min each) on authorship and first negation speeches only
Docket Size	All submitted bills	Max 8 bills	Max 8 bills
Passage Goal	Min 3 bills	Min 4 bills	Min 4 bills
Gridlock Penalty	50% reduction	50% reduction	50% reduction
Party Bonus	+10 points	+20 points	+20 points
Score Weight	25% of total	25% of total*	25% of total*
Recesses Allowed	2 per meeting	2 per session	2 per session
Appeals Allowed	1 per member	1 per member/session	1 per member/session
Authorship Requirements	1 speech (as 2) + 1 other	1 speech (as 2) + 1 other†	1 speech (as 2) + 1 other†

*Without preliminary rounds, chamber = 50% of total

†Or 3 speeches if no docketed bill

Appendix D: Sample Scripts

Opening a Committee/Chamber

Committee: CHAIR: *"I now call the Committee on Crown/Colonial Relations to order. The clerk will call the roll."*

Chamber: SPEAKER: *"I now call this House to order. The clerk will call the roll."*

Calling a Bill

CHAIR/SPEAKER: *"I now call on Representative Jane Congress to present their bill, 'forming local militias,' to the [committee/House]."*

Questioning Protocol

COMPETITOR: *"Madam Chair/Speaker, I would ask Representative Congress how she plans to raise revenue to pay for the militia she proposes in her bill?"*

Proposing an Amendment

COMPETITOR: *"Madam Chair, I rise for the purpose of proposing an amendment to the pending legislation."*

CHAIR/SPEAKER: *"Proceed"*

COMPETITOR: *(Reads the amendment and then brings the amendment form to the chair)*

Extending Question Time

COMPETITOR: *"Madam Speaker, I move that we suspend the rules and extend time for questioning of the bill sponsor by two additional minutes."*

Calling the Previous Question

COMPETITOR: *"Mr. Chair, I move the previous question."*

Motion to Reconsider

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

Calling the Next Speech

CHAIR/SPEAKER: *"Having heard a speech in support of the bill, does any Representative wish to speak in opposition?"*

Expiration of Time for Consideration of a Bill

CHAIR/SPEAKER: *"Time has expired for consideration of the bill current line on the floor. The Committee/House will move immediately to a vote on the measure. Clerk, please call the roll."*

Announcing a Vote in Other Circumstances

CHAIR/SPEAKER: *"The [committee/House] will now vote on the question of whether to pass Representative Jane Congress's bill. The clerk will call the roll."*

Announcing Vote Results

CLERK: *"4 yes. 2 no."*

CHAIR/SPEAKER: *"4 yes. 2 no. The bill passes/fails."*

(Note: On a tie vote, the bill always fails.)

Quorum Announcement

CLERK: *"Madam/Mister chair, we (have/do not have) a quorum."*

Adjourning

CHAIR/SPEAKER: *"The [committee/chamber] is adjourned." (No motion necessary)*

Appendix E: Glossary

At ease: A temporary pause in proceedings while an issue is resolved. The session has not ended, but business is suspended momentarily.

Chair: Judge who serves as presiding officer and parliamentarian of a committee.

Dilatory: Deliberately wasting time or obstructing proceedings. The presiding officer may rule dilatory behavior out of order.

Germaneness: Relevance of an amendment to the original bill. An amendment must relate to the same subject matter as the bill being amended.

Lèse-majesté: A crime of offending the dignity of a sovereign or state. In the colonial period, direct criticism of the King was not legally tolerated.

Office of the Speaker: Term used for what is called “tabroom” in most tournaments. Not to be confused with the website tabroom.com

Orders in Council: Executive orders from the British Crown issued through the Privy Council, a body of advisors to the monarch.

Point of order: A complaint that proper procedure is not being followed. The presiding officer rules on the point.

Point of personal privilege: A request to address a personal need (e.g., can't hear, need to leave, illness). Does not require recognition.

Precedence: Priority given to certain members (e.g., bill sponsors) or motions over others.

Prevailing side: The winning side of a vote. On a failed motion, the "nay" votes are the prevailing side. On a passed motion, the "aye" votes prevail.

Quorum: The minimum number of members (50%) required to be present to conduct business.

Recency: How recently a member last spoke. Members who spoke less recently have priority for recognition.

Roll call: Voting method where the clerk calls each member's name individually and records their vote (aye, nay, or abstain).

Show of hands: Voting method where members raise hands to indicate their vote, used for procedural motions.

Speaker: Judge who serves as presiding officer and parliamentarian of a preliminary full Congress chamber.

Speaker of the House: Revolutionary Rhetoric Congress tournament event director who also serves as presiding officer and parliamentarian of the final Congress chamber.

Tabroom: See *Office of the Speaker*.

Tabroom.com: Online platform where information about the event is posted.

Appendix F: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I change my legislation after I submit it? A: No. Once submitted, legislation cannot be changed before competition begins. During competition, it can only be changed by amendment. However, if your bill conflicts with your party assignment when you receive it after tournament check-in, you may submit an author's amendment in the nature of a substitute (Rule 9.18).

Q: What happens if I'm not present when my bill is called? A: Your bill moves to the end of the list. If you don't return before all other bills are heard and the chamber or committee adjourns, your bill will not be considered, and you will receive a score of zero for your authorship speech.

Q: Can I offer amendments to my own bill in committee if I'm not a member of that committee? A: No, other than an author's amendment in the nature of a substitute (Rule 9.18). You may ask a committee member to offer amendments on your behalf.

Q: How does the proxy voting work when I present my bill in another committee? A: Before leaving to present your bill, inform your committee clerk that you must present a bill in another committee, and that you are designating a member of your party to vote as your proxy. The proxy remains in effect until you return (Rule 9.8).

Q: What if my committee/chamber becomes gridlocked? A: If your committee passes fewer than 3 bills, or your chamber passes fewer than 4 bills, ALL members receive a 50% penalty on their committee/chamber scores.

Q: How do party bonuses work? A: If your party passes more bills than the opposing party in committee, all party members in that committee get +10 points. In the chamber, it's +20 points.

Q: Can I use my laptop or phone during the competition? A: Yes, but all wireless functions must be OFF. No internet access is permitted. Devices may be used for timekeeping and note-taking only (Rules 2.1-2.2). Devices must be on silent.

Q: Are props allowed? A: Only if period-appropriate (existed 1750-1769). Modern props will be ruled out of order.

Q: What topics are prohibited in legislation? A: You may NOT write legislation about (1) enslavement in any form, or (2) complete independence from Great Britain. Indentured servitude and increased colonial autonomy ARE allowed (Rule 7.9).

Q: How many speeches do I need to give? A: In committee: 1 authorship speech + 1 additional speech. In chamber: If you have a docketed bill: 1 authorship + 1 additional. If no docketed bill: 3 speeches on others' bills.

Q: What happens if two Speakers chair my chamber on different sessions? A: Each Speaker scores all competitors. Each Speaker's ballot contributes 50% of the overall Speaker ballot score (Rule 12.2.b).

Q: Can I caucus with my party during the session? A: Yes, by making a motion to recess for up to 5 minutes (limited to 2× per session). You can also caucus during breaks.

Q: How are ties handled in voting? A: On a tie vote, the bill always fails. If there's a partisan imbalance, the Chair/Speaker casts tiebreaking votes following specific rules (Section 14).

Q: What if I disagree with a ruling by the Chair/Speaker? A: You may appeal to the Speaker's Office within 2 minutes of the decision. Each member may appeal only once per session (Rules 9.20.a(2), 12.16.a(2)).

Q: How does docketing work for the chamber? A: Maximum 8 bills are docketed from committee. If more pass, the Speaker's Office eliminates the lowest-scoring bills to reach 8, balancing parties when possible (Rule 11.3).

Q: Can I ask follow-up questions immediately? A: No. Two-part questions and immediate follow-ups are not permitted. You must wait to be recognized again after others have had a chance to ask questions.

Q: What's the difference between "authorship" and "sponsorship"? A: The terms are used interchangeably in these rules. Both refer to the competitor who wrote the legislation.

Q: How do amendments affect my legislation score? A: Your base legislation score is based on your original submission. However, if your bill passes with amendments (that you didn't propose), you receive fewer bonus points than if it passed in its original form.

Q: What happens in the final chamber if my bill advances but I don't? A: Any member of your party in the final chamber may deliver the authorship speech for your bill (Rule 12.26.b).