

**Illinois Congressional Debate Association**  
**2026 RULES**  
**STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT**  
**Palatine, Illinois**

#### **ELIGIBILITY AND APPORTIONMENT**

1. The State Championship level is open to Illinois schools only. The State Championship level will consist of a maximum of four (4) qualifying students from each school, each of which has participated in at least one (1) ICDA invitational tournament during the current Congressional Debate season. All debaters who have competed in at least one (1) ICDA invitational tournament are eligible to run for P.O.
  - A. Fees are based on original entry number or actual participant number, whichever is greater. Registration fees are \$25 per student for the ICDA State Championship one-day tournament.
2. Apportionment of chambers will be determined randomly. The number of chambers will be determined by registered entries. The number of debaters per chamber will not exceed twenty (20).
3. Judging assignments are determined by the needs of the tournament according to entries.
4. Only qualified experienced ICDA judges and coaches may judge at the championship level.
5. All competing schools must be members of ICDA.

#### **LEGISLATION**

6. Every school entered at the Championship level may submit one bill or resolution. Legislation must be submitted without names or school designation on the front of the bill.
7. The submission of legislation by the coach will indicate that the coach has read and approves the form, content, appropriateness, and suitability of the material. Only legislation in the proper form will be accepted.
8. Appropriate legislation is double-spaced and follows the format template.

#### **COMMITTEE SESSIONS**

9. There will only be a **committee of the whole** for each chamber. Chamber members will place nominated dockets on the board. The chamber will then vote on the most desirable docket. Only one vote per school is permitted.
10. The committee of the whole shall meet (not before 7:55 a.m.) to select the bills to be debated within the respective chambers. The purpose of the committee is to select the most debatable bills. Discussions within the committee shall be restricted to the issue of debatability. ("Is the bill controversial, timely, well written?" "Are there substantial pro and con arguments concerning the bill?")
11. Only the committee of the whole shall have the authority to amend legislation providing that the amendments are for the purpose of clarification or correction of errors and does not change the intent of the legislation.
12. The bills on the docket shall be considered in the order recommended by the committee of the whole. The docket order (Economics (100), Foreign Affairs (200), Civil Policy (300)) must follow the same sequence throughout the docket. The docket sequence must provide for debate on each bill type before repeating a type. The process shall continue until time expires or until all bills are debated.

## PROCEDURES WITHIN THE CHAMBERS

13. Only coaches and experienced judges may judge in the championship chambers. Three (3) judges will be assigned to each chamber for each session. All three (3) will serve as judges and parliamentarians. The judges will be responsible for assigning seats and taking attendance based on the seating chart prepared by the Tab Room.
14. The judges will then conduct an election for Presiding Officer **for that session only**. Students may be nominated or may nominate themselves. Each nominee will be given an opportunity to present a brief statement in support of his/her candidacy. Each person within the chamber may cast one vote for a presiding officer. Voting will continue, dropping the lowest vote getter(s), until one person receives a majority. **Voting for the second and third session Presiding Officer will occur at the beginning of those sessions.**
15. Debate shall begin once the presiding officers have been selected. All three (3) judges must be present for debate to begin. Once procedural issues at the beginning of the session are completed, the P.O. will calculate the remaining time for debate in the session. The **maximum** amount of time the chamber may spend on any legislation will be **one half** of that remaining time, rounded up to the nearest minute.
  - A. Each session will be its own legislative day, with no bills carrying over to the next session. All debated bills will be voted on at the end of each session. If a bill is tabled and has not been debated, it may carry over to the next session. Once a speech has been given on a bill, it must be tabled or voted upon by the end of the session and cannot be removed from the table in a later session.
16. Debate on each bill will begin with a request for a three (3) minute **sponsorship** speech (since there are no authors stated on the bills). Any debater from any school may give the sponsorship speech. Following the delivery of the first "pro" speech, the chair will ask for a speech in opposition to the bill. All speeches will be three (3) minutes in length. This alternating process of three (3) minute speeches will continue until the time limit expires. Following all speeches, two (2) minutes of direct questioning and answering period will be held. The time clock will run continuously during the question and answer period.
17. At the beginning of the questioning period, the Presiding Officer will select two representatives and announce them at the same time. The first representative will have one (1) minute to ask the speaker as many questions as s/he chooses within the time frame. At the immediate conclusion of the minute, the first representative's questions/responses will stop and the Presiding Officer will ask the second questioner to begin his/her direct questioning. At the end of the two (2) minutes of questioning, all questions/responses will stop.
  - A. A maximum of one (1) minute of direct questioning per questioner is allowed. Questioners who do not use the entire one (1) minute will forfeit any time remaining.
18. Tab room will provide judges and Presiding Officers with a record of the number of speeches given by each person in the chamber during previous session(s). **A Presiding Officer's service will count as one (1) speech toward cumulative precedence.** The judges and Presiding Officer must consider the cumulative number of speeches given in the tournament (irrespective of speaking order) in determining who is eligible for the next speech.
19. A legislator may not speak on both sides of the same legislation. If they do, they will receive a score of zero for that second speech.
  - A. A speaker who speaks contrary to the pro/con sequence will receive a score of zero (0) for that speech.
20. Voting on all matters will be **one (1) person one (1) vote.**
21. The members of a chamber may **NOT** suspend the rules to alter the order of debate.
22. None of the above rules may be suspended.
23. Voting Procedures: In the case of needing a majority vote, 51% of those on the seating chart must vote in favor to pass. In the case of needing a 2/3 majority vote, it will be 2/3 of those on the seating chart. In case of ties, the Presiding Officer may vote to break the tie.
24. Electronic devices **MAY** be used in the chambers during committees or sessions by the congress participants and judges. Neither speakers nor questioners may use electronic devices while speaking or questioning. **Additionally, AI use should not be used to find or develop arguments for individual speeches nor to develop counter arguments to an individual's speech.**

## JUDGES' RESPONSIBILITIES

25. Judges will be responsible for evaluating all speeches. All three (3) judges will score all speeches. A judge from a student's school can write a ballot, however their score will not be tabulated. The average of the two other judge points will count as their score.
26. The judges will keep track of the participation of members of the chamber for purposes of fairness. Congressional Ethos points **WILL** be assigned.
  - A. Prior to each individual session, the judges in each session will confer with one another about their expectations for "Congressional Ethos." Judges will introduce their shared "Congressional Ethos" expectations to each chamber each session. The oversight committee together will provide guidelines in the form of a Congressional Ethos Statement prior to the tournament.
    - i. Judges shall award participation points to each member of the chamber following each session. Those **points may range from 0-1** and shall be based on "Congressional Ethos." A student who does not participate should receive a '0'. A student on the seating chart who is absent should be marked with a '0'.
    - ii. Congressional Ethos scores will be given to Presiding Officers.
27. The judges, acting as a majority, shall be the ultimate authorities on parliamentary procedure and fairness in recognizing speakers and questioners. They shall have the power and the responsibility to correct or overturn a decision of the Presiding Officer.
28. At the end of every session, each judge will nominate two (2) speakers, not from his own school, who represent the best overall legislators for the session. **The judges do this individually and must not confer.**
29. The Presiding Officer will receive one (1) score from each judge in each session. These scores will be averaged to count as one (1) overall speech score for that round.
30. Judges will conduct elections for Best Legislation at the end of the third session. All legislation that was debated and voted upon within the chamber will be eligible for consideration. Each person in the chamber will be allowed one (1) vote per committee. The chamber votes will be combined across chambers to determine a 1<sup>st</sup> place award in legislation from each committee.
31. Judges will conduct elections for best Presiding Officer at the end of the third session. Each person in the chamber will be allowed one (1) vote. The winning candidate must receive a simple majority of the votes cast. If no person earns a simple majority, the candidate who receives the lowest vote total will be dropped from consideration and voting will be repeated. If the two lowest vote getters are tied, a run off between the two will occur with the lowest vote getter being dropped. Another vote will be taken between the two remaining candidates.
32. A First Place Speaker Award will be given in each chamber to the debater with the highest speech average out of their top three (3) speeches. To earn this award, a debater must give a minimum of three (3) speeches.
33. Judges will conduct elections for the Second Place and Third Place Speaker Awards at the end of the third session. The tournament manager will provide the judges in each chamber with the names of participants who have been nominated by the judges for speaker awards. (The winner of the First Place Speaker Award will be deleted from balloting.) The names of all nominees will be announced, and each representative will be entitled to one (1) vote. The winner of the Second Place Speaker Award must receive a simple majority of the votes cast. If no person earns a simple majority, the person who receives the lowest vote total (or all candidates with the same lowest total) will be dropped from consideration until such time as a candidate does obtain the required simple majority. On the ballot in which a candidate does receive a simple majority, the person with the second highest vote total will be awarded the Third Place Speaker Award. (In the event there is a tie among persons with the second highest vote total, a run-off vote for the Third Place Speaker Award will be held.)

## **SWEEPSTAKES AWARDS**

34. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place school awards will be based on the following calculations:
  - A. Scores for each individual participant, including presiding officer points, will be totaled.
  - B. Sweepstakes will be computed using total points for all participants from each school (a maximum of four (4) participants).
  - C. Individual participant scores will be capped at highest three (3) scores per person. Presiding Officers will count as one (1) score. The lowest speech or PO score will be dropped for students with more than three (3) speeches. In the event of ties, duplicate awards will be presented.

## **TABULATION ROOM PERSONNEL**

35. The tab room personnel will consist of the oversight committee and appointees.
36. Only members of the ICDA Oversight Committee will have unlimited access to the tab room.
37. The tab room will be closed to all other coaches and debaters.

## **DECORUM AND BEHAVIOR**

38. No eating or drinking of any kind in chambers by contestants and judges.
  39. Inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
  40. Disrespect or misuse of the facilities or furnishings will not be tolerated.
  41. Keeping in mind that these chambers are open for public viewing, appropriate behavior is expected at all times.
  42. Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.
  43. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as work or ideas taken word for word and passed off as one's own.
  44. As a reminder, debaters and judges are not to utilize AI.
  45. Falsification of evidence will not be tolerated.
  46. Consequences for infractions may result in the following actions by the Oversight Committee:
    - a. Loss of participation points
    - b. Forfeiture of awards
    - c. Disqualification from the tournament
    - d. Schools held financially responsible for all damages incurred
    - e. School administrators being notified of any misconductAny additional consequences deemed appropriate to the severity of the infraction
47. Judges in each chamber will be responsible for enforcement of the rules and reporting infractions to the Oversight Committee in a timely manner.