



**2026 Year-End Young Genius  
Elementary and Middle School  
Congressional Debate Tournament**

***Tournament Docket & Procedures Handbook***

Saturday, May 30, 2026

# Table of Contents

<b>Tournament Information &amp; Schedule</b> .....	<a href="#">3</a>
<b>How Young Genius Congress Will Work</b> .....	<a href="#">4</a>
<b>Helpful Phrases and Terminology</b> .....	<a href="#">6</a>
<b>Elementary School Docket</b> .....	<a href="#">8</a>
<b>Round 1: A Resolution to Create Green Roofs</b> .....	<a href="#">9</a>
<b>Round 2: A Bill to Switch on Space-Based Solar Power</b> .....	<a href="#">10</a>
<b>Round 3: A Resolution to Build Floating Cities</b> .....	<a href="#">11</a>
<b>Middle/High School Docket</b> .....	<a href="#">12</a>
<b>Round 1: A Resolution to Green American Buildings</b> .....	<a href="#">13</a>
<b>Round 2: A Bill to Switch on Space-Based Solar Power</b> .....	<a href="#">14</a>
<b>Round 3: A Resolution to Urbanize the Ocean</b> .....	<a href="#">15</a>

# Tournament Information & Schedule

## Tournament Location

20900 Stevens Creek Blvd, Cupertino, CA 95014

## Tournament Date

Saturday, May 30, 2026

## Tournament Tabroom Page

[https://www.tabroom.com/index/tourn/index.mhtml?tourn\\_id=39317](https://www.tabroom.com/index/tourn/index.mhtml?tourn_id=39317)

## Tournament Rankings

All students will receive certificates ranking them  
“Very Good,” “Excellent,” or “Superior.”  
The top students in each house will receive 1st through 5th places.

## Questions/Requests for Additional Information

Feel free to contact us at [info@bayareadebate.com](mailto:info@bayareadebate.com).

## **TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE**

**Note: all times listed in PDT**

**8:00 AM** • Tournament Welcome

**8:15 - 9:30 AM** • Congress Round 1

**9:45 - 10:45 AM** • Spontaneous Speech Round 1

**11:00 AM - 12:15 PM** • Congress Round 2

**12:15 - 12:45 PM** • Pizza Lunch

**12:45 - 1:45 PM** • Spontaneous Round 2

**2:00 - 3:15 PM** • Congress Round 3

**3:30 - 4:30 PM** • Spontaneous Speech Round 3

**5:00 - 6:00 PM** • Spontaneous Speech Finals

**6:30 PM** • Awards Ceremony

# How Young Genius Congress Will Work

## TOURNAMENT POLICIES

- All competitors must wear professional attire during the tournament.
- Students may not use laptops, cell phones, or any other electronic devices during their rounds.

## RULES OF DEBATE

- There will be three (3) rounds for all divisions of Congressional debate. First through fifth place winners will be announced for each house.
- **Students must participate in all three rounds of debate.**
- Students will debate one bill/resolution per round and are expected to speak at least once per round. They may give a second speech only if time allows and everyone in the chamber has had a chance to speak.
- Rounds have a hard stop time 75 minutes after they begin.
- Topics per round have been set, so students do not need to set the docket before the round begins.
- Speakers must use tournament-provided placards and raise these placards to speak, ask questions, vote, or pass motions.
- For Elementary Congress, Presiding Officers (POs) will be provided by the tournament organizers. For Middle/High School Congress, students will elect POs.
- Students should give speeches of 3 minutes (with 10 seconds grace period) in length, either in affirmation or in negation of the bill or resolution being debated.
- Students in the chamber deliver their speeches in cycles (a cycle consists of one affirmative speech and one negative speech) until the students decide to call for previous questions on the legislation.
- Students should wait for a cycle to complete before introducing a motion to the chamber.
- If the chamber runs out of either affirmative or negative speeches to complete a cycle, students should motion for an “open podium,” meaning that if an affirmative speaker has just spoken, it is permissible to give another affirmative speaker the floor over a negation speaker, provided that the affirmative speaker has precedence based on recency. The motion should be structured as follows: “I motion for open podium.” or “I move for open podium.” The motion must then be seconded and voted upon by the chamber. If it receives 2/3 majority of the votes in the chamber, then it is passed.
- After a student completes his/her 3 minute speech, the presiding officer calls on other students to stand for cross-examine of the speaker. **For all divisions of congress, we will permit direct cross-examination, meaning the cross-examiner receives a 30-second block of time for back and forth with the speaker.** Cross-examiners need not use the entire 30 second block of time, but they may not exceed it.
- The default questioning period goes for 2 minutes for the first affirmative speech and the first negative speech and 1 minute for every speaker afterwards.

- Students are permitted to motion to extend the time of the questioning period. The motion should be structured as follows: "I motion to extend the questioning period by (state by what amount of time, usually by 1 minute or 30 seconds)." The motion must then be seconded and voted upon by the chamber. If it receives a majority of the votes in the chamber, then it is passed.
- Presiding Officers are required to follow standard recency/precedence procedures. First priority is given to speakers who have given the fewest speeches. Between speakers who have given the same number of speeches, the speaker who has spoken the least recently is given priority. Before recency is established, ties will be broken at the PO's discretion.
- Recency, precedence, and questions reset between sessions.
- To end the session, a motion to close Congress must be passed. The motion should be structured as follows: "I move for the previous question." or "I motion to close Congress." The motion must then be seconded and voted upon by the chamber. If it receives a majority of the votes in the chamber, then it is passed.
- Legislation may not be debated between sessions. If debate begins on a bill in one session, it must end in the same session and may not be continued to other sessions.
- All competitors must be polite and respectful to each other in the rounds and outside of them.

# Helpful Phrases and Terminology

**Make a motion** – “I move that (or to)...” or “I motion to...”

**Second a motion** – “Second!”

**Open debate on the current issue** – “I move/motion to open Congress.

**Divide the house** – “I motion to split Congress.

**Leave the room (toilet, drink water, etc.)** – “I motion for personal privilege. To leave the room.”

The chamber does not need to vote on this motion, it is up to the discretion of the Presiding Officer.

**Coming back into the room** – (wait outside the door until the speaker is done talking and the questioning time is complete) open the door and say, “Permission to enter the chamber.”

Wait for the Presiding Officer to grant you permission to enter the chamber.

**Ask about an error** – “Motion! Point of Order...”

**Address the Presiding Officer** – “I motion to address the PO.”

**Address the other competitors** – “I motion to address the chamber.”

**Table** – “I move to table the legislation.”

**Close debate on the current issue** – “I move/motion for the previous question.” or “I move/motion to close Congress.”

**Presiding Officer/Chair:** the leader of a legislative assembly who runs its meetings by recognizing members to speak or move. Also called the “presiding officer,” or “P.O.” Modeled after the Speaker of the House, or the Vice President or President pro tempore of the Senate.

**Chamber:** the group of students in a single room.

**Cross-examination:** period where the members of the assembly ask individual questions of the speaker. Multiple-part (or two-part) questions are not allowed because they take time from other members who may wish to question the speaker.

**Divide the House:** division of the house in parliamentary procedure refers to a vote. However, the motion to divide the house in student congress is more commonly used to determine how many speakers wish to speak on each side of a bill or resolution.

**Docket:** the complete packet of legislation (as titles or full text) distributed by a tournament.

**Floor:** when a member has the full attention of the assembly to speak (also refers to the area where the assembly meets, where its members speak, and where it conducts its business).

**Legislation:** a specific, written proposal (in the form of a “bill” or “resolution”) made by a member or committee for assembly to debate.

**Leading Question:** any question that begins with a preface (“According to the *New York Times*...”) or suggests the answer or contains the information the examiner is looking for (“wouldn’t you agree that this bill would...”)

**Motion:** a formal proposal to an assembly to take a certain action.

**Open Podium:** refers to a situation when the order of speeches does not matter; for example, only affirmative speakers will be giving speeches.

**Priority or Precedence:** standard rule in most leagues (including NSDA and NCFL), which requires the presiding officer to choose speakers who have spoken least (or not at all).

**Recency:** widely-used system where the presiding officer not only employs precedence, but also selects speakers based on who has spoken least recently (or earlier).

**Standing Time or “Longest Standing”:** denotes when students first seek recognition to speak; those who were standing earlier but were not called on initially will be recognized before students who wait until later in the debate to stand.

**Resolution:** an expression of conviction, or value belief of an assembly, which may urge, request or suggest further action by another decision-making authority or amend the Constitution.

**Bill:** type of legislation that describes the details of how a policy would be enacted, if voted into law by the assembly.

**Table:** to put a piece of legislation aside and move on without voting on the legislation.

**Voting:** there are two types of votes in congress:

- Voice Vote: the most efficient but least accurate. “All those in favor say ‘Aye,’ opposed say ‘Nay’.
- Standing Vote: More accurate than a voice vote and the most common manner of voting in congress. Students will raise their hands or stand up.

**Yield:** an action in which a member is called on to speak but declines recognition, thus yielding his time to another member who wishes to speak.

# Elementary School Congressional Debate Docket

**Round 1:** A Resolution to Create Green Roofs

**Round 2:** A Bill to Switch on Space-Based Solar Power

**Round 3:** A Resolution to Build Floating Cities

Elementary School Topic #1

## A Resolution to Create Green Roofs

Whereas, the United States is the highest producer of greenhouse gases in the world when measured on a per capita basis and second largest in absolute terms, second only to China; and

Whereas, the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities in the United States is from burning fossil fuels for electricity; and

Whereas, lack of tree cover in towns and cities is directly linked to higher energy consumption, now be it

Resolved, by the Congress here assembled, that the United States Federal Government mandate all residential and commercial buildings completed after January 1, 2027 must have vegetated green roofs.

Elementary School Topic #2

# A Bill to Switch on Space-Based Solar Power

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

- SECTION 1: The United States shall allocate \$1 trillion dollars to support private companies developing space-based solar power (SBSP).
- SECTION 2: Space-based solar power shall be defined as satellite technology that gathers solar energy and transmits it wirelessly back to Earth as an energy source.
- SECTION 3: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will be responsible for the oversight of this program.
- SECTION 4: This legislation shall take effect October 1, 2026.
- SECTION 5: All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.

Elementary School Topic #3

## A Resolution to Build Floating Cities

- Whereas, Sea level rise is a serious issue in the United States, where ocean levels have risen 10 to 12 inches over the past century; and
- Whereas, Rising sea levels have dangerous impacts like property damage, water contamination, and extreme weather; and
- Whereas, Sea levels along U.S. coasts are projected to rise even more quickly in the coming years, with experts estimating levels will increase 10 to 12 inches over the next 30 years; and
- Whereas, Technology has progressed to the point that floating cities are possible and affordable, now be it
- Resolved, By the Congress here assembled, that the United States Federal Government shall mandate the creation of floating cities off the East, West, and Gulf Coasts of the United States.

# Middle/High School Congressional Debate Docket

**Round 1:** A Resolution to Green American Buildings

**Round 2:** A Bill to Switch on Space-Based Solar Power

**Round 3:** A Resolution to Urbanize the Ocean

**Middle/High School Topic #1**

## **A Resolution to Green American Buildings**

- Whereas, the United States is the highest producer of greenhouse gases in the world when measured on a per capita basis and second largest in absolute terms; and
- Whereas, the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities in the United States is from burning fossil fuels for electricity; and
- Whereas, lack of tree cover in towns and cities is directly linked to higher energy consumption, now be it
- Resolved, by the Congress here assembled, that the United States Federal Government mandate all residential and commercial buildings completed after January 1, 2027 must plant a vegetated area on their property equivalent or greater than the square footage as their rooftop area. This may take the form of vegetated rooftops, vertical gardens, or planted areas adjacent to the building.

**Middle/High School Topic #2**

# **A Bill to Switch on Space-Based Solar Power**

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

- SECTION 1: The United States shall allocate \$1 trillion dollars in start-up grants, subsidies, and other support to private companies to accelerate the development of space-based solar power (SBSP).
- SECTION 2: Space-based solar power shall be defined as satellite technology that gathers solar energy and transmits it wirelessly back to Earth as an energy source.
- SECTION 3: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will be responsible for the oversight of this program.
- SECTION 4: This legislation shall take effect at the start of fiscal year 2027.
- SECTION 5: All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.

**Middle/High School Topic #3**

# **A Resolution to Urbanize the Ocean**

- Whereas, Sea level rise is a serious issue in the United States, where ocean levels have risen 10 to 12 inches over the past century and high-tide flooding is now more than 300% to more than 900% more frequent than it was 50 years ago; and
- Whereas, Rising sea levels lead to numerous deleterious impacts including property damage, erosion, water contamination, and extreme weather, resulting in loss of human life and suffering; and
- Whereas, Sea levels along U.S. coasts are projected to rise even more quickly in the coming years, with experts estimating levels will increase 10 to 12 inches over the next 30 years, exacerbating all of these issues; and
- Whereas, Technology has progressed to the point that floating cities are not only physically possible, but economically feasible, now be it
- Resolved, By the Congress here assembled, that the United States Federal Government shall mandate the creation of 20 floating cities off the East, West, and Gulf Coasts of the United States, ready to be inhabited by 2050.