

Congressional Debate Round Guide

*I use the word "bill" in this document, but in this document please read as "bill or legislation".

**When I write "Needs a second", any rep may say second, rep does not need to be called on.

Order in the session:	What is happening?	What do you say?	More information:
*	Oath of Office	You repeat after the adult, who reads it to you	This may happen before or after PO election, just depends on the tournament
1.	The round starts.	An adult coach or judge asks for nominations for a presiding officer.	
2.	Nominations for PO	Any representative: "I nominate Representative _____". Needs a second.	Many people can be nominated.
3.	Closing nominations for PO	Any rep: "I move to close nominations for PO" Needs second.	Adult coach/judge will lead vote to close nominations.
4.	PO election	Handled by adult coach/judge	
5.	The newly elected PO addressed the chamber	PO explains gavel procedure. This example is pretty standard: "You will hear one tap when you have one minute left, two taps when you have thirty seconds left, three taps when time has elapsed, and you will be gaveled down when the ten-second grace period has elapsed."	The Parliamentarian (adult judge) will provide the PO with the list of preset precedence. If two people raise their hand to speak, the speaker higher up on the precedence list should be given the speech. Once a speaker has spoken, they move to the bottom of precedence.
6.	PO opens session	PO: "I call this session to order."	

		If no one motions immediately, PO may follow with: "I would entertain a motion to open nominations for a docket."	
7.	Open nominations for docket	Any rep: "I move to open nominations for a docket" (Or can say "so moved") Needs a second.	
8.	Docket nominations	Raise placards, PO calls on you: "I nominate the following for a docket: First Bill C, then Resolution A, then Bill D..." etc The PO should keep track of the different dockets and their proposed orders, listing them visually on a whiteboard for the chamber to see if possible.	You don't have to place EVERY piece of legislation in your docket, go with at least six though. Many reps can nominate a docket.
9.	Close nominations for docket	Any rep: "I move to close nominations for a docket". Needs a second.	
10.	Vote on docket	Presiding officer handles vote. Voting may take place by raising placards.	
11.	Debate starts on first bill	PO: "We are starting with Bill _____, 'title'. (Read the title!) Are there any authorship speeches?" If no placards are raised: "Are there any sponsorship speeches?" If NO ONE raises placard, "The chair would entertain a motion to table this bill."	If you are from the school who wrote the bill, you may raise your placard and give the AUTHORSHIP speech. If no one from the school is in the room, then a SPONSOR, someone from another school, may give the first affirmative speech instead.
12.	Authorship/Sponsorship	*Bring placard up to the front	PO will time from

	Speech - 3 minute time limit	with you so that judges can see your name! You might briefly state, "I'm Representative so&so, my school code is letter ____." The author has three minutes to speak about why the chamber should vote for the bill.	beginning of speech, the giving-name-to-judges bit is not timed.
13.	PO opens questioning period.	PO: "With a speech time of _____, we are now in line for two minutes of questioning. All those with questions please raise your placards."	Two minutes for questions after the first speech and second speech for a given bill, one minute of questioning for all other speeches.
14.	Questioning period - 30 seconds per question-asker	The PO will call on students to ask questions. When a representative has been called on to ask questions, they have thirty seconds to ask as many questions as they can fit in. DIRECT QUESTIONING: If there is a two minute questioning period, four students will be called on to ask questions. If it is a one minute questioning period, then only two students will be called on.	The PO should follow the precedence list but BACKWARDS for students asking questions. The PO should NOT gavel down the questioning period, instead, when it is close to time elapsing, tell the questioner/speaker "briefly".
*	What if you want to ask the speaker more questions?	AFTER the PO calls time on the questioning period, Any rep: "I move to suspend the rules and lengthen the questioning period of this speaker by an additional minute." Needs a second, must be voted on.	

15.	Move on to next speaker	PO: "Seeing as that was a speech of affirmation, we are now in line for a speech of negation. All those with speeches in negation, please raise your placards."	
16.	Speaking & Questioning period	As above.	
17.	Continue debate	As above, PO calls for affirmative and then negative speakers. These speeches continue to have a 3 minute time limit .	Remember, questioning period is only one minute long for all speeches following the first two.
18.	To conclude debate:	Any representative: "I move to call the previous question". Needs a second.	This means the representative feels like it is time to move on with another bill, and to vote on the bill currently being debated.
*	What if you still want to give a speech on the bill, but someone motioned to call the previous question?	Any rep: "Permission to address the chamber" PO: "Permission granted" Rep: "Are there still people who want to speak on this? (Look to see if people raise hands.) Encourage people not to vote to call the previous question if there are still a lot of people who want to speak.	
19.	Call the previous question (vote on whether or not you want to keep on debating, or stop and vote on the bill)	PO: It has been moved and seconded to call the previous question. All those in favor of calling the previous question and move on to end debate and vote on this bill, please signify by raising your placards." (Count.) "All those opposed?" (Count). Announce whether the motion passes or fails.	

20.	Voting on the bill	PO: We will now vote on a bill to _____ (name of bill). All those in favor of passing this legislation, please signify by raising your placards. (Count). All those opposed? (Count) All those abstaining? (Count). On a vote of ____ to ____ to ____, this bill passes/fails.	Abstaining means you are not casting a vote for or against the bill.
21.	Moving on to the next bill:	PO: We are now moving on to discuss Bill ____, A bill to ____ (title of bill).	Keep on debating as described above!
22.	Time to end the round:	Any rep: I move to close the session. Needs a second. PO takes vote, but if it is the end of the time designated for the round, it should be unanimous!	
More things you can do during a round:			
	What if you think the chamber needs a short break?	"I move to take a five minute recess". Needs a second. PO leads vote.	
	What if you need to go to the bathroom or otherwise exit the chamber?	Raise placard and announce "Point of personal privilege". The PO will call on you, and you say "permission to exit the chamber?" PO: Permission granted. When you come back in, wait just inside the door until the speaker/questioning period is over, then ask "permission to re-enter the chamber?"	
	What if you are the PO and you need to go to the bathroom?	Say, "as a matter of personal privilege, the chair would entertain a motion to recess for five minutes"	

	What if you have a question, such as needing something repeated?	Raise your placard and say "Point of inquiry", wait to be called on, and ask your question.	
	What if you think the PO did something wrong--like called on someone to speak when someone else should have have a turn?	Raise your placard and say "Point of order", wait to be called on, and then explain what you think the issue is.	