2016 Congress Packet

15th Annual Spartan Invitational

A Battle of Minds — A War of Words

Congressional Debate Schedule

<u>Saturday, January 30</u>

8:00 a.m. — 8:30 a.m.	Registration
9 a.m. — 9:15 a.m.	Agenda Setting
9:15 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.	Session One
12:00 p.m. — 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m.	Session Two
5:30 p.m.	Awards

Official Rules

These rules are for clarity and accuracy, and may not be suspended unless otherwise noted.

RULES: The rules used at the tournament shall be, in order of precedence:
- Rules in this packet
- NSDA event rules
- Robert's Rules of Order

AGENDA: The agenda will be set by competitors at the beginning of the day. Competitors should be open and allow everyone to participate in selecting the agenda. Note that the chamber is not allowed to debate something debated in a previous session, so choose topic order wisely. It requires a majority vote to adopt an agenda when there is no previously agreed to order of business. Once adopted, the agenda becomes a standing rule and requires a 2/3s majority to amend.

AUTHORSHIPS: When a new piece of legislation is called up to the floor, the listed author should be granted the first affirmative speech as an authorship. If no author is present who wishes to give the authorship, any member of the house may speak as a sponsor of the

legislation. If there is a speaker from the same school who is not the listed author who wishes to give the sponsorship, it is customary, but not required, for others to allow them to give the sponsorship speech. If others wish to give the sponsorship speech as well, however, the Presiding Officer must use precedence and recency to recognize a speaker. There is no "first affirmative" instead of an authorship.

CHOOSING SPEAKERS: In choosing speakers, the Presiding Officer shall use precedence, than recency, than another method (preferably randomly). The Presiding Officer may NOT use activity, standing time, questions asked, geography, or something similar in choosing speakers. Precedence should reset to a clean slate at the beginning of each session (though it is a common, but not mandatory, courtesy to allow the Presiding Officer of the previous session preference for his/her first speech).

SESSIONS: Each session is a separate legislative day. Speaker precedence and recency reset at the beginning of each new session. The Presiding Officer may NOT serve during more than one session. Competitors may NOT debate any topic that was debated in a previous session.

VOTING: All votes are determined by the number of competitors present and voting. The chair MAY NOT call for abstentions, neither should they count them; abstentions do not count towards the number of votes cast. For all votes on legislation, amendments, appeals, and votes that require a 2/3s vote, the chair should use a standing vote, otherwise a voice vote is fine.

QUESTIONS: After the first affirmation and negation speeches, there shall be two minutes of mandatory questioning time. After all other speeches, there shall be one minute of mandatory questioning time. Leftover time after a speech should not be added to questioning time. The P.O. should recognize speakers fairly and equitably — geography is not fair or equitable because it penalizes members for where they sit, and should not be used..

To enhance debate, the P.O. will recognize questioners for 30 second blocks of back and forth cross examination between a single questioner and the speaker, where the questioner may use the time how they wish. The chair may not rule any question out of order that does not violate decorum. No rule regarding questions may be suspended, except to add time, which is a suspension of the rules.

ELECTIONS: All elections, including that for Presiding Officers and Best Speaker, shall use the following procedure. The chair opens the floor for nominations (not a motion). Competitors then nominate candidates. Once candidates have been nominated, a motion to close the floor for nominations requires a 2/3s votes, but if there are no more nominations, it is customary for the

chair to do through unanimous consent. Legislators will the write the name of the person they are voting for on a secret ballot and submit it to the parliamentarian. If a candidate does not reach a majority, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is dropped. If the combined votes of the two lowest candidates do not equal votes of the next lowest candidate, both are eliminated. If there is a tie for last place but they add up to above or equal to the next highest candidate's vote total, a runoff election shall decide who will be on the ballot between the candidates.

AMENDMENTS: Once the motion to amend is made, the P.O. requests the amendment be submitted to the chair and the person moving the amendment submits it the P.O., who decides if the amendment is germane. The P.O. may consult with the Parliamentarian to make this decision. If the amendment is found NOT germane, the chair rules it OUT OF ORDER and the amendment process stops. If the chair rules the amendment germane, the P.O. reads the amendment to the chamber. A 1/3 second of the members PRESENT in the chamber is required to debate the amendment. If the chamber seconds the amendment, debate on the amendment commences immediately. Debate on the amendment should be solely on the merits of the amendment, any speech on the legislation itself is out of order. Legislators may move a motion to table or call the previous question on the amendment at any time. The first speech on the amendment is a SPONSORSHIP speech. The chair determines speaker recognition for the SPONSORSHIP speech like any other speech; the author of the amendment is NOT guaranteed the sponsorship speech. The sponsor accepts responsibility for the mechanics of the amendment and yields to two minutes of questioning. All amendment speeches receive a score and count towards recency. A majority vote is necessary for the chamber to adopt the amendment.

Competition Format

There shall be a Parliamentarian and two scorers for each chamber. The Parliamentarian shall be the same for all sessions, but the scores shall change after every session. Scorers will judge and give a critique for each speech, awarding it between 1 and 6 whole points. The average of these two scores will be used to determine the number of NSDA merit points for the speech.

At the end of each session, scorers shall rank the top 8 competitors for *Best Legislator*, giving the best competitor 8 points, the second best 7 points, and so on. Students not ranked receive a score of 0 points. The Presiding Officer can be, and unless they did a particularly bad job, should be ranked. However, the Parliamentarian shall be responsible for giving them a score from 1-6, which shall be tripled for their NSDA points. At the end of the tournament the Parliamentarian should rank all students. The Parliamentarian's ballot shall count towards points for the top 8 the same way a scorer's ballot would. Both the Parliamentarian and the scorers shall consider speeches, questions, and participation in ranking students.

Once all ballots have been filled out, rankings will be determined by highest total score, with reciprocal ranks, then Parliamentarian's ballot, used to break all ties.

Rules Clarifications

These are not tournament specific rules, but rather rules in Robert's Rules or NSDA rules that are often misinterpreted and/or wrong.

- Abstentions do not count as votes cast, and therefore anyone abstaining does not count in the number of members needed for a motion to pass. As such, abstentions should not be called for, because abstention means not voting, so "abstention vote" is an oxymoron.
- Once a motion has been seconded, it can still be withdrawn and or amended by the author. A motion becomes property of the chamber once the chair states the motion.
- Lay on the Table had a higher precedence than Previous Question. It was created so a chamber could *temporarily* put aside a motion, with the intent of coming back to it. Once debate finished on a topic, the previous question should be moved. Lay on the Table should only be moved when the chamber wishes to come back to it.
- Once the chamber goes through three consecutive speeches on the same side, the chamber DOES NOT automatically move the previous question. The chamber should if debate becomes one sided, but it is not required.
- There is no motion to open the floor for debate. This is done by the chair without announcement. Same goes for nominations.
- Orders of the Day are not called at the end of a session. An Orders of the Day is a particular item of business set in advance to be taken up. They are called up by the chair when moving to another bill or resolution on the agenda, there is no motion to call for Orders of the Day. An agenda, by definition, is a collection of orders of the day, every time you start debate on another topic that is an order of the day being called up.

Scorer Instructions

Judges will fill out a ballot for each speech in the round and give comments and a score (from 1-6) to the speaker. Each ballot sheet can be used for 3 speeches from the same speaker. You may continue comments or notes on the back of the sheet. Please DO NOT score different speakers on a single sheet, even if they are from the same school. Notify the parliamentarian if

you run out of ballots. To avoid confusion, if a competitor gives more than 3 speeches, they should have their score written down on a separate ballot and stapled to the first ballot. In addition, so the tab room can verify rankings, scorers should write a students rank on their ballot, as well as the student ranking sheet.

Speech scores should take into account that Congress is a debate event. There are multiple different types of speeches, each have equal weight in a debate. The authorship and first few speeches should explain the problem and the most important reason to vote with them. After that, speeches should be constructive (add new points to the debate), but don't have to explain the problem; instead, they should refute previous speakers as well. The farther along in the debate, the more refutation a speech should have. Late in the debate, crystallization speeches should clarify what arguments have been made and refuted, and explain overall why one side won.

Scorers, please reward students who advance debate and engage with prior speakers, and students who move the chamber forward to the next legislation rather than giving a repetitive speech filled with "rehash." Students do not possess the right to speak on every legislation, and students should not be penalized for moving the previous question to end debate on an exhausted topic.

Presiding is equivalent to giving 3 speeches (one each hour). It is not required that you rank the P.O.; the PO should be considered equally along with the other members of the chamber based on their contribution to the quality and fairness of debate. However, unless they did a very poor job, the P.O. generally should be ranked. Some criteria to consider: adherence to parliamentary procedure, smoothness and speed in handling motions, fairness in distribution of questions, adherence to precedence in determining speakers.

Judges should consider the quality of student questions and answers and participation in questioning when ranking contestants at the end of the session. As part of the effort to turn the event into Congressional Debate, speakers are expected to be able to defend their arguments during questioning. How a speaker handles questioning should be part of the score for their speech, as well as part of their overall ranking. Keep in mind that although the questioner holds the floor, an overly aggressive or hostile posture should be discouraged.