



Congress A Guide



Jana Riggins, Editor
2024-2025 Edition

U n i v e r s i t y I n t e r s c h o l a s t i c L e a g u e



Important Dates for Congress

2024-2025

Intent to Participate from Schools submitted online (Late submission requires regional approval)	September 10
Legislation from Schools to Region Clerk	September 10
Legislation from Region Clerk to State Office	September 20
State Office posts Regional Legislation online	no later than October 1
School submits UIL Contestant Entry Form via the UIL website	<i>no later than 10 days prior to the Region meet</i>
Region Sanctioned Contest Window	November 1 - 16
Region submits Results & Legislation to State Office	<i>no later than November 18</i>
State office posts State Legislation online	<i>no later than December 1</i>
Region Clerk submits Parliamentarian for State	<i>no later than December 1</i>
Qualifying Schools each submit State Scorer	<i>no later than December 1</i>
State Congress Meet	January 6 - 8

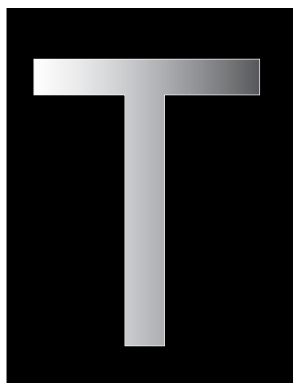


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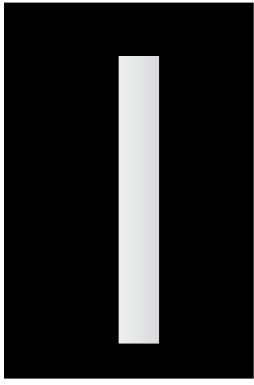
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This button is found on the UIL Speech home page <https://www.uiltexas.org/speech>



Introduction

*“Where there are no laws, or individuals have their own rules and laws, there is the least of real democracy.”
-- Gen. Henry Martyn Robert (author, Robert’s Rules of Order)*

Congress is an individual contest in a large group setting. It models the legislative process of democracy, specifically, the United States Congress.

PRIOR TO THE CONTEST

Within this mock legislative assembly competition, contestants draft legislation (proposed laws and position statements) that they submit to the tournament; and they research the docket of bills and resolutions dealing with real-world social and political policies to prepare speeches.

DURING THE CONTEST

At a tournament, students deliver formal discourse on the merits and disadvantages of each piece of legislation; after a period of debate, contestants vote to pass or defeat the measures they have examined. Parliamentary procedure forms structure for the discourse, and students extemporaneously respond to others’ arguments over the course of a session.

STRUCTURE OF A CONGRESS ROUND

Each Congress session lasts approximately 3 hours. A student Presiding Officer (PO) runs the session. The PO’s job includes:

- Recognizing speakers
- Giving time signals
- Conducting votes
- Keeping order

A congress tournament begins with the establishment of an agenda, or order of legislation to be debated from the docket provided by the tournament host.

The first speech introducing the piece of legislation is called an authorship speech (if the student who wrote the legislation or a teammate delivers the speech) or a sponsorship speech if given by a student from a different school. The author or sponsor may speak for up to 3 minutes, followed by 2 minutes of continuous questioning by other delegates. The first opposing speech is also 3 minutes, followed by 2 minutes of questioning. All other speeches on the same legislation are 3 minutes, followed by 1 minute of questioning. Finally, action is taken on the legislation by the chamber body.

DETERMINING THE WINNERS

In most rounds, there will be one parliamentarian and two judges (also called “scorers”). Judges evaluate contestants for based on the depth of their research and analysis of issues, argumentation, skill in asking and answering questions, use of parliamentary procedure and clarity and fluency of speaking.

Judges and parliamentarians evaluate and award points for each speech delivered by students in the chamber. Top ranked students advance to a final session, called a “super” congress.

For additional information, explore resources at www.uiltexas.org/speech/congress

Skills Involved that Make the Congress Contest Unique

The UIL Congress Contest provides students the exciting opportunity to participate in a mock legislative congress modeled after the United States Congress.

- » Using parliamentary procedure to conduct meetings properly
- » Following parliamentary law when speaking before the legislative body
- » Critical listening
- » Note taking
- » Creating laws to solve problems
- » Negotiating arts and mediation while meeting in caucuses
- » Incorporating elements of interpersonal communication while working to get legislation passed
- » Using proper decorum during formal discussion
- » Increasing civility in discourse
- » Improving writing skills by developing compelling arguments that are real-world
- » Providing real-life exposure to politics, political science, persuasion, public speaking and assemblies
- » Discussing newsworthy issues
- » Debating current laws of our nation
- » Increasing civic participation
- » Developing respect for public service
- » Cultivating a desire to contribute to society
- » Building leaders by providing an opportunity to run for Presiding Officer
- » Providing a student-driven contest as they author the legislation and set the docket
- » Utilizing research available via common resources makes the contest extremely cost-effective
- » Crossing curriculums, involving students from speech, debate, agricultural and FFA programs, government and social studies, among others

RULES

Section 901 of the *Constitution and Contest Rules*

- (a) The Academic Contest Ethics Code shall carry the force of rule. Member school districts, member schools and/or covered school district personnel who violate any of the provisions of this code shall be subject to penalty.
- (1) Participate in contests in the spirit of fairness and sportsmanship, observing all rules – both in letter and in spirit.
 - (2) Sponsor and advise individuals and teams without resorting to unethical tactics, trickery that attempts to skirt the rules or any other unfair tactic that detracts from sound educational principles.
 - (3) Accept decisions of officials and judges without protest and extend protection and courtesy to officials.
 - (4) Regard opponents as guests or hosts while placing personal and/or team integrity above victory at any cost. Maintain grace and poise in victory or defeat. Conduct that berates, intimidates or threatens competitors has no place in interscholastic activities.
 - (5) Provide information or evidence regarding eligibility of any contestant or school to local school administrators or to the appropriate judicial bodies upon request.
 - (6) Understand and appreciate the educational values of competition and abstain from modifying or soliciting another teacher to modify grades for eligibility purposes, knowing that such behavior defeats the character-building purposes of extracurricular competition.
 - (7) Abstain from any practice that makes a student feel pressured to participate in nonschool activities.
 - (8) At all times, ensure that competition is relative to a more important overall educational effort, using competition as a tool in the preparation of students for citizenship and successful adulthood.
 - (9) Ensure that UIL Academic district, regional and state meets receive precedence over non-qualifying contests or meets.
 - (10) School districts shall notify the academic regional or state meet director no later than the end of the second school day following academic district or regional competition if a student or a team knows that it will not compete at the next higher academic meet.

C&CR Section 1008: CONGRESS

(a) THE CONTEST.

(1) Purpose. The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to understand real-world social and political policies debated within the framework of a legislative body modeled after the United States Congress, with formal discourse guided by parliamentary procedure.

(2) Format. Contestants will formulate legislative bills and resolutions, debate them, and adopt or reject them by casting votes. Speaking in legislative congress is conducted within a structured environment of specific procedural rules.

(b) ENTRIES.

(1) Representation. Each school desiring to participate in UIL Congress should file an intent to participate form on the UIL website no later than date posted on UIL Congress webpage for the current school year. Failure to submit intent shall require regional committee approval in order for school to participate. Each school in all conferences may enter five competitors in the congressional region competition. Two alternates may be registered. Entries shall be submitted at least ten calendar days prior to the congressional region competition via the UIL website. In the event ten or less total contestants per conference are competing in a congressional region, both alternates from each school with a full entry in that conference may be seated. Only one alternate may be seated if there are 11-15 entries within the conference.

(2) Eligibility. Speech plan, Section 1000 of the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules, regarding specific speech eligibility shall not apply to this contest. Entering the congress competition does not impact a student's eligibility to enter any other UIL high school academic event (i.e., CX Debate, LD Debate).

(3) Entries submitted after the 10-day deadline, require majority consent of the regional congress committee.

(c) RESOURCES. The contest is discussed and defined in detail in the UIL Congress Handbook and on the UIL website. Coaches are responsible for reviewing these publications in advance of the contest.

(d) STRUCTURE. Congress will be organized into regions according to the twenty Educational Service Centers (ESC) designated by the Texas Education Agency. All schools, regardless of UIL conference, will compete with each other within their school's region ESC unless conference entry numbers warrant separate chambers. Regardless, each conference competing in the congressional region will be eligible to advance a minimum of three representatives to the state congressional competition.

(e) CONGRESSIONAL REGION CONTEST DIRECTORSHIP. A directorship of five for each congressional region contest within their Education Service Center region will conduct the region contest. A congressional region clerk appointed by the UIL office will chair the directorship. The congressional region clerk shall be the final authority until the congressional region competition is completed.

(f) ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CHAMBER. The use of laptop and tablet computers and other electronic retrieval devices by competitors in UIL Congress is allowed so long as wired or wireless connections are disabled and remain disabled throughout the contest. Cell phones and smart phones are prohibited in the chamber. Traditional timing devices are permitted.

(g) CONGRESS SHALL BE PUBLIC. Congress is public discourse. Therefore, all congressional chambers shall be open to the public. No coaching or cheering shall be permitted during the contest.

(h) RECORDING. Schools and/or individuals are prohibited from recording (audio and/or video) region or state congress sessions. The UIL reserves the right to record for educational purposes.

UIL CONGRESS RULES & PROCEDURES

2024-2025

1 **PURPOSE OF THE CONTEST.** The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to
2 understand real-world social and political policies debated within the framework of a legislative
3 body modeled after the United States Congress, with formal discourse guided by parliamentary
4 procedure.

5 **NATURE OF THE CONTEST.** Contestants will formulate legislative bills and resolutions,
6 debate them, and adopt or reject them by casting votes. Speaking in legislative congress is
7 conducted within a structured environment of specific procedural rules.

8 **STRUCTURE.** Congress will be organized into regions according to the twenty educational
9 service centers (ESC) designated by the Texas Education Agency. All schools, regardless of UIL
10 conference, will compete with each other within their school's Region ESC unless conference
11 entry numbers warrant separate chambers. Regardless, each conference competing in the
12 Congressional region will be eligible to advance a minimum of three representatives to the State
13 Congressional competition.

14 **CONGRESSIONAL REGION CONTEST DIRECTORSHIP.** A directorship of five for each
15 Congressional region contest within their Education Service Center region will conduct the
16 region contest. A Congressional Region Clerk appointed by the UIL State Office will chair the
17 directorship. The Congressional Region Clerk shall be the final authority until the Congressional
18 Region competition is completed.

19 **ENTRIES: REPRESENTATION.** Each school desiring to participate in UIL Congress should
20 file an Intent to Participate form on the UIL website no later than date posted on UIL Congress
21 webpage for the current school year. Failure to submit intent shall require regional committee
22 approval in order for school to participate. Each school in all conferences may enter five
23 competitors in the Congressional Region competition. Two alternates may be registered. Entries
24 shall be submitted at least ten calendar days prior to the Congressional Region competition via
25 the UIL website. In the event ten or less total contestants per conference are competing in a
26 Congressional Region, both alternates from each school with a full entry in that conference may
27 be seated. Only one alternate may be seated if there are 11-15 entries within the conference.
28 Entries submitted after the 10-day deadline, require majority consent of the Regional congress
29 committee.

30 **ELIGIBILITY.** Each contestant shall be eligible under subchapter M of the *UIL Constitution &*
31 *Contest Rules*. Only students in high school are eligible for this contest. Speech plan, section
32 1000 of the *UIL Constitution & Contest Rules*, regarding specific speech eligibility shall not
33 apply to this contest. Entering the Congress competition does not impact a student's eligibility to
34 enter any other UIL high school academic event. (i.e., CX Debate, LD Debate)

35 **SUBSTITUTIONS.** An eligible student may be substituted for any name on the official region
36 entry form by providing the contest director with a letter or official substitution form signed by
37 the superintendent or designated administrator certifying the student's eligibility. The letter shall
38 be presented to the contest director before the contest begins.

39 **LIMIT ON SUBSTITUTIONS.** After a given competition has begun, no substitutions shall be
40 allowed.

41 **PLANNING THE REGIONAL CONTEST.** In order to maximize participation by all schools
42 and provide equal opportunity to all students to enter regardless of the existing academic conflict
43 pattern, the congressional competition will be held during the fall/winter. The Congressional
44 Regional Directorship, with input from all participating schools, shall schedule Congressional
45 Region competition during the first two designated region weeks of November. Location and
46 entry fees will be determined by the Directorship.

UIL CONGRESS RULES & PROCEDURES 2024-2025

47 **SIZE OF CHAMBERS.** The optimum size is 20 legislators per chamber for a three-hour
48 session; otherwise, a session should be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student
49 beyond 20. If a conference has fewer than fifteen competitors, see *combining conferences at*
50 *Congressional Region* below.

51 If a school has more than one entry and there are multiple chambers at Congressional Region
52 school entries should be assigned to separate chambers, whenever possible.

53 **NUMBER OF CONGRESSIONAL REGIONAL CHAMBERS:**

54 **24 or less entries** – There shall be one chamber, which will conduct morning and
55 afternoon sessions. Each session should be three hours of debate time, lengthened by 10 minutes
56 per each additional congressional contestant beyond 20.

57 **25 to 48 entries** – There shall be at least two chambers, which will conduct a preliminary
58 session consisting of three hours and should be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional
59 student beyond 20. The top half of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage)
60 will advance to a final congress session. The final session shall not be less than three hours, and
61 shall be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

62 **49 to 72 entries** – There shall be at least three chambers, which will conduct a
63 preliminary session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional
64 student beyond 20. A proportionately equal number of students shall be selected to advance from
65 each preliminary chamber resulting in a final chamber of no less than 18 and no more than 24
66 students. The final session shall be three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional
67 student beyond 20.

68 **73 to 96 entries** – There shall be at least four chambers, which will conduct a preliminary
69 session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student
70 beyond 20. A proportionately equal number of students shall be selected to advance from each
71 preliminary chamber resulting in a final chamber of no less than 18 and no more than 24
72 students. The final session shall be three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional
73 student beyond 20.

74 **97 to 120 entries** – There shall be at least five chambers, which will conduct a
75 preliminary session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional
76 student beyond 20. The top one fifth of each chamber (or whole number closest to that
77 percentage) will advance to the final session that will be three hours and lengthened by 10
78 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

79 **COMBINING CONFERENCES AT CONGRESSIONAL REGIONALS.** In the event there
80 are an insufficient number of competitors in some conferences to constitute a chamber,
81 Congressional Regions will combine conferences to achieve the desired chamber(s) size(s). The
82 Region clerk and/or Directorship committee should do this in a fashion as determined by the
83 Region Directorship committee. Those advancing from preliminary to final chambers must be
84 proportionate to the conferences represented. If a conference is represented by only one school,
85 then all of that school's members shall advance to the final chamber and to State.

86 **LEGISLATION.** Participating Regional schools are encouraged to author and submit bills,
87 constitutional amendments, and/or resolutions for debate and are encouraged to author legislation
88 that has an impact on the state of Texas. However, schools should assume members of the
89 chamber to be United States Congress representatives. All legislation submitted shall meet UIL
90 formatting and shall be the original product of the school. Plagiarism includes: submitting
91 legislation that was not authored by the student or school. Direct quotation from a published
92 source shall not be allowed in submitted legislation. Students should paraphrase from published

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93 sources in submitted legislation. Plagiarism is unacceptable and shall result in the legislation
94 being ineligible for inclusion on the agenda, and the school shall lose authorship speeches for
95 any additional legislation they have in the docket. It shall be the duty of the coach to affirm that
96 the legislation submitted is original. Legislation must be submitted to the regional clerk by the
97 date posted on the UIL Congress webpage to be eligible for review by the clerk and regional
98 committee, which will determine the legislation. A maximum of 20 pieces (10 for prelims, 10 for
99 finals) will be debated at the regional contest but less is permissible. The clerk shall then forward
100 the regional legislation to the UIL state director for final approval and posting on the official UIL
101 website.

102 **SCORERS/PARLIAMENTARIANS.** The congressional regional directorship will determine
103 requirements for providing scorers and Parliamentarians for the region competition. Upon
104 request from the regional clerk and committee, in emergency situations, regions may receive a
105 waiver from the UIL state debate director to use one scorer in preliminary sessions.

106 **SCORING CHAMBERS.** A Parliamentarian and a minimum of two scorers shall score each
107 chamber, unless a waiver is granted. In regions with fewer than 24 competitors, there will be two
108 sessions with a single chamber. The scorers shall rank students at the end of each session. The
109 Parliamentarian shall rank students only at the end of the second session, ranking all contestants
110 from 1st through the total number of members in the chamber. In regions with more than 24
111 competitors, there will be one preliminary session with multiple chambers and one final session.

112 **ASSIGNING RANKS.** Scorers shall rank students at the end of each session. Scorers will rank
113 only the top 8 students from 1ST (best) through 8TH (all unranked students receive a 9 for
114 purposes of tabulation). Parliamentarians shall only rank students at the end of their last session.
115 Parliamentarians shall rank all contestants from 1ST (best) through the total number of members
116 in the chamber.

117 Legislators may be scored on up to five speeches per session. They may deliver more
118 than five speeches, but only the initial five shall be scored. Each speech shall be rated 1- 6, with
119 1 being worst and 6 being the best. Ratings should be based on originality of thought,
120 organization and unity, evidence and logic, and overall delivery. An evaluation sheet should be
121 completed for all members of congress whether they spoke during the session or not. Ratings are
122 not used for advancement purposes but provide feedback to students as to the quality of each
123 speech.

124 **PLACEMENT.** The cumulative ranks of the Parliamentarian and each scorer in the chamber
125 shall determine placements using the established tie-breaking rules. The lowest rank of the
126 scorers and Parliamentarians shall be first in the chamber, the second lowest shall be second in
127 the chamber, and like manner. The congressional regional directorship shall conduct the
128 tabulation.

129 **ADVANCEMENT/PLACEMENT.** Final rankings in each chamber shall be determined on the
130 basis of cumulative ranks of all scorers and the Parliamentarian. Scorers should rank only the top
131 8 competitors from 1st (best) to 8th at the end of each session (with all others considered as 9th for
132 purposes of cumulative rank). The Parliamentarian should rank each competitor from 1st (best)
133 through the total number of members in the chamber at the end of the last session. In determining
134 cumulative rank totals. The Parliamentarian ranks greater than 9 shall be adjusted to 9 (thus
135 giving equal weight to each scorer and Parliamentarian).

136 Ties in cumulative ranks shall be broken by:

- 137 1) Judge preference (using Parliamentarian ranks adjusted to 9)
- 138 2) Reciprocal fractions (using Parliamentarian ranks adjusted to 9)

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139 3) Actual Parliamentarian rank (non-adjusted)
140 **BALLOT VERIFICATION PERIOD.** After the preliminary and final rounds (excluding final
141 round at state) and the announcement of unofficial rankings, the individual evaluation sheets
142 shall be made available to each contestant and/or coach. It then becomes the responsibility of the
143 students and/or coach to question any tabulation error before the official results of those
144 advancing to the final round or being awarded medals is announced. Students and/or coaches
145 who are not present for this announced ballot verification period forfeit their opportunity to
146 verify tabulation. Approximately 15 minutes should be allotted for this verification period. This
147 is designed as time to verify tabulation, not a time to question the decision or ranking that a
148 judge has given the student.

149 From the final regional chamber, each congressional region shall advance the top three
150 candidates from each conference to state. Congressional regions with more than 40 entries within
151 a conference will advance the top candidates from each conference based on a ratio of one
152 student advancing for every 10 entries in a given conference (40 – 49 entries = 4 students
153 advancing to state; 50 – 59 entries = 5 students advancing to state). The ratio applies to all
154 students entered per conference at the congressional regional tournament. Conference entries
155 shall not be combined for the purpose of determining the ratio qualifying for state.

156 **REGION AWARDS.** Each regional competitor should be recognized for participation. Each
157 state-advancing congress competitor and state alternates shall receive an award for their
158 accomplishment. Further, each final chamber will vote, using the same method employed for
159 selecting a Presiding Officer for the outstanding Presiding Officer of that chamber. Outstanding
160 Presiding Officers shall receive an award for his/her accomplishment.

161 **ALTERNATES.** A first alternate and second alternate to State should be named from each
162 conference in each Congressional Region, if possible.

163 **THE STATE MEET:**

164 In order to participate, each Congressional Region and each school qualifying a contestant to the
165 Congressional State Meet shall be required to provide the following:

166 **LEGISLATION.** At the completion of Congressional Region competition, those students for
167 each conference advancing to State competition shall select one resolution or one bill and an
168 alternate piece of legislation, should it be needed, to be submitted to the State Director to be
169 considered as legislation for the State Meet.

170 **STATE PARLIAMENTARIAN/CLERKS/SCORERS.** Each Congressional Region (ESC)
171 advancing competitors to State shall provide one qualified Parliamentarian for the duration of the
172 Congressional State competition. Deadline for submission of state Parliamentarian by the
173 Regional Clerk is the deadline posted on the UIL Congress website. Each school qualifying a
174 legislator shall provide one individual qualified to serve as a scorer/clerk for the duration of the
175 Congressional State competition. Deadline for submission of state scorer/clerk by each
176 qualifying school is the deadline on the UIL Congress website.

177 **CHAMBER DIVISION.** State-qualifying competitors shall be assigned to a chamber within
178 their own conference at the state meet. Preliminary chambers will be evenly divided, in so much
179 as possible, and shall conduct debate for a morning and an afternoon session.

180 **STATE SCORING.** During preliminary and final sessions, Parliamentarians will remain the
181 same in each chamber, but the scorers will be rotated from that chamber after each session.
182 Thus, there should be four scorers and one Parliamentarian who have scored the chamber during
183 state preliminary sessions.

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184 **ADVANCEMENT/PLACEMENT.** Final rankings in each chamber shall be determined on the
185 basis of cumulative ranks of all scorers and the Parliamentarian. Scorers should rank only the top
186 8 competitors from 1st (best) to 8th at the end of each session (with all others considered as 9th for
187 purposes of cumulative rank). The Parliamentarian should rank each competitor from 1st (best)
188 through the total number of members in the chamber at the end of the last session. In determining
189 cumulative rank totals, the Parliamentarian ranks greater than 9 shall be adjusted to 9 (thus
190 giving equal weight to each scorer and Parliamentarian).

191 Ties in cumulative ranks shall be broken by:

- 192 1) Judge preference (using Parliamentarian ranks adjusted to 9)
- 193 2) Reciprocal fractions (using Parliamentarian ranks adjusted to 9)
- 194 3) Actual Parliamentarian rank (non-adjusted)

195 **ADVANCING FROM PRELIMINARY TO FINALS AT STATE:** both the preliminary and
196 final chambers shall be scored in the fashion herein specified. The number of legislators
197 advancing from each conference chamber must be proportionate to providing 18-20 in the final
198 chamber.

199 **BALLOT VERIFICATION PERIOD.** After the preliminary and final rounds (excluding
200 Super Congress final round at State) and the announcement of unofficial rankings, the individual
201 evaluation sheets shall be made available to each contestant and/or coach. It then becomes the
202 responsibility of the student and/or coach to question any tabulation error before the official
203 results of those advancing to the final round or being awarded medals is announced. Students
204 and/or coaches who are not present for this announced ballot verification period forfeit their
205 opportunity to verify tabulation. Approximately 15 minutes should be allotted for this
206 verification period. This is designed as time to verify tabulation, not a time to question the
207 decision or ranking that a judge has given the student.

208 **STATE AWARDS:** Each student advancing and participating in Congressional State will
209 receive recognition. Competitors in the final chamber ranked 1 – 6 in each conference will
210 receive medals respective to their rank. Each chamber shall vote for the best Presiding Officer of
211 that chamber using the same method employed for selecting a Presiding Officer. Each
212 outstanding Presiding Officer shall receive an award for his/her accomplishment.

213 **UIL COMPETITION RULES**

214 **ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

215 **Oath of office** (collectively or by chamber)

216 **Audition of Presiding Officer candidates** (order should be drawn by lots)

- 217 ■ The first candidate's obligation shall include the consideration of "rules of
218 the day," which will remain binding for the duration of the session, unless
219 amended as allowed.
- 220 ■ Candidates shall NOT be scored during their candidacy, nor shall their
221 candidacy be a consideration for precedence or recency.

222 **Conducting the business of the chamber**

223 **Vote on Presiding Officer**

224 **Conducting the business of the chamber**

225 **Chamber adjourns at the established time**

226 **ORDERING THE DOCKET:** Chambers may set their own agenda.

227 At Region and State, all legislation intended for that portion of Congress may be altered by a
228 two-thirds vote, but no new legislation (beyond a resolution of appreciation) may be introduced
229 to the chamber.

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230 Invitational tournament hosts are allowed to use UIL Region and State legislation at their meets.

231 **LENGTH OF DEBATE:** The length of debate on each piece of legislation may be set in the
232 rules of the day. When no one seeks the floor for debate, the Parliamentarian may prompt the
233 Presiding Officer to ask the chamber if they are “ready for the question,” at which point, if there
234 is no objection, voting may commence on the legislation itself.

235 **TIME:** Times are absolute in Congress. They can neither be diminished, nor increased by a
236 vote of the chamber.

237 • Thus, the first affirmative (author/sponsor) has three minutes to speak on the question,
238 followed by a two-minute question and answer period. If, for instance, the speaker only
239 uses 2 minutes and 30 seconds of his/her speaking time, the remaining 30 seconds does
240 **NOT** accrue to his/her question-and-answer period – the first affirmative and negative
241 speaker receives only those two minutes.

242 ○ After the first affirmative and negative speakers have spoken, subsequent
243 speakers will have 3 minutes to speak on the topic and a 1 - minute question and
244 answer period.

245 ○ One legislator may **NOT** yield any portion of his/her time to another legislator,
246 except to ask a question as provided above.

247 **RECOGNIZING MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER:** Members must speak only after being
248 recognized by the Presiding Officer. Members should be addressed formally as Representative
249 when addressing another member of the chamber. At Region and State Contests, pre-set speech
250 precedence charts may be used. At the regional level, use of such shall be approved by the
251 Regional Congress committee. At the state level, approval shall be by State Tournament
252 officials.

253 • At the Region and State Contests, when legislation is first placed in order by a main
254 motion, the Presiding Officer will call for the author of the legislation. Until precedence
255 and recency (defined below) can be established, s/he may choose whomsoever s/he
256 pleases, giving attention to geography of the chamber. That is, s/he should not choose
257 only from one location of the chamber or from one school known to him/her or from one
258 conference known to him/her.

259 If two or more contestants wish to speak that have previously spoken, the precedence
260 rules below will apply in selecting the contestant that has precedence:

261 • As speakers are recognized, the Presiding Officer shall record that the legislator has
262 spoken and in what order. Once a portion of the chamber has spoken, the Presiding
263 Officer, when recognizing speakers, shall recognize those who have not spoken or who
264 have spoken the fewest times (precedence). If all legislators seeking to speak have the
265 same number of speeches previously, that legislator who has spoken earliest shall be
266 recognized first (recency).

267 • Questions shall be recognized on recency.

268 • During any session, precedence/recency should not reset, to ensure that all students in a
269 chamber have an equal opportunity to speak. Precedence/Recency will be reset when a
270 new session begins.

271 • A member of the chamber speaking on the wrong side, that is, speaking on the
272 affirmative when they should have spoken on the negative or who speaks on the wrong
273 legislation shall receive no points for that speech, but the speech will be recorded for the
274 purpose of precedence and recency.

275 **PRO-CON BLOCK:** The pro-con block does **NOT** exist.

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276 • The affirmative shall be followed by a negative speech, if one is offered. In like manner,
277 the negative shall be followed by an affirmative speech, if one is offered. If, however,
278 there is no negative after the affirmative or affirmative after the negative, it is permissible
279 to hear two or more affirmatives or negatives in a row.

280 **QUESTIONING:** Thirty second questioning blocks shall be employed in all sessions of
281 Congress. There shall be two minutes of questioning time after the first affirmative and first
282 negative speeches on an item. All other speeches shall have a questioning time of one minute. If
283 pre-set speech precedence charts are used, Presiding Officers are encouraged to select
284 representatives that are lower on the chart to ask questions first while maintaining recency.
285 Members shall have only one questioning block per questioning time, unless no other members
286 seek recognition.

287 **DECISIONS OF THE CHAIR:** A member may appeal the decision of the chair, which
288 requires a second and a majority vote.

289 • As a rule, this is discouraged. Members elected the chair and should have confidence in
290 that individual's decisions. This action should be reserved for only the most egregious
291 acts, and should always be preceded with the motion "point of order" to allow the chair
292 the opportunity to reconsider on their own.

293 **DECISIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARIAN:** If the Parliamentarian and clerk are not the
294 same person, a member or the chair may appeal to the Clerk a decision of the Parliamentarian.
295 Such appeals must be made in writing, must be accompanied by a two-thirds vote of the
296 chamber's members, and no appeal will stop the proceedings of the congress.

297 **DISCUSSION WITH THE PARLIAMENTARIAN.** Prior to an appeal of the decision of the
298 Parliamentarian, two members in opposition, one for the decision and one opposed, may seek to
299 discuss their positions in conference with the Parliamentarian. These are non-scored speeches,
300 and may not be considered by either the Parliamentarian or judges in ranking the student. They
301 are intended only to allow a brief period of time for advocacy.

302 • A two-thirds vote to appeal the decision of the Parliamentarian is necessary to appeal.

303 **DECISIONS OF THE CLERK:** The decisions of the Clerk of Congress are final. There is no
304 other authority to which a legislator may appeal.

305 **RIGHT TO IMPEACH:** The members and officers of the congress may not be impeached;
306 however, the Parliamentarian of the chamber may request a member be removed for cause.

307 **PREVIOUS QUESTION:** The motion to previous question should be used sparingly and only
308 when debate has lagged, evidence of which is no new or extended arguments are being made.

309 • It should **NOT** be entertained by the chair, nor allowed by the Parliamentarian, merely to
310 dispatch legislation in order to debate a different piece of legislation.

311 **TABLING LEGISLATION:** As with a motion to previous question, tabling legislation should
312 be used for very limited purposes and not to deny legislators the opportunity to speak on the
313 legislation.

314 • It should **NOT** be entertained by the chair, nor allowed by the Parliamentarian, merely to
315 dispatch legislation in order to debate a different piece of legislation.

316 **OWNERSHIP OF LEGISLATION:** Legislation does **NOT** belong to the chamber until it has
317 been first introduced by the author/sponsor.

318 • Objecting to the consideration of a question will not supersede the right of the
319 author/sponsor to introduce the legislation to the chamber before any other motions may
320 be made on the legislation.

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321 **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments and amendments to amendments must be presented, written on
322 the appropriate form, to the Parliamentarian first, who shall solely determine the appropriateness
323 of the amendment offered. After the Parliamentarian either approves or disapproves the
324 amendment, they will pass the amendment to the chair, who shall recognize the author of the
325 amendment at the earliest possible time for his/her motion to amend.

- 326 • No amendment shall seek to alter the fundamental intent of the legislation.
- 327 • There is no guarantee of a speech. Upon a one-third vote of the chamber, a delegate may
328 move the question, or the Presiding Officer may call for speeches in affirmation of the
329 amendment. The amending legislator is not guaranteed this privilege; it is based on
330 precedence and recency.
- 331 • Amendment speeches shall count toward precedence and recency.

332 **SCORED SPEECHES:** Speeches will only be scored when the member of the chamber has
333 been recognized to give a speech for or against the legislation or amendment at hand.

- 334 • Scorers and the Parliamentarian shall rate each speech on a 6-point scale with 1 being
335 worst and 6 being best.
- 336 • Motions or a member offering “floor debate” shall **NOT** be a scored speech.

337 **RANKING LEGISLATORS:** At the end of the preliminary session, the scorers will rank the
338 members of the chamber 1-8 (1 = best, 2 = 2nd best, etc. for that session and only that session).
339 All other members will receive a rank of 9. The Parliamentarian shall only rank students at the
340 end of their last session. Parliamentarians shall rank all contestants from 1st (best) through the
341 total number of members in the chamber.

- 342 • The cumulative sum of the scorers and Parliamentarian will determine members’ final
343 rank. (In order from lowest cumulative rank (1st) to highest cumulative rank.)

344 For example, Legislator A receives a 2 from scorer 1, a 3 from scorer 2 and a 1
345 from the Parliamentarian. The legislator’s cumulative score would be 6.

346 If a tie occurs, the tiebreaking procedures shall be implemented. For State competition, ties shall
347 be broken by: 1) Judges preference (**adjusted**) 2) Reciprocal fractions (**adjusted**) 3) Rank by
348 Parliamentarian (raw score) UIL State Officials shall conduct the tabulation.

- 349 • This method is used regardless of the number of scorers.
- 350 • If there is more than one preliminary session, the cumulative ranks will determine final
351 ranking for the purposes of recognition or advancement to a final chamber.
- 352 • Scorers may be changed after a session (and it is recommended they are changed), but the
353 Parliamentarian remains with the chamber until it stands adjourned.

354 **VOTING BY THE CONGRESS:**

355 **VOTING IN CHAMBER:** Only those members present at the time of a vote shall have their
356 vote counted for all matters before the chamber, including but not limited to motions,
357 amendments and to pass legislation.

358 **QUORUM:** The chamber must have a quorum of 50% plus one member to conduct business.
359 This is based on the original number of legislators seated at the beginning of the session.

360 **ADVANCEMENT BY THE CONGRESS:** Ranking in the chamber for advancement to a final
361 round will be done by the cumulative ranks of the scorer and Parliamentarian, not the members
362 of the chamber.

363 **VOTING FOR PRESIDING OFFICER:** The nominees for Presiding Officer should have an
364 audition period, which should not last more than a total of one hour irrespective of the number of
365 auditions in the chamber. The Parliamentarian will divide this time equally. At the end of the
366 audition period, the Parliamentarian with the assistance of the chamber clerk shall ballot the

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367 membership of the chamber. Voting shall be done by preferential balloting until a clear majority
368 is established.

- 369 • In each balloting, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be removed from the next
370 round of balloting.
- 371 • If the total number of ballots received by multiple candidates is less than the next highest
372 candidate, all the lower candidates shall be removed from the next round of balloting.
- 373 • If there is a tie among the lowest candidates and the total number of votes received is
374 greater than the next lowest candidate, a separate ballot between those candidates must be
375 conducted.
- 376 • Repeat this process until only two candidates remain. Conduct a ballot between the two
377 remaining candidates. The candidate who receives the greatest number of votes will have
378 the choice of serving as Presiding Officer in the morning session or the afternoon session
379 and the other candidate will serve as Presiding Officer in the other session.
- 380 • Only those members elected in a preliminary session may offer their candidacy in the
381 final legislative session. If no preliminary Presiding Officers advance, open auditions
382 will be conducted.
- 383 • In any consolation congress, any member may offer himself or herself for the position of
384 Presiding Officer.

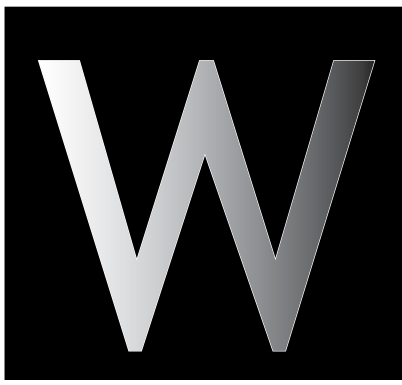
385 **ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CHAMBER:** The use of laptop and tablet computers and other
386 electronic retrieval devices by competitors in UIL Congress is allowed so long as wired or
387 wireless connections are disabled and remain disabled throughout the contest. It is the
388 responsibility of the contestant to disable the equipment. Contestants electing to use computers
389 are responsible for providing their own computers and extra batteries. Tournament hosts shall not
390 be responsible for providing computers for contestants. Contestants who choose to use laptop
391 computers accept the risk of equipment failure. Should equipment failure occur, no special
392 considerations or accommodations, including additional preparation time or speech time, will be
393 given by judges, contest directors or tournament hosts. Contestants accept full responsibility for
394 the safety and security of their electronic retrieval devices throughout the entirety of all UIL
395 tournaments. Contestants, parents and coaches should be aware that contestants are bringing and
396 using the computers at their own risk. UIL is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken
397 computers. Cell phones, smart phones and smart watches are prohibited in the chamber.
398 Traditional timing devices are permitted.

399 **VISUAL AIDS:** If any member uses visual aids, the visual aids shall be left before the chamber
400 and shall be available for use by all members.

401 **OPEN CHAMBER:** UIL Congress shall be an open chamber, but congress members shall
402 request and must receive permission from the Presiding Officer to leave the chamber. Members
403 are encouraged to limit time absent to a strict minimum. (i.e. 5-minute break)

404 **CONGRESS SHALL BE PUBLIC.** Congress is public discourse. Therefore, all congressional
405 chambers shall be open to the public. No coaching or cheering shall be permitted during the
406 contest.

407 **RECORDING:** Schools and/or individuals are prohibited from recording (audio and/or video)
408 region or State Congress sessions. The UIL reserves the right to record for educational purposes.



riting Legislation

While UIL rules do not mandate that each school or legislator submit bills (proposed laws) or resolutions (position statements of conviction) as a requirement for participating in Congress, authoring legislation provides excellent research and technical writing experience for students and gives them the right to deliver the authorship speech which introduces the bill or resolution to the congressional assembly. This provides a guaranteed opportunity to deliver three minutes of constructive speech on the legislation, a clear advantage for Congress competitors.

WRITING EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION

Writing an effective piece of legislation will require the legislator to research an important issue, discover what constituents are impacted by the problem, and explore how the issue can best be addressed. It demands study of implementation, if it is a bill: which government agency would best implement the legislation and the amount of time required before it is implemented. These areas must be considered in the planning stages and then directly addressed within the written legislation. Although resolutions lack the force of law they also require research before writing begins.

UIL Congress is a mock national Congress; therefore, any legislation submitted must be within the jurisdiction of the United States Congress. Authoring legislation that impacts our state is advisable; however, legislation that affects only the state of Texas should be avoided. All legislation should be submitted using the templates posted on the UIL Congress webpage. This will ensure consistency in formatting. Do not submit legislation on a Google form. At the end of each piece of legislation, there should be a confirmation that the legislation is the original work of the school, and the subject matter is approved by the school's administration including a label with the school's name (not the student's name).

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WHEN DEVELOPING LEGISLATION:

Debatability: Legislation with clear arguments on both sides generates solid debate and promotes an equal amount of speeches on both the affirmative and negative side.

Interest: Select an issue that not only engages critical thinking, but that also has a high level of interest on the part of students, scorers and parliamentarians.

Recency: Is the issue current? Develop legislation around a fresh topic that is not debated repeatedly.

Jurisdiction: Can the United States Congress really do this? Has the correct governmental body been designated to enforce the legislation?

Clarity: Is the intent of the legislation clear? Legislation should be written concisely.

Unique: Is the legislation the original work of the student and the school? Guard against plagiarism. Schools should never submit legislation for UIL competition that was not authored by the school's students. Students may paraphrase from published sources but direct quotations are not allowed in legislation. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Coaches must affirm that the legislation submitted is original and a statement of confirmation must be included at the bottom of each legislation submitted for consideration. Refer to the UIL template that follows this discussion.



A Bill to [Action Word] [article] [Object] to [Summarize the Solution Specifically]

1 BE IT ENACTED BY THIS UIL CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

2 **SECTION 1.** State the new policy in a brief declarative sentence, or in as few
3 sentences as possible.

4 **SECTION 2.** Define any ambiguous terms inherent in the first section.

5 **SECTION 3.** Name the government agency that will oversee the enforcement of the
6 bill along with the specific enforcement mechanism.

7 A. Go into further details if necessary.

8 B. Go into further details if necessary.

9 **SECTION 4.** Indicate the implementation date/timeframe.

10 **SECTION 5.** All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.

Introduced for UIL Congressional Debate by _____ (school name).

We certify that the legislation submitted by this school for this Congress is the original work of the students of our school and its subject matter is approved by school administration.



A Resolution to [Action Word] [article] [Object] to [Summarize the Solution Specifically]

- 1 **WHEREAS,** State the current problem (this needs to be accomplished in one brief
2 sentence); and
- 3 **WHEREAS,** Describe the scope of the problem cited in the first whereas clause (this
4 clause needs to flow logically from the first) and the inherent need for a
5 solution; and
- 6 **WHEREAS,** Explain the impact and harms perpetuated by the current problem (once
7 again, the clause needs to flow in a logical sequence); and
- 8 **WHEREAS,** Use additional “whereas” clauses to elaborate rationale for the problem
9 that needs to be solved; now, therefore, be it
- 10 **RESOLVED,** That the UIL Congress here assembled make the following
11 recommendation for solution (a call for action); and, be it
- 12 **FURTHER RESOLVED,** That (this is an *optional* additional recommendation; if not used,
13 end the previous “resolved” clause with a period).

Introduced for UIL Congressional Debate by _____ (school name).

*We certify that the legislation submitted by this school for this Congress is the original work of the students of our school
and its subject matter is approved by administration.*



A Resolution to Amend the Constitution [to...]

1 BE IT ENACTED BY THIS UIL CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

2 **RESOLVED,** By two-thirds of the UIL Congress here assembled, that the following
3 article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United
4 States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the
5 Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the
6 several states within seven years from the date of its submission by the
7 Congress:

8 **ARTICLE --**

9 **SECTION 1:** State the first part.

10 **SECTION 2:** The UIL Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate
11 legislation.

Introduced for UIL Congressional Debate by _____ (school name).

We certify that the legislation submitted by this school for this Congress is the original work of the students of our school and its subject matter is approved by administration.

Checklist for Writing Legislation

- Is your legislation original?
- Is the legislation federal in nature?
- Do arguments exist on both sides?
- Will your legislation be interesting to the entire chamber?
- Is your legislation debatable comfortably by the entire chamber?
- Does your legislation inspire high-level critical thinking?
- Is the topic of your legislation current and unique? (not debated too frequently and with multiple issues on both sides, without having to rehash the same limited arguments over and over)
- Is the subject matter acceptable for your community standards and approved by your administration?
- Do the clauses lay out specific policy?
- Are warrants absent from the legislation? (save these for your authorship speech)
- Did you select the correct governmental body to handle the legislative issue?
- Did you use the appropriate template found on the UIL Congress webpage for your formatting? (no Google forms)
- Does the title of your legislation include only a short phrase? (only a brief tag line, short and concise; not a full sentence)
- Is there a header and footer?
- Is every line numbered?
- Is it a bill? If so, it has sections. Are indentations done according to format?
- Is it a resolution? If so, it requires *Whereas* clauses and a *Be it Resolved* clause.
- Is it an amendment to the Constitution?
- If using an acronym, is it presented as a full title in the first use? (United Nations/UN)
- Does the *Introduced By* statement at the bottom of the template identify your school name? (not contestant name)
- Is the original work statement included at the bottom? (see template)
- Has your school administration read and approved this legislation?
- Have you checked punctuation? Are periods at the end of sentences?
- Have you spell-checked it? (don't depend on the computer)
- Has someone else read it to confirm the legislation is coherent and makes sense to the general public?
- Does your legislation fit on one page?

R RESOURCES



Table of Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions

Type	Motion	Purpose	Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Required Vote	May Interrupt?
Privileged	24. Fix time for reassembling	To arrange time of next meeting	Yes	Yes-T	Yes-T	Majority	Yes
	23. Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	Yes	No	Yes-T	Majority	No
	22. Recess	To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	Majority	No
	21. Rise to a question of privilege	To make a personal request during debate	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	20. Call for orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed motion	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
Incidental	19. Appeal a decision of the chair	To reverse a decision	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
	18. Rise to a point of order or parliamentary procedure	To correct a parliamentary error or ask a question	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	17. Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	16. Object to the consideration of a question	To suppress action	No	No	No	2/3	Yes
	15. Divide a motion	To consider its parts separately	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
	14. Leave to modify or withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No
	13. Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Subsidiary	12. Rescind	To repeal previous action	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
	11. Reconsider	To consider a defeated motion again	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	10. Take from the table	To consider tabled motion	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	9. Lay on the table	To defer action	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	8. Previous question	To force an immediate vote	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	7. Limit or extend debate	To modify freedom of debate	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	2/3	No
	6. Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	5. Refer to a committee *	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	4. Amend an amendment °	To modify an amendment	1/3	Yes	No	Majority	No
	3. Amend °	To modify a motion	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
2. Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No	
Main	1. Main motion	To introduce a business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No

* No. 5 should include:

1. How appointed
2. The number
3. Report when or to what standing committee

T = Time

° Nos. 3 and 4 by:

1. Adding (inserting)
2. Striking (deleting)
3. Substituting

Questions & Answers

Where can I locate the web address?

www.uiltexas.org/speech/congress

How do I enter my school in Congress?

Fill out the Intent to Participate Form located on the UIL website by Sept. 10.

No later than 10 calendar days prior to the contest (or earlier if the region requires) submit your entries via the Speechwire online system. SpeechWire is the official tournament management system.

How do I know if my students are eligible to compete?

All students must meet the no pass – no play law established by the State of Texas. The TEA-UIL Side by Side manual provides answers to many of your eligibility questions. This manual can be located on the home page of the UIL website. Review it first and then consult with your Academic Coordinator and/or local administrator. If you still have questions, call the League (512-471-5883) and ask to speak to Dr. Mark Cousins.

How do I know which ESC my school is in?

Access the ESC map on the Congress webpage. Confirm which Education Service Center established by the Texas Education Agency your school is officially aligned. Ask your administration, if you do not know.

What is required for state meet?

- **There are no entry fees for the Congress State Meet.**

Online results from your region meet submitted by your Region Clerk serve as your official entry for State. Judging forms (to be completed online by each qualifying school) are due in the League office no later than December 1 and are required for competition at State.

Legislation: You may write and submit Legislation to your Region Clerk by the deadline prescribed on the UIL website. At the completion of Congressional Region competition, students for each conference advancing to State Competition shall select one bill or one resolution and one alternate piece of legislation to submit to the State Office to be considered as legislation for their conference chamber at State Meet. Region Clerks submit the legislation selected from your region and an alternate piece of legislation for each qualifying conference.

Scorer/Judges/Clerks: Each school qualifying a legislator shall provide one (1) individual qualified to serve as a scorer (judge)/clerk for the duration of the State competition. Deadline for submission of scorer/clerk by each qualifying school is December 1.

Parliamentarians: Each Congressional Region (ESC) advancing competitors to State shall provide one (1) qualified parliamentarian for the duration of the State Competition. Deadline for submission of parliamentarian by the Region Clerk is December 1.

- **What should I wear for the State Competition?**

Business attire is appropriate. Because State champions are photographed, students should remain dressed appropriately in tournament attire until after the awards ceremony.

- **What if I cannot come to State Meet?**

Notify your Region Clerk and Jana Riggins, State Director immediately if you are unable to attend State Meet. Alternates will need sufficient time to make arrangements to compete, so do this in a timely manner.

- **What do I do if I'm an alternate?**

If you attend State Meet as an alternate, report to the assembly room for roll call. Official substitution of alternates will be made at the end of roll call. Even if you are not subbed in, watching a final chamber is a great learning experience.

What is ballot verification?

It is a required contest procedure at UIL tournaments. After results are tabulated and before they are certified as “official” results and medals awarded, contest directors should announce a period of approximately 15 minutes when coaches and students have an opportunity to look at rankings and ballots.

Why do I need a scorer/judge for Congress State?

Contest Rules require every school that qualifies a contestant to supply an experienced scorer. The state tournament is large with many chamber assignments that must be covered by judges. Having schools bring judges provides students with a geographically balanced judging pool.

What if I don't feel qualified to score at the State Meet?

When you start the year, realize that at least one of your students just might qualify for state. Therefore, it's a good idea to offer to judge Congress rounds at invitational tournaments. Tournament officials will welcome a willing scorer for Congress! The more rounds you observe, the more confident you will feel judging. Besides, judging at tournaments makes you a better coach since you can discuss the congressional debate you heard with your students after the tournament. If, after judging throughout the year you still do not feel qualified, you must secure someone qualified to bring as your scorer, so secure that individual in time to meet the December 1 deadline.

When should I make travel arrangements for Regionals or State?

Make tentative hotel arrangements months in advance. Austin is the capitol city and a popular tourist attraction. For Congress, early fall is adequate. Follow your school district's policies for paperwork. If you do not advance a student to state, cancel your arrangements in a timely manner. Check the UIL website and the Congress State Tournament webpage for a list of hotels that offer special UIL rates if booked in a timely manner.

What if I have A question that is not answered in this contest guide?

Feel free to contact the UIL State Director. Email is the easiest and quickest way to get a response. You may also call or write:

Jana Riggins

UIL Director – Speech & Debate

University of Texas, Austin

1701 Manor Rd.

Austin, TX 78722

jriggins@uiltexas.org

512-471-5883

Ethics in Coaching Forensics

Competition can bring out the *best* or the *beast* in coaches and students. Although there are sometimes differences among Texans about just what is “ethical,” there is general consensus that unethical behavior occurs all too often in forensic competition. The attitude of “*win at all costs*,” “*if your squad is going to use a tactic – my students will use it too, whether it’s right or not,*” is a trap you won’t want to fall into as a coach.

What is unethical when it comes to competition? What should you avoid?

- **Unsportsman-like conduct** – Never treat judges, tournament officials, or opponents disrespectfully, even if you disagree with their opinion. Your students learn by example. Teach your students sportsmanship and courtesy.

- **Taking shortcuts** – Don’t resort to skipping the important steps of having students check all evidence before using it in the chamber or a debate round, trying to pass off inappropriate documentation in prose and poetry contests, or illegal materials in the extemporaneous speaking preparation room or creating a voting block against an opposing congressional contestant. You not only risk disqualification of your student, but your credibility with your coaching colleagues.

- **“Everybody else is doing it” attitude** – Never excuse unethical behavior just because it seems other coaches are doing something. Many more coaches follow the letter of the law than not. Be an example for your students

- **Looking for Loopholes** – Violating the spirit of the rule when the intent is clear by arguing the “letter” of the law is not exemplary behavior. Don’t try to skirt the rules or teach your students to do so.

- **Abuse of scholarship of the activity** – Forensics is a noble endeavor. Set high standards of decorum for yourself and your students. Using a ballot to punish students from a school you don’t like or whose coach you aren’t fond of, manipulating sectioning/pairings in the tabulation room, doing your students work for them, dropping contestant entries without notice, berating or intimidating tournament officials, demonstrating a lack of courtesy toward other competitors, and a general disrespect for rules are not what forensics should be about.

As speech educators, we have a responsibility to our profession as well as our students. We must ensure that the educational aspect of our activities takes precedence over the competitive aspect and we must be careful how we help students define “winning.”

Place *Integrity* over *Victory*. Be proud of your students if they have done their best. Teach your students not only the written rules, but also the unwritten rules of etiquette and ethics.

How to Run the Meet

Hosting the Meet

These directions expand upon but do not replace the information in the *UIL Constitution* and the contest rules. The contest director should read sections 1000 and 1008 of the *UIL Constitution*, then read these guidelines for additional details. See also the Academic Quick Reference Chart, found on the UIL website.

Preparation for the contest

The League office appoints a Regional Clerk to organize the UIL schools who are members in their Education Service Center. In addition, each region should select four Region Congress Committee members to assist with the meet.

FACILITIES

Consider the following items in selecting the appropriate building(s) to house the competition, and work with the director to secure permission for the use of the buildings and needed rooms and to ensure their availability.

- Number of rooms (one room for every chamber)
- Location of the rooms (buildings) on campus in relation to one another
- Facilities for tabulation
- Hospitality rooms for contestants, coaches and judges

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- Congress Clerk Checklist
- Contest Materials: Download from the Congress page of the UIL website
 - Presiding Officer Rubric
 - Judging Instructions
 - Oath of Office
 - Debate Rubric: Speaking
 - Speech Evaluation - available via *Speechwire*
 - Master Ballot- available via *Speechwire*
 - Presiding Officer Evaluation- available via *Speechwire*
 - Parliamentarian Ballot- available via *Speechwire*
 - Amendment Form
 - Table of Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions
 - Chamber Voting/Election Record
 - Precedence/Recency Table & Fractions of Parliamentary Voting
- Legislation: submitted by participating schools
- Rosters/Seating Charts for each chamber (print from *Speechwire*)
- Stop watches
- Gavels
- Awards

SCHEDULE

Consider the following items in selecting a date and a time.

- Minimum loss of school time
- Adequate time to run the needed number of rounds (3 hours per session)
- Time for tabulation, verification and announcement of winners
- See contest procedures for determining prelims and/or finals for each chamber

REGIONAL FORMAT

Sample Time Schedule for a One-Day Student Congress

8:00 am – 8:30 am	Registration and verification of entries
8:30 am – 11:30 am	Morning session, break for lunch
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Afternoon session
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Elections and Awards

Sample Time Schedule for a Two-Day Session

First Day

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Registration and verification of entries
3:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Session I

Second Day

8:30 am – 11:30 am	Session II, break for lunch
12:45 pm – 3:00 pm	Session III
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Joint meeting, elections, awards

CHAMBER OFFICIALS

- 2 Scorers per chamber per session
- 1 Parliamentarian per chamber
- Student presiding officer

AWARDS

Designate medals to the winners according to the guidelines on the Academic Awards Chart posted on the UIL website. Places 1 – 6 receive individual awards. The top Presiding Officer receives an award, traditionally an engraved gavel. If a contestant advances to the final chamber in this event but does not compete in that round, the contestant should not receive a place (rank). He or she also does not contribute points to the speech team award or sweepstakes. (Note: Currently, sweepstakes points for Congress only apply at the state level.)

INFORMATION TO SCHOOLS

As early as possible, the Region Clerk should disseminate the following information to the schools/coaches involved.

- Date
- Site
- Time and place to register (All ESC regions register electronically via *SpeechWire* for convenience in administering the tournament.)
- Time schedule
- Requirements (if any) to provide scorers/parliamentarians for the meet
- Criteria for scorers/parliamentarians (age requirement, experience level, etc.)
- Deadline for entries/"change in entry" procedures
- Entry fees and/or scorer fees
- Hospitality/concession plans

After entries are received

ENTRIES

Check that all participating schools in your ESC have registered their contestants in *Speechwire*.

SUBSTITUTIONS

Before the contest begins, students may be substituted for entries on the official region entry form if the substitute presents the Region Clerk with substitute eligibility forms or letters from the superintendent or designated administrator certifying their eligibility.

CHAMBER ASSIGNMENTS

In regions with fewer than 24 competitors, there will be 2 sessions with a single chamber. Scorers shall rank students at the end of each session. In regions with more than 24 competitors, there will be one preliminary session with multiple chambers and one final session.

Follow the instructions given in the Congress Contest Rules & Procedures to determine chamber assignments. The optimum size of a chamber is 20 legislators for a three-hour session. Lengthen the session by 10 minutes for each additional student beyond 20. If a conference has fewer than 15 competitors, see the instructions in the current Congress Rules for combining conferences.

If a school has more than one entry and there are multiple chambers at Congressional Region, assign school entries to separate chambers, whenever possible.

The day of the tournament

CONDUCTING THE CHAMBER

Refer to the contest rules for the Order of Business, Ordering the Docket and Length of Debate for the chamber.

Times are absolute in UIL Congress. They can neither be diminished nor increased by a vote of the chamber.

First Affirmative (author/sponsor)

3 -minute speech, followed by a 2-minute question and answer period

First Negative

Follows the question and answer period of the first affirmative. 3-minute speech followed by a 2-minute question and answer period

Subsequent speakers

3-minute speech followed by a 1-minute question and answer period

Once the first affirmative and negative speakers have spoken, subsequent speakers will have 3 minutes to speak on the topic and a 1-minute question and answer period.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CHAMBER

Competitors are allowed to use laptop and tablet computers and other electronic retrieval devices in UIL Congress so long as wired or wireless connections are disabled and remain disabled throughout the contest. It is the responsibility of the contestant to disable the equipment. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers and extra batteries. Tournament hosts shall not be responsible for providing computers for contestants. Contestants who choose to use laptop computers accept the risk of equipment failure. Should equipment failure occur, no special considerations or accommodations, including additional preparation time or speech time, will be given by judges, contest directors or tournament hosts. Contestants accept full responsibility for the safety and security of their electronic retrieval devices throughout the entirety of all UIL tournaments. Contestants, parents and coaches should be aware that contestants are bringing and using the

computers at their own risk. UIL is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken computers. Cell phones and smart phones are prohibited in the chamber. Traditional timing devices are permitted.

RECORDING

Schools and/or individuals are prohibited from recording (audio and/or video) region or state congressional chambers. The UIL reserves the right to record for educational purposes.

TABULATING RESULTS

See Lines 106-123 of the current version of the UIL Congress Rules for assigning ranks, placement and advancement. *Speechwire* is customized to tabulate according to UIL rules.

Ballot Verification

This period is mandatory. Before the official results are announced in both preliminary and final rounds, the contestants and/or coaches should be given the unofficial results and allowed to view individual evaluation sheets for approximately 15 minutes. The master tabulation sheets should be available during the verification period. Contestants and/or coaches may, at this time, bring any questions concerning tabulation to the attention of the Region Clerk or tabulation officials. The Clerk will then correct any errors before the official results are announced. Questions about the decisions of scorers and/or parliamentarians are not allowed.

OFFICIAL RESULTS

When the ballot verification period is over, the official results may be announced or posted. These results are final. At this time, individual scoring sheets may be released to coaches/students.

POINTS Awarded at the state level.

Individual Points:

1st – 15

2nd – 12

3rd – 10

4th – 8

5th – 6

6th – 4

*Outstanding Presiding Officer - 10 points

*Speech Team Points

The UIL Online Entry System, *Speechwire*, will calculate and award speech team points.

After the tournament

REPORT TO STATE DIRECTOR

The Region Clerk shall submit the ESC region results for each conference via *Speechwire* by the prescribed deadline or as designated by the State Director.

ADVANCEMENT

From the final regional chamber, the top 3 students in each conference*

Congressional regions with more than 40 entries operate under a ratio system for advancement. See UIL Congress Contest Rules.

OBLIGATION OF EACH ESC REGION

In order to participate in the UIL Congress State Meet, each Congressional Region and each school qualifying a

contestant to the state meet shall be required to provide the following:

- Each Congressional ESC advancing competitors to State shall provide one qualified parliamentarian **for the duration of the state competition.**
- Each school qualifying a legislator to state shall provide one scorer/clerk **for the duration of the state competition.**
- Students for each conference advancing to State shall select one resolution or one bill to submit to the State Director for consideration for the State Meet docket, unless additional legislation is requested. An alterante piece of legislation should also be submitted to the State Director.

Region Clerk Checklist

FIRST THINGS FIRST:

Familiarize yourself with the specific contest rules and read the directions for hosting the meet that precedes this checklist.

Contest rules mandate a regional committee of five individuals, with the Region Clerk serving as the Chair. Have the ESC participating schools select four other participating coaches to serve on the committee, reflecting representation from differing school sizes, *whenever possible*. Clerks should include the committee when making decisions concerning the contest.

Familiarize yourself with the UIL Congress webpage in order to help other coaches navigate contest information (deadlines, legislation template, contest dates, rules, ballots and additional forms).

Use your Regional Educational Service Center resource page (on your particular ESC website) to find the list of schools in your ESC region. Recruit eligible schools in an effort to increase participation in your region. More participants can result in additional state qualifiers to represent your region. Then, distribute your contact information to other coaches in your ESC.

Encourage coaches to use the new and improved Congress Guide, available on the UIL website.

Examine contest materials online to be familiar with the intent of each form.

All schools wishing to participate in Congress must submit the electronic Intent to Participate Form via the UIL website. Do not honor verbal confirmations; insist the coaches submit the form.

NOTE: The Intent to Participate form and the due date for submitting legislation are the same. The UIL State Office will send you an Excel spreadsheet listing all schools that have submitted their intent. Review these carefully. If there are discrepancies in the spreadsheet and the local list, contact the State Office.

BEFORE THE CONTEST:

- Has the committee decided on a fee structure and a registration process to officially register students for the contest? Watch the UIL Congress webpage for updates on *SpeechWire* procedures. The region clerk is responsible for giving receipts for payment of fees.
- Has the committee decided on a procedure to procure judges, either hired or school-sponsored?
- Has a contest site been determined? Do you have enough rooms?
- Has the region clerk procured all forms necessary to conduct the contest? (ballots, parlia-

mentarian ranking form, amendment forms, etc.) All contest materials are downloadable from the UIL website. No materials will be shipped hard copy. Double check the number of ballots and judge forms needed before the contest begins. Note: Electronic ballots are available in the *Speechwire* system. You are encouraged to implement them at region.

- If you have been notified of schools dropping, did you inform the State Office?
- Has the region procured trophies and awards (if necessary)?
- Have placards been generated for all contestants, once entries are final?
- Have you given specific jobs to each member of the committee?
- Have you made a decision on hospitality for both judges and coaches?

EVALUATING LEGISLATION:

- Did they use the UIL Format Template? (no Google forms)
- Is there a header?
- Is there a footer?
- Are there line numbers?
- Is the authorship at the bottom of the legislation? (should be the name of the school and NOT the name of the student)
- Is the original work statement included at the bottom of the legislation?
- Is the administration approval statement included at the bottom of the legislation?
- Is the title of the legislation short, concise, and easy to understand? (similar to a tagline in a debate case)
- Did they use the appropriate template? (bill, resolution, amendment to Constitution)
- Is it a bill? If so, it has sections.
- Is it a resolution? If so, it has “whereas” clauses and a “be it resolved” clause.
- Is it an amendment to the Constitution?
- Is punctuation correct? Look at the sample template. Are there periods at the ends of sentences?
- Has it been spell-checked by a human? Only a human knows the difference between “oversees” and “overseas.”
- Is the subject matter acceptable for your community standards?
- Does it make sense—including full, grammatically-correct sentences?
- If using an acronym, is it presented as a full title in the first use? (United Nations/UN)
- Is it federal? Federal legislation affecting Texas is permissible and encouraged, but legislation cannot be “Texas-only.”
- Has the topic already been covered? Multiple pieces of legislation on the same topic from the Region Meet should not be submitted to the State Office.

*If these standard requirements have not been met, send the legislation back to the school to be corrected. Do not submit the legislation to the State Office if not corrected.

CREATING A DOCKET FOR DEBATE:

- Do you have a procedure in place for ranking legislation submitted by the schools? The ide-

al size of the docket should be no more than 20 pieces of legislation. Less is recommended for quality research and debate at the regional competition.

- Pull legislation that does not meet the UIL requirements. Send it back to the school for revision, with a new deadline for proper submission.
- Email the legislation to your committee members for the purposes of ranking.
- Create a docket with the understanding chambers will set the actual agenda order.
- Email the final docket and all pieces of legislation to the State Office for approval so all schools in your ESC will have access via the UIL website.

AT THE 10-DAY CONTESTANT ENTRY DEADLINE:

- Do you have contestant entries in *Speechwire* for all the schools that sent Intent to Participate forms?
- Does your list match the State Office? If not, investigate why they are not congruent.

DURING THE CONTEST:

- Have you established a verification process? Open or closed tabulation? Committee only or everyone? Make sure you have a particular amount of time for an official verification period/coaches challenge, and that you announce the location so all schools know where it will be conducted.
- If not using e-ballots, have you returned ballots to the competitors at the end of the meet? Regions are strongly encouraged to use the electronic ballots in *Speechwire*.

AFTER THE CONTEST:

- Have you selected an appropriate piece of legislation plus an alternate to send to the State Office for each individual conference? This should be decided by the end of the meet or you should establish a plan/deadline should your state qualifiers wish to draft new legislation for the State Meet. The region clerk is responsible for emailing the chosen legislation from each conference to the State Office. The submitted legislation will be evaluated by the state advisory committee and the State Office for inclusion on the state docket.
- Do your correct results show up publicly on *Speechwire*?
- Have you made certain that your qualifier names are spelled correctly? This is critical for speaker placards and the state championship program.
- Have you notified the coaches that have advancing students to fill out the required state judge forms on the UIL website by the prescribed deadline?
- Have you told yourself and your committee “GOOD JOB?”

Thank you for your leadership!

The Scorer's View

Scorers for the State Meet are selected from among the most knowledgeable and experienced coaches across the state of Texas. We asked a group of them to share their award-winning coaching strategies and to tell us what they look for as they are judging Congress.

SELECTING A TOPIC FOR LEGISLATION

Generating topic ideas is a great way to get to know your students. Start with a discussion about what they perceive in their world that is unfair, or problematic, or dangerous. Then discuss the concept of jurisdiction and tailor ideas to where the United States federal government can legislate or influence legislation at the state level. Be cautious not to discount “silly” ideas or ideas that don’t seem like traditional policy territory. Allow them to think outside of the box and work through any debatability issues as they go. They will brainstorm some great ideas and learn much about the event in the process. *(Melissa Witt, Hereford High School)*

SETTING A DOCKET

I think this should be done in the presences of the judge(s) so they can see which students are leading the process...it is another little thing that judges can factor into the overall performance. When considering legislation, students should not only consider the total number of speeches prepared for the topic but should also consider the number of pro and con speeches in order to avoid one-sided debate. *(Jay Stubbs, Bellaire High School)*

Try to get your prepared speeches and research into the round as early as possible. If you sit back and let others set the docket, you might find your favorite items too far down the list to debate at all. *(David Gardiner, W.B. Ray High School)*

MAKING THE AUTHORSHIP SPEECH STAND OUT

A good authorship speech extends upon the actual bill or resolution. It is not a reading or paraphrasing of the legislation itself. It should lay a foundation for the arguments that might come up and maybe even preemptively answer some of the negatives that might be coming in opposition speeches. *(Noah Recker, La Vernia High School)*

A good authorship/sponsorship speech is different from an ordinary affirmative speech. The authorship speech needs to lay out the need for the legislation and explain its solvency in detail. *(Debby Haren, ESC 12 Region Clerk)*

This has become a very interesting area to address. If you go full narrative, you usually lack evidence that supports your position. If you go full evidence the whole time, you lose the appeal. A balance is required for most judges. *(David Gardiner, W.B. Ray High School)*

BEST PRACTICES FOR SPEECHES

Be prepared to speak coherently on any item, either side. You are never guaranteed the opportunity to give the speeches you’ve prepared, unless you’ve prepared everything.

Remember: Ethos/Pathos/Logos - be passionate, prepared, and persuasive. You must have the argumentation

basics (claim, data, warrant, impact) but also you are advocating for your constituency and your countrymen. Make me believe that. Where possible, put a face to the issue. Tell me someone's TRUE story. Avoid hypothetical "what if's" and tell me how this issue has specifically impacted a family, a town, a child, a mother, someone with a name and a face. This is not an impromptu event. You shouldn't wait until the round to prep your speeches/outlines. Take this event seriously if you want to be taken seriously and practice with teammates before tournaments so that if an argument is missing something, you can edit/revise before competition.

(Melissa Witt, Hereford High School)

Two well-developed arguments are sufficient for the speech time limit in Congress. Introductions should be brief but should not be skipped. A clever, one sentence attention-getting device (AGD) sets the tone for a good speech. *(Debby Haren, ESC 12 Region Clerk)*

Practice with other students. Have them ask you real questions and ask them to point out potential flaws that you made. Rewrite your responses often. Do not forget to update as new evidence comes to light.

(David Gardiner, W.B. Ray High School)

BEST PRACTICES FOR QUESTIONING

There are three types of questions 1) clarification; 2) exposing weakness in opponent's arguments; and 3) setting up an argument to be run in a later speech. Clarification questions should be avoided because it allows the opponent to have a platform on which to speak for a long time. The third type of question is rarely used in Congressional Debate. Questions that expose weakness in opponents' arguments can be laser focused. This question does not give the opponent a platform in which to explain something. It focuses in on a specific weakness in the argumentation. *(Jay Stubbs, Bellaire High School)*

HOW TO POLITIC

Be courteous, be inclusive. Remember: you will want the legislators to support your legislation. Build relationships. Networking is essential. *(Noah Recker, La Vernia High School)*

Don't create a coalition to deliberately exclude someone from the chamber. This is not to suggest that discussions revolving around who would be the best presiding officer, for example, are inappropriate; however, blocking a presiding officer because you feel them to be a threat...that is unethical and inappropriate. Do work the room – and let the judges see you work the room. Work with other members of the chamber to make sure everyone has a fair shot and that parliamentary procedure is being followed. And don't be afraid to propose an amendment if doing so would clear up the legislation and make it easier to debate – this is a perfect opportunity to get the room on your side so that the amendment is proposed, seconded appropriately, and passed very quickly. (But don't propose an unnecessary amendment!) *(Kristi Hodgkiss, Paris North Lamar High School)*

The art of compromise is a real skill. You will need to learn to work with others to establish a docket. Sometimes the politics will extend to multiple tournaments and that can help you in the long run.

(David Gardiner, W.B. Ray High School)

PROS AND CONS OF SERVING AS PRESIDING OFFICER

Pros: If executed effectively, you give a voice to everyone in the room. An efficient room is one where lots of questions and speeches will be had. You also have an instant status within the room. You don't have to worry about being called on because you are always involved in the business of the chamber.

The obvious con is that judges still don't always know what to do with the PO. Exceptional POs are still sometimes left off of the rank sheet because the judges don't know how to reconcile where to put them. The UIL Presiding Officer rubric assists in alleviating this. *(Noah Recker, La Vernia High School)*

An effective PO sets themselves apart (literally) from the rest of their competition by having the opportunity to showcase their knowledge of the event and parliamentary procedure, as well as their leadership skills. Someone who is efficient, knowledgeable and runs a chamber smoothly presents themselves in an elevated status. Judges think they are among the best. More often than not, a PO is default guaranteed a spot in the top 6 of their Chamber. On the other hand, if you like debating you will have to sacrifice speech-giving to presiding over the assembly. Also, everyone in the room knows that you have preferred status as a PO so if you give them an opening to knock you out of the top 6, they will go after it. It is a high pressure position and once in a while you'll get a hostile chamber. *(Melissa Witt, Hereford High School)*

BEST PRACTICES IN RESEARCH

Including quality research is a great way to stand out. However, you have to perk up our ears with your citation if you want it to work. Typical citations like, "According to [news source]" sound like an afterthought. Ask yourself: Am I citing this piece of information correctly? Could I be more specific? Chances are you're probably using a study that the journalist included in their article. Why not cite the actual study? Maybe the journalist quoted an expert. What if you stated the expert's credentials instead of the umbrella news organization? Hearing these types of citations—books, interviews, studies—shows you know how to dig into your research further to get as close to a primary source as possible. *(JP Fugler, Lindale High School)*

Starting with generic news sources for topic generation and information-gathering is great. But the research that really grounds your arguments in your speeches will come from policy think tanks, Congressional research briefs, and industry specific sources. I really don't care what *Time* magazine has to say about health care policy, education policy, or foreign policy. But look at who they name as the experts and where they are getting their information. Take your research cue from good journalists. *(Melissa Witt, Hereford High School)*

Just do it. *(David Gardiner, W.B. Ray High School)*

IN-ROUND STRATEGIES

Each speech must have refutation, cited research, clear structure, and persuasive points. Understand that someone is going to get the last speech in precedence. Especially in competitive rounds, don't let frustration at not being called to speak show. It's a real turnoff for your judges. The chamber does not need a comedian; that doesn't mean you can't include an appropriate joke, but it doesn't have to be a constant schtick. If you're presiding, please stick to procedure and assert your dominance. Do not let the chamber dictate everything. *(Rory McKenzie, Lindale High School)*

WHAT DO I LOOK FOR WHEN JUDGING?

I look for clash in rounds. It is the number one thing that I look for. I want to hear new things in later speeches and direct addressing of previous speakers. *(Noah Recker, La Vernia High School)*

When I am ranking competitors in a Congress round, I'm looking for the person who takes control of the room as well as gives good speeches. Congress ought to be about more than just dueling Extemp speeches. Stand out by working with others in the room to make things go well. Stand out by actually debating the legislation. Stand out by strategically giving speeches at just the right time – the last speech on a particular piece of legisla-

tion, for example, where you crystallize everything that has happened and clarify which way to vote. *(Kristi Hodgkiss, Paris North Lamar High School)*

These are the things I evaluate: Did you have multiple high-scoring speeches? Good delivery skills? Were your arguments well-researched? Did you ask lots of questions? Did you stay active and engaged throughout the session, producing lots of activity such as making motions, working to set the docket, and other activeness? *(Debby Haren, ESC 12 Region Clerk)*

Poise - Does the speaker look like, sound like, move like they know what they are talking about, do they command the room?

Competence - Does the speaker understand the rules of the event, parliamentary procedure, and the topics on which they choose to speak?

Preparation - Does the speaker demonstrate knowledge of the topics on which they speak, thoughtfulness in argumentation, and preparedness for a variety of opposing arguments/attacks?

Activity in the Chamber -Is the student in the room to compete? Are they asking questions, making motions, paying attention to other speakers, being responsive to previous arguments made on the item?

Respectfulness - Speakers who exhibit rude, dismissive, or intolerant behavior don't make the top 6, regardless of how I would score their speech.

Mentoring - Students who are experienced and have mastered this event shouldn't use that as a weapon against those who are still learning. Always, ALWAYS do your best in competition, but also be gracious, welcoming and kind. *(Melissa Witt, Hereford High School)*

On POs, I want them to run a smooth chamber knowing all the rules and preventing some representatives from using tricks. I look for participation and how you answer questions. If you ask the same question to each new speaker, I will frown upon that. I expect you to ask questions of speakers. I want you to offer clash. The idea is to point out flaws and strengths of other representatives. *(David Gardiner, W.B. Ray High School)*

Virtual Meets

With the advent of the unprecedented global pandemic, it was speech and debate coaches that problem-solved by designing a way for speech tournaments to go on in spite of the health crisis. With schools, cities, even countries under lockdown, the virtual world became the method of competing. Speech and debate contests are designed and at their optimum value as in-person competition with judges face-to-face with competitors, and rooms filled with audience members. But, the virtual world through computers and the Internet provided a way to continue the critical world of forensics for students during the crisis.

Although in-person competition is definitely preferred, our experiences in the virtual world convince us that some things we experienced were actually good and should be retained. Some schools continue to sponsor virtual tournaments, providing Texas students with limited travel opportunities the ability to compete against schools hundreds of miles on the other side of the state from them or even out of state, and diversity of competition is a good thing. Judges don't have to travel to a central site so recruiting a variety of judges from a wide array of geographical areas enhances the pool and provides different perspectives and feedback to competitors.

In addition, tournament hosts have innovative methods of administering tournaments efficiently. Electronic tournament management systems were designed out of necessity to provide electronic ballots. These make sense to continue because of their expediency, efficiency and the reduction in cost, in addition to their contribution to promoting ecology. So, in an effort to continue to embrace the virtual tournament world, in this chapter, you will find information on best practices when your students compete virtually.



BEST PRACTICES FOR VIRTUAL : Congress

Preparation

Prepare to enter the world of online Congress before the start of actual competition rounds by holding online practice rounds. Purchasing an ethernet cable to hardwire to the router is recommended to improve connectivity.

Technology Set-Up

Technical set-up is critical to consider. Competitors should enter the chamber early to test microphone and technology in advance. Check the wi-fi connection. Turn off unnecessary devices. Try to minimize simultaneous connections to the router to improve video quality.

Location

Try to secure a separate room away from noise and other people. If using a wireless connection is necessary, be as close as possible to the router. Inform others of the tournament schedule and required privacy to compete. Be aware of when to be online and show up early to the contest.

Competitor Positioning

Students are encouraged to sit while competing because of the “virtual box”.

Speaker Tips

Sitting heightens the need for verbal transitions when speaking since traditional speaker movement used as nonverbal transitions is hampered. Main point previews at the end of introductions are critical.

Placards

Representatives should prepare a placard professional in appearance that includes their name (i.e. **REP. RODSON**) and, when appropriate, should hold it so it can be visually seen within the frame of the camera (the “virtual box”). Check the virtual mirror setting to be certain the placard can be read correctly.

Cameras

Students should adjust to the web camera considering what can be seen in the “virtual box”, adjust to the room and adjust the side lighting so as not to be a dark shadow on the screen. Have a visual background free from distractions, to the extent that is possible. Simple adjustments can be made such as turning on a desk lamp for back lighting, turning off a ceiling fan to eliminate distraction, removing pets that might make noise and making sure what shows in the background is organized and uncluttered.

Coach Notifications

Online Procedures

Familiarize yourself and your students with the tournament management software. Get any necessary accounts set up ahead of time.

Be sure online registration includes your current cell phone number.

Plan in advance how to keep in contact with your students. There are apps available that do not require sharing cell phone numbers, a practice some school districts prohibit. Discuss protocols with the team regarding pre-round meetings, check-in and during the tournament.

Know how to access the specific tournament online video conferencing being used.

Be available at all times that your students are competing. Make sure you are aware of your judging obligations. Be sure you have contact information for tournament personnel.

Technical Difficulties

Have a plan in place should you or your students have technical difficulties. Know what procedures to follow if the tournament video platform crashes or has a glitch.

Judge Notifications

Preparation

Judges should prepare to enter the world of online judging before the start of actual competition rounds. In order to maximize social distancing, any pre-tournament adjudication training should be digital or presented via video.

Technical set-up is important to consider. Become familiar with the tournament software. Review all instructions provided by the tournament host and ask questions well in advance of the competition. Enter the chamber early to test technology in advance. Purchasing an ethernet cable and hardwiring to the router is recommended to improve connectivity.

Technology

Keep your video on but your microphone off during the contest.

Know what the tournament procedure is should there be tournament-wide tech issues.

Common tech issues:

- Lagging audio – have participant turn off video briefly to improve bandwidth
- Noise in the audio – have participant mute themselves if they are not speaking
- Video quality – have participant readjust lighting or screen angle
- Disconnection – wait a reasonable amount of time for participant to reconnect

Contact Info

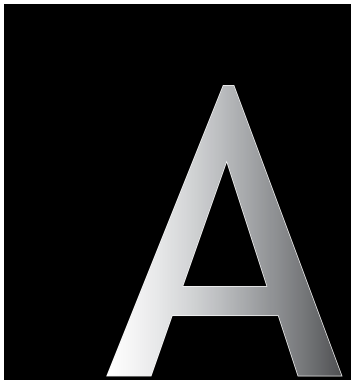
Be certain the tournament officials have your current cell phone number and that you know how to reach them, should problems arise.

Ballots

Congress ballots will be accessed through the online platform.

Environment and Disruptions

Judges are being encouraged to remember that participants come from diverse backgrounds and should not be penalized for things beyond their control. This may include unanticipated interruptions, technical issues and the visual background students have available to them.



Appendix

ESC Map

Congress Terminology

Instructions for Chamber Officials

Speaking Rubric

Speech Evaluation

Presiding Rubric

Presiding Evaluation

Accommodation Request

TILF Scholarships

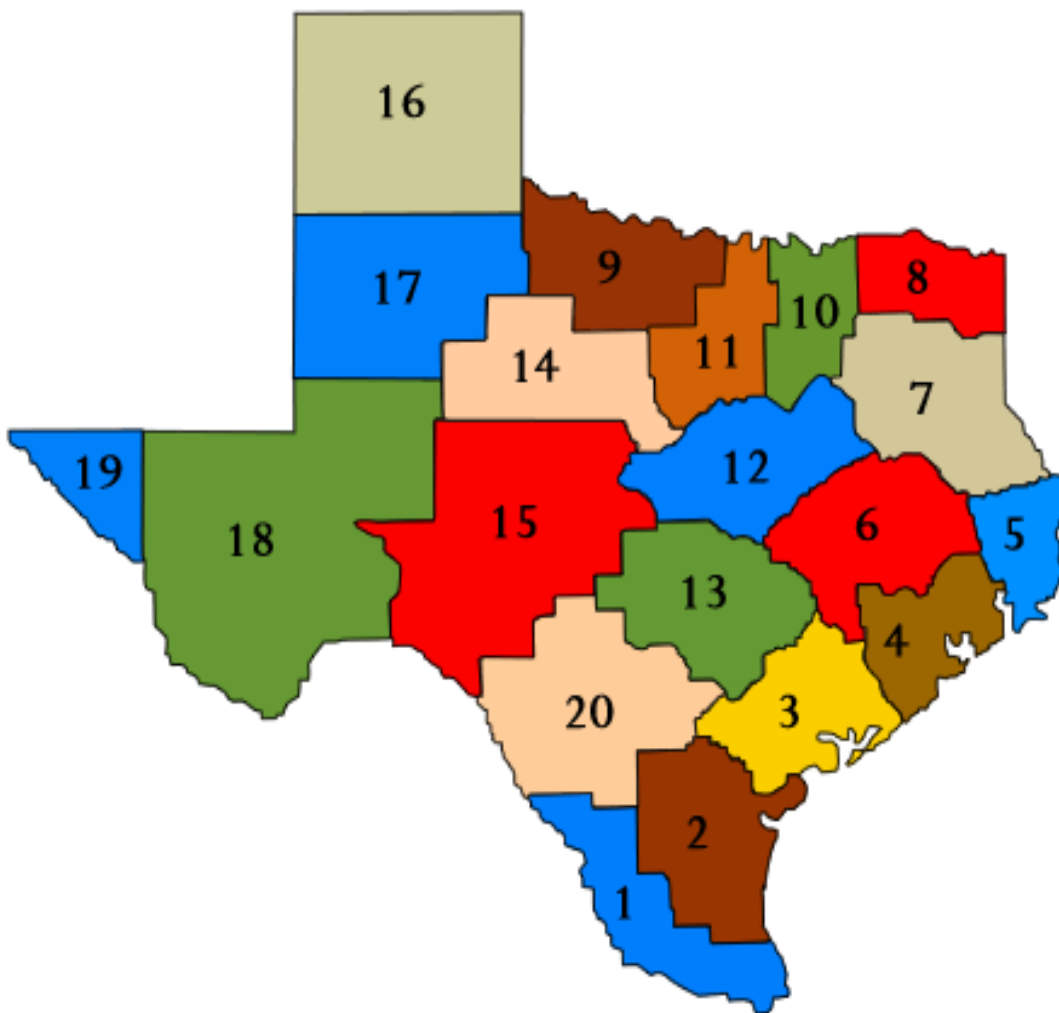
For additional information to help students prepare for UIL Congress check out these links:

UIL Congress webpage: www.uiltexas.org/speech/congress

Congress 101 – Rhonda Smith - <https://youtu.be/A3RH5SludHY>

How to Speak Effectively in a Congress Round – Jay Stubbs - <https://youtu.be/5IpbNm3IRxE>

Education Service Center Regions



Congressional Debate Terminology

- **Legislation** - a specific, written proposal (in the form of a “bill” or “resolution”) made by a member or committee for assembly to debate.
- **Bill**- type of legislation that describes the details of how a policy would be enacted, if voted into law by the assembly.
- **Resolution** - an expression of conviction, or value belief of an assembly, which may urge, request or suggest further action by another decision-making authority.
- **Docket** - the complete packet of legislation distributed by a tournament.
- **Agenda** - the order of legislation as suggested by a committee or member, and voted on by the assembly.
- **Presiding Officer (PO)** - leader who runs meetings by *recognizing* members to speak or *move*. Also called the **chair**. Modeled after the *Speaker* of the House of Representatives, or the Vice President or President pro tempore of the Senate.
- **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).
- **Amendment** - a specific change to an item of legislation, explaining exactly which words it modifies, and not changing the *intent* of the legislation itself (*germane*).
- **Authorship Speech** - a *constructive* speech of up to three (3) minutes given by a member, which introduces an item of legislation for debate by the chamber. It is called a sponsorship speech if given by a student who is not affiliated with the school the legislation originated from. All author/sponsorship speeches are followed by a two-minute questioning period. The first negative speech also may have two minutes of questioning.
- **Questioning** - period where the members of the assembly ask individual questions of the speaker. *Multiple-part* (or two- part) questions are not allowed (unless the rules are suspended for that instance, or specific *open/direct questioning* rules are used), because they take time from other members who may wish to question the speaker. For all speeches that follow an authorship – except the first negative speech – the speaker may speak for a maximum of three (3) minutes, followed by one minute of questions. All affirmative and negative speeches that follow an authorship speech should introduce new ideas (arguments) and respond to previous arguments (refute or rebut).
- **Precedence** - standard rule, which requires the presiding officer to choose speakers who have spoken least (or not at all). The only exception to precedence is when a speaker has *authorship* privileges to legislation when it is introduced for debate. In those cases, the presiding officer must recognize the author first.
- **Recency** – where the presiding officer not only employs precedence, but also selects speakers based on who has spoken *least recently* (or *earliest*).

This position is used to administer the State Meet. These instructions pertain to State but may be appropriately adapted for use at the Region contest.



SCORING CONGRESS

Congress is intended to emulate the U.S. Congress. In theory, the contest combines the best aspects of debate, oratory, and extemporaneous speaking within the structure of parliamentary procedure.

The parliamentarian remains the same throughout Session I and II. Individual scorers, however, will consider the results of each individual chamber session they are assigned to score.

Important: The parliamentarian and scorers will submit scores/rankings on electronic ballots via *SpeechWire*, a web-based tournament management system. You will need a laptop in the chamber and are required to register as a judge in advance of the tournament at *speechwire.com*. Instructional videos can be located there, if you have questions on how to register.

SCORING

A ballot should be completed for all members of Congress whether they spoke during the session or not. Scorers shall not confer with others about their selection or reasons for ranking before submitting their decisions.

POINT ASSIGNMENT

- ❖ **Competitors may have 5 scored speeches per session.** They might speak more than 5 times during the session, but only their first 5 speeches should be scored. Consult the **Congressional Debate Rubric: Speaking** for criteria. NOTE: Despite the fact that *SpeechWire* will allow you to input more than 5 speech scores, **you will only score the first 5.** You can take the other speeches into consideration when ranking the competitors.
- ❖ Amendment speeches are scored.
- ❖ **Speakers may receive up to six points per speech.** Complete a **Speech Evaluation** form (ballot*) for each individual student.
- ❖ **The presiding officer may receive up to six points per clock hour** based on his/her ability in that capacity. Use the **Presiding Office Evaluation** form (ballot*).
- ❖ **Rank the students at the end of each session,** unless instructed otherwise by the Clerk. Use the **Master Ballot** for the overall ranking of legislators.
- ❖ There can be **no ties** for placement.
- ❖ Provide as much constructive criticism as possible for each of the student's speeches.

Scorers will rank the highest scoring participants 1 through 8 (one being the best) at the end of each session. At the end of the second session, ties in the individual rounds will be broken by the Parliamentarian preference. *Don't forget to consider ranking the presiding officer, if the individual warrants.*

**Electronic ballots will not look like traditional UIL ballots.*

This position is used to administer the State Meet. These instructions pertain to State but may be appropriately adapted for use at the Region contest.



Parliamentarian Duties STATE

BEGINNING THE SESSION

1. All items needed for the day will be in the notebook for the chamber, including all forms, the stopwatch and the gavel. You will find this already in your room or brought to you by the Clerk.

The Chamber Clerk will call the Chamber to order, take roll and confirm the seating chart with you and the scorers. Clerk will then seat the chamber accordingly and give each legislator a placard. Afterwards, Clerk will formally introduce you and the scorers to the chamber.

2. Then, the first order of business is for you to:
 - a. Review the session time schedule
 - b. Conduct Presiding Officer auditions. The chamber clerk can assist you.

Auditions for Presiding Officer:

Note: Students aspiring to run for PO had to declare their intent prior to State. The names of these students are in your notebook.

(Remind judges/scorers that they are **not** to score the auditions for presiding officer candidates but that they **are** to score the speeches that are given during the auditioning periods).

- c. The envelope labeled “*Presiding Officer Auditions*” contains slips of paper with numbers for each PO candidate. The candidates will draw for order (the candidate who draws the #1 will audition first; the contestant who draws the # 2 will audition second, and so on. The auditioning period will last for a MAXIMUM of one hour. If there are 3 nominees, each nominee will audition for 20 minutes; if there are 4 nominees, each nominee will audition for 15 minutes, etc.).
 - d. Remind each candidate before the auditioning period begins that all nominees should maintain an accurate precedence/recency chart. It is not the obligation of one candidate to share his/her chart for later auditions.
 - e. The first nominee should set the rules of the day.
 - f. Carefully time the length of each nominee’s audition. It is critical that each nominee serve the same length of time. At the end of the nominee’s auditioning period, say **“Representative _____, your auditioning period has come to an end. Representative _____, please take the chair.”**
3. Election of the Presiding Officer
 - a. After the last nominee has auditioned, ask all nominees to come to the front of the room. In the order they auditioned, give each nominee 30 seconds to re-introduce him/herself and give a brief campaign speech.
 - b. Conduct the vote. Give each member of the chamber (including the candidates) a stack of voting slips. Clerk can assist you.

if the name is illegible, or if you write a name of someone other than a nominee, your vote will be invalid.”

- c. With the Clerk’s assistance, count the votes.

Note: **There must be a majority vote** for one candidate in order for the vote to be final. 15 people = 8 votes needed to win. 20 people = 11 votes needed to win. If no candidate receives a majority, drop the nominee with the lowest number of votes and repeat the process. If the votes received by the bottom two do not equal the number of votes of the next highest, drop both of the bottom two nominees and vote again. Repeat until someone gets a majority.

3. Contest Rules establish that the candidate who receives the most votes will have the **choice of serving as presiding officer in the morning session or the afternoon session** and the other candidate will serve as presiding officer in the other session. Only those members elected in a preliminary session may offer their candidacy in the final legislative session. If no preliminary officers advance, open auditions will be conducted.
4. Introduce the PO. Say: **“Representatives, please welcome to the chair your Presiding Officer, Representative _____.”**
5. It is important to note that the student presiding officer will now run the chamber. You only need to step in if the presiding officer is confused or is making a major procedural error. Be firm but fair. You must protect any errors that could harm members of the chamber but if you have a strong PO, your job will be easy. If the PO is less knowledgeable, you will need to be alert to errors of commission or omission. Remember, the presiding officer will be ranked along with the other legislators so his/her showcase of knowledge needs to be evaluated.
6. As parliamentarian, you should keep track of:
 - the number of speeches made
 - the recency of questions asked
 - the precedence of student speakers. (See form in your packet)

Students that have spoken the least amount of times should receive precedence for speaking in the chamber. For example, if two students want to give a speech and one has spoken twice and the other not at all, the student with no speeches should be recognized to give the speech. Assist the PO when asked to confirm recency for a particular member of the chamber.

When more than one speaker seeks the floor, then, the presiding officer must follow the precedence/recency method:

- (1) First recognize students who have not spoken during the session.
- (2) Next recognize students who have spoken fewer times.
- (3) Then recognize students who have spoken earlier (least recently)

7. Amendments are to be submitted in writing on the form provided.
8. Please help ensure sessions are as close to the schedule as possible. Recesses should be kept as short as possible.
9. Keep track of the gavel and stopwatches.

10. In Session II, introduce the new Presiding Officer. (See instructions from Session I) If there was only one PO that ran in Session I, and no one wishes to run, the PO from the first session may serve again.
11. Note: In Session II, as per contest rules, Precedence & Recency are reset.
12. Subsequent preliminary sessions open with new seating charts. Legislation may not be carried over for debate from one session to the next. The chamber must call for Orders of the Day at the end of the session and vote on the legislation at hand.
13. At the end of second session, it is the parliamentarian's responsibility to complete a ballot, ranking all the representatives in the chamber. Every representative will be ranked. Do not leave anyone out. Submit your electronic or paper ballot promptly.

ENDING THE SECOND CONGRESS SESSION

Conduct the voting for best Presiding Officer. The Clerk may assist you with this.

1. Ask all presiding officers from both morning and afternoon sessions to come to the front of the room with their placards.
2. Ask each Presiding Officer to remind the chamber of his/her name.
3. Have the Presiding Officers return to their seats.
4. Say: **“Please vote for your choice for top presiding officer by writing the name of the person for whom you wish to vote on a voting slip. You may vote for only one person. If you write more than one name on the slip, if your writing is illegible, or if you write a name of someone who did not serve as presiding officer, your vote will be invalid.”**
5. With the clerk's assistance, count the votes. There must be a majority vote for one candidate in order for the vote to be final. 15 people = 8 votes needed to win. 20 people = 11 votes needed to win. If no candidate receives a majority, drop the nominee with the lowest number of votes and repeat the process. If the votes received by the bottom two do not equal the number of votes of the next highest, drop both of the bottom two nominees and vote again. Repeat until someone gets a majority.
6. Do **NOT** announce the name of the winner. Fill out the Congress Presiding Officer results form and bring it promptly to the Tab Room.

This position is used to administer the State Meet. These instructions pertain to State but may be appropriately adapted for use at the Region contest.



Clerk Duties

Key Duties:

- Assist the parliamentarian
- Facilitate between tournament officials and the chamber
- Promote safety protocols within the chamber

*Note: These items will be in your assigned chamber:

- Parliamentarian Notebook
- Student Placards
- Sanitizing wipes, gloves, extra PPE, if needed

Beginning the session

1. Call the Chamber to Order.
2. Take roll and confirm the seating chart.
Each student should be seated where he/she is assigned.
3. Distribute the appropriate placard to each student.
Report any errors to the State Clerk in the Tab Room.
4. Introduce the parliamentarian and the two scorers to the chamber.
5. Assist the Parliamentarian with auditions and elections for Presiding officer.
Parliamentarian has details of how to audition Presiding Officer candidates.

With the election, assist the parliamentarian in counting the votes. There must be a majority vote for one candidate in order for the vote to be final. 15 people = 8 votes needed to win. 20 people = 11 votes needed to win. If no candidate receives a majority, drop the nominee with the lowest number of votes and repeat the process. If the votes received by the bottom two do not equal the number of votes of the next highest, drop both of the bottom two nominees and vote again.

Repeat until someone gets a majority.

6. Disinfect the gavel and stopwatch when exchanged from 1 Presiding Officer to the next.

Ending the First Session

Announce to Contestants.

1. Tell them to take their name placards with them to lunch but be sure they bring them back for Session II this afternoon. This is important!

Announce to Scorers:

- Remind the scorers to consider the Presiding Officers in their rankings if the Presiding Officer deserves to be ranked.

Confirm Scorers have submitted their electronic ballots in *SpeechWire*.

1. The Parliamentarian does not rank until the end of the day, following Session II, so do not request their ballot submission during session I.
2. Request that the Scorers and Parliamentarian remain in the chamber until you have cleared them through the Tab Room.
3. Text Clerk Coordinator when both scorers have confirmed they have submitted their ballots. Include Conference and room # in the text.
4. Wait for Clerk Coordinator to text an “All-Clear” before scorers and Parli are released to leave.

Ending the Second Session

Parliamentarian will conduct the voting for the best presiding officer. (in the Super Congress final session only) **Be available to assist, if requested.**

Assist the parliamentarian in counting the votes. There must be a majority vote for one candidate in order for the vote to be final. 15 people = 8 votes needed to win. 20 people = 11 votes needed to win. If no candidate receives a majority, drop the nominee with the lowest number of votes and repeat the process. If the votes received by the bottom two do not equal the number of votes of the next highest, drop both of the bottom two nominees and vote again. Repeat until someone gets a majority.

Do **NOT** announce the name of the winner.

Collect the Contestants' name placards. VERY IMPORTANT!

These will be needed for Super Congress on the second day. ***Insert them into the Parliamentarian notebook and leave in the chamber on Day 1.*** Students not advancing can retrieve their placard for a souvenir following verification, if they wish. Advancing students will pick their placard up at the Capitol prior to the beginning of Super Congress finals.

Confirm the Scorer's ballots have been submitted through *SpeechWire*.

Confirm the Parliamentarian's ballot has been submitted through *SpeechWire*.

The Parliamentarian should rank all contestants regardless of whether the contestant participated actively in the chamber or not.

1. Text Clerk Coordinator when all 3 officials in the chamber have confirmed they have submitted their ballots. Include Conference and room # in the text.
2. Wait for Clerk Coordinator to text an "All-Clear" before scorers and Parli are released to leave.

Retrieve the Presiding Officer **gavel**, if they did not use their own gavel.

Make certain the **stopwatch** is disinfected and has been re-inserted into the Parli notebook.

Bring the Parliamentarian **notebook, gavel, stopwatch and sanitizing items/unused gloves/extra PPE** to the ballot chamber at the end of the day.

NOTE: Follow the chain of command.

- If there is a question about an issue, address it first with the Parliamentarian in the chamber.
- If it remains unresolved, text Clerk Coordinator and they will forward it to the State Clerk and UIL State Director.



Congressional Debate Rubric: Speaking

This table of evaluation standards may be used by any judge who would like assistance in determining scores for speeches. Each scorer independently (without collaborating) awards 1 to 6 points for each speech. Each speaker has up to three minutes to present argument; followed by a questioning period.

	1 Mediocre	2-3 Good	4-5 Excellent	6 Superior
Content: Organization, Evidence & Language	The speech lacked a clear thesis and organizational structure. Claims are only asserted with generalizations and no real evidence. Language use is unclear or ineffective.	While the speaker's purpose is present, the speech lacks logical organization and/or developed ideas. Analysis of evidence, if present, fails to connect its relevance to the speaker's claims. Use of language is weak.	While a clear purpose is apparent, organization may be somewhat loose (weak introduction/conclusion; no transitions between points). Diction represents a grasp of language. Much evidence is presented, but not in a persuasive or effective manner; or the speaker relies on <i>one</i> piece of evidence, but does so effectively.	Content is clearly and logically organized, and characterized by depth of thought and development of ideas, supported by a variety of credible quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (testimony) evidence analyzed effectively to draw conclusions. Compelling language, a poignant introduction and conclusion and lucid transitions clearly establish the speaker's purpose and frame the perspective of the issue's significance.
Argument & Refutation	The speaker offers mostly unwarranted assertions, which often simply repeat/rehash previous arguments.	The speaker fails to <i>either</i> introduce new arguments (simply repeating previous arguments) <i>or</i> the speaker fails to refute previous opposing arguments; in other words, no real <i>clash</i> is present.	New ideas and response to previous arguments are offered, but in an unbalanced manner (too much refutation or too many new arguments). Questions are answered adequately.	The speaker contributes to the spontaneity of debate, effectively synthesizing response and refutation of previous ideas with new arguments. If the speaker fields questions, he/she responds with confidence and clarity.
Delivery	Little eye contact, gestures and/or movement are present. Vocal presentation is inarticulate due to soft volume or lack of enunciation.	Presentation is satisfactory, yet unimpressively read (perhaps monotonously) from prepared notes, with errors in pronunciation and/or minimal eye contact. Awkward gestures/movement may be distracting.	The presentation is strong, but contains a few mistakes, including problems with pronunciation and enunciation. The speech may be partially read with satisfactory fluency. Physical presence may be awkward at times.	The speaker's vocal control and physical poise are polished, deliberate, crisp and confident. Delivery should be extemporaneous, with few errors in pronunciation. Eye contact is effective and consistent.



Speech Evaluation

Student Name:		Code:
Session #:	Chamber:	Room:

Directions: **Rate** each speech 1-6 points, with *one being the worst, six being the best*, providing comments to *justify* your rating, with *constructive suggestions for improvement*. [At the **end** of the session, you will holistically and comparatively *rank* students, on a separate form.]

Criteria: *When rating, consider the following elements and comment accordingly in the spaces provided.*

- **Originality of Thought** (extent that speech advances debate or merely repeats ideas; whether speaker **refutes** opposing arguments)
- **Organization and Unity** (even though extemporaneous in nature, the speaker should attempt cohesiveness)
- **Evidence and Logic** (cites credible sources and warrants claims accordingly)
- **Delivery** (extemporaneous vs. reading, seriousness of purpose, style and poise; how well the speaker *answers questions*)

Speech 1 – Topic:	Side: <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> AFF <input type="checkbox"/> NEG
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Explain your evaluation and justify your rating of both speaking and answering questions:

← High/Best (<i>circle point rating</i>) Low →
6 5 4 3 2 1

Speech 2 – Topic:	Side: <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> AFF <input type="checkbox"/> NEG
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Explain your evaluation and justify your rating of both speaking and answering questions:

← High/Best (<i>circle point rating</i>) Low →
6 5 4 3 2 1

Speech 3 – Topic:	Side: <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> AFF <input type="checkbox"/> NEG
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Explain your evaluation and justify your rating of both speaking and answering questions:

← High/Best (<i>circle point rating</i>) Low →
6 5 4 3 2 1

Speech 4 – Topic:	Side: <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> AFF <input type="checkbox"/> NEG
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Explain your evaluation and justify your rating of both speaking and answering questions:

← High/Best (<i>circle point rating</i>) Low →
6 5 4 3 2 1

Speech 5 – Topic:	Side: <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> AFF <input type="checkbox"/> NEG
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Explain your evaluation and justify your rating of both speaking and answering questions:

← High/Best (<i>circle point rating</i>) Low →
6 5 4 3 2 1

Questioning of Other Speakers
(comment on relevance to debate, quality of clarification, etc.)

Print Judge Name:
School/Affiliation:

Judges: Competitors may have five scored speeches per session; they may have more than five speeches, but only score the first five.



Congressional Debate Rubric: Presiding

This table of evaluation standards is provided for any judge who would like assistance in determining scores for a presiding officer (P.O.). Each scorer independently (without collaborating) awards 2-6 points for each hour of presiding. The primary job of a presiding officer is to efficiently run the meeting with the purpose of giving students in the chamber the maximum opportunity to participate. An effective presiding officer does not draw negative attention to himself/herself and makes the smooth operation of the session as their highest priority. The position of presiding officer can be the difference between a successful productive session and a session that accomplishes very little. If you feel the Presiding Officer was one of the most effective students in your chamber, it is appropriate for scorers to take into consideration rewarding excellent or superior performance by the presiding officer with one of the highest ranks in the session.

Points	2 Weak-Mediocre	3-4 Good	5-6 Excellent-Superior
Parliamentary Procedure	The P.O.'s knowledge of parliamentary procedure is lacking, and he/she shows negligible effort to correct errors and/or consult written rules. Minimizes opportunities for others to debate by failing to adhere to time specified in a recess motion.	The P.O. demonstrates competency in procedure, but makes mistakes in determining the results of motions and votes, etc.	The P.O. has command of parliamentary procedure (motions) and uses this almost transparently to run a fair and efficient chamber, seldom consulting written rules and ruling immediately on whether motions pass or fail. Brings chamber back into session in a timely fashion following recess.
Recognition	Frequent errors are made in speaker recognition. Students in the chamber rise to a point of order to correct erroneous speaker recognition made by the P.O. The P.O. is slow in recognizing speakers and questioners. There are fewer than 10 speeches per hour in the chamber.	Presiding preferences are not clearly explained. Speaker recognition is somewhat inconsistent or biased. The P.O. is successful in achieving 10 speeches per hour in the chamber.	Presiding preferences are clearly explained at the beginning of the session. The P.O. is consistent in recognition distributing speeches throughout the room based on precedence. The P.O. recognizes speakers and questions in a timely manner to maximize participation. Achieving 12 or more speeches per hour in the chamber is a sign of excellence.
Control	The environment in the chamber does not foster participation. Allows students to abuse parliamentary procedure in place of debating legislation. Encourages frequent recesses.	Guides the chamber to remain focused on debating legislation. At times, students on the chamber floor appear to be more in control of the chamber than the P.O. during the session. Sometimes is unsure of how to rule on motions or business.	The P.O. is respected and trusted by his/her peers. Establishes a business-like environment that fosters maximum participation in the chamber. Rules on motions and business without interjecting himself/herself into the issue.
Demeanor	The P.O. uses their position for their own personal advantage as opposed to operating in the best interest of the chamber as a whole.	Overall, the P.O. creates a professional atmosphere although there are times where the atmosphere is less than totally professional.	The P.O. fosters a respectful, professional and collegial atmosphere. Addresses all members as Representative _____ not by just first or last name.
Communication	Communication between the P.O. and chamber is confusing or counterproductive. Communication from the P.O. (excessive or lack of) prevents maximum participation from members of the chamber.	The P.O. occasionally takes excessive time when explaining rulings. There are times when the members of the chamber are not sure what they are being asked to vote on. The P.O. uses debate time to admonish the members of the chamber regarding issues that the scorers are responsible for evaluating (ex., Reminding members to ask short questions and give short answers).	The P.O. dynamically displays a command and relates well to the chamber through his/her vocal and physical presence. Word choice is economical and eloquent. The P.O. clearly explains the meaning of upcoming votes. Rulings are concisely explained to keep all members of the chamber informed.



Presiding Evaluation

Student Name:		School Code:
Session:	Room:	Chamber #:

Directions: Award a rating of 2-6 points per hour of presiding, with *two being the worst, six being the best*. You will rank students, holistically, at the end of the session, on a separate form. You **may or may not** include the presiding officer in your *ranking*. The presiding officer may also have an evaluation ballot for *speaking* – please be sure to circle the same rank at the bottom of the speech *and* presiding forms. **Auditions** are not scored.

Criteria: *When rating, consider the following elements and comment accordingly below.* **Parliamentary Procedure** (clear in explaining protocols and rulings); **Recognition** (fair and efficient in recognizing speakers and questioners, and maintains appropriate speaker precedence and recency); **Control** (maintains decorum of delegates, and willing to rule dilatory motions/business out of order); **Demeanor** (fosters a respectful, professional, and collegial atmosphere); **Communication** (overall use of language, avoiding unnecessary verbiage).

Specific Comments (*explain your evaluation and justify your rating, providing constructive suggestions for improvement*):

<i>Circle point rating:</i>					X # of Hours	= Total Points
← High/Best		Low →				
6	5	4	3	2		

Print Judge Name:
School/Affiliation:

Academics - Request for Accommodation Process

Submitting a Request

The University Interscholastic League will consider requests to accommodate a student with physical or mental impairments. The school should submit the Request for Accommodation form located at the link below with the appropriate signatures **a minimum of two weeks before the contest** in which the accommodation is sought. Requests submitted after that time, absent extenuating circumstances, will not be granted.

Request For Accommodation Form

http://www.uil texas.org/files/academics/UII_Request_for_Accommodation-9-16-posting.pdf

The request shall adhere to the accommodations provided by the student's Sec. 504 Committee and/or A.R.D. Committee. No student records are to be submitted to UIL. The only required submission is the signed request with rationale for the accommodation. The completed form should be submitted to the UIL office, Music, Athletics or Academics, that administers the game or contest in question.

Approval Letter

A response letter from UIL granting or denying the requested accommodation will be provided to the school. A UIL letter approving the accommodation can be submitted at any level of the competition. It is the coach's or sponsor's responsibility to notify and provide a copy of the UIL approval letter to the meet director well in advance of the competition. If the student advances to the next higher meet, it is the responsibility of the student's school to notify the region and/or state meet director immediately.

Additional costs or equipment required for accommodations are the responsibility of the school district. It is the responsibility of the host school, contest director and contestant to follow any applicable UIL ethics code or other applicable UIL rule to ensure the honesty of the competitors and the integrity of the competition.

Approval Process

Requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. The facts matter in each case. Just as an example, accommodations have been approved for visual impairments, dyslexia, motor skill impairments and special circumstances to take the test in a separate room. Such accommodations have included the use of an enlarged test copy, a magnifying glass, colored overlay, converting a test to Braille format or use of a computer and printer. UIL, however, will not alter a contest's judging criteria as an accommodation or make other accommodations that would fundamentally alter the game or contest.

TILF Scholarship Opportunities

From 1959 to 2024, TILF has awarded more than 22,000 scholarships valued at over \$39 million. Amounts of scholarships range from \$500 for one year to \$24,000 over four years. Some scholarships have special requirements or restrictions such as requiring a student to select certain majors, attend specific colleges or universities, or compete in specific contests. Details of all scholarships and their requirements are listed at the TILF website.

Applications for 2025 may be submitted in March through May of that year (specific deadlines can be found online at www.tilfoundation.org).

All TILF applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Must have competed at the UIL Academic State Meet, Congressional Debate State Meet, One-Act Play State Meet, or Theatrical Design State Meet **OR** must have advanced to the **octofinal round** (second day) of the Cross Examination Debate State Meet, **OR** must be a **state finalist** in the Barbara Jordan Historical Essay Competition, the Latino History Essay Competition, or the Young Filmmakers Festival **OR** must have been a member of one of the **top 10 teams** per competition group at the BEST, FIRST, or RECF-VEX state robotics contests
- Must plan to attend an accredited college or university in the state of Texas, enroll full-time in college, and maintain a 2.5 college GPA (some scholarships require a higher GPA)
- Must be graduating from high school during the current academic year

Advancing to the state level in academic pilot contests that are not yet officially sanctioned by the UIL does not qualify a student to apply for TILF scholarships.

Applicants who are graduating under the state of Texas three-year graduation schedule should inform TILF of that fact. Students who are entering the Texas Academy of Math and Science at the University of North Texas in Denton will apply the year they complete their high school requirements at the TAMS.

The awards committee typically meets in June and all applicants will be notified of their status by mid-July of the application year.

If you have any questions, please visit the TILF website at www.tilfoundation.org or contact:

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