

Writing Unique, Engaging, and Effective Legislation

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BEFORE WE GET STARTED

Register your attendance.

Complete this form for each session you attend.

Session numbers
are in the program.

CAP
CON
2024



Rosters

A Little About Me



- I just finished my 24th year in education.
- I've been at Chireno for the last 17 years and served as the district (2-12) UIL coordinator and coached many events.
- Moving to Center HS next year
- Coached the 2021 Congress State Champion (and many other state medalist)
- Member of the Region 7 Congress Committee, Regional Speech Advisory Committee, State LD Committee
- I typically host many elementary/junior high and high school meets a year.
- My favorite role is "Mimi" - I have 6 grandbabies - 3 boys and 3 girls
- I love Disney and SFA Basketball!

Capital Conference Files

My presentation files for the conference - and if you ask for anything throughout the year, I'll add it here. :-)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aCzV7Xh8vJ08QaqsFl6Xc_jlUN_cs0PG?usp=sharing

Important Dates

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

*no later than 10 days prior
to the Region meet*

Region Sanctioned Contest Window

November 1 - 16

Region submits Results & Legislation to State Office

no later than November 18

State office posts State Legislation online

no later than December 1

Region Clerk submits Parliamentarian for State

no later than December 1

Qualifying Schools each submit State Scorer

no later than December 1

State Congress Meet

January 6 - 8

https://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/speech/Congress_Important_Dates_2024_25.pdf

Why write legislation?

Guaranteed speech (authorship speech)

Helps to debate all legislation when you understand how to put it together (you can see the problems with others) - they will see the flaws in others which helps them construct questions and speeches

Teaches them research and technical writing

Most Important Tip – Proofread!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Yes, I used all those exclamation marks on purpose :-)

If this is your weakness, find someone else to proofread it. Seriously, proofread!




Proofread, proofread, proofread - Did I mention to proofread before you submit?

Check for

- Grammar
- Jurisdiction
 - Is it federal?
 - Did they name the correct agency to oversee/enforce?
- Dates
 - Be sure it's not BEFORE contest
- Plagiarism

Formatting

CONGRESS CONTEST MATERIALS

- Legislation Template- Bill 
- Legislation Template- Resolution 
- Legislation Template- Resolution Amend Constitution 

- Use the template (convert to PDF when submitting)
- Double-spaced, Calibri 12 point font
- One page
- Line numbering
- *At the end of each piece of legislation, there should be a confirmation that the legislation is the original work of the school, including a label with the school's name (not the student's name). This is in italics.*

Topics

- Encourage kids to make it personal and choose things that they care about
- **Brainstorm as a team - what law(s) do you wish you could change? Encourage them to talk to adults in their lives**
- Don't limit to federal ideas when brainstorming - it's ok if it's school, local, or state - it may lead to a bigger idea
- Spend a week (or 2) pulling up news websites or apps and seeing what is happening and thinking about how it could be "fixed"
- ** We keep a list all year long and go back over it each August**

Topic Examples

- Debater with Type 1 Diabetes - writes bill over controlling insulin prices
- Your school installs bullet proof glass - write a bill requiring all schools to do so
- Know a single dad who complains about lack of changing tables? - write a bill requiring changing stations in public restrooms
- Male debater turns 18 and has to register with selective service - write a bill removing this requirement
- Debater worked as a waitress and realized how little they make - write a bill increasing wait staff to minimum wage

Considerations

- Be sure it is debatable (have them list at least 5 reasons for/against before writing the entire piece of legislation).
- Try to use current (not universal) topics. The universal ones tend to be overused.
- Focus on quality over quantity - Create teams if you need to or have a contest to see who can write the best ones. It's better to submit a couple good ones than 20 bad ones.
- Clarity - Remember everyone doesn't brainstorm and discuss your legislation so ensure that on face value it's clear (I usually share our final selections with 2-3 people for feedback before submitting).
- School/Community Standards - Be sure this is not going to put students or teachers in awkward situations

More Considerations

Isn't "popular" - Once your kids have experience, they need to think out of the box. If it was a topic last year, it probably won't make this year's cut. (We try to use a 4 year cycle so debaters don't repeat topics at region)

Is Interesting - Consider students, judges, parliamentarians. Is tax law interesting? Not to very many people.

Review Past Dockets

This allows students to become familiar with

- Format
- Bills v Resolutions
- Wording
- And it might spur an idea in them

Google UIL Congress Legislation or TFA
Congress Legislation or NSDA Congress
Legislation.....

Bills vs Resolutions

Discuss the
difference before
they start writing

Bills - Proposed Laws

- Includes details such as who will oversee it, who will enforce it and what penalties are, when it takes effect, etc
- The first section needs to be super clear, and a concrete action.

Resolutions - Position Statements/Suggestions

- Clearly state the goal
- Resolutions are NOT a way to get out of doing the research needed for a bill

Resolution Example



A Resolution to Ban Animal Testing

- 1 **WHEREAS,** The Department of Agriculture found that animal testing in the U.S. is
2 increasing with over 700,000 animals used in experiments; and,
- 3 **WHEREAS,** Figures also reveal that over 70,00 animals were used in 'Category E'
4 experiments in which no relief is provided for animals experiencing pain
5 or distress; and,
- 6 **WHEREAS,** Animal testing does not offer reliable data on human outcomes because
7 of differences in physiology, anatomy, and metabolism; and,
- 8 **WHEREAS,** Drugs and procedures that could be effective in humans may never be
9 developed because they fail in animal studies; now, therefore, be it
- 10 **RESOLVED,** That the UIL Congress here assembled ban all animal testing in the United
11 States.

Introduced for UIL Congressional Debate by Shelbyville High School.

Bill Example



A Bill to Require Baby Changing Facilities in all Public Restrooms

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

2 **SECTION 1.** All new or renovated public restrooms in buildings open to the public
3 shall have at least one changing station accessible to both men and
4 women.

5 **SECTION 2.** Public restrooms are any structure or facility on public or private property
6 equipped with toilets, a urinal, or similar facilities maintained for use by
7 members of the general public. A baby changing facility means a table or
8 other suitable device for changing the diaper of a child age 3 or under.
9 Public restrooms that are renovated are those that change the structure
10 or layout of the bathroom, but do not include cosmetic changes such as
11 paint or flooring.

12 **SECTION 3.** A building permit should not be authorized for any building for
13 construction or renovations that does not include a designation for the
14 required baby changing stations. Public restrooms designed, built, or
15 remodeled after January 30, 2024 must follow these guidelines.

16 **SECTION 4.** This bill shall be implemented on January 30, 2024.

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

Introduced for UIL Congressional Debate by Chireno High School.

Amendment Example



A Resolution to Amend the Constitution to Grant Statehood to Washington D.C.

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 I Section 8, Clause 17**

9 **SECTION 1:** The Commonwealth of Washington District of Columbia shall be admitted
10 to the Union on an equal footing with the other states. The
11 Commonwealth (1) shall consist of all District territory, with specified
12 exclusions for federal buildings and monuments, including the principal
13 federal monuments, the White House, the Capitol Building, the U.S.
14 Supreme Court Building, and the federal executive, legislative, and
15 judicial office buildings located adjacent to the Mall and the Capitol
16 Building; and (2) may not impose taxes on federal property except as
17 Congress permits.

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

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Quick Deadlines

Important Dates for Congress

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Legislation from Schools to Region Clerk

September 10

Deadline is always QUICK after school for declaring intent to participate and submitting legislation so act quick!

UIL Congress Contest



Congress is an individual contest in a large group setting. It models the legislative process of democracy, specifically, the United States Congress. Within this mock legislative assembly competition, contestants draft legislation (proposed laws and position statements) submitted to the tournament, and they research the docket of bills and resolutions dealing with real-world social and political policies prior to the contest to prepare their speeches. At the tournament, students caucus in committees, deliver formal discourse on the merits and disadvantages of each piece of legislation, and 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.

Resources & Guidelines

- 2023-24 Congress Handbook
- Overview of the Congress Contest
- Synopsis & Time Structure of Congress
- Skills Gained from Participating in the Congress Contest

CONTEST RULES

- Congress Contest Rules & Procedures

CONGRESS CONTESTS AND CLINICS

- Submit your Intent to Participate in Congress - Contact Region Clerk after Sept. 10
- PHOTO RELEASE - Coach (coach)
- PHOTO RELEASE - Student

Student Activities Conference

Student Activities Conferences

2024 Student Activities Conferences

This year's schedule includes four in-person conferences offering contest information, instruction and tips to help coaches and students prepare for the 2025 competition season. Sessions will be scheduled for all UIL academic contest areas.

Sept 7 Tyler Junior College, Tyler

Sept 14 Lone Star College-North Harris, Houston

Oct 5 Texas Tech University, Lubbock

Nov 2 University of Texas at Austin

Virtual Challenge Meets

... > UIL > Chirer

✕ 1 selected ✨ 👤+

Name ↑

 VirtualMeet2

 VirtualMeet3

Q & A – Round table Time

Questions? Other tips I didn't share?



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

Registration link,
presentations and handouts
are available on the website.

*Remember to register your
attendance for each session.*

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Handouts & More

