



CENTENNIAL MODEL CONGRESS CONFERENCE

Guide to Congress

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the First Annual Centennial Model Congress Conference! The purpose of this conference is for high school students across Maryland to be able to research contentious topics facing the U.S. government today, exercise debate skills, demonstrate knowledge of the legislative process, and prepare for collegiate conferences in a Congressional simulation setting. In order to succeed in committee, it is critical that you prepare for your role prior to the conference, and this guide is intended to assist you in researching, writing position papers, and fully grasping parliamentary procedure. The pre-submitted position papers are due to your chairs by Sunday, March 27th via email, the addresses to which are found on the Contact page on our website at conf.centennialmc.org, which also contains logistical information such as address, schedule, and registration information. Position papers are intended to get you a good start on understanding your topics and your assigned delegate's viewpoints, as well as to provide a basis from which you may draft bills in committee.

It is highly encouraged that you to begin preparing right away, as proper knowledge of background information and consideration of topics provides for a much more enriching experience in committee. We hope that you discover something new and thought-provoking in your investigations. Good luck, and we await your arrival at Centennial High on April 9th!

Best,
Jessica Gai, Brittney Murugesan, Drew Schleicher
Conference Coordinators



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RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

In reading these rules, keep these key concepts in mind: Only bills and issues open for debate may be discussed. Motions may only be made when the floor is open. If there are several motions, then the motion with highest precedent is considered first.

Fundamentals

1. **SCOPE:** These rules of procedure shall be self-sufficient and shall be considered adopted in advance of the conference. No other rules of procedure shall apply.
2. **POWERS OF THE CHAIR:** The Chair of a committee shall direct discussions, put questions, announce decisions, accord the right to speak, decide all questions of order, sign all written proposals, and ensure and enforce observance of these rules. The Chair shall, subject to these rules, have complete control of the proceedings at any meeting and over the maintenance of order. The Chair shall not vote, except in the case of a tie.
3. **MEMBERS:** Every Member shall be present unless excused or necessarily prevented. A Member may not authorize any other individual to cast his or her vote or record his or her presence. No Member shall be recognized without his or her placard. Senators shall be addressed as “the Senator from [State]”; representatives as “the Representative from [State].”
4. **MOTIONS:** When the floor is open, Members may rise and be recognized by the Chair by raising their placards. The floor is defined as open if no Member of the committee or congressional staff is speaking or has been recognized to speak. ONLY points of personal privilege and order may interrupt a speaker. Only one motion may be on the floor at any given moment. If a new motion takes precedence over the motion currently on the floor, then the motion currently on the floor will be tabled while the new motion is resolved. The old motion will then return to the floor. No motion may be recognized that falls below the current motion in precedence. In order to be considered by the Committee, a motion must be immediately seconded by another Member.
5. **QUORUM:** The Chair shall declare the opening of a session when at least one-third of the Members are present.
6. **COURTESY:** All Members shall show courtesy and respect to the congressional staff and to other Members. If any Member should transgress these rules, the Chair shall call him or her to order, in which case he or she shall immediately sit down. No Member shall impute any conduct or motive unworthy or unbecoming of a Member. No Member in debate shall refer offensively to any Member or to any State of the Union.

Debate

1. **SPEAKERS LIST:** When a Member desires to speak on any question, he shall submit his State (and District number in the House, or rank in the Senate) to the Chair to be entered on the Speakers List for that question. There should be one continually open general Speakers List on the issue before the floor. Separate Speakers Lists shall be established on all debatable questions, including motions, amendments, and bills. The Chair may rotate between majority and minority parties or between Members “For” and “Opposed.”



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2. **TIME-LIMIT ON SPEECHES:** The Chair may limit the time allotted to each speaker and the number of times Members may speak on any question. If a Member exceeds his or her allotted time, the Chair shall call him or her to order without delay.
3. **YIELDS:** A speaker who has remaining time at the end of his or her speech has three options:
 - a. Yield remaining time **to the Chair**, whereby his or her time is ended and the floor is open for motions.
 - b. Yield remaining time **to questions**, whereby the Chair will recognize questions from the floor until time expires. Only the speaker's responses to questions shall be deducted from remaining time.
 - c. Yield remaining time to **another Member**, who may then rise and use this time to address the Committee.
4. At the end of a speech, if the speaker neglects to yield his remaining time to any of the above, any Member may rise and ask, "Will the speaker yield to questions?" NOTE: A speaker may not yield to another speaker after yielding to and answering questions. A speaker to whom time has been yielded may not then yield time to another speaker or to questions.

Written Proposals

1. **SIGNATURES:** Written proposals may only be distributed to the Committee after receiving the Chair's signature. Certain proposals also require the signatures of a number of Members. Signatures do not represent personal support for the proposal, but merely a willingness to entertain debate on the proposal. The Chair may refuse to sign a proposal if it does not follow proper format, is incoherent in form or concept, essentially reproduces a previous proposal, would impede the progress of the Committee, is limited in content, or if it does not address the issue sufficiently. This decision cannot be appealed.
2. **WORKING PAPERS:** Members may bring working papers before the consideration of the Committee. Working papers are unofficial documents and may include general ideas, policy statements, or proposed bills. They are never officially introduced; however, they require the signature of the Chair to be copied and distributed to the Committee.
3. **BILLS:** Proposals may be submitted as bills when they are signed by 4 senators in a Senate committee or 6 representatives in a House committee, as well as the Chair. Signing a bill for introduction need not indicate support for its content, but rather support for seeing it debate. Once submitted, the Chair shall have the bills either copied and distributed or projected onto a screen, after which a Member may move to introduce a bill (see Motions). Bills which pass in committee and pass both chambers of Congress will be sent to the Presidents. If the president does not veto the bill, it becomes a law. Otherwise the veto must be over-ridden by a 2/3 vote of each chamber for the bill to become law.
4. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments may be submitted once they receive signatures from the Chair and two senators or eight representatives. In the House, amendments must be relevant to the bill and the section being amended; amendments in the Senate need not be relevant. Members may not directly amend an amendment which is on the floor of the Committee. Only bills may be amended.



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Points

1. POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE: At any time, a Member may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege to correct conditions adversely affecting the rights and personal comfort of the Members. Questions of privilege shall have precedence over all other questions and shall be resolved by the Chair.
2. POINT OF ORDER: At any time, a Member may rise to a Point of Order if he or she feels that the rules are not being followed. Questions of order shall be decided by the Chair without debate, subject to appeal.
3. POINT OF INFORMATION: When the floor is open, a Member may rise to ask a question relating to substantive issues, such as content of a bill or factual information about the topic of debate.
4. POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY: When the floor is open, a Member may rise to ask a question of the Chair regarding parliamentary procedure.

Motions

1. PRECEDENCE: Motions shall be considered in the order of precedence listed on the chart entitled Table of Points and Motions. Motions at the same level of precedence shall be decided in the order in which they were introduced.
2. CONSIDER A DIFFERENT ISSUE: A motion to change the stated topic shall require the approval of the Chair and the second of a majority of the Members and shall be debatable with one speaker in favor and one opposed. It shall require a 2/3 majority to pass. It shall have the effect of tabling discussion on the current topic and any bill or amendment currently on the floor. Following the passage of this motion, committees will move directly to the second topic.
3. CAUCUSING: When the floor is open, a Member may move to caucus for a stated reason and a stated period of time, not to exceed twenty minutes. The motion is not debatable and requires a majority to pass.
 - a. MODERATED CAUCUS – 1-2 minute speaking time; no formal list; “Motion for a __ minute moderated caucus with a __ minute speaking time”.
 - b. UNMODERATED CAUCUS – bipartisan or partisan; no organization/able to get up and move around the room; *write bills*; “Motion for a __ minute unmoderated caucus”.
4. INTRODUCTION OF A BILL: Once a bill has been submitted to the Chair with proper signatures and has been copied and distributed to the Committee, a Member may rise to introduce it for consideration. If the motion is seconded, then the Chair shall allow one speaker in favor and one opposed. If the motion passes with support from at least 1/3 of the Members voting, then a new Speakers List shall be drawn up with the Member who made the motion placed first, and the bill shall be debated until a Motion for the Previous Question or for Laying on the Table passes.
5. INTRODUCTION OF AN AMENDMENT: Once an amendment is submitted and the Chair has either distributed copies or publicized the amendment in some fashion, a Member may rise to introduce the amendment. Upon receiving a second, the amendment shall be immediately placed on the floor. If there is absolutely no objection to the amendment, then it shall pass by Acclamation.



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Otherwise, the amendment shall be debated with a new Speakers List until there is a Motion for Previous Question or for Laying on the Table. Although there is no vote as to whether or not an amendment may be introduced, a Member may Object to Consideration of the motion.

6. **OBJECTION TO CONSIDERATION:** The Objection to Consideration of any bill, amendment, or motion requiring debate may be made immediately following introduction of the motion and before debate has commenced. Objection to Consideration is not debatable and requires a 2/3 vote.
7. **SUSPENSION OF A RULE:** A Motion to Suspend a Rule is in order if it receives the approval of the Chair. The motion must be seconded by a majority of the Members present. The motion may then be debated by one speaker in favor and one opposed and shall require the support of more than 2/3 of the Members voting.
8. **LAYING ON/TAKING FROM THE TABLE:** A Motion to Lay a Bill, Amendment, or Motion on the Table is not debatable and requires the support of 2/3 of the Members voting. It removes an item from the floor and from immediate consideration by the Committee. A motion to resume debate on any tabled motion (to “Take from the Table”) is not debatable and requires a majority to pass.
9. **PREVIOUS QUESTION:** When the floor is open and a bill or amendment is under discussion, a Member may move to Previous Question. If the motion is seconded, the Chair will recognize one speaker against the motion. The motion requires a 2/3 majority to pass; if it passes, then all debate
10. shall end and the Committee shall move to a direct vote on the proposal in question. Note that if an amendment is on the floor, a Motion for Previous Question on a bill or resolution is out of order.
11. **RECESS:** When the floor is open, a Member may move to Recess until the next scheduled meeting. The motion is debatable, requires a majority to pass, and suspends all committee functions until the next meeting. The Chair’s decision to rule this motion dilatory cannot be appealed.

Voting

1. **TAKING THE VOTE:** Each Member shall have one vote and shall vote “Aye” or “Nay.” Each question shall be decided by a placard vote. No Members may change or withdraw their votes except with unanimous consent.
2. **DIVISION OF A QUESTION:** Any Member may ask to divide a bill or amendment, in order to vote separately on individual parts of the proposed legislation. A Member would move to Divide the Question if he or she agreed with all but certain sections of a bill. The motion must clearly state which sections are to be divided from the bill or amendment to be voted on separately. A Member may ask to vote separately on every section of the bill or may ask to vote separately on one clause only. After the divisions have been stated, the Chair shall call a vote on each division. Those parts which pass by simple majority shall remain part of the bill. Those parts which do not pass will be omitted from the original bill. A final vote will be taken on the bill as it remains — i.e., on the surviving sections of the bill as a whole.



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BILLS

Proposing a Bill

When debate concludes and delegates enter the bill writing stage, there usually are several different bills being written by committee members at the same time. According to committee rules, however, only one bill may be debated at any one time; so the process of getting a bill onto the floor becomes something of a race.

Format for all Bills

All bills must follow the format specified below:

- A) Title
- B) Preamble — the bill's basic purpose and intent
- C) Content — the legislation
- D) Definitions — definitions of ambiguous terms
- E) Enforcement — penalties for violation
- F) Funding — suggestions of the amount and the source, to be judged by the appropriations committee

Within each section, each numbered clause should address a different idea, especially in the content section. A certain section may be omitted if absolutely unnecessary; for example, an enforcement clause might not appear in an appropriations bill in the House.

Amendments

After debating a bill for some time, members who do not wholly support a bill may wish to add, rewrite, or delete certain sections. Members must propose such changes in the form of amendments. Some amendments are rather minor and pass almost immediately; others may be detailed and require extensive

debate. In any event, amendments require signatures of the Chair and either two senators or five representatives. Amendments are decided **FRIENDLY** by the authors of the bill, in which case the amendment is automatically put into the bill without further question, or **UNFRIENDLY**, in which case the amendment requires debate in order to pass and immediately placed on the floor of the committee upon introduction by a member. Amendments are often the result of compromise, yet an amendment can double as a political weapon to kill legislation.

Passing Legislation

Eventually, the committee will bring a bill to a vote. Once debate on the bill is closed and upon **Motion for the Previous Question**, the committee moves into placard voting procedure. Motion for the Previous question requires a 2/3 majority vote, while passing bills require a simple majority to pass.



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TABLE OF POINTS AND MOTIONS

MOTIONS (BY PRECEDENCE)	SECOND?	DEBATABLE	VOTE
Appeal the Decision of the Chair	Yes	Chair	Majority
Point of Personal Privilege	No	No	Chair
Point of Order	No	No	Chair
Point of Information	No	No	Chair
Point of Parliamentary Inquiry	No	No	Chair
Motion to Rise	Yes	No	Majority
Motion to Recess	Yes	No	Majority
Motion to Caucus	Yes	No	Majority
Motion to Object to Consideration	Yes	No	2/3
Suspend a Rule	1/2	1 pro/1 con	2/3
Motion to Lay on the Table	Yes	No	2/3
Motion to Take from the Table	Yes	No	Majority
Motion for Previous Question	Yes	1 con	2/3
Motion to Consider a Different Issue	1/2	1 pro/1 con	2/3
Motion to Introduce an Amendment	Yes	No	None
Motion to Introduce a Bill/Resolution	Yes	1 pro/1 con	1/3
Motion for Reconsider	Yes	1 pro	Majority



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SAMPLE BILL

Foreign Narcotics Control Act

Be it hereby enacted by the US Senate:

Preamble

The United States Senate resolves to strengthen the forces of the War on Drugs by increasing foreign law enforcement and military assistance and support for American drug interdiction.

Content

1. \$200 million in foreign aid shall be given to the nations of Bolivia and Colombia in order to train, equip and support their law enforcement and military forces for the purpose of combating narcotics trafficking.
2. The President of the United States shall be authorized to transfer immediately up to \$50 million worth of excess US military supplies to the militaries of major Latin American drug producing nations.
- 3(a). \$250 million shall be allocated to the Pentagon to support AWACS surveillance planes, E-2 Navy reconnaissance planes and P- 3 planes in order to detect drug shipments.
- (b). \$100 million shall be allocated to increase F-15 interceptor capabilities and Coast Guard patrols near US waters.
4. Up to \$200 million in economic aid shall be provided in matching funds to the governments of major Latin American drug producing nations. Funds will be provided to those nations matching their expenditures on internal crop substitution, drug eradication and drug education programs.

Definitions

AWACS — Airborne Warning and Control System; modified Boeing 707 airplanes outfitted with sophisticated radar equipment.

Major Latin American drug producing nations — Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Belize, Mexico, Ecuador, Paraguay. For the purposes of this legislation, this list can be expanded subject to review by the Secretary of State.

Enforcement

Aid and assistance shall be reviewed quarterly by the General Accounting Office. There shall be a foreign penalty of up to complete cut-off of foreign aid for foreign misappropriation or misuse of funds.

Funding

Funding for this bill will be appropriated after passing full session.