



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# THE LEGISLATURE

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# YOUR STEPS AS A LEGISLATOR

## YOUR MISSION

To create laws that you think are important and will benefit the citizens of your state.

## THINGS YOU WILL DO AS A LEGISLATOR

- Research and author a bill
- Meet all deadlines
- Be aware and informed of legislative rules and procedures
- Attend the pre-conference training session
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct
- Present your bill at Youth in Government and work to get it passed
- Debate and defend your bill

The Legislative program is the oldest component of Youth in Government. This area gives participants the ability to make their voices heard on important issues, which affect the people of your state. You will research and write bills on topics that are important to you, to your school, to your family or to your community – the possibilities of topics are limitless.

At Youth in Government, you will present your bill in a committee hearing. Those bills, which have the strongest topics or the greatest possibilities for debate, may be advanced to be heard on the floor of one of the Houses, Assembly, or Senates and may even find their way through to the Executive Branch, where they might be signed into law or vetoed. Legislators also work with Lobbyists and Cabinet members to ensure passage of their bills. Some people underestimate this important alliance. Representatives and Senators benefit from developing allies and advocates who can help develop strategies for putting their bills into law.

# WRITING YOUR BILL

A bill is a proposal to change the laws of a state – or “draft legislation.” Legislators use a special format for wording the draft so that it fits with existing laws. The laws are called statutes, and states have a lot of them! When you put them all together, officially they are called the Minnesota Revised Statutes or Wisconsin Revised Statutes. Nevertheless, since our lives are always changing, the laws need to adjust, too. So, as a legislator you are required to write one bill that either:

- Changes a law that already exists;
- Deletes a law that already exists; or
- Makes a new law to address an issue.

The most important part of writing a legislative bill is that you choose a topic that is meaningful to you. The strength of commitment you feel toward your bill will undoubtedly influence your overall experience in Youth in Government. Whether your interests lie in the environment, business, education, or social programs, your bill should be about something that you believe in.

Writing a bill is simple if you know a few secrets. The next few pages will reveal some of those secrets. A GREAT BILL IS THE RESULT OF SIX SIMPLE STEPS:

- STEP 1:** Choose a Topic
- STEP 2:** Research It
- STEP 3:** Fill Out Topic Analysis Form
- STEP 4:** Write First Draft and Get Feedback
- STEP 5:** Write Final Draft and Send In
- STEP 6:** Debate It

## Step 1 – Choose a topic

There are many topics out there that you can choose to address. Your first step is to come up with a fantastic idea for changing life, as we know it. What you really want to do is find a problem you see in society that you would like to fix. Talk to your Delegation Director, friends, teachers, YMCA staff, coaches, parents, and your legislator – anybody who might be helpful. Have members of your delegation look around the community and see what needs to be done. Develop a list of suggestions. What areas do you think can be improved with legislation? Which affect the quality of people’s lives? Which endanger the growth and enrichment of the human condition? On the next page is a list of only A FEW topics you could do.



Abortion Issues	Gun control	Racial profiling
Abuse	Handicapped persons	Recycling
Adoption	Harassment	Redevelopment areas
Advertisements	Health care	Rest homes
Aged persons	Highways	Responsible parties
Agriculture	Historic preservation	Restaurants
AIDS	Holidays	Retirement funds
Alcoholic beverages	Homeless	Roads
Animals	Homicide	Safety
Assault	Hospitals	School
Bias	House arrest	Senior citizen issues
Building Codes	Housing	Self defense
Camping	Hunger	Shoplifting
Campaign Finance	Imprisonment	Social services
Reform	Income	State and local government
Cancer Research	Insurance	State guard affairs
Capital punishment	Investments	Taxation
Change of name	Jails	Teenage pregnancy
Charities	Judges	Telecommunications
Child care services	Jurisdiction	Tobacco sales and regulation
Child welfare and placement	Jury duty	Traffic
Civil Law	Juvenile delinquents	Transportation
Compensation and salaries	Kidnapping	Unemployment
Confidentiality/Privileged information	Labor and employment	Unicameral legislature
Consumer Rights	Landlords and tenants	Water supply
Corporate Fraud	Liabilities	Welfare reform
Court System	Liberty	
Crime	Licenses	
Criminal Justice	Liens	
Deadly weapons	Literacy	
Discrimination	Lobbying	
Domestic violence	Marriage	
Drivers licenses	Medical information rights	
Drug laws	Natural resources	
Drugs and medicine	Pardons and parole	
Education	Perjury	
Elections	Personal injury	
Employee rights	Personal property	
Fireworks	Pesticides	
Fire arms	Population	
Fires	Pollution	
Food	Prescription drugs	
Gambling	Protective services	
Gay & Lesbian rights	Public health	
Genetic tests	Public lands	
Government operations	Public safety	
Guardians	Public spending	
	Public transit	

## **OTHER SOURCES OF CURRENT ISSUES:**

- One of the simplest and most accessible sources of current information is the newspaper. Whether it's the hometown daily or the *New York Times*, a newspaper can give you a good idea of what people want, don't want, like, or don't like.
- Internet, internet, internet! Plug some issues into any search engine and see what comes up. You will find a variety of related issues that can make for a well-rounded bill.
- Podcasts – lots of topics are discussed in podcasts. If you hear an interesting one, research the topic to see if it could become a bill.
- See what is trending on your favorite social media platform. There are many causes that leverage social media as a platform to boost their voice, so there is a wide variety of topics represented there.
- Ask around! Your friends, family, teachers, and peers all have things that matter to them. See if any of their thoughts line up and would be a good bill idea.
- Consider any condition, which exists in your school, family or community. Then propose a solution to end the problem or resolve the issue. It's that simple!

## **WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT PICKING A TOPIC, KEEP A FEW THINGS IN MIND:**

- It needs to be a STATE issue and not FEDERAL. You also want it to address a statewide problem and not an issue that is specific to one location.
- It should be something that could really work and not just a daydream. Sometimes great ideas do not make great bills because they are not practical.
- It should be something you believe in and can passionately defend.

## **OTHER PLACES YOU MIGHT FIND VALUABLE INFORMATION ARE:**

- Library, Internet, books, magazines
- Associations and organizations that your bill affects
- Professionals, attorneys, educators

You should have some statistics, some facts, and even some informed testimonies by people who are well informed. The more facts you can find now, the better your bill will be and the easier it will be to squash any opposition in debate! People who have done their work write the best bills! Once you have gotten your basic information, the next step will help make sure that you have hit all the major hot spots.

## Step 2 – Research it

Now that you have the beginnings of an idea, you need to do some looking around to be able to develop it fully. If you only have a general topic, you may want help coming up with a more specific application. Some things that might help are:

- Media sources- *Time*, Internet, nightly news, radio, online sources, etc.
- Thinking of things that have personally affected you or someone you know.
- Discussions with local leaders, teachers, family and friends.

### STATE SEARCHES

Once you come up with your specific idea, you need to figure out how to make it work. First, you need to check and see if there is already a law that deals with your issue. Best place to start is the website of the state legislature –

Minnesota: <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/>

Wisconsin: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>

Make sure you do a REALLY GOOD search for your topic. Pick several words or ideas that are related to yours. You don't want to write your whole bill and get up to debate it, only to find out that the same law is already on the books!

If you search well, most of the time you will find a law that deals with your issue, but it needs to be better. OR, you may find a bad law that needs to be removed. You can write a bill to change or delete a current law, and sometimes the best debates come from tweaking a current statute.

### CONSTITUTIONALITY

Determine the constitutionality of your proposed law by referring to a copy of the State and Federal Constitutions. When a law is unconstitutional, it means that it goes against the constitution and the Courts will veto it. If you want to write a bill that, would invite a court challenge, great – but be prepared to defend that at Youth in Government.

### ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Once you've checked the statutes, you need to move on to the next step – RESEARCH.

Try to collect as many facts as you can about your issue. Go back to the state legislature websites and other web sources to get full background.



## Step 3 – Analyze Your Topic



Use these analysis points to see if your bill is checking all the boxes.

1. Why is this bill necessary? Why is it important?
2. How much will this bill cost? Where will the money come from?
3. Who will enforce this bill?
4. Is this in conflict with the State Constitution, Federal Constitution, or Federal Law?
5. Do other states do this?
6. Has this been tried before in Minnesota?
7. Who will this bill affect?
8. When will it take effect?
9. Who might be against this and why?
10. Is this a responsibility of government or could it be taken care of in another way?

## Step 4 – Write a first draft & get feedback

Next, put your bill in the correct format for publication. This means actually wording it the specific way it will appear at Youth in Government. Remember to address all the issues on the Analysis Form. Drafting a bill in the proper form is crucial to getting it passed by the legislature. It's also a lot easier than you might think!

### TIPS FOR THE WELL-WRITTEN BILL

Each bill in Youth in Government must contain the following sections:

**A TITLE** This is the part of the bill that will be read in committee and in the legislative bodies when the bill is up for consideration. A good title is concise and states what the bill is about.

**EXAMPLE:**

AN ACT TO: Ban smoking in all public restaurants and bars.

**SECTION I – PURPOSE** This section simply states why this bill is being written. What is the aim or what does this bill hope to accomplish?

**EXAMPLE:**

The purpose of this bill is to promote healthier lifestyles and cut down the effects of second-hand smoke to patrons of public establishments.

**SECTION II – JUSTIFICATION** This section tells the reader why this bill is important or necessary. What is the problem in the state that this idea is attempting to change?

**EXAMPLE:**

Second-hand smoke is the cause of XX% of all cancer-related deaths in the state. Removing smoke from the environment of non-smokers will result in better health for non-smokers and reduce health-care costs in Minnesota.

**SECTION III – DEFINITIONS** In this section, you define any terms, which are key to the bill. Remember that this is a law and will need to be interpreted by law enforcement so the more clear the language of the bill, the better.

**EXAMPLE:**

1. "Restaurant" shall be defined as any establishment that serves prepared food in exchange for money.
2. "Bars" shall be defined as any establishment that serves alcohol excluding off sales liquor stores.
3. "Public" shall be defined as any member of the state being allowed to enter the establishment freely without fee or restriction.

**SECTION IV – FUNDING** If your bill requires the spending of any money, in this section you need to explain exactly where that money will come from such as new taxes, the sale of bonds, fees etc. (Do not include info in this section if your bill does not call for any specific funding).

**SECTION V – PENALTIES/ENFORCEMENT** In this section, you state what penalty would be applied to someone who is in violation of your new law. Penalties can take many forms and are often related to the intent of the bill.

If you've made something illegal or told someone to do something, who will make sure it gets done? If something is illegal because of your bill, the police will probably be the enforcement. If you are making a change with your bill that doesn't make something illegal, then there is probably a state agency that deals with it. *Do not include this section if your bill does not call for any specific penalties.*

**EXAMPLE:**

The penalty for any person found smoking in a public establishment shall be a petty misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$300.

**SECTION VI – EFFECTIVE DATE** Your bill takes effect on this date. Some can go into effect immediately ("upon passage") others take time to set up so be logical. If you decide that you want to have a specific effective date for your bill, note that that date should be after the Youth in Government conference.

## **OTHER TIPS TO MAKE YOUR BILL SPECTACULAR**

- Language. Use respectful language reflecting YMCA values.
- Singular Terms. Use singular terms, such as he, she, the Governor, applicant, etc. Avoid plurals where possible – they can confuse people.
- Be careful with pronoun usage. Two or more "he's" in one sentence can get confusing.
- Watch for others your act may apply to. If you use the term "cities," make sure you don't also want it to apply to towns, counties or school districts.
- Watch "shall" versus "may." One little word may force something to happen, instead of giving it the option to happen.
- Avoid "and/or." It makes the statute difficult to read and interpret. If you must use both, consider writing two different sections.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD BILLS**

### **CONTENT**

- Written on a topic that is of interest to you and thoroughly researched before Youth in Government.
- Should relate to a state specific issue - not an issue controlled by the federal government or another state.
- Clearly and succinctly, state the objective of the bill in the title.
- Should contain definitions of specialized terms contained in the bill.
- Should contain provisions for enforcement (who will enforce, how and under what circumstances) only if needed. If a bill does not require enforcement, do not even mention enforcement in the bill.
- Should contain an effective date for when the bill will come into force. The date should be realistic for the provisions of the bill.

## FORMAT

- Should list supporting delegates in the opposite body who can speak for the bill on the floor of the other house. (List this on the bill form in the space provided.)
- Should list the name and delegation and of the author on the bill form.
- Should not list any bill number or committee name on the bill form. The youth officers and State Office staff will assign bill numbers and committees.
- Should not be a “joke bill.” NO JOKE BILLS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY THE STATE OFFICE. If you have questions about this requirement, work with your local Delegation Director.

## FORMATTING & EXAMPLES

Regy—the online tool used for conference registration and document submission—will do most of the formatting for you, but you still need to know how it SHOULD look. Use the following format example and make your bill look great!

### FORMATTING STYLE POINTS

- STATE STATUTE. If you are amending a statute, you should reference the statute and detail the changes you wish to make to it.
  - If changing a current statute, copy the existing statute in its entirety, ~~strikeout any deleted text~~, and put any new text in BOLD AND CAPITALS. If numbering or lettering changes mess up the organization of the statute, you can suggest, “renumbering the sections to conform” in the bill. Keep the same statute number.
- LONG TITLE. Give your bill a specific “Long Title.” This goes at the very top of the bill. Example “An Act to Provide Stability of Foster Care.”

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED - Compose your bill in your word processing program of choice, then copy and paste the text into Regy when it is complete, as it is easier to save and work on in multiple sessions. Once you have completed your first draft, pass it along to some peers, your Delegation Director, and/or your advisors. Ask them to edit it and give you feedback. The more people who can read your bill and give you suggestions, the clearer it will be for Youth in Government!

INTRODUCED BY:	COMMITTEE:
DELEGATION:	
LEGISLATURE:	BILL #:
TITLE: AN ACT TO	
BE IT ENACTED BY THE YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA	
1.	<u>SECTION I - PURPOSE</u>
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	<u>SECTION II - JUSTIFICATION</u>
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	<u>SECTION III - DEFINITIONS</u>
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	<u>SECTION IV - FUNDING</u>
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	<u>SECTION V - PENALTIES/ENFORCEMENT</u>
18.	
19.	
20.	
21.	<u>SECTION VI - EFFECTIVE DATE</u>
22.	
23.	

## Step 5 – Write final draft & submit online

After you've passed your bill around for feedback and made any necessary changes, you should write your final draft. Here is a final checklist to make sure that you have included everything you need:

- Your bill cannot be more than 2 pages in length.
- If you are changing or deleting a current state statute, you should include the text of the actual statute being changed in the body of the bill.
- Your bill should include all the info in template shown above, including the required enacting clauses.



Once you write your final draft, you will use your assigned template on Regy. The template will have a variety of text boxes. Copy the content, section-by-section, from your text document and paste it into each corresponding text box.

Regy has the capabilities for back-and-forth editing. It is possible for a bill to be reviewed by your Delegation Director and you may be given instructions/conditions to fulfill before the bill can be submitted to the State Office for publication in the Session Book.

Make sure you get your bill submitted before the posted deadline, so your Delegation Director can review and make suggestions for final improvements. Plan ahead in case of technical difficulties.



**IF YOU DO NOT 'FINALIZE' YOUR BILL AND SEND IT TO YOUR DELEGATION DIRECTOR, IT WILL NOT BE PRINTED IN THE SESSION BOOK.**

Please take care that you fully complete the process.

It is strongly encouraged that you bring a printed and digital version of your bill with you to Youth in Government, just in case something goes wrong.

## Step 6 – Final Research & Debate

Even though you have finished writing your bill, your work is not over! Just because your bill looks good doesn't mean it is going to pass. You must convince all the other legislators at Youth in Government that it should pass. You will have to speak in front of a committee and in front of the whole House or Assembly (if you are a Representative) or the whole Senate (if you are a Senator). On top of that, you will have to make sure that someone in the other body is prepared to speak on your bill and that the person knows all the information and understands it enough to debate the bill. You gotta know your stuff!

To prepare for your presentation, here are a few things you can do before Youth in Government:

- Interview a senator, representative, or lawyer who can help with the final preparation of the bill and in organizing debate concerning it.
- Ask these people to attend a meeting of your delegation to critique and comment on the bills of all the delegates.
- Seek out opposing views on the subject and take notes.

Ask your delegation for time to debate your idea to fine-tune it and make it **MAGNIFICENT!** Usually, most delegations will have time set aside for this, but you may need to talk to your Delegation Director or Chair.

When you debate the topic, keep a few things in mind:

- You are looking for weak points in your bill, so be open for arguments against it.
- Deliberating it with your peers can help you clean up any last messy sections.
- Write down areas that you may need to address as you go along.

Check out the next section "**PRESENTING YOUR BILL**" for more ideas about how debate can help you.

**REMEMBER:** if you are a Representative you are not allowed to speak on the floor of the Senate and vice-versa. You **NEED** someone to speak for you in the other body. That person can be either a friend you know or the Floor leader/Ast. Floor Leader of the opposite body (you can find them near the front of the room).

# PRESENTING YOUR BILL

Once the bill is written, you must figure out how to convince everyone that your brilliant idea should be passed and become a law. This is the fun debate part! When you present your bill (either in committee or on the floor), you will have time for an opening statement, response to questions, and a closing statement.

## OPENING ARGUMENT

Let's start with the opening statement first. You'll have about 2 minutes to WOW the crowd with this.

- **PROBLEM** – First off, you want to make them aware of the HUGE PROBLEM you are trying to fix in your bill. For example: pet safety in moving vehicles. Your opening argument should start out with a bang. A great story or good fact will catch their attention and make them realize that the issue you're discussing is VITALLY IMPORTANT!! Then it's your job to make them think clearly but QUICKLY, "I can't believe I never realized pets don't have to be secured when a vehicle is being operated! We need to cancel all the other bills until we solve *this* issue!" Give them a couple of facts or tell them a story to make them aware of the problem.
- **YOUR PLAN** – Next, you want to lay out the basic steps of your plan that will deal with this earth-shattering issue. Make a clear statement: "My bill will solve the problem of animals jumping out or distracting a driver while the vehicle is being operated". Then try to pick about 3-5 things that the audience needs to know to understand how your bill will do what it says it will. Where will the money come from? Who will this affect? How will you enforce it? This is where you need some solid facts as to why your bill should become a law.
- **HEAD THEM OFF AT THE PASS** – You know that the other legislators are just waiting to try to bust up your bill, so think of some common arguments that people have had about your bill. [Here is where your practice debates come in handy!] Address them right now before they get a chance to say anything! Example: You may think that it is necessary that pets be secured in a car while it is being operated, but you may find that is not the reason for many car accidents.

## RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS - DEBATE

After you've given your opening speech, the legislators will be allowed to ask you questions and make pro and con statements.

- **BE READY** – Have a fact sheet with lots of information in an easy-to-read format so that you can be prepared to answer any questions they shoot at you, like: How many car accidents are caused by an animal who was not secure in a vehicle?

- **THINK ABOUT IT** – Before you are put on the spot, do your homework and find the answers to any questions that you were asked in practice debate. Then strain your brain to try to think of any other questions you might be asked.
- **WRITE IT DOWN** – You also want some paper and a pencil to jot down any con statements that other legislators make – that way you can address those statements in your closing speech. It does not need to be long but just enough to summarize the idea. For example, they may say: Requiring animals to be secured while a vehicle is being operated will reduce animal injuries!

## CLOSING ARGUMENT

When everyone has asked their questions and made their statements, you will get a chance to finish discussion. You'll have 2 minutes to leave the audience with no doubt about passing your bill.

- **ADDRESS CON STATEMENTS** – Since you do not get to speak during debate except to answer questions, you will want to take a minute and address the con statements brought up by other legislators. *Hopefully* you jotted them down during debate. Pick a couple of the biggest arguments you heard and take a minute and give rebuttal statements that are short but to the point: "Even though it may be a Constitutional right to wear a hat, our Constitution has been amended before because of important issues, and this would certainly qualify as a major issue!" Don't try to address too many of them – just a couple of biggies. If there were no real objections to your bill, try to respond to the debate somehow. Say something like, "I would like to thank the House for its tremendous support of this bill." It lets everyone know you were at least awake for the last ten minutes.

It's really important to address the major con statements, otherwise people won't know the answers to the good points your opponents made, and they probably won't vote for a bill that they think has such huge problems. Only spend a minute on it.

- **CLOSING THOUGHT** – The last thing you say to the audience is what they will remember the most, so you need to decide what is *most important* for them to think about. It's best to restate the problem and then your solution, just to recap. Don't introduce any new ideas – it just confuses people. Then you can add a dramatic closing thought. Have a conclusion you wrote beforehand that you can go right into if you run out of time.

## HELPFUL HINTS

**Try to use many types of information in your speech:**

- Factual Knowledge – Information that is verifiable and agreed upon by almost everyone.
- Statistical Inferences – Interpretation and examples of an accumulation of facts.
- Informed Opinion – Opinion developed through research and/or expertise of the claim. Citing an impressive source can be helpful.
- Personal Testimony – Personal experience related by a knowledgeable party.

**Think about:**

- Who is your audience?
- What do they believe?
- Where do they stand on the issue?
- How are their interests involved?
- What evidence is likely to be effective with them?

**Practice Your Arguments**

- Try giving your opening and closing statements to your delegation, your parents, or just to a mirror.
- Consider creating visual aids (handouts or palm cards) to help present any points that may be complex or confusing rather than trying to explain verbally.
- The more calm, prepared, and concise you are the better chance you have of convincing others to support your bill.

**Quality, not quantity**

- You have two minutes for opening and closing, but you don't have to use them all.
- Be wise about how much you say and don't confuse the issue with too much information.
- Select the best stuff for your speeches and hold the rest in case you need it during debate time.

**RELAX!!! You got this; you're prepared and ready to go!**

# PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE

Our program tries to be as similar to the actual real-life Legislature as possible. You will need to become familiar with parliamentary procedure. Don't panic! It sounds complicated, but it's just a fancy way of having a conversation – and we'll teach you all you need to know!

Any time you are acting officially as a legislator (on the floor of the House or Senate, in committee, etc.) you will need to use this form of parliamentary procedure to run the meeting. It plays a major role in keeping meetings on an efficient track, using language and a format that is familiar to everyone. Because of that, it's your responsibility to know it well and use it.

For the most part, the officers and chairs will lead the meetings and tell everyone what to do. However, since you are an active participant, you will need to know how to get involved! On the next page is a table of common actions that you may want to do, or that you might see take place during the meeting.



## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE ABRIDGED TABLE OF MOTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Only one motion can be addressed at a time.

No other motion can be considered until the first motion has either passed or failed.

There are no seconds on any motion in the Minnesota Legislature Rules of Order.

MOTION	APPLIES TO THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS	INTERRUPT MEMBER WHO HAS THE FLOOR?	MOVER MUST BE RECOGNIZED FIRST?	REQUIRES A SECOND?	DEBATABLE ?	VOTE REQUIRED	MAY BE RENEWED?	MOTIONS THAT APPLY TO IT
Set the time of the next meeting	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not when privileged	Majority	Not for the same time	Amend, reconsider
Adjourn	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not when privileged	Majority	Yes	None
Question of privilege	None	Yes	No	No	No, but resulting motion may be	Decided by chair	After progress	None
Rise to a point of order	Any motion or act	Yes	No	No	No, but appeal is	None unless appealed	No	None
Appeal the ruling of the chair	Any decision of the Chair	Yes	No	Yes	No, unless underlying matter is debatable	Majority	No	Any
Table (reconsider for later)	Main Motion, appeals, privilege, reconsider	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	After progress	None
Remove from table	Only a tabled motion	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	After progress	None
Close or limit debate (Previous Question)	Any debatable motion	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority	After progress	Reconsider
Amend	Any	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Any
Postpone indefinitely	Main motion, question of privilege	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Limit or close debate, reconsider
Reconsider	Any except adjourn, table, suspend rules	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Limit or close debate, table, postpone
Suspend the rules	Any	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority	Only by unanimous consent	None

## **ADDRESSING THE CHAIR**

When you speak on the floor or in committee, you must talk to the chairperson. In some ways, it's like using a translator – you tell the translator what you wish to say, and the translator explains what you're saying to everyone else. This means that all statements and requests must begin by saying "Chair," then stating what you intend to do. You can be ruled out of order by the chair if you fail to do so.

## **ADJOURNING**

Adjournment is usually done at the end of the day or the end of the session and is done through making a motion to adjourn. You may ask the Chair to consider adjourning or the Chair may ask for a member to make the motion. You need to be recognized by the Chair to make the motion. A majority of the members in the chamber (50% + 1) is required for the motion to prevail. If an adjourning motion is approved, the Chair will announce the time to reconvene.

- To make a motion to adjourn: "Thank you Chair. I move that we adjourn until tomorrow at 9am."

## **PREVIOUS QUESTION/ENDING DEBATE**

If you feel that debate is one-sided or just particularly boring, you can help bring it to an end. Any member may call for the question by saying "I move the Previous Question" in between speakers during debate. After Previous Question has been called, the Chair will ask for a vote on the Motion of Previous Question. 2/3 of the people in the chamber need to agree with you for the motion to pass. If the motion prevails, the Chair will move directly to closing statements and voting. Moving Previous Question isn't considered to be nice because it cuts off verbal debate. Consider this when thinking about making this motion.

## **CLOSING STATEMENT**

This is your LAST opportunity to convince the other members to vote for your bill. You also give this speech from your desk. The Chair determines the time you have for this and they should tell you before you begin. You will want to cover the following in your statement: restate their position, rebut points made during debate, and introduce new points in favor of their bill. Many sponsors will end their closing statement by moving the bill again, but it is not required.

## **MOTION**

Motions are what moves the process forward during debate sessions. A motion can be made in committee or on the floor of the House, Assembly or Senate. Every bill must be moved both in Committee and in floor sessions (please see Opening Statement for the official motion). You need to be recognized to make any motion.

- To make a motion: "Chair, I would like to move..." or "Chair, I move that..."
- To make an amendment: In committee, "Chair, I move to amend Senate File XXX as follows..." or, on the floor, "Chair, I move my amendment."

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

This is your chance to tell everyone what your bill is about and why he or she should pass it. As the bill sponsor, you would give the statement from your desk. During Committee is the FIRST time everyone will be hearing your speech, so make it count! When you finish making your opening statement, you must move the bill.

- To move a bill: "I move my bill."

## **POINT OF INFORMATION**

If you have information that is important to the current debate, you can say "Point of Information" in between speakers during debate. When you've been recognized, you'll give the information to the Chair. This is especially useful if you have a statistic that the author was not able to give during questions. The Chair has the right to refuse to recognize any point of information if he/she believes that debate is being impeded by the abuse of this procedure.

## **POINT OF ORDER**

During the debate, if a colleague has not stated their name/delegation/intent or otherwise violates parliamentary procedure, you could shout out "Point of Order." The Chair must recognize the motion. Once recognized, you would state your point. If the Chair determines the point to be valid, they will tell the delegate sit down, apologize, or whatever disciplinary action must take place.

- "Point of Order!" Then wait to be recognized by the Chair: "Isn't the speaker supposed to be speaking for the bill instead of against?"
- "Point of Order!" Then wait to be recognized by the Chair: "My colleague did not state his/her name."

## **POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE**

Let's say your parents came to visit you during Youth in Government and you'd like to introduce them to the chamber. You can do this during debate without interrupting the debate in progress. You would call out "Point of Personal Privilege" between speakers. Once recognized by the Chair, you would make your statement of introduction. You can also make these for other general announcements (see below).

- "Point of Personal Privilege! (After recognition by the Chair) I would like to introduce my parents in the gallery, Mr. & Mrs. Hebert."
- "Point of Personal Privilege! (After recognition by the Chair) There is too much talking in the back of the room."

## **RECESS**

This is like the break you take during grade school! You may ask the Chair to consider taking a recess, but typically, the Chair asks the floor for a volunteer to make the motion. The Chair will usually state what the recess is for (a water break, bathroom break, stretch break, until the next morning, etc.).

- To move for recess: "Thank you Chair. I move that we take a recess until after lunch (or whatever the Chair is entertaining a motion for)."

## RECOGNITION TO SPEAK

- If you would like to speak, raise your hand (or name card) and wait for the Chair to recognize you.
- After being recognized, you will stand and thank the chair, simply by saying, "Thank you, Chair." If you simply wish to speak, you may begin your statement immediately. (You do not have to reserve your right to make a statement). If you wish to do something else, you must state your intent.
- To ask a question of the sponsor: "Will the author yield to a question?"
- To ask more than one question: "Will the author yield to a series of questions?"
- To make a motion: "Chair, I move that..."
- If, after asking questions of another member, you wish to make a statement, you may simply do so; again, you do not have to reserve your right to make a statement.
- When done, you may either formally yield the floor by stating, "I yield my time to the Chair," or you may simply sit down. Either is acceptable.

## SPEAKING ON THE FLOOR

You may speak only to the issues, avoiding personalities and not referring to the proceedings in the other chamber. In debate, unless you are the author of the bill, if you have spoken, you will generally not be recognized to speak again if other members wish to speak. This gives more people a chance to participate in debate. If you wish to speak again, and a colleague does not, you can ask the colleague to yield his/her speaking time to you. This is usually allowed, but it is within the presiding officer's discretion not to recognize a yield of time (especially if a legislator has spoken a lot and there are others who wish to be heard).

- To refer to a comment made by another member: "In reference to the statement made by "a/the previous speaker," "my friend", "my colleague" . . . (follow with your point)."

**A Note about Personal References:** At no time should you or anyone else addressing a committee or the House/Senate refer to another delegate by name. It's considered to be rude. Reference to comments of another member may only be made if relevant to the issue at hand and not in reference to discussion in the other chamber. Remember you are debating the TOPIC, not the PERSON.

## SUSPEND THE RULES

When the chamber wants to do something that it cannot do without violating one of its regular rules, it can adopt a motion to suspend the rules. Typically this motion is used to hear a bill that was previously defeated or vetoed by the Governor. Rules may NOT be suspended to allow members of the opposite chamber or the Governor/Lt. Government to speak on the floor!

- "Chair, I move that the rules be suspended and that the chamber (state reason for suspension of the rules)..."

## VOTING

Get used to voting – it happens a lot on the chamber floor! The primary voting procedure is a voice vote. On the floor, at the time a vote is called, the Chair will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to seal the doors of the chamber – no notes shall be passed, and no one may enter or leave the chamber during a vote.

Sometimes the vote is so close that the Chair may ask people to stand and be counted or to press the buttons on their desk if they vote "Aye" or "Nay." When calling for a vote, the presiding officer will use the following forms (please refer to the Debate Procedure section for when abstentions may apply). For more information regarding voting, please see the Standing Joint Rules for the House and Senate.

- For the affirmative vote: "Those in favor, say 'Aye'."
- For the opposing vote: "Those opposed, 'Nay'."

# COMMITTEES

Well, here it is at last. The big finale. The main event. What you've been waiting for: The Youth in Government conference.

## COMMITTEES

One of your first challenges will be to get your bill through committee. Every legislator (including yourself!) will be placed on a committee, usually the same one as your bill. These committees are on subjects like "Education" or "Transportation." Each committee will have a chair and co-chair who will run the show. The committees

- look at all the bills that fall under their subject;
- debate them;
- decide which ones will Pass to be discussed on the House, Assembly, or Senate floor; and
- decide which ones will Fail and go to the great hopper in the sky.

Each author will have a chance to present their bill (see "*Presenting Your Bill*") and the committee will debate it. As a committee member, you want to pass good bills that are well thought out and have the potential for good debate. At this point, even if you don't agree with a bill or you don't think it's a great idea, you should try to be as unbiased as possible. Your job is simply to decide if the entire chamber should get to debate on this bill or not.

When it's time for *your* bill to be debated, you'll step down from your position on the committee. This is your moment to shine, and all your practice and hard work will be put to the test.

Here are some examples of committees of each legislative body:

- Commerce
- Education Development
- Environment
- Government Operations
- Human Services
- Transportation

## COMMITTEE SCRIPT

Here's an example of what a committee meeting will look like. This is a general script, which may vary.

### MINNESOTA YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair

**"THE COMMITTEE WILL NOW COME TO ORDER."**

#### 2. INTRODUCTIONS

(Introduces self, Vice Chair, Clerk, Advisors, resource people, etc.)

Committee Chair

#### 3. CHAIR REQUESTS THAT THE CLERK TAKE ROLL

(Clerk must take roll each day to record those members present.  
A motion to suspend with the roll call is not in order.)

Chair & Clerk

**"THE CLERK WILL TAKE THE ROLL."**

#### 4. CHAIR EXPLAINS COMMITTEE PROCEDURE & POSTS

THE BILL PRIORITY LIST/SCHEDULE & TIME THAT EACH BILL WILL BE HEARD

(To inform authors of schedule; Review the rules and the order of business.)

Committee Chair

#### 5. PRACTICE BILL IS PRESENTED

(A bill not in that committee is presented and used as a warm-up bill.)

Committee Chair &  
Assistants

#### 6. REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS

#### 7. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS AS PRIORITIZED

(Chair announces each as it comes up – recognizes the author for a short presentation – two minutes)

**"THE NEXT BILL UNDER CONSIDERATION IS \_\_\_\_\_ HOUSE/ \_\_\_\_\_ SENATE  
FILE # \_\_\_\_\_. IS THE AUTHOR PRESENT?"**

Committee Chair/  
Committee Clerk

#### 7. TESTIMONY

(After the author has made their presentation, the Chair will ask if anyone present would like to testify on the bill. This may include lobbyists, cabinet officials, or the public. Only members of the committee may ask questions. Questions may be asked of any person testifying before the committee, either during or after their presentation.)

Lobbyists, Cabinet, the General Public

#### 8. DEBATE AND DISCUSSION

(After the testimony has been taken, the floor is open to the committee to debate and discuss the bill. Questions may be asked of those who testified.)

Committee Members

#### 9. MOTION TO PASS BILL

(When the allocated time has elapsed, any member of the committee may move that the bill be recommended to pass.)

Committee Members

**“I MOVE THAT \_\_\_\_\_ HOUSE/ \_\_\_\_\_ SENATE FILE # \_\_\_\_ BE RECOMMENDED TO PASS (AS AMENDED).**

(If a bill is considered to be of a non-controversial nature it may be moved to pass and be placed on the Consent Calendar.)

**“I MOVE THAT \_\_\_\_\_ HOUSE/ \_\_\_\_\_ SENATE FILE # \_\_\_\_ BE RECOMMENDED TO PASS AND BE PLACED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR.”**

10. CHAIR HANDLES MOTION

Committee Chair

**“IT HAS BEEN MOVED THAT \_\_\_\_\_ HOUSE/ \_\_\_\_\_ SENATE FILE # \_\_\_\_\_ BE RECOMMENDED TO PASS (AS AMENDED). ALL THOSE IN FAVOR PLEASE SIGNIFY BY SAYING ‘AYE’. THOSE OPPOSED SIGNIFY BY SAING ‘NO’. THE MOTION PREVAILS (DOES NOT PREVAIL).”** (A hand vote shall be taken on all votes in committee for final passage.)

11. BILL FORWARDED TO SECRETARY OF STATE

Clerk & Chair

(Bill should be grouped by House & Senate and sent to the Secretary of State’s office with the proper transmittal sheet attached.)

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS FORWARDED TO SECRETARY OF STATE Clerk & Chair

(Separate Committee Reports should be prepared for the House and the Senate and must be forwarded to the Secretary of State’s Office immediately when the committee has recessed for the day!)

- Remember to send the first two passed bills to the Secretary of State’s Office immediately during the first committee meeting. During subsequent committee sessions, save up 4 – 5 bills and then send them to the Secretary of State’s Office.
- Committee Reports must be turned in to the Secretary of State’s Office immediately when the committee has finished its hearings for the day. The proceedings of the Houses and Senates cannot happen without these reports. The Secretary of State’s Office has to turn these forms around very quickly, so the sooner you can turn in these reports, the better.

# AT THE CONFERENCE

## **AMMENDMENTS**

In committee, you can also suggest changes to bills – this is called “amending.” The chair should have information and the forms to create an amendment. The author may decide that they want to make a last-minute change, or you may find some incorrect information in debate those are both good reason for amending a bill.

## **THE FLOOR**

Once you’ve finished your committee duties, whether or not your bill passed, you will move onto the floor of the House or Senate. The rest of the weekend will be spent debating the bills that passed through committee in whatever order the Rules Committee decided. Your job here is to listen, ask good questions and vote for legislation that will help the people of your state.

If your awesome bill passed through committee, and it’s placed early enough on the agenda, you may get to present your bill once again to the whole chamber.

**THIS TIME, YOU’LL BE TRYING TO CONVINCING THE WHOLE HOUSE OR SENATE TO PASS YOUR BILL!**

If it passes there, it will go onto the opposite chamber, where a friend or the Floor Leader will speak on behalf of your bill using your notes.

## **THE GOVERNOR/LT. GOVERNOR’S OFFICE**

If your bill passes the House and Senate, it’s headed straight to the top – the Governor or Lt. Governor’s desk!!! This is your LAST opportunity to persuade the Governor or Lt. Governor why the bill is a good idea.

Hopefully, it will pass your chamber...

then your sponsor in the other chamber will help it pass there...

and the Governor or Lt. Governor will like it and sign it...

you’ve helped to create a NEW LAW!

# NEXT YEAR

Before you pack up the bills and put the parliamentary procedure guide into storage, you should think about next year and what you might want to do.

*If you like the debating part of being a legislator...*

## **You may want to consider being in the Court Program.**

The Court program gives you a lot of time to debate (our fancy word for arguing!). As an attorney, you represent one side of a case and try to convince a panel of judges that your arguments are better than the other side's. If you become a judge, you get to listen to the arguments of others and poke holes in them with your piercingly intelligent questions. It's all about the debate!

*If you really enjoyed getting legislation passed...*

## **You may want to consider being a Lobbyist.**

A lobbyist is the person behind the scenes who pushes the legislative process. You probably had some experience with them in committees or debate this year, and hopefully you got to talk to your own teammates. Lobbyists represent clients, and they try and get certain bills to pass or fail depending on how it affects their client's interests. You can use all your debating and negotiating skills to convince legislators to think your way one-on-one, or you can organize campaigns about legislation to reach whole groups. Your primary focus is still legislation and you also get to use your debating skills. If you like networking, have a cause you believe in passionately, and love to convince others to join your cause, being a lobbyist might be right for you. Note: Lobbyists are appointed, so don't forget to fill out your application!

*If you liked being a legislator, but you're interested in debating national issues...*

## **You may want to consider being in the National Issues Forum (Minnesota only)**

Like the legislature, the National Issues Forum debates and discusses issues, and members work to pass proposals through. However, the National Issue Forum focuses on issues related to the federal government, while the legislature works on state issues.

*If you loved being a part of Youth in Government...*

## **You may want to become an Elected Officer or Appointed Official**

### **YOUTH OFFICERS**

Officers for the program are elected by participants in each program area at Youth in Government, to take office at the conclusion of Youth in Government and complete their leadership the following January. Youth Officers preside in the Model Legislatures and Courts and lead all program areas during the Model Session.

### **APPOINTED OFFICIALS**

Shortly after Youth in Government, the newly elected Youth Officers appoint delegates to assist in the leadership of their program area. Some appointed positions include: Floor Leaders, Committee Chairs, Commissioners, Administrative Assistants, and Presiding Judges/Justices.