PLAIN TALK ABOUT STUDENT CONGRESS BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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Bills and resolutions submitted to PHSSL should be original to your school and not something you found at another student congress.

It is important that bills and resolutions follow the proper format. Hybrids (half bill/half resolution) are not acceptable.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions answer two simple questions:

1. Why do we want to do something?
2. What is it we want to do?

The WHY is expressed through whereas clauses which begin the resolution. If you were to substitute the word "because" in place of "whereas" at the beginning of each clause it would read smoothly, but the language of Parliamentary Procedure requires you use the word "Whereas."

The resolution ends with a statement that begins with "Therefore, be it resolved by this Student Congress here assembled that . . ." and simply explains what it is you wish to do.

A resolution may consist of just this statement and not explain why.

Resolutions may suggest change (but you need not indicate how) or may be written to support the status quo, to praise a person or event, to chastise, or to offer a proclamation.

BILLS

Bills answer many questions:

1. What is it we want to do?
2. How will we do it?
3. Who will administer it?
4. When will we start to do it?
5. How will it be financed?
6. How will it be enforced?
    - A. By whom?
    - B. Do we need penalties if people don't comply?
    - C. What will these penalties be?

Bills do not explain why, and so they begin immediately with the clause "Be it enacted by the PHSSL State Student Congress here assembled that . . ." Sections that follow answer the necessary questions listed above.

It is not always necessary to answer all of the questions listed nor in the order listed.

Bills do not suggest; they mandate change, and if enacted (passed), have the power of law.

The CONGRESS WORKSHEET on the following pages should help you in preparing a good bill or resolution.to be debated in Congress.

WORKSHEET FOR PREPARING CONGRESS BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

So……you want to write a bill. DECIDE, is it something that you want to be definite and have the force of law

OR are you merely stating a conviction and saying "Wouldn't it be nice if….?"

HOW TO BEGIN:

LOOK AROUND YOU, READ AND WATCH THE NEWS. Is something troubling you about our society, our foreign policy, our morals, etc. THEN:

I. STATE THE PROBLEM: _____

_____

_____

II. WHY IS THERE A PROBLEM? ARE THERE ANY CONTRIBUTING FACTORS? WHAT'S HAPPENING?

_____

_____

_____

III. WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT? ARE THERE PENALTIES IF THE LAW IS VIOLATED? IF FINANCING IS NEEDED, HOW WILL IT BE DONE? WHEN WILL THE LAW TAKE EFFECT? WHO WILL ADMINISTER IT?

_____

_____

_____

_____

NOW YOU'RE READY TO BEGIN

To write a Resolution:

Whereas clauses are where you build your rationale. Use Parts I and II to help you. Conclude with BE IT RESOLVED…using Part III. What can be done?

1.WHEREAS:

2.

3.

4.WHEREAS:

5.

6.

7.WHEREAS:

8.

9.

10.WHEREAS:

11.

12.

13.WHEREAS:

14.

15.

16.THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the PHSSL State Student Congress that (complete the sentence)

I prefer bills over resolutions. When writing a resolution you basically build your arguments into the whereas clauses. Bills permit a stronger pro or con speech because the arguments are not contained in them, just the action.

How to Write a Bill

Begin with the following statement:

1. Be it enacted by the Student Congress here assembled:

2. SECTION 1: What you want to do.

3. SECTION 2: How will you do it?

4. SECTION 3: How will it be administered and by whom?

5. SECTION 4: How will it be financed?

6. SECTION 5: When will it go into effect?

7. SECTION 6: Are there any penalties.

Sites from other leagues that offer templates that you might use:

NSDA: try this link – it may only be available to schools that purchase the NSDA resource package

NCFL: these links ares open to all
Bill Template for Download (Student Congress) - Current Version: 2015
Resolution Template for Download (Student Congress) - Current Version: 2015
Amendment Template for Download (Student Congress) - Current Version: 2015