



Florida Gulf Coast Catholic Forensics League

Student Congress Manual

2009-2010

**Version of November 7, 2009
Previous Versions Unusable**

I. General Rules

A. Manuals and Officials

1. **Manuals.** This manual governs Student Congress at all FGCCFL tournaments. It is based upon the *NCFL Student Congress Manual* (1996 edition), which should be consulted in the event of a procedural question not addressed by this manual. If the question is not addressed by either manual, consult *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (10th edition).
2. **Congress officials.** Although judges are encouraged to allow the chamber to solve its own problems, they may make procedural rulings if the Presiding Officer requests assistance or if a serious error has been made that will derail the session if left uncorrected. Decisions of the judge will not be overturned by the Tab Room except in cases of clear error.
3. **Tab Room.** Judges may request a procedural ruling from the Tab Room by sending a signed note. The Tab Room shall have the authority to issue any rulings needed to implement or interpret the provisions of this manual, and such decisions shall be final and binding upon all participants.
4. **FGCCFL Grand Finals.** At FGCCFL Grand Finals, the rules and modifications in Part V of this manual take precedence over conflicting rules elsewhere in the manual.
5. **Usage note.** This manual uses masculine pronouns to refer to speakers and feminine pronouns to refer to Presiding Officers. In either case, the pronouns used shall embrace both genders.

B. Rules of Conduct and Decorum

1. **General decorum.** NCFL and FGCCFL Congress chambers are modeled after the U.S. House of Representatives. Legislators are expected to maintain the decorum proper for a house of Congress through their language, behavior, and demeanor.

The Presiding Officer should be addressed as “Madam (Mister) Speaker” and should refer to herself as “the Chair.” Legislators should be addressed or referred to as “Representative (last name)” or “the Representative from (school).”

No legislator shall speak without being recognized by the Presiding Officer, except for interruptions permitted by the rules. Legislators may communicate with one another by passing notes quietly and discreetly.
2. **Attendance.** Legislators must attend all sessions in their assigned chambers unless excused for compelling reasons approved by the Executive Committee. Points and nominations are awarded only within the assigned chamber.

3. **Exiting and entering the chamber.** Exiting and entering the chamber during the session requires a point of personal privilege. The chamber may not suspend the rules to permit legislators to exit or enter without proper procedure (“open chambers”). *Violation of this rule may result in penalties up to and including the disqualification of the chamber.*

Although legislators may exit the chamber on a point of personal privilege, they should do so sparingly. The Presiding Officer shall deny excessive requests to exit the chamber except in an emergency.
4. **Comments to the chamber.** Floor debate is the sole means by which legislators may address the chamber. A motion (including a point of personal privilege) to address the chambers is *out of order*.
5. **Parliamentary inquiries.** Legislators who wish to ask a procedural question may do so using a point of order (there is no “point of inquiry” in NCFL or FGCCFL Congress). However, legislators should not inquire about session time, priority records, or other matters that they should be tracking themselves.
6. **Point of order.** Under no circumstances are legislators permitted to argue with the Presiding Officer; she was elected by the chamber and is entitled to make decisions within the rules. If there is an error that affects the rights of the chamber or its members, a correction may be offered using a point of order. The Presiding Officer will rule on the point of order and explain the reason for her decision. The Presiding Officer may consult with the judge before ruling.
7. **Appeal.** If a legislator is dissatisfied with the resolution of a point of order, he may appeal using the following procedure:
 - (a) A proper motion (“I appeal the decision of the Chair”) must be made and seconded. This motion may not be ruled dilatory or frivolous by the Presiding Officer; however, the judge may intervene if the motion is abusive.
 - (b) Although there is no debate, the legislator making the motion may state briefly the reason for the appeal, and the Presiding Officer may state briefly the reason for her decision.
 - (c) The vote is taken as follows: “Those voting to sustain the Presiding Officer . . . Those voting to overrule the Presiding Officer . . .” This is a majority question; a tie vote sustains the Presiding Officer’s decision. Once the vote has been taken and the results announced, the chamber’s decision is irrevocable and no further discussion is permitted on the matter.
8. **Comments to officials.** Legislators may not address the officials at any time during the session. If legislators have relevant questions regarding the conduct of business, those questions should be directed to the Presiding Officer on a point of order. The Presiding Officer may refer the question to an official if necessary.
9. **Evidence.** All evidence used in Student Congress is subject to verification. Legislators should be prepared to provide sources and/or complete source citations. Personal communications are not acceptable forms of evidence.

C. Rules Governing the Presiding Officer

1. **Election of Presiding Officer.** The Presiding Officer is elected by secret ballot, to be counted by the sitting Presiding Officer, the Temporary Presiding Officer, or the judge. The Presiding Officer may vote in a secret ballot election, but she must exercise that right with the rest of the chamber (that is, not just to break a tie). A majority (more than 50% of votes cast, including invalid votes) is required to win. If no candidate has a majority, one or more runoffs are to be conducted as follows:
 - (a) **Simple runoff.** The individual with the fewest votes is eliminated from contention and another vote is taken. If the individual with the third-lowest vote count has more votes than the bottom two candidates combined, both of the bottom two are eliminated.
 - (b) **Double runoff.** If no candidate has a majority and there is a tie for second place (e.g., the vote is 9-7-7), a runoff is conducted between the tied legislators. The candidate with fewer votes is eliminated, and another runoff is conducted. If there is a tie for a place lower than second, both candidates (and any with fewer votes) are eliminated from contention.
2. **Limitations on service.** A Presiding Officer may serve in only one session. The Presiding Officer must NEVER enter into debate but should be above it. Once elected, the Presiding Officer may not relinquish her position in order to participate in floor debate.
3. **Obligation to maintain debate.** The Presiding Officer is strictly charged with the responsibility to keep debate moving. She must rule dilatory (time-wasting) tactics *out of order*, subject to appeal. Additionally, she must refuse to recognize speakers who attempt to monopolize the floor, subject to appeal.
4. **Timing speeches.** The Presiding Officer shall time each speech and provide time signals by gaveling:
 - (a) When 2 minutes have elapsed, she shall gavel once.
 - (b) When 2 minutes and 30 seconds have elapsed, she shall gavel twice.
 - (c) When 3 minutes have elapsed, she shall gavel three times.
 - (d) If the speaker does not conclude immediately, the Presiding Officer shall gavel repeatedly and ask the speaker to relinquish the floor.Upon the conclusion of the speech, the Presiding Officer shall announce the speaker's time.
5. **Communication with the chamber.** All remarks made by the Presiding Officer to members must be made publicly. The Presiding Officer may not communicate with legislators by note or ask or allow legislators to approach for private discussion.

D. Laptops and Other Electronic Devices

1. **Laptops.** Contestants in Student Congress may use laptop computers and flash drives for evidence retrieval and notetaking. Only laptop computers and flash drives are permitted. Media players, telephones, and similar devices are prohibited.
2. **Assumption of risk.** THE CONTESTANT AND THE OWNER OF THE LAPTOP ASSUME ALL RISK OF EQUIPMENT FAILURE, DAMAGE, THEFT, OR LOSS.
3. **Search or examination.** Laptops and flash drives are subject to search or examination at the League's sole discretion. Contestants shall cooperate with the requests of the Tab Room.
4. **Power and external devices.** During the round, laptops must be operated on battery and without any external devices other than flash drives.
5. **Connectivity.** All wired and wireless connectivity devices (Ethernet, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, cellular, etc.) must be removed or disabled. Computers with built-in wireless capabilities must display an indicator (light or icon) of the capabilities' status. **VIOLATION OF THIS RULE SHALL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE TOURNAMENT.**
6. **Communication.** During the round, contestants may not access the Internet or other networks, including local networks. A completely self-contained web server process (e.g., Apache, IIS, Google Desktop) is permitted. **VIOLATION OF THIS RULE SHALL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE TOURNAMENT.**
7. **General treatment of laptops.** In all other respects, including sharing of resources and limitations on permitted materials, laptop computers shall be treated as the equivalent of physical files.
8. **Devices other than laptops.** Cell phones, media players, and other electronic devices must be turned off and put away during the session. However, the Presiding Officer may use an electronic device (other than a phone) for the sole purpose of keeping time. The judge may eject and the Tab Room may **DISQUALIFY** any person using a prohibited device or allowing such a device to disrupt business.

II. Parliamentary Procedure

A. Speaker Recognition

1. **Duration of speeches.** All speeches shall have a maximum length of three minutes. Speakers may not reserve any part of their time or yield time to another legislator, except in the case of a speaker recognized in error (see below).
2. **Procedure for recognition.** A legislator who wishes to speak on a bill or resolution must wait until the Presiding Officer calls for speakers before rising.
3. **Alternating sides.** Legislators may rise only to oppose the views of the previous speaker so that debate will alternate between affirmative and negative speeches. Only if no one wishes to oppose the previous speaker may the Presiding Officer recognize a speaker upholding the same side.
4. **Priority system.** Speaker priority for all speeches (except sponsorship/authorship speeches) shall be determined by the following method:
 - (a) **Number of speeches.** When multiple legislators rise for a speaking opportunity, the Presiding Officer shall, if possible, select a legislator who has not yet spoken. If all legislators seeking the floor have spoken, the Presiding Officer shall select the legislator who has given the fewest speeches.
 - (b) **Recency of last speech.** If there is a tie in number of speeches, the Presiding Officer shall select the legislator who gave her (his) most recent speech the longest time ago.
 - (c) **Presiding Officer's discretion.** When multiple legislators who have not yet spoken seek the floor, the Presiding Officer shall select one using a fair and consistent method that does not consider school affiliation.

A speaker recognized in error is entitled to the floor but may choose to yield the speaking opportunity to the legislator who should have been recognized. The Presiding Officer may not ignore priority to give special consideration to a legislator wrongly denied a speech.

5. **Sponsorship/authorship.** The first speech on a bill or resolution is called a sponsorship or authorship speech. This speech may be given by any legislator from the school that submitted the bill or resolution, regardless of priority, provided that the author or sponsor identifies himself when the agenda is set. If the sponsor or author of the legislation is serving as Presiding Officer, the item should be tabled or postponed until the next session.

If there is no same-school sponsor, any legislator may act as sponsor. In this case, the normal rules of priority apply. If no one wishes to act as the legislation's sponsor, the item should be laid on the table until a sponsor is available.

6. **Activities counted against priority.** Speaking on an item of legislation or an amendment to legislation counts as one speech. Serving as Presiding Officer counts as the first two speeches of the session. Questions and motions are not counted.

7. **Speech out of order.** A speech on the wrong side or topic is *out of order*. Should this occur, the Presiding Officer must gavel down the speaker and demand that the speaker immediately take his seat. The speech receives no points but still counts against priority.
8. **Priority records.** Priority accumulates over all sessions and may not be reset. The Presiding Officer shall maintain records of speeches and recency using the Official Seating Chart. It is the responsibility of each Presiding Officer to verify the priority records before the session begins.

B. Questioning Periods

1. **Questioning of sponsors/authors.** The sponsor/author of a bill or resolution must answer 2 minutes of questions following the sponsorship/authorship speech.
2. **Questioning of affirmative and negative speakers.** All other speakers, including the first negative, may respond to questions in the time remaining after the speech. For example, a speech 2 minutes and 40 seconds in length would be followed by a 20 second questioning period.
3. **Recognition of questioners.** The Presiding Officer controls the questioning period and recognizes all questioners. Although there is no formal priority system, a legislator who has already asked a question should not be recognized again in the same questioning period unless no one else seeks recognition or all legislators seeking recognition have asked a question.
4. **Procedures during questioning.** The questioner, upon being recognized, shall ask a one sentence question; questioners may not yield the floor to others. The speaker may either give a brief response or (except sponsors/authors) decline to answer.
 - (a) Questioners may include a preface within the one sentence question. No other prefacing is permitted.
 - (b) The speaker may request a clarification, and the questioner may briefly clarify. However, the Presiding Officer may disallow a clarification request if it appears to be dilatory or if time is running short.
 - (c) If time expires while a question is being asked, the questioner may complete the question, and the speaker may respond.
5. **Improper questions and responses.** The following types of questions and responses must be ruled *out of order*:
 - (a) Personal attacks against the speaker or others, including persons not present
 - (b) Questions that are irrelevant to the topic of debate
 - (c) Questions substantially similar to those already asked of the speaker
 - (d) Multiple-part questions or requests to ask them
 - (e) Extended prefacing or requests to preface

- (f) Cross-debate, in which the speaker engages the questioner (however, the speaker may use a rhetorical question)
 - (g) Excessive commentary or oration by the questioner or the speaker
6. **Extensions.** The chamber may suspend the rules to create or extend a questioning period (of a specified length) for a single speaker, provided that the speaker yields to additional questions. The questioning period may only be extended once per speech. The chamber may not suspend the rules either to create a fixed questioning period for all speakers or to eliminate all questioning periods.

Legislators are cautioned that cross-examination takes time that might otherwise be used for speeches; therefore, extending the questioning period is STRONGLY discouraged.

C. Parliamentary Motions

1. **Appropriate use of motions.** Parliamentary motions are an essential part of Student Congress and should be used as needed to conduct business. However, their consideration consumes time that might otherwise be used for speeches, so they should not be used unnecessarily.

There is a right way and a wrong way to speak in Student Congress. Studying this manual and *Robert's Rules of Order* and learning to state motions in proper language will help you contribute to a successful Congress.

2. **Procedure for recognition.** A legislator who wishes to make a motion may rise and seek recognition at any time, unless the floor is claimed by a speaker or a vote is in progress. If necessary, a legislator may attract the Presiding Officer's attention by saying "Madam (Mister) Speaker!"

Motions that permit interruption may be made at any time but are ***strongly discouraged*** during a speech or vote except in case of an emergency, a speech *out of order*, or a serious violation of the rules.

3. **Table of Parliamentary Motions.** The Table of Parliamentary Motions in Appendix A summarizes the rules governing motions in Student Congress, including the order of precedence.
4. **Order of precedence.** Motions may "stack" within the order of precedence. This means that motions of higher precedence are still in order while a motion of lower precedence is pending. Motions are disposed of from highest to lowest precedence.
5. **Dilatory and frivolous motions.** The Presiding Officer shall rule *out of order* any motions that are intended to waste time or that have no serious purpose. However, an appeal or a call for a division of the chamber **may not** be ruled *out of order* by the Presiding Officer—only by the judge.

6. **Debate of motions.** Motions classified as debatable may be discussed pro and con. Remarks on motions (other than amendments to legislation) are delivered from members' desks, shall not exceed 30 seconds, and do not count against priority. While a motion is being considered, discussion of the merits of the legislation is *out of order*. The vote on the motion is taken when debate is exhausted or when the chamber orders the previous question *on the motion*.
7. **Decision of the Chair.** The Presiding Officer has broad discretion in her decisions regarding motions upon which she is authorized to rule. Only in cases of serious error or abuse will the judge overrule the Presiding Officer.
8. **Minimum speech requirements.** There are no required speeches before legislation may be disposed of by the chamber. Debate need not end with a "completed cycle" or an even number of affirmative and negative speeches.
9. **Closing debate (previous question).** This motion, properly phrased "*I move the previous question,*" requires a second and a two-thirds vote of those PRESENT. Do not overwork this motion. It is proper to give legislators the opportunity to contribute new ideas to the debate. When debate becomes stale or repetitive, use of this motion is encouraged.

If no one wishes to speak on either side, the previous question is automatically ordered. No vote is required in this instance.

10. **Setting aside legislation.** Bills and resolutions may be laid on the table, referred to committee, or postponed to a specific time if debate is to resume later. These motions are most properly used to address specific business or to promote further study rather than to "kill" legislation. Legislation postponed to a specific time is taken up again as soon as possible after that time, once no other item of legislation is under consideration.
11. **Suspension of the rules.** A motion to suspend the rules must state a specific and limited purpose that is permitted by NCFL and FGCCFL rules. *Violation of this rule may result in penalties up to and including the disqualification of the chamber.*
12. **Start of session.** When returning from a recess, no motion is required to open the floor for debate. If an item was laid on the table at the close of the previous session, it is automatically taken from the table at the start of the next session unless a previously postponed item is scheduled for debate.
13. **Orders of the day.** A call for the orders of the day should be entertained by the Presiding Officer after 90 minutes of session time or as otherwise directed by the Tab Room. The motion shall not be granted until that time. The legislation on the floor is automatically laid on the table when the motion is granted.

In all but the last session, the chamber shall elect its next Presiding Officer, schedule agenda items if necessary, and recess (by motion) until the call of the next Presiding Officer. In the last session, the chamber shall conduct preferential voting and adjourn; the chamber should therefore recess (by motion) until the Tab Room delivers the final ballots.

D. Voting Procedures

1. **Standing vote.** A standing vote (or a show of hands, at the Presiding Officer's discretion) must be taken for the following questions:
 - (a) Passage of a bill or resolution
 - (b) Adoption of an amendment to legislation
 - (c) An appeal of the Presiding Officer's decision
 - (d) A question requiring a vote other than a simple majority
 - (e) A question on which a division of the chamber has been ordered
2. **Voice vote.** Voice votes may be taken **only** on procedural matters that require a simple majority. If two legislators call for a division of the chamber or the Presiding Officer cannot decide the outcome of a voice vote, a standing vote must be taken.
3. **Unanimous consent prohibited.** Unanimous consent is not approved by NCFL and must not be used. The Presiding Officer should take a voice vote instead.
4. **Majority questions.** Majority questions pass if there are more "aye" than "no" votes cast. Abstentions are taken on majority votes, but legislators are not obligated to vote. Absent, abstaining, and nonvoting legislators never affect the outcome and must not be counted as "no" votes.

A tie vote defeats the question. The Presiding Officer may vote whenever her vote will affect the outcome—either to break or create a tie.
5. **Supermajority questions.** Motions such as the previous question or suspension of the rules are based on the number of legislators PRESENT at the time of the vote (this is an NCFL rule and contradicts *Robert's*). The Presiding Officer only calls for "aye" votes on these questions; the question passes if and only if at least two-thirds of those PRESENT (excluding the Presiding Officer) vote "aye."
6. **Statement of the question and result.** Before a vote is taken, the Presiding Officer must state the question being considered and the vote required for passage. Once the vote has been taken, she shall state the outcome and effect of the vote.

E. Amending Process for Legislation

1. **Content of amendment.** An amendment may make *only one change* to the legislation (striking, adding, or substituting text) and must not alter the legislation's subject matter or intent.
2. **Format of amendment.** The amendment must be written following the format in Appendix B. It must include all of the following items:
 - (a) The name of the amendment's sponsor
 - (b) The title and sponsor of the bill or resolution to be amended
 - (c) The numbers of all lines affected by the amendment
 - (d) The amendment text
 - (e) Space for the judge's and Presiding Officer's notes
3. **Approval of judge.** The amendment must be submitted to the judge for approval before it may be brought to the floor.
4. **Motion and second.** The motion to amend may be made at any time following the authorship/sponsorship speech. If the judge has approved the amendment, the Presiding Officer reads the amendment to the chamber and calls for a second. One-third of the members PRESENT must vote to second; no negative vote is taken.
5. **Floor debate.** If the amendment receives the required second, it is brought to the floor. No speeches are required; the chamber may choose to order the previous question and vote on the amendment immediately.

Debate, if any, begins with a 3 minute affirmative speech, assigned according to the usual rules of priority. The author of the amendment is not automatically entitled to open debate. Debate continues pro and con until the amendment is approved, defeated, or set aside by appropriate procedure.
6. **Speeches on the legislation.** While an amendment is on the floor, debate is limited to the amendment. Speeches on the bill are *out of order* and should be cut off by the Presiding Officer. Such speeches receive no points but still count against priority.
7. **Motions on the legislation.** Remember that motions may "stack." This means that motions may apply either to the amendment alone or to both the amendment and the legislation as provided in *Robert's Rules of Order*. Therefore, the Presiding Officer should ask legislators to clarify the scope of their motions.
8. **Resumption of debate on legislation.** Once the previous question *on the amendment* has been ordered, the Presiding Officer shall conduct a vote on the adoption of the amendment. Following the vote, debate resumes on the legislation (if the amendment passed, on the legislation *as amended*) where it left off prior to the motion to amend.
9. **Amendments to amendments.** An amendment may be amended in the same manner as a bill or resolution. However, such an amendment may not itself be amended. Motions on the original amendment and the legislation are still in order.

III. Legislation and the Agenda

A. Legislation Structure and Content

1. **Bills.** All bills must be written in the *NCFL bill format* (example in Appendix C). This format requires five specific articles:
 - (a) **Article I** states the action to be taken. (NCFL bills do not contain “be it enacted” language.)
 - (b) **Article II** clarifies procedures and terminology from Article I; common terms should not be defined unless they are used in an unusual way. This Article may be written in sections (A, B, etc.) if it contains multiple provisions.
 - (c) **Article III** establishes the effective date, either as a fixed date, a number of days from passage, or immediately upon passage.
 - (d) **Article IV** identifies the implementing/enforcing agency and the method of enforcement (including penalties and funding as appropriate). As with Article II, this Article may be written in sections.
 - (e) **Article V** declares that all laws in conflict with the bill are null and void.
2. **Resolutions.** All resolutions must be written in the *NCFL simple resolution format* (example in Appendix D). This format requires at least one “whereas” clause (preferably at least three) to explain the basis for the resolution.
3. **Constitutional amendments.** Constitutional amendments are considered resolutions; as such, they are to be written in the *NCFL simple resolution format*. The resolution should specify that the amendment is to be submitted to the states (or conventions in the states) for ratification.
4. **Scope of legislation.** Because Student Congress chambers are national legislative bodies, bills must be implemented by agencies of the United States government. Any federalism concerns should be addressed in the bill. Because resolutions are statements of the chamber’s opinion and do not carry the force of law, they may address federal, state, local, international, or non-governmental entities.

B. Legislation Format and Formalities

1. **File format.** All legislation must be submitted in a native Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx).
2. **Formatting and length.** Legislation must be written in a 12 point Times New Roman font. The legislation must have 1 inch margins on all sides (except for line numbering). The bill or resolution text must be double-spaced. The maximum length, including title and signature block, is one letter-size page.
3. **Line numbering.** Every line of the bill or resolution text must be numbered using the word processor’s automatic line numbering feature (not “numbered list”).

4. **Descriptive title.** The legislation must have a descriptive title (identifying the position or actions to be taken) centered at the top of the page. The title shall be capitalized in accordance with the MLA rules for capitalization of titles.
5. **Signature block.** The legislation must contain, beneath the text, a single-spaced signature block consisting of the closing “Respectfully submitted,” a blank line, the author’s name, and the name of the sponsoring school.
6. **Legislation templates.** Templates that comply with all structure and format requirements are available on the FGCCFL website (www.fgccfl.org). *Use of these templates is STRONGLY encouraged.*

C. The Agenda

1. **Setting the agenda order.** During opening business, the chamber shall set an initial agenda order of at least eight bills and resolutions, including all items with a same-school sponsor, from the packet items and only these unless additional legislation is authorized in writing by the Tab Room. The order shall be determined using the following rules:
 - (a) Items with a same-school sponsor in the chamber have the first priority. The sponsor must identify himself during opening business to claim this privilege and may only claim the privilege for a single item. Sponsored legislation shall rotate among schools so that every school has the opportunity to present one item before any school presents a second item.
 - (b) After all sponsored items are placed on the agenda, other items may be added in any order. Sponsors will be determined by the priority system as the items come to the floor. **Any bill or resolution may be debated in any chamber.**
 - (c) Items not in the packet but authorized in writing by the Tab Room may be added to the agenda only after all packet items have been debated.
2. **Adding to the agenda.** When considering the orders of the day in all sessions but the last, the chamber shall add at least four items to the end of the agenda unless all items in the packet have been scheduled. Items authorized in writing by the Tab Room may be added to the agenda only after all packet items have been debated.
3. **Modifications prohibited.** The chamber may not suspend the rules to modify an agenda order already set, but once the order has been set, legislators may use motions e.g., to postpone or table legislation, to debate particular items without altering the agenda order.
4. **Additional legislation.** If a chamber has disposed of all repository items, the Tab Room will provide supplemental legislation to be debated. Items not in the packet may not be placed on the agenda unless authorized in writing by the Tab Room. *Violation of this rule may result in penalties up to and including the disqualification of the chamber.*

IV. Tournament Operations

A. Registration and Agendas

1. **Legislation quotas and deadline.** A school with Congress entries must submit at least one item of legislation for every two students, up to a maximum of three items; however, the League may waive either of these quotas. If the quota is not waived and more than three items are submitted, the items to be included in the packet will be selected by the League.

The full text of every item of legislation must be submitted as part of the school's registration. All deadlines that apply to registration of students also apply to submission of legislation unless otherwise specified. The League is not responsible for delays due to system errors or service failures.

2. **Late submissions.** At the discretion of the League, late or delayed submissions may be approved for debate. Such items are subject to the same review process as packet legislation. They may be considered only after all packet items are exhausted and may not be debated unless copies are available before the start of the tournament.
3. **Review of legislation.** The League shall have the authority to exclude from the agenda any piece of legislation that it deems frivolous or excessively stale or that is not substantially compliant with the requirements of Part III of this manual. The League shall have absolute discretion in such determinations.

The League may make simple corrections to the formatting of legislation but is not obligated to do so. Under no circumstances will the League correct errors in spelling, grammar, or substance.

4. **Number of chambers.** The number of chambers will be determined based on the number of entries at the registration deadline. Chambers shall have no more than 25 legislators. Chambers will not be split or combined on tournament day except in unusual circumstances.
5. **Sectioning.** Chamber assignments are determined by blind draw, with adjustments made to balance chamber size and school assignments. Requests that students be seated together or assigned to specific chambers will not be entertained.
6. **Assignments.** Chamber assignments will be made available at Saturday registration; however, the League may elect to release tentative assignments earlier in the week. Points and nominations are awarded only within the assigned chamber.
7. **Legislation packet.** The official legislation packet, will be posted at www.fgccfl.org and/or e-mailed to coaches on the Wednesday before the tournament. Legislators are expected to print a copy of the packet and bring it with them to the tournament. Copies will not be made at the tournament site.

B. Session Procedures

1. **Chamber designation.** Each chamber shall be considered a House of Representatives. Chambers operate independently of one another.

2. **Preliminary business.** Before the first session begins, the Temporary Presiding Officer (appointed by the Tab Room) shall pass the Attendance Record and Official Seating Chart, set the initial agenda (at least eight items from the packet, including all sponsored items), and conduct the election of the first session's Presiding Officer. The Attendance Record and one copy of the agenda must be sent to the Tab Room before floor debate begins.
3. **Presiding Officers.** Any legislator may be nominated to serve as Presiding Officer, and nominations may be declined. Once the floor has been closed to nominations, each candidate may give a brief statement of her credentials. The vote is taken by secret ballot and counted by the sitting Presiding Officer, the Temporary Presiding Officer, or the judge. The Presiding Officer is scored on a 12 point ballot with a minimum score of 6 points.
4. **Session length.** Unless otherwise directed by the Tab Room, each session will consist of 90 minutes of floor debate and the time necessary for the orders of the day. Recesses taken by the chamber do not stop the session clock unless ordered by the judge or the Tab Room.
5. **Judges.** One judge per chamber, per session, will be chosen from the Congress or IE judge pool or as otherwise directed by the Tab Room. The judge serves as both Scorer and Parliamentarian.

C. Nominations, Voting, and Awards

1. **Nomination of Best Legislator candidates.** At the close of a session's floor debate, the judge will nominate and rank (in secret) the six legislators who, in his opinion, contributed the most to the session. The judge may not nominate a student from his own school in the first position. Nominations are made blindly, that is, with no knowledge of previous nominees.

The Presiding Officer **is eligible** for nomination, and judges shall indicate on the nomination form whether the Presiding Officer was nominated.

2. **Conversion of nominations to credits.** The Tab Room shall convert nominations to credits as follows:

first preference = 6 credits	fourth preference = 3 credits
second preference = 5 credits	fifth preference = 2 credits
third preference = 4 credits	sixth preference = 1 credit

3. **Preferential ballot.** After the close of the third session, the Tab Room will prepare a preferential ballot listing the six legislators with the highest credit totals. If a tie occurs that results in more than six nominees, all tied legislators shall appear on the ballot unless doing so shall result in more than nine candidates.

In the event that ties must be broken to exclude students from a large ballot, the Tab Room will first eliminate the students preferred by the fewest judges, then the students with the lowest total rank reciprocals, then the students with the lowest total points for their best three speeches, until a ballot with no more than nine names has been created.

4. **Final voting.** Printed preferential ballots shall be distributed to the chambers. Legislators will rank the Best Legislator nominees and will separately rank the Presiding Officers. If either part of the ballot is improperly marked, neither part of the ballot will be counted.

Awards are determined by low total rank. Ties are broken as follows:

- (a) **Chamber's preference.** The candidate with the better rank on more preferential ballots prevails.
- (b) **Reciprocals.** The candidate with the highest total rank reciprocals prevails.
- (c) **Unbreakable ties.** Any ties remaining at this point shall be considered unbreakable, and all tied candidates shall receive the highest rank.

V. Rules and Modifications for Grand Finals

A. Registration and Agendas

1. **Legislation quotas and deadline.** Schools with one or two Congress entries must submit at least one item of legislation; schools with three or four entries must submit at least two items. Schools may submit as many items as they have entries. **The name of each item's presumptive sponsor should appear above the school name in the legislation's signature block.** Complete copies of legislation shall be submitted as directed by the League.

The full text of every item of legislation must be submitted as part of the school's registration. All deadlines that apply to registration of students also apply to submission of legislation unless otherwise specified. The League is not be responsible for delays due to system errors or service failures.

2. **Late submissions.** Late submissions shall not be approved for debate.
3. **Review of legislation.** The League shall have the authority to exclude from the agenda any piece of legislation that it deems frivolous or excessively stale, that is not substantially compliant with the requirements of Part III of this manual, or that is of inferior quality. The League may make simple corrections to the formatting of legislation or return legislation to schools for revisions; however, the League is not obligated to do so.
4. **Number of chambers.** The number of chambers shall be determined based on the number of entries at the drop deadline. Chambers shall have no more than 25 legislators. Chambers will not be split or combined once the Congress Packet has been published.
5. **Sectioning.** Chamber assignments shall be determined by blind draw with adjustments made to balance chamber size, agenda length and content, school assignments, and Presiding Officer candidates. Requests that students be seated together or assigned to specific chambers will not be entertained.

6. **Agenda.** The League will select two items of legislation from each school for the agenda. Additional items will be considered but are not guaranteed placement.
Each chamber's agenda will be preset by blind draw within tiers as follows:
 - (a) The Primary Agenda shall consist of items with a presumptive sponsor present, but no more than one item per school.
 - (b) The Secondary Agenda shall consist of all other items assigned to the chamber.
 - (c) The Supplemental Agenda shall consist of items from all other chambers.
7. **Candidates for Presiding Officer.** Coaches may declare no more than two of their students eligible to serve as Presiding Officer. Only students so identified are may serve at Grand Finals.
8. **Congress Packet.** The Congress Packet (chamber assignments, names of Presiding Officer candidates, seating charts, agendas, legislation full text, and Super Congress legislation or topics) will be posted online and/or e-mailed to coaches at least one week before the tournament. An effort will be made to post legislation in advance of the rest of the packet to provide more time for research.

B. Preliminary Session Procedures

1. **Preliminary business.** Preliminary business must be completed before the first session begins. The Parliamentarian will call the roll, administer the Oath of Office, finalize the agenda order, read any Tab Room messages, and conduct the Presiding Officer election for the first session.
2. **Presiding Officers.** Only those legislators identified as eligible to serve may be nominated for Presiding Officer. Nominations may be declined unless all eligible candidates have declined for the session. Once the floor has been closed to nominations, each candidate may give a brief statement of her credentials. The vote is taken by secret ballot and counted by the Parliamentarian.
3. **Agenda order.** The agenda order for the preliminary sessions shall be preset by the League and may not be modified unless a Primary Agenda item is without a sponsor, in which case the item shall be swapped with the school's Secondary Agenda item (if that item's sponsor is present) or dropped to the bottom of the Primary Agenda.

If the chamber's Primary and Secondary Agenda items have all been put to a final passage vote, the chamber shall consider the agenda of the other chambers in order, beginning with the chamber below and wrapping around to House A if necessary.
4. **Debate time limit.** The debate time limit for each item of legislation is determined by dividing the number of Primary Agenda items into the total time scheduled for floor debate. The time limit may not be extended, but the chamber need not consider an item for the entire time allotted. At the expiration of debate time, the previous question is automatically ordered without a vote.

5. **Session length.** Unless otherwise directed by the Tab Room, each session will consist of 90 minutes of floor debate and the time necessary for the orders of the day. Recesses taken by the chamber do not stop the session clock unless ordered by the Parliamentarian or the Tab Room.
6. **Officials.** Each chamber will have two Scorers and one Parliamentarian per session.
 - (a) **Scorers.** The Scorers shall evaluate speeches; however, they do not score the Presiding Officer or make procedural rulings. Scorers are chosen from the Congress judge pool; should this prove unworkable, Scorers may be chosen from any pool. Scorers will be assigned to one or two sessions on either Friday night or Saturday morning.
 - (b) **Parliamentarians.** The Parliamentarian shall evaluate the Presiding Officer and shall make any procedural rulings required during the session. At Grand Finals, the Parliamentarian shall be considered the “judge” as that term is used elsewhere in this manual. The pool of Parliamentarians shall include coaches and other highly qualified judges, including former competitors who meet the League’s eligibility requirements. Parliamentarians are tournament officials and may be asked to serve in any or all sessions.

C. Selection for Super Congress

1. **Size of Super Congress.** The size of the Super Congress and number advancing from each chamber shall be determined by the number of preliminary chambers:
 - (a) **One Preliminary Chamber:** 12 students
 - (b) **Two Preliminary Chambers:** 24 students – 12 from each chamber
 - (c) **Three Preliminary Chambers:** 24 students – 8 from each chamber
 - (d) **Four Preliminary Chambers:** 24 students – 6 from each chamber
2. **Nomination of Best Legislator candidates.** At the close of the session’s floor debate, each official will nominate and rank (independently and in secret) the six legislators who, in his opinion, contributed the most to the session. An official may not nominate a student from his own school in the first position. Nominations are made blindly, that is, with no knowledge of previous nominees.

The Presiding Officer **is eligible** for nomination, and officials shall indicate on the nomination form whether the Presiding Officer was nominated.
3. **Conversion of nominations to credits.** The Tab Room shall convert nominations to credits as follows:

first preference = 6 credits	fourth preference = 3 credits
second preference = 5 credits	fifth preference = 2 credits
third preference = 4 credits	sixth preference = 1 credit
4. **Advancing to Super Congress.** The legislators in each chamber with the highest cumulative credit totals shall advance to the Super Congress.

In the event that ties must be broken, the Tab Room will first eliminate the students preferred by the fewest judges, then the students with the lowest total rank reciprocals, then the students with the lowest total for their best three speeches, until the prescribed number of qualifiers has been reached.

D. Super Congress Procedures

1. **Session length.** The Super Congress will consist of two 90-minute sessions of floor debate (designated Sessions V and VI) and the time necessary for the orders of the day. There shall be a brief closed chamber recess between sessions to allow a change of officials, during which the clock shall stop. Other recesses shall not stop the session clock unless requested by the Parliamentarian or the Tab Room.
2. **Agenda.** All legislation in the Super Congress will be produced by the League. The agenda shall consist of no fewer than six and no more than eight items representing domestic, foreign, and economic topics. The legislation shall be published in the Congress Packet. The agenda order shall be set by the chamber before the start of Session V. Once set, the agenda order may not be modified. Sponsors will be chosen based upon the rules of priority.
3. **Debate time limit.** The debate time limit for the Super Congress shall be 30 minutes per item of legislation. The time limit may not be extended, but the chamber need not consider an item for the entire time allotted. At the expiration of debate time, the previous question is automatically ordered without a vote.
4. **Presiding Officers.** The League will select Presiding Officer candidates from among the members of the Super Congress. Students will elect a Presiding Officer for each session. Service as Presiding Officer shall count as the first speech of the session and shall be scored by the Parliamentarian on a 12 point ballot with a minimum score of 6 points.
5. **Speaker priority.** When recognizing speakers from among those who have not yet spoken, the Presiding Officers shall select speakers using the method specified by the League at the start of Session V. Priority does not reset between sessions.
6. **Officials.** Each session of Super Congress will have two Scorers and a Parliamentarian. Scorers may be chosen from any judge pool and, if possible, will be selected from schools without advancing Congress participants. The Parliamentarian will be a highly qualified coach or former national qualifier at least one year out of competition. Although different Scorers will judge each session, the same Parliamentarian will evaluate both sessions.

E. National Qualifying

1. **Nomination of potential qualifiers.** At the close of each session, each Scorer will nominate and rank (independently and in secret) the eight legislators who, in his opinion, contributed the most to the session. At the end of the second session, the Parliamentarian will nominate and rank (independently and in secret) the eight legislators who, in his opinion, contributed the most to the two sessions taken together. The Presiding Officers **are eligible** for nomination. Officials may not nominate students from their own schools in the first position.
2. **Selection for final ballot.** The Tab Room shall convert nominations to credits as follows:

first preference = 8 credits	fifth preference = 4 credits
second preference = 7 credits	sixth preference = 3 credits
third preference = 6 credits	seventh preference = 2 credits
fourth preference = 5 credits	eighth preference = 1 credit

The eight legislators with the highest total credits will appear on the final ballot. In the event of a tie, all tied legislators will appear on the ballot, to a maximum of 12. If a tie must be broken, the plurality preference of the officials shall prevail, with the Parliamentarian's choice breaking any remaining tie.

3. **Qualifying by nominations.** A legislator who appears as the first or second preference on at least four officials' ballots shall automatically qualify for Grand Nationals. Up to a maximum of two legislators may qualify in this manner. The legislators' names shall still appear on the preferential ballot.
4. **Preferential voting.** Legislators will rank the candidates and record their ranks in the appropriate spaces on the ballot. A ballot that is improperly completed will not be counted. The six best performers on the final ballot (including any selected by nominations) will qualify for Grand Nationals; the seventh- and eighth-place students will be the first and second alternates respectively. Ties for sixth, seventh, or eighth place will be broken using the final ballot selection and tiebreaking criteria described above.

Appendices

Appendix A – Table of Parliamentary Motions (adapted for use in FGCCFL Student Congress)

Name of Motion	Purpose of Motion	Interrupt	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Privileged Motions						
Fix time for reassembling	To arrange time of next meeting	Yes	Yes	Time	Time	Majority
Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	No	Yes	No	Time	Majority
Recess	To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time	No	Yes	Yes	Time	Majority
Point of personal privilege	To make a personal request during debate	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
Call for the orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed motion	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
Incidental Motions (these motions have no order of precedence among themselves)						
Appeal a decision of the Chair*	To reverse a decision	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Point of order	To correct a procedural error or ask a question	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	Yes	No	No	No	None
Object to consideration*	To suppress action	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Divide a motion	To consider its parts separately	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Modify/withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	No	Majority
Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Subsidiary Motions						
Rescind*	To repeal previous action	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3
Reconsider*	To consider a defeated motion again	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Take from the table	To consider tabled motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Lay on the table	To defer action	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Previous question	To force an immediate vote	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend debate	To modify freedom of debate	No	Yes	Yes	Time	2/3
Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to a committee	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend an amendment*	To modify an amendment	No	1/3	Yes	No	Majority
Amend*	To modify a motion	No	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Main motion	To introduce business	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

* Special rules apply; consult this manual or *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* for information.

Appendices

Appendix B – Amendment Form

Amendment

Author of Amendment _____

Title of B/R Being Amended _____

Sponsor of B/R Being Amended _____

Line Numbers Affected _____

Amendment Text

Judge/Parliamentarian

The amendment is (check one) ___ approved ___ not approved (explain below)

Presiding Officer

Second (1/3 required): ___ yes ___ no

Final outcome: ___ adopted ___ defeated ___ tabled

Appendices

Appendix C – NCFL Format Bill

A Bill to Exclude Illegal Immigrants from the 2020 Census

1 **Article I:** Persons not residing in the United States lawfully shall be excluded from the 2020
2 Census of Population and Housing.

3 **Article II:** A. The Bureau of the Census shall add to all census questionnaires a question
4 about lawful citizenship or residency and shall use individuals' responses as the
5 basis for inclusion or exclusion.

6 B. This bill shall not affect the Census confidentiality rules that prohibit
7 disclosure of responses to authorities.

8 **Article III:** The provisions of this bill shall take effect on October 1, 2011.

9 **Article IV:** The Department of Commerce shall be responsible for enforcing the provisions of
10 this bill. The penalty for making a false response to the citizenship or residency
11 question shall be a fine of \$500.

12 **Article V:** All laws in conflict with the provisions of this bill shall be declared null and void.

Respectfully submitted,

Bennett High School

Appendices

Appendix D – NCFL Format Simple Resolution

A Resolution to Exclude Illegal Immigrants from the Census

- 1 **Whereas:** The Constitution requires that representation in the House of Representatives be
2 based on a census taken every ten years; and
- 3 **Whereas:** The current policy of the Census Bureau is to count all persons, whether present
4 in the county legally or illegally; and
- 5 **Whereas:** The effect of this policy is that states with large illegal immigrant populations get
6 undue representation in the House.
- 7 **Therefore:** Be it resolved by this Student Congress here assembled that illegal immigrants be
8 excluded from the Census.

Respectfully submitted,

Zion Academy