DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING STUDENT CONGRESS BILLS

The ACTAA Student Congress, composed of high school, college and university students, is not a legislative body; rather a body which deals with resolutions. These resolutions are directed to a designated legislative body, i.e. the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, or the Congress of the United States, and are offered for debate and action. However, because the subjects offered for debate and action are controversial, and thereby differ from subjects handled in most resolutions, we choose to call the Student Congress resolutions “bills”.

A sample resolution (bill) is included. Please read the explanations for each part of the sample bill (provided below), and read the enclosed sample bill carefully. THIS FORM MUST BE FOLLOWED IF A BILL IS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE BILL BOOK.

TOPIC

- Should be significant.
- Must have a clearly defined scope, either state or national.

THE BILL

- The topic and wording must be original. This means it is not a repeat of a former bill and the legislation that you are requesting would make a change in the current system.
- Must fit on one 8½ x 11 page, using no smaller than 12 point font.
- Must be prima facia.
- Must be well researched.
- Should be progressive, a positive step for humanity.
- Must give a workable feasible solution to the problem.

PARTS OF THE BILL

REFERRAL INFORMATION (Heading)

Bill Number: The bill number is to be filled out by the Congress Director; please leave this blank on your bill.

Bill Introduced By: The name of the person(s) who wrote the bill. No bill may have more than two authors. A student may not be the author or co-author of more than one bill. Co-authors must be assigned to the same House.

Representing: The name of the author’s school, college, university.

Assigned to Committee: The committee which will debate the bill. The committee assignment will be made by the Congress Director; please leave this blank on your bill.

Time Approved by Committee and Name of Chairperson: Should be filled out by the chairperson of the committee after the committee has acted on the bill. When all bills assigned to a committee have been acted upon, the bills given a “do pass” must be prioritized and sent to the Congress Director with any amendments attached. Bills that are “killed” in committee should be so designated and should be retained by the committee clerk and a notation to the effect that the bill “failed to pass” on a given date and time.
SHORT TITLE

The short title, IN CAPITALS, should seldom exceed two lines and should only include two items:

1. The legislative body to which the resolution is directed, i.e. the **General Assembly of the State of Arkansas** (state and local matters), or the **Congress of the United States** (national matters).
2. A brief summary of the subject of the bill

WHEREAS CLAUSES

The whereas clauses are considered statements of the problem for which the legislative action is suggested. The whereas clauses should establish that there is a significant problem and a clear need for reform. Each phrase of the problem must have a whereas clause properly spaced as shown on the sample bill. The whereas clauses **CANNOT BE AMENDED**. Authors and proponents of the bill are obligated to prove the allegations set forth in the whereas clauses, as well as the existence and the extent of the problem, and provide proof through material offered in affirmative and negative debate.

RESOLVING CLAUSES (Sections)

The resolving position of the bill must begin, in capitals, **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** BY THE 2002 STUDENT CONGRESS THAT................. Resolving clauses encompass suggested solutions to the problem (such as who, what, when, how, enforcement). Each phase of the solution must have a separate section. The number of the section and their order may vary. Any part of the resolving clauses may be amended, either in committee or on the floor, and numbering the lines is for the purpose of facilitating the amending process. Each section is designated by capitals and Roman numerals and the lines are designated by Arabic numerals. The first line in each section is not given Arabic numeral “1”, therefore the line on which the section number is given is line one in that particular section (see sample bill).

ACTION DATA

Action data at the bottom of each bill provides a uniform procedure for verification of the final action on a bill. The **Originating House** means where the bill was introduced (House I, House II, Senate) what happened there and the time. The blanks are filled out and signed by the clerk of the originating house. If the bill passes in the originating house, it is then sent to one of the other bodies. Any bill passing two bodies become a “Law of Congress” and is forwarded to the Arkansas delegation in Washington D. C. or to the General Assembly in Little Rock. The Congress Director is charged with the responsibility of sending the resolutions to the proper legislative body; however the clerk of the second body passing the bill must send the bill to the Congress Director.
REMINDERS:

☐ All bills are limited to one letter-sized page, must be at least 12 point font, must follow the above guidelines, and must follow the form of the enclosed sample bill.

☐ Spacing and margins do not have to be identical to the sample bill, but please be sure that your bill is clear and easy to read.

☐ There is also a “Sample Worksheet for Student Congress Bills” that may be helpful for coaches to duplicate for student use.
DRAFT WORKSHEET FOR A STUDENT CONGRESS BILL

Note to Student Congress Delegations: This worksheet may be used to help generate ideas for your bill and help you arrange your ideas in the right areas. Your ideas may require more or less space than what is provided in this example. This is only a “draft” of your bill. This worksheet does not include the “referral” portion of a Student Congress Bill. Refer to the “Sample Bill” and “Direction for Writing a Student Congress Bill” for further guidelines before typing the final copy of your bill.

Short Title:

A BILL RECOMMENDING TO THE ___________________________________________ THAT
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Whereas Clauses:

(What is the significance of the problem?)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(What harms are being done? What indicators show a need for change?)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(Why cannot the present system correct itself? What laws, attitudes, or lack of legislation prevent improvement?)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
(Describe how your proposed solution will eliminate the harms.)

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

(page two – “Draft Worksheet for a Student Congress Bill”)

Sections:

Section I.  BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE 2011 STUDENT CONGRESS THAT THE
(Who?)_____________________________________

(Should do what, how?)_______________________________________

2.  ______________________________________________________
3.  ______________________________________________________
4.  ______________________________________________________
5.  ______________________________________________________

Section II.  (When will the act be implemented and who will administer it?)_____

2.  ______________________________________________________
3.  ______________________________________________________
4.  ______________________________________________________

Section III.  (Who will enforce the act?  What are the penalties for non-compliance?)

2.  ______________________________________________________
3.  ______________________________________________________
4.  ______________________________________________________

Section IV  (Cost and funding sources.) ____________________________

2.  ______________________________________________________
3.  ______________________________________________________
4.  ______________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Failed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action of Originating House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of the Clerk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action of Second House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of the Clerk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Please note that your bill may have fewer or more sections depending on the content of your bill. This worksheet is set up to go along with the organization of the “Sample Bill.” If you choose to present a different number of sections, or do them in a different order, be sure that your bill is complete and logical.