



National Model U.S. Congress

How to Write a Bill

What is a National Model Congress bill?

Bill writing is a major component of our legislative process. It serves to create, amend, or abolish laws. Bills at model congress are written by students (delegates). All bills are compiled and printed in a bill book. Every delegate will receive a bill book. Bills will be debated in house and senate committees. Favorable bills will be sent to the chamber leadership for debate on the floor during full sessions.

Step 1: Bill Idea

It all starts with an idea, a simple concept. You take that idea to your representative or senator because you see a need, you have a cause, and you want it to become a law. Anyone, such as the President, lobbyist, citizens, etc. can write up or draft a bill but only a member of Congress can introduce it. There are several types of legislation in the federal government, each of which has a specific purpose. Congress considers a bill, resolutions, joint resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and private bills. Many laws are already in existence, but these laws can be amended for further improvement. Your idea for a bill must be for either a law that does not yet exist, or an amendment to an existing law. You will need to do some RESEARCH. In the box below, write down your ideas for a law, that would improve the lives of the citizens of the United States of America. Some topics for ideas are:

1. Education
2. Health Care
3. Defense/Security
4. Income Taxes
5. Equality/Civil Rights
6. Employment
7. Immigration
8. National Debt/Budget

What are some topics that are important to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Use these questions to help you generate more ideas.

1. What conditions exist in the education system that make it difficult for you to get the best education?
2. What would be the pros/cons of raising minimum wage?
3. Are there enough employment opportunities for your family?
4. Does your family have health care?
5. What can be done to balance the U.S. budget and pay down the national debt?

Now, formulate your idea for a bill: _____

Research tools:

1. Go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/> for existing bills already exists and may just need to be amended.
2. Research your district demographics and talk to your constituents.
3. Review existing legislation under consideration: <https://congress.gov/>

Step 2: Draft Your Bill

Writing Your Bill

Now you draft your bill. You can work as a team with your campus delegation or you can work alone. Collaborate, research, and have fun.

The bill should include:

1. Bill # and committee referral (assigned by staff or in committee)
2. Bill/Resolution Summary
3. Begin with “*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*”
4. Body of the Bill

Bill # and committee referral: The bill # and any committee the bill has been referred to will be expressed here. I.E. “Mr./Mrs. XYZ_(for him/herself and any cosponsor) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

Bill/Resolution Summary: a brief summary of “what” your bill/resolution will do. I.E. “To amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to apply the provisions of the Act to certain Congressional staff and members of the executive branch.”

Bill/Resolution Summary: _____

Title: The subject of the bill should be briefly expressed in the title.

Title: _____

Author/Sponsor: Author/Sponsor can be the bill author or the person sponsoring the bill. They don’t have to be one in the same. Write your bill sponsor below.

Sponsor: _____

Enacting Clause: The enacting clause was prescribed by law in 1871 and is identical in all bills, whether they originate in the House of Representatives or in the Senate. “Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.” Nothing else is needed on this line.

Body of the Bill: The body of the bill specifies how the bill will fulfill the requirements you wrote in your “act related to, summary, and title”. These specifications are separated into **sections**. Your sections should include at least:

- Existing statutes/Change/addition(underlined)/deletion(~~striketrough~~)/repealing of existing laws
- Definitions of terms used in the bill if necessary
- Actions such as funding, enforcement, penalty
- An effective date

Summary: Provide a brief summary of your bill and its intended actions if passed.

Now it's time to draft your bill. Attached is a National Model Congress bill template. Write your draft in the spaces provided. Use only the number of sections you need.

114TH CONGRESS **S #**
1ST SESSION

[Bill/Resolution Summary]

IN THE [LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER]

Date

[BILL AUTHOR/SPONSOR] introduced the following bill; which was referred to the [NAME OF COMMITTEE]

A BILL

[Bill/Resolution Summary (repeated)]

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of*
2 *America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “[TITLE OF ACT/BILL].

5

6 **SECTION 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE**

7 (A) FINDINGS. –

8 (B) PURPOSE. –

9 **SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE**

10

Step 3. Saving As and Submitting a Bill

Your bill is complete! Before submitting your bill, make sure to check spelling and grammar. A sloppy bill will reflect poorly on the author.

Save your bill in Microsoft 2003 or greater format (.doc/.docx)!!! This is vital to making sure your bill receives corrections and is sent back to you in a timely manner. Please Title your bill to match the inside of the document. If your Bill Title is “XYZ” Then your Document should be named “XYZ”. After you have correctly saved the document, [fill out the bill submission form](#), and submit your bill.

Step 4. Drafting Process

We will then go through a drafting process, where we will make sure your bill follows our guidelines and make sure there is no overlap between the bills we have already received and your bill. We will also correct spelling errors, misrepresented statutes and assign a Committee and Bill Number to your bill. *We will not change anything substantial in your bill! We will only clarify it if necessary.* Upon finishing your draft bill, we will either accept it as it is if it only has minor corrections, or we will send it back to you for correcting. This process can take a while, so please remember to have patience. Once your bill is submitted, you must have research to back your law; this is a perfect time to research.

Step 5. Resubmitting your Bill

Once you have finished our corrections, please resubmit your bill on our website and we will be in touch with you with either more corrections, or a letter of bill acceptance.

