

# Senate Committee

## Letter from the Chair

Hello everyone, and welcome to the second annual Island Model United Nations Conference! We're delighted that you decided to join us here at Encinal High School on October 25, 2025.

My name is Ryan, and I'm honored to serve as your Head Chair for this year's Senate committee. I'm currently a junior at Encinal, and this is my third year participating in MUN. Outside of school, I enjoy running track and field, listening to music, and occasionally playing video games with friends.

In this fast-paced committee, you'll be challenged to think creatively, work collaboratively, and take on leadership roles. While the Senate requires flexibility and cooperation, it's also an amazing space to build your confidence and improve your public speaking and critical thinking skills. Remember, the goal of our committee is not to reenact a historical event, but instead to imagine a different reality and learn from it.

At Island MUN, we prioritize learning and personal growth. If you ever feel unsure or have questions as you prepare, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at [ryanchen123s@gmail.com](mailto:ryanchen123s@gmail.com). We're here to help and support you.

Best Wishes,

*Ryan Chen*

"Liberty, once lost, is lost forever." - John Adams.

## Committee Introduction

The U.S. Senate Committee at Island MUN is meant to simulate the American legislative branch. You will represent senators from both major parties and from a variety of states, each with their own unique political cultures and priorities. This committee follows standing Senate procedures: recognition by the Chair, the amendment process, and roll-call votes.

Over the course of the committee, you will draft, amend, and vote on three highly debated bills. Our goal is to experience the full arc of policymaking: from dissecting background reports and caucusing with fellow senators to building alliances and writing final amendments.

## Topic Synopsis

In today's rapidly changing society, senators face high-stakes challenges that test the nation's commitments to modernization, equity, and self-determination. This committee will tackle:

1. Bill A: Women in the Draft
  - a. Right now, only men register for the draft. Should women be included? What would that mean for fairness, military readiness, and how families plan their lives?
2. Bill B: National High Speed Rail

Remember to ask yourself questions that may help you develop a better argument. What does the Constitution allow? What are the consequences of bills that pass not just now, but also in the future?

## Committee Definitions and Acronyms:

There will be a few differences from the traditional MUN conference within this committee to provide a more immersive experience.

1. In this committee unmods will be renamed to **recess**

## Senators:

This section provides a quick overview of your senator. Most of the research should be done by yourselves.

### Democratic Senators

#### **Cory Booker** – New Jersey

Cory Booker has served as the senior United States Senator from New Jersey since 2013, becoming the first African American to represent the state in the U.S. Senate. He is known for advocating criminal justice reform, affordable healthcare, and environmental protection.

#### **Tammy Baldwin** – Wisconsin

Tammy Suzanne Green Baldwin has served as the junior United States senator from Wisconsin since 2013. As a member of the Democratic Party, she has also served as the secretary of the Senate Democratic Caucus since 2017.

#### **Alex Padilla** – California

Alex Padilla has served as the junior United States Senator from California since 2021, becoming the first Latino to represent the state in the U.S. Senate. Though he was first appointed to fill Vice President Kamala Harris's vacant seat, he has since become a strong advocate for immigration reform, voting rights, climate action, and equitable access to education and healthcare.

#### **John Fetterman** – Pennsylvania

John Fetterman has served as the junior United States Senator from Pennsylvania since 2023. Known for his plainspoken, working-class appeal and unconventional style, Fetterman rose to prominence as the former Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania and mayor of Braddock. In the

Senate, he has focused on issues like labor rights, mental health care, infrastructure investment, and revitalizing struggling industrial communities.

**Mazie Hirono – Hawaii**

Mazie Keiko Hirono has served as the junior United States senator from Hawaii since 2013. A member of the Democratic Party, Hirono previously served as a member of the United States House of Representatives for Hawaii's 2nd congressional district from 2007 to 2013.

**Amy Klobuchar – Minnesota**

Amy Klobuchar has served as the senior U.S. Senator from Minnesota since 2007 and was the first woman elected to represent the state in the Senate. Known for her bipartisan approach, she has focused on infrastructure, antitrust reform, and expanding rural broadband access. Klobuchar is widely recognized for her pragmatic leadership and commitment to Midwestern priorities.

**Jon Ossoff – Georgia**

Jon Ossoff has served as a U.S. Senator from Georgia since January 2021 and is the youngest millennial ever elected to the Senate. He has focused on infrastructure and clean energy investment in Georgia, expanding broadband access, ports, rail, and road development through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Ossoff is also known for championing voting rights and anti-corruption reforms, including fielding bipartisan legislation to ban corporate PACs and prohibit stock trading by members of Congress.

**Kirsten Gillibrand – New York**

Kirsten Gillibrand has served as a U.S. Senator from New York since 2009 and was the second woman to hold that seat. She is especially known for her leadership on military justice reform, working to remove sexual assault cases from the military chain of command and improve support for survivors. Gillibrand has also prioritized affordable health care, paid family leave, equal pay, and economic opportunity for working families.

### **Michael Bennet – Colorado**

Michael Farrand Bennet is an American attorney, businessman, and politician serving as the senior United States senator from Colorado, a seat he has held since 2009. A member of the Democratic Party, he was appointed to the seat when Senator Ken Salazar became Secretary of the Interior.

### **Catherine Cortez Masto – Nevada**

Catherine Marie Cortez Masto is an American lawyer and politician serving as the senior United States senator from Nevada, a seat she has held since 2017. A member of the Democratic Party, Cortez Masto served as the 32nd attorney general of Nevada from 2007 to 2015.

### **Bernie Sanders (I) – Vermont**

Bernie Sanders has served as the junior United States Senator from Vermont since 2007 and is the longest-serving Independent in U.S. congressional history. He's known for his progressive platform, and has confronted issues such as universal healthcare, income inequality, campaign finance reform, and workers' rights. Though he's Independent, he caucuses with the Democratic Party and has played a significant role in shaping its progressive agenda.

### **Chris Van Hollen – Maryland**

Christopher Van Hollen Jr. is an American attorney and politician serving as the senior United States senator from Maryland, a seat he has held since 2017.

### **Elizabeth Warren – Massachusetts**

Elizabeth Ann Warren is an American politician and former law professor who is the senior United States senator from the state of Massachusetts, serving since 2013.

### **Mark Kelley – Arizona**

Mark Edward Kelly is an American politician, retired astronaut, and former naval officer serving as the senior United States senator from Arizona, a seat he has held since 2020.

## **Republican Senators**

### **Tom Cotton – Arkansas**

Tom Cotton has represented Arkansas in the U.S. Senate since 2015. A former Army officer and Harvard Law graduate, Cotton is focused on national defense, strong border security, and conservative economic policies. He is known for his hawkish views on China and Iran, advocacy for tougher immigration enforcement, and support for law-and-order legislation.

### **Marsha Blackburn – Tennessee**

Marsha Blackburn has represented Tennessee in the U.S. Senate since 2019 and is the first woman ever elected to that seat. She is known for her strong support of military and veterans' policies, including leading the repeal of the Department of Defense's COVID-19 vaccine mandate. Blackburn focuses on conservative priorities such as border security, economic growth, and cultural issues, and she also champions policies related to technology, human trafficking prevention, and law enforcement protections.

### **Susan Collins – Maine**

Susan Collins has represented Maine in the Senate since 1997 and is known for her centrist, independent style. She has played key roles in passing bipartisan legislation, including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and recent gun safety reforms. Collins continues to advocate for fisheries sustainability, rural economic development, and pragmatic governance.

### **Josh Hawley – Missouri**

Josh Hawley has served Missouri in the Senate since 2019 and offers a populist conservative voice focused on manufacturing jobs, worker protections, and anti-monopoly legislation. He supports stricter regulation of major tech platforms and trade policies that prioritize American

labor. Hawley stresses sovereignty, family values, and a cultural conservatism rooted in working-class concerns.

**Tim Scott** – South Carolina

Tim Scott has represented South Carolina since 2013 and emphasizes economic empowerment, faith-based initiatives, and community-focused policies. He co-authored the Opportunity Zones provision in the 2017 tax reform law, promoting investment in under-resourced neighborhoods. Scott also advocates for police reform measures and school choice as pathways to upward mobility.

**Cindy Hyde-Smith** – Mississippi

Cindy Hyde-Smith has represented Mississippi since 2018 and champions agricultural interests, rural infrastructure, and Second Amendment rights. She draws on her background in state politics to advocate for crop insurance, farm subsidies, and improved access to rural healthcare. Hyde-Smith often emphasizes traditional values and limited federal regulation.

**Lisa Murkowski** – Alaska

Lisa Murkowski has represented Alaska since 2002 and is known for her moderate, bipartisan approach. She frequently crosses party lines, especially on energy, environmental stewardship, and reproductive rights. Murkowski played a major role in expanding broadband and clean water infrastructure in remote Alaskan communities.

**Mitt Romney** – Utah

Mitt Romney has served Utah in the Senate since 2019. A former governor and presidential nominee, he supports fiscal conservatism, market-based solutions to climate change like carbon dividends, and constitutional principles. Romney often votes independently and emphasizes disciplined governance alongside pragmatic policy proposals.

**Deb Fischer** – Nebraska



Deb Fischer has represented Nebraska since 2013 and places high importance on defense readiness, agricultural policy, and rural development. She serves on the Armed Services Committee, where she supports nuclear triad modernization and military family quality-of-life improvements. Fischer also backs ethanol incentives and rural broadband expansion.

**Ted Cruz – Texas**

Ted Cruz has served as a Senator from Texas since 2013 and is known for his constitutional conservative stance and advocacy for limited federal government. He champions strong border enforcement, judicial restraint, and reductions in federal spending. Cruz is vocal on energy independence, religious liberty, and pro-business policy.

**Rick Scott – Florida**

Rick Scott has represented Florida since 2019 and promotes conservative fiscal policies, including lowered taxes and reduced federal deficits. He is also focused on issues affecting retirees and veterans, and has prioritized disaster resilience and coastal protection—critical concerns for Florida. Scott often leads the Senate’s Republican Policy Committee, shaping party strategy.

**Mike Lee – Utah**

Mike Lee has served Utah in the Senate since 2011. He is known for his constitutional conservative approach, emphasizing limited government, judicial restraint, and adherence to the Constitution. Lee advocates for tax reform, privacy rights, and checks on federal power.

**Tommy Tuberville – Alabama**

Tommy Tuberville has represented Alabama in the Senate since 2021 and is a former college football coach. He is known for conservative views on education, economic policy, and register-based Syrian refugee restrictions. Tuberville has drawn attention by blocking Pentagon promotions to protest military abortion policy, reflecting his emphasis on social and religious values.

## **John Kennedy – Louisiana**

John Kennedy has served Louisiana in the Senate since 2017. A former state treasurer and attorney general, he stands out for his conservative fiscal positions, support for agriculture and energy industries, and direct rhetorical style. Kennedy often speaks out on budget discipline, tax reform, and Gulf Coast disaster preparedness.

## **Mike Crapo – Idaho**

Mike Crapo has represented Idaho since 1999. He serves on the Banking, Finance, and Tax committees and is a strong advocate for rural economic development, energy independence, and fiscal conservatism. Crapo consistently supports balanced budgets, agricultural funding, and policies to enhance Idaho's water and land stewardship.

## **Bill A: Women in the Draft**



### **Key Vocabulary and Acronyms:**

**Conscription:** compulsory enlistment for state service, typically into the armed forces.

**Selective Service System (SSS):** A U.S. government agency that keeps a database of individuals who could be called up for military service if a draft is ever reinstated. It's not an active draft,

but a standby system that would be used only if the all-volunteer military can't meet the country's defense needs during a national emergency.

**VAWA – Violence Against Women Act:** A federal law first passed in 1994 that provides funding and legal protections to prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Although not directly related to the draft, VAWA is often referenced in broader discussions about gender equity and women's treatment under federal law.

### Topic Background:

The United States has historically required only men to register for the Selective Service. Currently, all male citizens and residents between the ages of 18 and 25 must register, while women do not. Women currently serve in the military on a voluntary basis. This male-only draft policy has been in place since the creation of the Selective Service System during World War I. However, as the role of women in the military has expanded over the past century, the question of whether women should also be required to register has come up multiple times. These debates focus on equality under the law, the needs of the military, and public opinion, but are ultimately shaped by clear changes in U.S. policy and legal precedent.

A key reason that women have been excluded from the draft was the restriction on women in combat roles. In the past, women's military service was largely limited to non-combat positions. (nurse corps)

### Key Historic Events:

#### 1917 – Selective Service Act

President Woodrow Wilson signed the Selective Service Act on May 18, 1917, creating the modern draft system to build an army for WW1. The law required men (initially ages 21–30, later expanded to 18–45) to register. Women **were not included**. This established the tradition of male only drafts.

#### 1945 – World War II Nurse Draft Proposal

After heavy casualties in WW2, President Roosevelt asked Congress to authorize drafting women nurses to meet the medical needs of the army. In March 1945, the House passed a nurse draft bill (which would have been the first U.S. law conscripting women), except the bill was stalled by the Senate, and Germany's surrender in May 1945 removed the immediate need. This is the closest instance the U.S came to drafting women.

#### 1948 – The Women's Armed Services Integration Act



The Women's Armed Services Integration Act (1948) officially permitted women to serve as regular members of the armed forces in peacetime

### **1973 – End of the Draft**

The military draft was ended as the United States transitioned to an all-volunteer force because of widespread public opposition and social unrest due to controversy surrounding the Vietnam War.

### **1980 – Draft Registration Revived (Men Only)**

In 1980, after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, President Carter brought back draft registration and tried to include women. Congress pushed back, especially the Senate Armed Services Committee, and made it clear early on that they did not support registering women. Ultimately, Carter went forward with a men only registration plan.

### **2013–2015 – Women Allowed in Combat**

The removal of all combat restrictions on women, a process that relatively recently happened from 2013–2015, is a significant event, as it eliminated the legal basis for excluding them from the draft and challenged long-held assumptions about their capability to serve equally in all military roles.

### **2020 – Commission Recommends Drafting Women**

The National Commission in March 2020 concluded that including women in draft registration is in the national interest. This is the first official U.S. government recommendation in history that women should be required to register for the Selective Service

### **2021 – Congress Considers Change, then Delays**

## **Key Statistics**

- Approximately 15 million men ages 18–25 are currently registered with the Selective Service System (~84% of eligible men, not all comply). Zero women are registered, if draft registration were expanded to women, the army could potentially double in size.
- Women today make up around 17% of the active-duty U.S. military (over 230,000 women in 2021). In the reserve components, women make up about 21%. This is a significant increase from past decades. For example, in 1973 women were only about 2% of the force. As of 2023, women serve in every role, including combat arms, special operations, and leadership positions.
- While the U.S. has not yet chosen to draft women, a few other countries have moved to gender-neutral conscription. For instance, Norway and Sweden both updated their laws in the 2010s to require both men and women to serve if called (Norway's universal draft began in 2016, Sweden's in 2017). Israel has conscripted Jewish women alongside men since its founding in 1948 (with some exemptions, such as for married or religious women)

## **Questions to Consider:**

1. What does the Constitution actually directly say about the draft?

2. How would the draft apply to individuals who identify as female or another gender? If registration only applies to men, what prevents someone from changing their gender identification to avoid being drafted?
3. Should the United States maintain the Selective Service System at all?
4. What can we learn from the conscription systems of other nations?
5. How might including women in Selective Service registration impact military readiness, recruitment strategies, and public perception of national defense obligations?

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## **Bill B: National High Speed Rail**



## Key Vocabulary and Acronyms

### High-speed rail (HSR)

Passenger rail service with trains operating at least 110 mph. The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) uses 110 mph as the minimum speed for high-speed rail.

### Amtrak

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation. Created by the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 to ensure continued intercity passenger rail service. Amtrak assumed responsibility for national passenger services in 1971.

### Background:

The current U.S. passenger-rail network is a patchwork dominated by freight lines. Outside of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC), which offers limited higher-speed service (top speeds of 150 mph on short segments), the network lacks dedicated high-speed rail. The NEC carries the Acela service—America's only high-speed train, however ridership has remained modest (3.4 million passengers in 2008). In contrast, nations like Japan, France and China have built networks of dedicated high-speed corridors capable of speeds above 160 mph; these systems shift travel from short-haul flights and highways to rail, reducing congestion and greenhouse-gas emissions. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,

transportation produced 28 % of U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions in 2022, the largest share of any sector. Electrified high-speed rail presents a lower-carbon alternative to automobiles and short-haul flights.

Federal support for high-speed rail has been intermittent. Early efforts began with the High Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965, which funded demonstration projects such as the Metroliner and TurboTrain in the NEC. The Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 created Amtrak to maintain intercity passenger service. Through the 1990s and 2000s, Congress designated high-speed corridors (ISTEA 1991; TEA-21 1998), established the PRIIA 2008 framework for high-speed corridors, and funded projects via ARRA 2009 (which allocated \$8 billion for intercity passenger rail. The FAST Act 2015 reauthorized intercity rail and created the FSP-SOGR program to repair and expand passenger-rail infrastructure. Most recently, the IIJA 2021 introduced the Corridor ID Program and increased funding for passenger rail, signaling renewed national interest in high-speed rail

### Key Statistics:

- High-speed rail's viability depends on robust ridership. Analysts have suggested a line needs on the order of 6–9 million passengers per year to justify its construction and operating costs
- **Transportation Emissions:** The climate and environmental case for high-speed rail is increasingly prominent. The transportation sector is the largest contributor to U.S. greenhouse gas emissions (28% in 2022)([epa.gov](https://www.epa.gov)), surpassing electricity generation
- **Funding:** IIJA provides \$36 billion for the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail, with \$24 billion designated for the Northeast Corridor and \$12 billion for other projects. The Corridor ID Program offers \$500,000 per selected corridor for planning and unlimited future funding for development phases

### Questions to Consider:

1. What problem(s) would a high-speed rail be intended to solve?
  - a. Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions?
2. How will new high-speed lines integrate with Amtrak and commuter rail networks? Should high-speed trains share tracks with freight and conventional passenger services (which can limit speeds), or operate on dedicated rights-of-way?
3. Where would the funding come from?
4. How will high-speed rail projects impact communities and the environment?

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