

Judging Congressional Debate - Specifics

General Reminders

- Keep an eye on your email or frequently refresh your Tabroom.com account to check for assignments. When you are assigned a round, press “start round” immediately so that tournament officials know you have received the round. Then please head to your assigned classroom. Occasionally, a tournament will opt for paper ballots and they will be brought directly to you.
- You probably won’t judge every round. When you get a round off, please relax in the judge lounge and enjoy the hospitality. You’ll probably have time to read, answer emails, or whatever. Please stay close to your computer/phone and check for email/text alerts. You may get assigned to replace a judge who doesn’t show, and if you do have a round off, you will likely be judging the next round.

Before the Debate

- Once you’ve reported to your room, make sure you have the correct students, a parliamentarian (if you are not parli) in the room, and have your online ballot pulled up so that you can write comments during the debate.
- Try to eliminate any distractions (phone, other tabs, etc.) Forget about them for the next 45 min. Please focus on our students and their arguments.
- In elimination rounds, there may be more than one judge. Be sure to wait for all judges and parliamentarian to be present before starting. (In prelim rounds, there will usually be only one judge and one parli)

During the Debate

- You are NOT a participant in the debate. Do NOT interrupt or comment on speeches. Do NOT coach or give advice or offer your opinion. Only the parli may comment in round if parliamentary procedure is being violated.
- **Take notes** on each speech. Keep track of the speeches, arguments, and responses each competitor offers.
- Keep track of time and note whether speakers go over time.

Round Procedure

- The parliamentarian will run the vote for presiding officer (in a secret vote)
- The presiding officer will run the session after being voted in
- Parliamentarian and presiding officer should follow the rules for motions (see below)
- Any agreements made outside the session between congresspeople should be voted on in the session.
- Any suspension of the rules must be voted on by the chamber and approved by the parli.
- Below is a chart that explains the order of the speeches. After the 2nd Negative speech, continue cycling through affirmative speech and questioning

Authorship Sponsor 3 minutes	1st Questioning Period 2 minutes	1st Negation 3 minutes	2nd Questioning Period 2 minutes	2nd Affirmative Speech 3 minutes	Question 1 minute	2nd Negation 3 minutes	Question 1 minute
The author or sponsor of the bill should clearly outline why their bill needs to be discussed and voted for in the chamber.	Congresspeople will ask questions to clarify, find issues with, or support the author/sponsor. Direct questioning is designated by the tournament director, otherwise, students should use open questioning.	A speech that goes directly in response to the authorship/sponsorship.	Questioning period to advance the debate	An affirmative speech used to advance the debate forward and support the legislation.	A 1-minute question period	A negative speech used to oppose legislation and to further the debate.	See previous 1 minute question period

After a Debate

- When the debate is over, congratulate all the debaters, but don’t speak with them at length. You should not reveal your decision to them or offer critiques. That’s what the ballot is for!
- Judge the round based on the arguments and speeches that you heard, NOT the arguments that you would like to have heard.

- **Parliamentarian**
 - *Rank **all students** in the chamber AFTER you have either seen both preliminary sessions or have watched finals.
 - *Consider each session if you are the preliminary parliamentarian.
 - *The parli is not required to give feedback after the round
- **Judges**
 - *Rank students 1-8 on the ballot. 1 should indicate the highest performing person in the session,
 - *Consider the presiding officers in the rankings. Presiding officers do not have to be the center of attention to be considered a good or high-ranking PO. The sign of a well-run chamber is a parli who does not have to exert their dominance constantly or someone who is able to adapt to a rowdy chamber
 - *Assign speaker points to each debater for each speech if you are judging on Tabroom.com. If you are judging on paper, bring your ballot to the tab room and then fill out speaker points and comments.
 - ***Submit your ballot on Tabroom.com** as soon as you have ranks and speaker points assigned. You'll be prompted with a confirmation screen.
 - ***After** you submit your ballot, click "Edit Feedback" and write constructive **feedback** and a "**Reason For Decision**" on the ballot. This should be a specific issue, idea, or impression in the debate that was most convincing or which led you to vote for the winner. (see below)

When deciding the debate and writing your ballot, here are some things to consider...

- Who was active in the chamber?
- Did students advance arguments on pieces of legislation?
- Were authorships delivered clearly and effectively?
- Which debater communicated with clarity, organization, and eloquence while maintaining a sense of professional decorum?
- Was the presiding officer effective and have few to no mistakes?

Writing the Ballot

What to write:

Overall: Be specific in your feedback. "Good job" is not particularly helpful to competitors.

Please do not include comments that discourage students from continuing this activity. This is, above all, a learning experience for students!

Never write on a ballot, "Debate is not for you," or "Why are you in this event?"

- Reason for Decision-** note specific reasons you voted for the winning debater, based on the arguments you heard in the round
- Constructive feedback on each debater's performance.**
 - consider speaker's clarity, organization, logic, understanding of the topic, professionalism, use of time
 - keep in mind that authorship/sponsorship speeches will almost always be pre-written - most students will be *reading* their first speeches- the remainder of speeches should be composed in round based on the debate occurring

Examples of Less than Helpful Feedback

- Nice tie/suit/dress, etc.
- Authorship speech seemed *too* rehearsed
- Great argument
- Your camera quality isn't great.

Examples of More Helpful Feedback

- Use time more effectively - had 1 full minute left in the first speech
- Slow down and speak more clearly, especially during rebuttal
- Provide a roadmap to organize points in each speech

Congressional Debate Point Scale

6	This speech was of superior quality. It had effective delivery, argumentation, points, and clarity. The student advanced the debate or if they were the author/sponsor, they set the stage for a rigorous debate.
4-5	This speech was of good quality. It was effective in its delivery, argumentation, points, and clarity, but there were occasional missteps in the speech or argumentation.
2-3	This speech was of mediocre quality. The debater needed to be clearer in their delivery, argumentation, or points. The speech did not advance the debate or if it was an authorship/sponsorship, it did not effectively set up the topic of the legislation for debate.
1	This speech was too short, did not address the topic at hand, or was inappropriate for the round.

Table of Most Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions Adapted for use in National Speech & Debate Association Congressional Debate							
Type	Motion	Purpose	Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Required Vote	May Interrupt?
Privileged	24. Fix time for reassembling	To arrange time of next meeting	Yes	Yes-T	Yes-T	Majority	Yes
	23. Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	Yes	No	Yes-T	Majority	No
	22. Recess	To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	Majority	No
	21. Rise to a question of privilege	To make a personal request during debate	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	20. Call for orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed motion	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
Incidental	19. Appeal a decision of the chair	To reverse a decision	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
	18. Rise to a point of order or parliamentary procedure	To correct a parliamentary error or ask a question	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	17. Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	16. Object to the consideration of a question	To suppress action	No	No	No	2/3	Yes
	15. Divide a motion	To consider its parts separately	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
	14. Leave to modify or withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No
	13. Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Subsidiary	12. Rescind	To repeal previous action	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
	11. Reconsider	To consider a defeated motion again	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	10. Take from the table	To consider tabled motion	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	9. Lay on the table	To defer action	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	8. Previous question	To force an immediate vote	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	7. Limit or extend debate	To modify freedom of debate	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	2/3	No
	6. Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	5. Refer to a committee *	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	4. Amend an amendment °	To modify an amendment	1/3	Yes	No	Majority	No
	3. Amend °	To modify a motion	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
	2. Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
Main	1. Main motion	To introduce a business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No

* No. 5 should include:

1. How appointed?
2. The number
3. Report when or to what standing committee

T = Time

° Nos. 3 and 4 by:

1. Adding (inserting)
2. Striking (deleting)
3. Substituting