

Harvard Model Congress Asia 2012

Guide to the House of Representatives

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Introduction

Welcome to the United States Congress! This guide will help you prepare for your role as a member of the House of Representatives at Harvard Model Congress Asia this year. Capitol Hill is undoubtedly an exhilarating setting for politicians and political staffers alike, but working in this dynamic environment comes with its fair share of rules and responsibilities. In order to serve your nation to the best of your ability, your constituents expect you to prepare for your role by familiarizing yourself with the legislative process and thoroughly researching the issues you will discuss during committee sessions.

We encourage you to begin preparing for HMCA as soon as possible! The more time you spend becoming acquainted with congressional procedure and the various legislative issues that you will encounter in your role as a United States Representative, the more fun you can expect to have over the course of the conference.

Congressional Programs at HMCE

The House of Representatives, the larger of the two chambers comprising the United States Congress, is a dynamic legislative body. As a representative, you will experience the challenges and rewards of drafting and passing laws that impact the entire nation. In order to make your congressional experience as immersive as possible, you are encouraged to research the background, party affiliation, political ideologies, and constituent interests of the congressman or congresswoman you have been assigned to represent.

The House of Representatives is divided into a number of standing committees, each of which is responsible for addressing and debating policy matters related to a specific facet of the federal government's purview. At HMCA, however, the House will be divided into two separate committees: the Committee on Domestic Affairs and the Committee on International Relations. To begin the conference, each committee will address its respective policy issues, and committee members will be expected to draft and debate bills that are related to the topics at hand. At the conclusion of the daily committee sessions, representatives from the two committees will convene in full session to debate the bills that were passed by each committee. If a bill is passed by a majority of representatives during full session, it is then sent to the Senate to undergo a similar review process. Bills passed by the full Senate are similarly sent to the full House for a vote. Once a bill passes both the House and the Senate, it is then sent to the president for his approval. Although the president has the power to veto any bill that is sent to his

desk, this veto can be overridden if the piece of legislation in question is passed by a two-thirds majority in both chambers of Congress.

You can find information about the topics that will be discussed during this year's conference in the briefings posted on the House of Representatives page on the HMCA website. These briefings should be considered starting points for the issues, however, as you are strongly encouraged to follow up with your own research on the topics assigned to your particular committee. While each committee will focus on two topics during their respective committee sessions, you should be familiar with the briefings assigned to the other House and Senate committees so that you will be prepared to debate any pieces of legislation that these committees may pass.

Also keep in mind that all debate will follow the rules of parliamentary procedure. Please carefully read the explanation of parliamentary procedure that is included in this guide. Having a sound understanding of these rules will enable committee sessions to run efficiently and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to voice his or her ideas and opinions.

Preparing for the Conference

As a member of Congress, your political commitments and legislative decisions will be shaped by a variety of factors. Each of your positions should reflect your personal feelings as a representative, the opinions of your constituents, the specific interests of your region, and the general interests of the nation as a whole. Once you are matched with a particular representative, begin by researching your representative's biography in order to familiarize yourself with your representative's background and political views. Also be sure to carefully read through the "liberal view" and "conservative view" sections of your briefings to ensure that you know how each political party traditionally approaches the public policies you will be discussing during committee sessions. We also strongly encourage you to research the issues discussed in your briefings so that you are able to consider each topic from multiple viewpoints. Delegates who have thoroughly read their briefings and have conducted additional research on their respective policy issues are often the most successful at crafting thoughtful and effective legislation.

At the Conference

Over the course of the conference, you will alternate between formal debate and more informal caucus discussions, each of which contributes to the congressional committee process in a unique way. During formal debate, your committee chair will recognize different representatives to speak on the issue that is under consideration at the time. Speaking during formal debate is often the best way to communicate your ideas to the committee as a whole. During caucus, committee members may brainstorm ideas for legislation, craft new bills, or work on pending bills in smaller groups.

After setting the agenda, your chair will open the committee session by forming a general speakers list to begin debate on the topic at hand. It is a useful strategy to raise your placard as early as possible in order to place yourself on the general speakers list. While you may have little to say at the time, a fellow committee member will inevitably

make a statement or claim that you wish to object to or support once you are given the floor. By placing yourself on the speakers list early, you can assure that your ideas and viewpoints influence the direction of debate.

At the beginning of the conference, you may be reluctant to speak in front of a large committee during formal debate. Yet while speaking may seem daunting at first, voicing your ideas during committee is the best way to impact the legislative process. Furthermore, participating in formal debate will allow you to enhance your public speaking skills, which will in turn make your HMCA experience all the more rewarding.

While drafting legislation, it is important to keep in mind the rules for writing a bill. Any piece of legislation must first be approved by the committee chair before it can be officially introduced for formal debate. While each bill will be discussed the committee as a whole, chairs especially look for well-written legislation drafted through insightful debate and compromise. The committee may pass more than one bill addressing a particular policy issue, but it is always encouraged to make each bill as comprehensive as possible so that legislation passed by the committee is included on the full session docket.

Party Caucus

Over the course of the conference, you and your fellow representatives from your respective political party (Republican or Democrat) will meet in a party caucus, where you will rally behind your party's political platform and articulate the party stance on the policy issues being discussed in committee. Your committee chairs will present the bills included on the full session docket so that your party can attempt to construct a cohesive party strategy for addressing the proposed pieces of legislation during full session.

Full Session

Toward the end of each day of the conference, all of the members of the House of Representatives will assemble in a full session so that the entire chamber can review and vote on the legislation passed in committee. In full session, representatives have the opportunity to discuss and debate the bills that were successfully passed in each committee with the intention that the bill will be rejected by the full House or eventually signed into law. During the full session of the House, members will discuss legislation that was passed in the two House committees as well as bills that are passed in the full session of the Senate. Legislation that passes both chambers is then submitted to the president, who signs or vetoes the bill before a joint session of Congress at the HMCA closing ceremony.

Special Programs in Action

Presidential Cabinet

Over the course of the conference, members of the House can request to hear testimony from members of the Presidential Cabinet during both committee and full sessions. As experts in their respective fields, Cabinet secretaries can provide valuable testimony on the policy issues under discussion. Furthermore, since members of the Cabinet are expected to represent the interests of the president's administration, they can inform members of the House whether or not the president will support or veto certain pieces of legislation.

Lobbyists

As representatives of organizations, professional associations, industries, and countless other “special interests”, lobbyist groups serve as direct conduits between politicians and citizens who share similar beliefs about certain policy issues. During the conference, lobbyist groups will necessarily work behind the scenes to promote the preferred policies of causes that span the entire political spectrum. Nevertheless, these lobbyist groups can provide members of the House with useful information and viewpoints concerning the policy issues under discussion in committee sessions, and their views in turn reflect the interests of the constituent groups that you are expected to represent.

Media

During the conference, reporters from the media will update all conference participants about important votes, court decisions, national crises, and political scandals that occur throughout the day. While observing committee sessions, reporters will take notes on any progress that is made during formal debate and caucus discussions, and they may ask to interview you about your political ideas, your policy agenda, or whether or not you are planning on supporting a particular piece of legislation.

Partisan Viewpoints

Unlike many countries around the world, the political party structure in the United States is far from stringent. Since the individual political interests of elected representatives typically supersede the interests of a particular political party, maintaining a strong party line in Congress is often difficult. This political flexibility, however, also makes bipartisan compromise possible (and often necessary), especially since many politicians are expected to balance the gridlock that often results from partisan disagreements with the need to pass meaningful and effective legislation. Nevertheless, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party are the two major political parties in the United States, and their general political platforms are summarized below.

Democrats

The Democratic Party is considered to be the more liberal party in the American political system. Democrats in general are advocates of an increased role of the federal government in improving the socioeconomic conditions of disadvantaged populations, and as such, they typically support Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other entitlement and welfare programs. Democrats have traditionally been concerned with issues concerning health care, education, pensions, and environmental protection. Traditionally strong in urban areas, Democrats support policies that specifically impact the nation’s city dwellers, and they generally side with labor unions, which are particularly strong in large urban areas, over business interests. Democrats also receive substantial support from African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, and other minority populations, and they have in turn championed affirmative action and other social initiatives aimed at improving racial equality in the United States.

Democrats tend to be progressive on social issues as well, advocating comprehensive reproductive right, non-discrimination against homosexuals and other minorities, and a firm separation of church and state. Democrats from the South and Midwest are inclined to be slightly more socially conservative, however.

On matters of foreign policy, Democrats tend to favor diplomacy over military action, and the party often supports foreign aid to developing nations as well as the United States' involvement in international organizations such as the United Nations. Many Democrats favor tariffs and other protectionist policies, fearing that foreign competition will undermine domestic industries and the American job market. The emergence of a core of fiscally conservative liberals who call themselves "blue dog" Democrats has revolutionized the party in recent years, however. Democrats draw considerable support from New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the northern Great Lakes, and Pacific Coast, and the traditional symbol of the party is the donkey.

Republicans

The Republican Party (also known as the Grand Old Party or GOP) is the more conservative party in American politics. Republicans generally advocate a diminished governmental role in daily life and, in turn, the party regularly favors delegating authority from the federal government to the state and local level. Republicans firmly believe that free enterprise is an essential key to national economic prosperity, leading them to support policies that favor businesses and private corporations. Furthermore, Republicans tend to favor market-oriented solutions to economic and social issues such as crime, unemployment, and health care, and consequently, the party has voiced its support for the privatization of schools, jails, infrastructure projects, and government services such as Social Security and Medicare in recent years. The party draws considerable support from wealthy and middle class citizens concerned with high taxes, excessive public debt, and wasteful government spending. Thus, it is rather unsurprising that the GOP is a strong advocate for lower taxes, limited federal outlays, and a balanced federal budget.

On social issues such as abortion and gay rights, the GOP is split between religious conservatives who support the use of legislation to uphold traditional family values and more libertarian lawmakers who believe that decisions concerning such issues should be deferred to individual families. The Republican Party also receives a considerable amount of monetary and electoral support from the evangelical community.

On foreign policy issues, Republicans tend to favor uninhibited free trade with international trading partners as well as an influential American economic presence abroad. The GOP is also largely united in its desire for a powerful military, a strong national defense, and unilateral decision-making on the international stage. Republicans draw considerable support from the South, the Great Plains, and the Mountain West, and the traditional symbol of the GOP is the elephant.

Independents

Politicians who are not formally affiliated with either of the two main political parties are considered to be independents, and they tend to support a variety of policies that span the entire ideological spectrum. Some of the more prominent independents in American politics today include Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Senator Joe Lieberman

(I-CT), and Governor Lincoln Chafee (I-RI). Although Independents in Congress tend to caucus with one of the major parties on most issues, they nonetheless have their own specific views on many public policies, and they are often united in their distrust of large party bureaucracies.

Working with the Party Leaders

At HMCA, each House committee will nominate a Republican Majority Leader and a Democratic Minority Leader. These two leaders will be responsible for organizing party caucuses and working with delegates from their respective parties on legislation currently under debate in each committee. As part of their role, party leaders will answer questions, coordinate party strategy on specific bills and amendments, and work with their fellow colleagues on substantive proposals. The party leaders will also work to encourage party unity during important votes in committee and in full session. Delegates should remember that their political allegiance does not always rest with the party, however, and thus should not hesitate to disagree with fellow party members when necessary.

Regional Viewpoints

Unlike countries with proportional representation systems, lawmakers in Congress represent geographic constituencies with unique local and regional interests. Thus, since many congressional campaigns are expected to address these local issues, members of the House in particular feel obligated to support policies that benefit the interests of their home districts. Although federal legislators certainly support broader party and national interests, they are nonetheless keenly aware of how certain policy decisions impact their local districts and, by extension, their individual electoral prospects.

At HMCA, members of the House hail from nine broadly defined geographic regions that shape their perspectives on certain political issues.

New England

Consisting of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, New England is one of the oldest and wealthiest regions in the United States. Legislative priorities include the protection of civil liberties and collective bargaining rights, environmental conservation, comprehensive social programs, and progressive approaches to education, health care, poverty, and social issues. New England is considered by many to be a Democratic stronghold, but the emergence of a highly influential class of moderate Republicans at the state and federal level has altered the region's political landscape in recent years. Maine currently has a split congressional delegation, and New Hampshire is consistently classified as a battleground state. Nevertheless, the four other New England states have largely Democratic congressional delegations, and President Barack Obama overwhelmingly carried all six states in the 2008 presidential election.

Mid-Atlantic

This region along the central Atlantic coastline includes Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The Mid-Atlantic is a center of banking,

finance, commerce, and industry, and consequently, economic issues such as business regulation, taxation, labor relations, and international trade are all pressing policy concerns. The region also includes major metropolitan centers such as New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore that are defined by dynamic economies, comprehensive public transit systems, ethnic and cultural diversity, and uniquely urban problems such as poverty, homelessness, and crime. Politically, the region is largely Democratic, but its voters tend to elect socially progressive moderates who also recognize the region's dependence on large corporations and business interests. Even so, Republicans have gained considerable ground in Delaware and New Jersey in recent years, and Pennsylvania is regularly touted as a major battleground state. President Obama carried all five states in the 2008 presidential election.

South

The South, which includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia, is a rapidly developing region with a variety of political and socioeconomic contrasts. The region contains a number of increasingly large population centers with booming economies such as Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas, Houston, and Miami, but the South also includes some of the poorest rural areas in the country. Demographically, the South has a large African-American population and a growing young middle-class, and Florida in particular is the home of a large elderly population and a politically influential Cuban-American community. Encompassing most of the Bible Belt, the region also has a large population of Christian evangelicals. Historically one of the most solidly Democratic regions of the country, the South has emerged as a secure Republican stronghold in recent decades, with social issues being the primary concern of many voters. Florida is regularly classified as a major battleground state, and voters in North Carolina and Virginia supported a Democratic candidate for president for the first time in decades in the 2008 election (President Obama carried all three states in 2008). However, all of the other states in the region supported Republican presidential nominee Senator John McCain (R-AZ) in the 2008 presidential election.

Midwest

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin comprise the Midwest region. Long considered the nation's industrial heartland, the region has witnessed a steady decline in manufacturing and heavy industry over the past half century, with Detroit, Cleveland, and other cities in the Rust Belt having suffered from high unemployment and population declines in recent years. Nevertheless, Chicago remains one of the nation's most important economic hubs, and other cities in the region such as Minneapolis, St. Paul, Columbus, and Indianapolis have invested heavily in technology, health care, higher education, and other dynamic industries over the past few decades. Collective bargaining rights and protection from foreign manufacturers are important political priorities in the Midwest, and agriculture is still a vital component of the region's economy. Minnesota and Wisconsin tend to be more Democratic than their Midwestern neighbors, but the region is remarkably competitive politically, with Ohio, Missouri, Michigan, and Iowa having emerged as battleground states in recent

presidential elections. During the 2008 presidential election, however, President Obama carried every state in the region with the exception of Missouri.

Great Plains

The Great Plains consist of Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. The region is a vast land of ranchers and farmers, and consequently, farm subsidies, land conservation, and other policies that impact the agricultural sector take precedence in the political arena. The Great Plains have also emerged as a stronghold of the evangelical movement, and the region's residents are some of the most socially conservative voters in the nation. The Great Plains is reliably Republican, and unsurprisingly, Republican nominee Sen. John McCain won overwhelmingly in all five states in the 2008 presidential election.

Mountain West

The Mountain West includes Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. With the exception of Denver and other cities in Colorado, the Mountain West is sparsely populated and predominantly rural. Nevertheless, this mountainous region is home to some of the nation's most impressive natural wonders as well as some of its most renowned national parks, and the region in turn benefits from a robust tourism industry. Farming, ranching, mining, and oil production are also major contributors to the region's economy. The region's small population tends to be fairly socially conservative, but Colorado in particular has recently emerged as a pivotal battleground state. President Obama carried Colorado in the 2008 presidential election while Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming all favored Republican challenger Sen. John McCain.

Pacific Northwest

The Pacific Northwest consists of Alaska, Oregon, and Washington. This resource rich region is home to some of America's most pristine natural landscapes, and given the vast timber forests, pristine coastlines, and expansive tundra found throughout the Pacific Northwest, its residents have pushed for extensive environmental protection initiatives. The economic costs of these conservation efforts have become more apparent in recent years, however, and rising energy prices have compelled many voters and politicians to call for more intensive drilling in oil-rich Alaska. In addition to its natural wonders, the Pacific Northwest also includes a dynamic, export-oriented economy, with the Seattle region serving as the home of a number of Fortune 500 companies and a diverse, highly educated population. The socially liberal population centers in Washington and Oregon have led both states to emerge as Democratic strongholds, and President Obama easily carried both states in the 2008 presidential election. Sparsely populated Alaska, however, is home to a much more conservative population, and Republican nominee John McCain carried the state in 2008.

Southwest

The American Southwest includes Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. The Southwest has a large Hispanic population, and thus, residents in the region are especially concerned about the future of the nation's immigration policy. The region is also home to a sizeable portion of the country's American Indian population. The Southwest enjoys a growing, dynamic economy based around major urban centers such as Phoenix and Salt

Lake City, with mining, ranching, oil production, tourism, and government defense contracts also contributing to the region's economic prosperity. The recent collapse of the American housing bubble hit the region particularly hard, however, and Las Vegas and the Phoenix metropolitan region have some of the highest foreclosure rates in the country. Voters in the region tend to be socially and fiscally conservative, but the rapid growth of the Southwest's Hispanic community has transformed the region's political landscape. President Obama won Nevada and New Mexico in the 2008 presidential election while Republican nominee John McCain carried Utah and his home state of Arizona.

California/Hawaii

California is the most populous state in the country, and the state is home to the ninth largest economy in the world. California has a remarkably diverse population, and cities such as Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, and San Francisco have emerged as some of the largest cities in the United States over the past half century. The state's economy is incredibly diversified: commerce and international exports account for a sizeable portion of the state's total gross domestic product (GDP), a number of electronics and technology firms are headquartered in Silicon Valley, central California is one of the most productive agricultural regions in the country, Los Angeles is the home of the American film industry, and the largest naval fleet in the world, along with the immense amount of military spending that comes with it, is stationed in San Diego. Even so, the state's economy was devastated by the 2008 recession, causing California to have one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, and the state's soaring budget deficits over the past decade have created a major fiscal crisis. Politically, California is one of the most socially liberal states in the nation, and it is regularly viewed as a Democratic stronghold. President Obama easily carried the state in the 2008 presidential election.

Hawaii, a volcanic archipelago located approximately 2,000 miles southwest of the North American mainland, is also home to a dynamic economy and one of the most liberal populations in the country. The state is highly dependent on tourism, but agricultural products such as pineapples, coffee, and sugarcane also contribute substantially to the state's economy. Hawaii is also remarkably diverse, with the state serving as the home of large Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Hawaii overwhelmingly voted for President Obama in the 2008 presidential election

Guide to Drafting Legislation

Proposing a Bill

When debate enters the bill writing stage, there are usually several different bills being written simultaneously by members of the committee. According to committee rules, however, only one bill may be debated at any given time, so the process of getting a bill onto the floor requires careful consideration and compromise. By following the guidelines listed below, you will acquire a greater understanding of how the legislative process in particular and the committee process in general can work to your benefit as a legislator.

Format for All Bills

All bills must follow the format specified below:

- A) Title
- B) Preamble—the bill’s basic purpose and intent
- C) Content—the legislation itself
- D) Definitions—definitions of ambiguous terms
- E) Enforcement—penalties for violation of the bill’s language
- F) Funding—the amount and source of the of funding required to implement the bill

Within each section, each numbered clause should address a different idea, especially in the content section. A certain section may be omitted if absolutely necessary. For example, an enforcement clause might not appear in an appropriations bill or spending legislation.

Once a bill has been signed by the requisite number of committee members, a member may motion to introduce the bill for debate by the entire committee. If approved by a one-third majority vote, the committee Chair will then create a pro/con speakers list, and debate on the bill under consideration will proceed until is motion to end debate is made.

The sample bill provided below is a good example of a precise, thoughtful, and thorough piece of legislation. It develops several ideas and sufficiently defines its terms. The author has also devised a creative way to fund the initiatives outlined in the bill.

Amendments

After debating a bill for some time, committee members who do not fully support a bill may decide to add, rewrite, or delete certain sections of the bill’s language. Members must propose such changes in the form of amendments. Some amendments include only minor changes or edits and pass almost immediately. Others may be much more detailed and require extensive debate. In any event, amendments require signatures from eight representatives and the approval of the committee Chair.

Unlike bills, amendments are immediately placed on the floor of the committee upon introduction by a member, requiring neither debate nor a vote. Amendments are often the result of compromise, yet an amendment can also serve as a political weapon to kill certain pieces of legislation. Members may seek to attach controversial amendments to a bill knowing that the bill, as amended, will draw significant opposition from either the full House or Senate, or the president.

Passing Legislation

Eventually, the committee will bring a bill under consideration to a final vote. Once debate on a bill is ended with a two-thirds majority vote on a Motion for Previous Question, the committee members will then proceed to final vote of approval on the legislation in question. If the vote on a bill is particularly close, a member may request a roll call vote in which each committee member will individually announce his or her vote. On most occasions, however, a standard placard vote will suffice.

Sample Bill

Foreign Narcotics Control Act

Be it hereby enacted by the United States House of Representatives:

Preamble

The United States House of Representatives resolves to strengthen the forces of the War on Drugs by increasing foreign law enforcement and military assistance and support for American drug interdiction.

Content

1. \$200 million in foreign aid shall be given to the nations of Bolivia and Colombia in order to train, equip and support their law enforcement and military forces for the purpose of combating narcotics trafficking.
2. The president of the United States shall be authorized to transfer immediately up to \$50 million worth of excess US military supplies to the militaries of major Latin American drug-producing nations.
3. (a) \$250 million shall be allocated to the Pentagon to support AWACS surveillance planes, E-2 Navy reconnaissance planes, and P-3 planes in order to detect drug shipments.
(b) \$100 million shall be allocated to increase F-15 interceptor capabilities and Coast Guard patrols near US waters.
4. Up to \$200 million in economic aid shall be provided in matching funds to the governments of major Latin American drug-producing nations. Funds will be provided to those nations matching their expenditures on internal crop substitution, drug eradication, and drug education programs.

Definitions

AWACS — Airborne Warning and Control System; modified Boeing 707 airplanes outfitted with sophisticated radar equipment.

Major Latin American drug producing nations—Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Belize, Mexico, Ecuador, Paraguay. For the purposes of this legislation, this list can be expanded subject to review by the Secretary of State.

Enforcement

Aid and assistance shall be reviewed quarterly by the General Accounting Office. There shall be a foreign penalty of up to complete cut-off of foreign aid for foreign misappropriation or misuse of funds.

Funding

Funding for this bill shall come from the Defense Discretionary Budget and sales of confiscated assets of persons convicted of narcotics-related felonies.

Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

While reading these rules, keep three key concepts in mind:

- Only bills and issues open for debate may be discussed.
- Motions may only be made when the floor is open.
- If there are several motions, then the motion with highest precedence is considered first.

Fundamentals

1. **Scope:** These rules of procedure shall be self-sufficient and shall be considered adopted in advance of the conference. No other rules of procedure shall apply.
2. **Powers of the Chair:** The Chairperson of a committee shall direct discussions, put questions forward, announce decisions, accord the right to speak, decide all questions of order, sign all written proposals, and ensure and enforce observance of these rules. The Chairperson shall, subject to these rules, have complete control of the proceedings at any meeting and over the maintenance of order. The Chair shall not vote, except in the case of a tie. A Chair may suggest that a motion pass with unanimous consent.
3. **Members:** Every Member shall be present unless excused or necessarily prevented. A Member may not authorize any other individual to cast his or her vote or record his or her presence. No Member shall be recognized without his or her placard and badge of office. Senators shall be addressed as “the Senator from [State]” and Representatives shall be addressed as “the Congressman or Congresswoman from [State].”
4. **Motions:** When the floor is open, Members may rise and be recognized by the Chair by raising their placards. The floor is defined as open if no Member of the committee or congressional staff is speaking or has been recognized to speak. ONLY points of personal privilege and points of order may interrupt a speaker.

Only one motion may be on the floor at any given moment. If a new motion takes precedence over the motion currently on the floor, then the motion currently on the floor will be tabled while the new motion is being resolved. The old motion will then return to the floor. No motion may be recognized that falls below the current motion in precedence.

In order to be considered by the Committee, a motion must be immediately seconded by another Member. A Member may ask that his motion (or amendment, etc.) pass by unanimous consent, in which case the Chair shall ask if any Member objects. If there is an objection, the motion shall be considered normally. Otherwise it shall pass immediately.
5. **Quorum:** The Chairperson shall declare the opening of a session when at least one-third of the Members are present.
6. **Courtesy:** All Members shall show courtesy and respect to the congressional staff and to other Members. If any Member does not follow these rules, the Chairperson shall call him or her to order, in which case he or she shall immediately sit down. No Member in debate shall refer offensively to any Member or to any State of the Union.

7. Agenda: The first item on the floor at the initial meeting of every committee shall be to set the agenda. The setting of the agenda shall be debatable to the extent of one speaker advocating each issue. The issue that receives a plurality of the votes shall be considered first. In certain circumstances, the Chairperson may set the agenda without a vote from the full committee.

Debate

8. Speakers' List: When a Member desires to speak on any question, he or she shall submit his or her State (and District number in the House, or rank in the Senate) to the Chair to be entered on the Speakers' List for that question. There should be one continually open general Speakers' List on the issue before the floor. Separate Speakers' Lists shall be established on all debatable questions, including motions, amendments, and bills. The Chairperson may rotate between majority and minority parties or between Members "For" and "Opposed" in order to give "Pro" or "Con" speeches.

9. Time Limit on Speeches: The Chairperson may limit the time allotted to each speaker and the number of times Members may speak on any question. If a Member exceeds his or her allotted time, the Chairperson shall call the Member to order.

10. Yields: A speaker who has time remaining at the end of his or her speech has three options:

- Yield his or her time to the Chair, whereby the Member's time is ended and the floor is open for motions.
- Yield his or her time to questions, whereby the Chairperson will recognize questions from the floor until time expires. Only the speaker's responses to questions shall be deducted from the remaining time.
- Yield his or her time to another Member, who may then rise and use this time to address the Committee.

At the end of a speech, if the speaker neglects to yield his or her remaining time to any of the above, any Member may rise and ask, "Will the speaker yield to questions?"

***NOTE:** A speaker may not yield to another speaker after yielding to and answering questions. A speaker to whom time has been yielded may not then yield time to another speaker or to questions.*

Written Proposals

11. Signatures: Written proposals may only be distributed to the Committee after receiving the Chair's signature. Certain proposals also require the signatures of a number of Members. Signatures do not represent personal support for the proposal, but merely a desire for debate on the proposal. The Chairperson may refuse to sign a proposal if it does not follow proper format, is incoherent in form or concept, essentially reproduces a previous proposal, would impede the progress of the Committee, is limited in content, or if it does not address the issue sufficiently. This decision cannot be appealed.

12. Working Papers: Members may bring working papers before the consideration of the Committee. Working papers are unofficial documents and may include general ideas,

policy statements, or proposed bills. They are never officially introduced; however, they require the signature of the Chairperson to be copied and distributed to the Committee.

13. Bills: Proposals may be submitted as bills when they are signed by six senators in a Senate committee or ten representatives in a House committee, as well as the Chairperson. Signing a bill for introduction need not indicate support for its content. Once submitted, the Chairperson shall have the bills copied and distributed, after which a Member may move to introduce a bill (see Motions).

Bills that pass in committee and pass both chambers of Congress will be sent to the President. If the President does not veto the bill, it becomes a law. Otherwise the veto must be overridden by a 2/3-majority vote of each chamber in order for the bill to become law.

14. Simple Resolutions: A simple resolution deals with matters entirely within the province of one chamber, such as allocating funds, recognizing individuals for outstanding service, or expressing the opinion of the House or Senate. A simple resolution undergoes the same procedure as a bill. When passed, simple resolutions hold no force of law; instead they affect only the particular chamber in which they are written.

15. Concurrent Resolutions: Simple resolutions that pass both chambers are termed concurrent resolutions. They have no force of law and express only the sentiment and will of the Members of Congress.

16. Joint Resolutions: Joint resolutions must concern limited, specific legislation, such as special appropriations or minor, technical changes in an existing law. Joint resolutions require a majority vote and the president's signature and do indeed hold the force of law.

17. Joint Resolution to Amend the Constitution: Changes in the Constitution must be passed by a 2/3-majority vote in the originating Committee and in both chambers and be ratified by 3/4 of the States. In the case that an amendment is passed with 2/3 majority in both chambers, the Amendment is sent to the states for ratification.

18. Amendments: Amendments may be submitted once they receive signatures from the Chair and two Senators or eight Representatives. In the House, amendments must be germane to the bill and the section being amended; amendments in the Senate need not be germane. Members may not directly amend an amendment that is on the floor of the Committee. Only bills may be amended. Therefore, if an amendment is incorporated into a bill, then the new section of the bill can be further amended. Or, Members may table the original amendment and draft a new amendment.

Points

19. Point of Personal Privilege: At any time, a Member may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege to correct conditions adversely affecting the rights and personal comfort of the Members. Questions of privilege shall have precedence over all other questions and shall be resolved by the Chair.

20. Point of Order: At any time, a Member may rise to a Point of Order if he or she feels that the rules are not being followed. Questions of order shall be decided by the Chair without debate, subject to appeal.

21. Point of Information: When the floor is open, a Member may rise to ask a question relating to the Committee's business, excluding parliamentary and substantive issues.

22. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: When the floor is open, a Member may rise to ask a question of the Chair regarding parliamentary procedure.

Motions

23. Precedence: Motions shall be considered in the order of precedence listed on the chart entitled Table of Points and Motions. Motions at the same level of precedence shall be decided in the order in which they were introduced.

24. Consider a Different Issue: A motion to change the stated topic shall require the approval of the Chair and the second of a majority of the Members and shall be debatable with one speaker in favor and one opposed. It shall require a 2/3 majority to pass. It shall have the effect of tabling discussion on the current topic and any bill or amendment currently on the floor. Following the passage of this motion, House committees will once more set the agenda and Senate committees will move directly to the second topic.

25. Testimony: When the floor is open, a Chair or Member may rise to ask that the Committee hear the testimony of an expert on the issue being discussed. The motion requires a second, is not debatable, and requires a 1/3 vote to pass.

26. Appeal: A Member may appeal the decisions of the Chair. If a decision is appealed, then the Chair may speak briefly in defense of the ruling. The appeal shall then be put to a vote, and the decision of the Chair shall stand, unless overruled by a majority of the Members voting. Decisions that cannot be appealed are decisions of the Chair regarding (1) dilatory questions or motions, (2) adjournment or recess, (3) signature or distribution of bills, amendments, working papers or other proposals, and (4) motions requiring the Chair's approval.

27. Caucusing: When the floor is open, a Member may move to caucus for a stated reason and a stated period of time, not to exceed twenty minutes. The motion is not debatable and requires a majority to pass. There are two different forms of caucus which a Member may propose. An unmoderated caucus opens the floor for Members to discuss issues related to the topic or bill in question. During an unmoderated caucus, Members may also draft bills and resolutions. Unmoderated caucuses can be either partisan, in which Members may only speak to other Members of their party, or bipartisan, in which Members may speak to anyone. The other form of caucus which a Member may propose is a moderated caucus, in which the Chair shall call upon individual Members to speak for a time not to exceed 30 seconds in order for the chamber to ask questions and to discuss the topic in question and ideas for legislation.

28. Introduction of a Bill: Once a bill has been submitted to the Chair with proper signatures and has been copied and distributed to the Committee, a Member may rise to introduce it for consideration. If the motion is seconded, then the Chair shall allow one speaker in favor and one opposed. If the motion passes with support from at least 1/3 of the Members voting, then a new Speakers' List shall be drawn up with the Member who made the motion placed first, and the bill shall be debated until a Motion for the Previous Question or for Laying on the Table passes.

29. Introduction of an Amendment: Once an amendment is submitted and the Chair has either distributed copies or publicized the amendment in some fashion, a Member may rise to introduce the amendment. Upon receiving a second, the amendment shall be immediately placed on the floor. If there is absolutely no objection to the amendment, then it shall pass by Acclamation. Otherwise, the amendment shall be debated with a new Speakers' List until there is a Motion for Previous Question or for Laying on the Table. Although there is no vote as to whether or not an amendment may be introduced, a Member may Object to Consideration of the motion.

30. Objection to Consideration: The Objection to Consideration of any bill, amendment, or motion requiring debate may be made immediately following introduction of the motion and before debate has commenced. Objection to Consideration is not debatable and requires the support of 2/3 of the Members voting to prevent consideration of the bill, amendment, or motion in question.

31. Suspension of a Rule: A Motion to Suspend a Rule is in order if it receives the approval of the Chair. The motion must be seconded by a majority of the Members present. The motion may then be debated by one speaker in favor and one opposed and shall require the support of more than 2/3 of the Members voting.

32. Laying on/Taking From the Table: A Motion to Lay a Bill, Amendment, or Motion on the Table removes an item from the floor and from immediate consideration by the Committee. It is not debatable and requires the support of 2/3 of the Members voting. A motion to resume debate on any tabled motion (to "Take from the Table") is not debatable and requires a majority to pass.

33. Previous Question: If a motion for Previous Question passes, then all debate shall end and the Committee shall move to a direct vote on the proposal in question. When the floor is open and a bill or amendment is under discussion, a Member may move the Previous Question. If the motion is seconded, the Chair will recognize one speaker against the motion. The motion requires a 2/3 majority to pass. **NOTE:** If an amendment is on the floor, a Motion for Previous Question on a bill or resolution is out of order.

34. Reconsideration: When a substantive question has been decided, any Member that voted with the prevailing side may move to Reconsider. This motion is debatable to the extent of one speaker in favor and requires a majority to pass; it places the decided issue back on the floor for another vote. No question may be reconsidered more than once without unanimous consent. Only decisions regarding bills, amendments, and other substantive proposals may be reconsidered.

35. Recess: When the floor is open, a Member may move to Recess until the next scheduled meeting. The motion is debatable, requires a majority to pass, and suspends all committee functions until the next meeting. The Chair's decision to rule this motion dilatory cannot be appealed.

36. Motion to Rise: This motion is not debatable and requires a simple majority to pass. It is only in order after 3/4 of the time allotted for the last meeting of the Committee has

elapsed. When a committee rises, the Committee shall cease to exist, and Members shall rise to enter full session of the chamber.

Voting

37. Taking the Vote: Each Member shall have one vote and shall vote “Aye” or “Nay.” Each question shall be decided by voice or placard vote.

Any Member may request a roll call for votes on substantive proposals such as bills and amendments. If more than 1/5 of the Committee seconds the request, then the ayes and nays shall be ordered. The Members shall, without debate, declare their assent or dissent without abstention, unless excused by the Chair. No Members may change or withdraw their votes except with unanimous consent.

38. Division of a Question: Any Member may ask to divide a bill or amendment, in order to vote separately on individual parts of the proposed legislation. A Member would move to Divide the Question if he or she agreed with some, but not all, of a bill. The motion must clearly state which sections are to be divided from the bill (or amendment) and voted on separately. A Member may ask to vote separately on every section of the bill or may ask to vote separately on one clause only. After the divisions have been stated, the Chair shall call a vote on each division.

The parts that pass by simple majority shall remain part of the bill. The parts that do not pass will be omitted from the original bill. A final vote will be taken on the bill as it remains — i.e., on the surviving sections of the bill as a whole. Only this final vote shall be eligible for a Roll Call Vote.

NOTE: If those divisions that do pass form an incomplete or self-contradictory final bill or amendment, then the Chair may, subject to appeal, rule the bill incoherent. This ruling will cause the bill to be removed from the floor without further vote or debate.

Rules of the Full House and Senate Sessions

1. Scope: The rules of procedure for Committee sessions shall be in force for House and Senate sessions as well, except as modified by the following changes.
2. Congressional Staff: The President of the Senate shall be the Presiding Officer of the Senate. The Speaker of the House shall be the Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives. In the event that either cannot fill his or her position as Presiding Officer, he or she shall appoint a congressional staff member to step in. Each body shall have a Majority Leader, Minority Leader, and other party officials who shall organize their parties and coordinate support for or in opposition to a given proposal.
3. Powers of the Chair: The Speaker of the House shall vote at his or her discretion; he or she shall be required to vote in the case of a tie. The President of the Senate shall only vote in the case of a tie.
4. Motions: In the House of Representatives, all motions except Appeals, Points of Privilege, Points of Order, and Points of Parliamentary Inquiry must be submitted in writing to the Presiding Officer.

5. Agenda: The agenda shall be set in advance of the first session by the Presiding Officers in consultation with the Committee Chairs. Motions to Reorder the Agenda must receive the signatures of the Majority or Minority Leader and the Presiding Officer before they may be introduced.

6. Working Papers: There shall be no working papers in full session.

7. Bills: Bills may be introduced in the order specified by the agenda. In order to be introduced, bills not on the agenda must be signed by 90 House Members or 40 Senate Members, the Majority or Minority Leader, and the Presiding Officer.

8. Amendments: Amendments to bills may be proposed once they have received the signatures of 25 Representatives or 10 Senators, the Majority or Minority Leader, and the Presiding Officer. Amendments in the House must be germane to the bill and section being amended; amendments in the Senate need not be germane.

9. Previous Question: Motions for Previous Question in the House of Representatives shall be in order only after two members of each party have spoken. The Senate shall use the Motion for Cloture instead. Cloture is not debatable and requires the support of 3/5 of the Members voting. If Cloture passes, then the President shall recognize one Member to speak in favor of the bill or amendment and one to speak against. A Motion to Re-Open Debate is then in order; it is not debatable and requires the support of a majority to pass. If that motion fails, the Senate shall move to an immediate vote on the bill or amendment.

10. Motion to Adjourn: The Motion to Adjourn is used in full session in place of the Motion to Rise. Following adjournment, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall submit their reports to the Joint Session of Congress.

11. Voting: There shall be no Roll Call Votes in the House of Representatives. There shall be no Roll Call Votes on amendments in the Senate.

12. Laws: In order to become a law, a bill must receive the approval of both chambers of Congress and the signature of the President. If the President vetoes a bill, then it shall require the support of 2/3 of the Members of each chamber to become law.

13. Constitutional Amendments: Bills to propose Constitutional Amendments shall require the support of 2/3 of the Members of both Houses. Proposed Constitutional Amendments do not require the President's signature and are not submitted to the President. As stipulated in Article V of the Constitution, in order for a proposed Amendment to be ratified, it must receive the endorsement of 3/4 of all the state legislatures.

