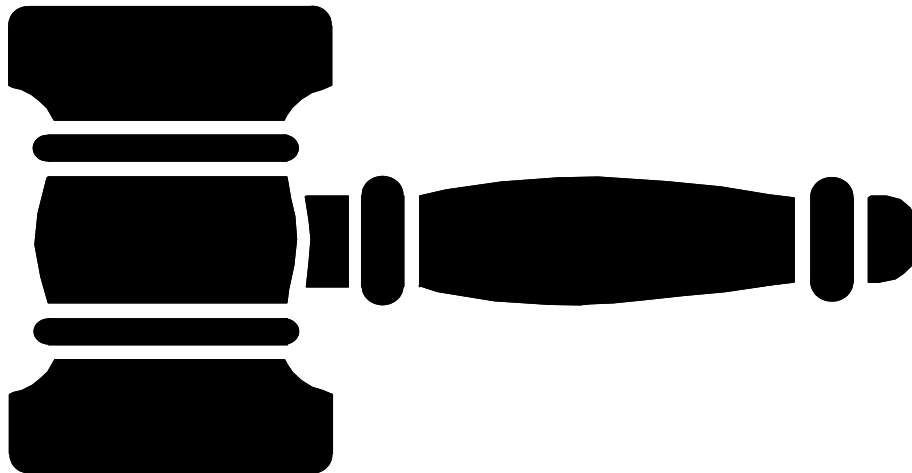


# **Pennsylvania High School Speech League**



## **STUDENT CONGRESS: SENATE HANDBOOK**

**Revised: September, 2013**

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FORMS can be found in the FORMS SECTION of the PHSSL binder:

- SC: Senate - Presiding Officer Evaluation Form
- SC: Senate - Speaker Evaluation Form
- SC: Senate - Ballot

## SECTION I: ORGANIZATION

1. The Pennsylvania High School Speech League Senate shall be a unicameral Senate. However, if more than 28 students meet the registration requirements; two houses shall be formed (bicameral).
2. The Senate shall convene for three sessions at a time and a place determined by the Executive Director. 1. Session I; 2. Session II; 3. Super Session.
3. At each legislative session the Senate shall elect from its membership a Presiding Officer who shall serve for that session only.
4. The qualified students will select legislation to submit to the state office for the Senate. Each bill or resolution must be submitted ELECTRONICALLY as an email attachment to the Senate coordinator no later than the deadline for district tournament results due to the state office. The attachment should be typed in Microsoft Word and in the proper form. (See Section III.3.) Refer to notices from the state office or the PHSSL website as to whom the B/R should be sent. The Senate legislation packet will be sent out at least two weeks in advance of the state tournament with an agenda set by random draw. Each district will also be assigned First Response for another district's legislation.

## SECTION II: ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Roll call of members.
2. Election of Presiding Officer.
3. Consideration of the calendar.
4. Adjournment.

## SECTION III: BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

1. A bill is an enumeration of specific provisions, listed in "sections", which if enacted will have the force of law. The debate over a bill will usually explore the merits of the specific provisions it contains.
2. A resolution is simply a generalized statement expressing a conviction. A resolution will usually center debate on the broad principles of the concept. Although they are not necessary, a resolution may have "whereas" clauses.

3. When the bill or resolution is submitted, there should be no student's name appearing on it, however, the school's name is to appear. The B/R should be in the proper format: double-spaced, lines numbered, and should not exceed one (1) page.
4. Legislation not previously assigned to a Senate Committee by the Director may not be introduced with the exception of legislation pertaining to the State Tournament.
5. Legislation pertinent to the State Tournament may be considered at the close of the final legislative session.

#### SECTION IV: ELECTION OF PRESIDING OFFICER

1. Each session will elect from its membership a presiding officer.
2. The Parliamentarian will conduct these elections by taking nominations from the floor for the presiding officer.
3. For each ballot each member will select one name and place it on the ballot.
4. The Parliamentarian and scorekeepers will collect and count the ballots.
5. Names are then selectively eliminated by the following procedure. The one person with the lowest total is eliminated. The person second from the bottom is also eliminated if his/her total, when added to the bottom person's total, adds up to less than half the membership. When a person has received a majority of the votes, he/she is declared the winner.
6. Prior to each election, those nominees under consideration are to stand and be recognized by the other students in the Senate.

#### SECTION V: DUTIES OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER

1. The Presiding Officer shall preside impartially and shall not vote except in case of a tie vote.
2. Once elected, the presiding officer may not relinquish the chair during that session to enter debate.
3. The Presiding Office shall recognize no student a second time until all other students who seek the floor have been recognized.
4. The Presiding Officer shall not permit a member to speak more than twice on the same bill. The speaker may be limited to one speech unless no one else wishes to speak. The Presiding Officer may refuse to recognize him/her further if the Presiding Officer feels he/she is trying to monopolize debate. This decision may be appealed.

5. The Presiding Office is responsible for keeping debate moving. The Presiding Officer is held responsible for seeing to it that members do not monopolize speaking time by making frequent speeches or amendments. The Presiding Officer will also be held responsible for failing to rule dilatory or obstructionist tactics out of order. As a rule of thumb, if a person has made over three speeches per session or has already tried two apparently dilatory or obstructionist tactics, the Presiding Officer may explain this situation and then permit him/her one more speech or motion. If speaking again will also impede debate, the Presiding Officer may decline to recognize him/her further. This discretionary power is very broad and should be used with care and in consultation with the Parliamentarian. This decision may be appealed.
6. The Presiding Officer may never enter into debate but should be above it.
7. Questions of Procedure not covered by these rules shall be ruled according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 1990.
8. The Presiding Officer of the first session will conduct an election for the chamber's calendar for the two preliminary sessions.

## SECTION VI: CONSIDERATION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

1. Debate on legislation shall be as follows:

A. A member representing the district which has submitted the bill or resolution shall be privileged to open debate in the form of an authorship or sponsorship speech. This speech shall be 3 minutes in length and the speaker may not yield his/her time to another member.

B. A one minute mandatory questioning period shall follow.

C. A member representing the district assigned as the First Response for the bill or resolution will give his/her speech followed also by one minute of mandatory questioning.

D. Debate shall then be open from the floor, with a time limit of 3 minutes per speaker.

E. In the event a district qualifies more than two competitors to the Senate, the third competitor will get the second pro speech of the district's legislation. The fourth competitor will get the second con speech of a district's assigned First Response legislation.

2. A member shall claim the floor in debate if he/she wishes to oppose the views of the preceding speaker so that debate will alternate. If there are no opposing views then a maximum of three speeches expressing the same view will be permitted before debate automatically stops and the question is voted upon.

3. Any member who has the floor may yield his/her time to another or may yield part of it for questions. In either case he/she controls the time yielded and may interrupt the person to whom he/she has yielded at any time to resume use of his/her own time.

4. Decisions on all legislation shall be by standing vote (show of hands).
5. Legislation shall be open to amendments from the floor. Such amendments must be in writing and state exactly the words to be added, deleted, or substituted and may be considered only upon a 1/3 second of the members. The following procedure is to be utilized:
  - A. The amendment is to be written and passed to the Parliamentarian.
  - B. The Presiding Officer will, at his/her discretion, and usually, but not exclusively, after a negative speech, announce that he/she has an amendment on the floor.
  - C. The Parliamentarian will read the amendment (stating the author of the amendment).
  - D. The Presiding Officer will ask for a 1/3 second. If the amendment is seconded, the author of the amendment is then entitled to a 3 minute speech in favor of the amendment. Debate will then alternate pro and con on the amendment until the amendment is disposed. If the amendment does not receive the required second, debate continues with the next appropriate speech.
6. A member may be recognized for debate no more than two times on any one bill or resolution.
7. Do not overwork the motion for Previous Question. As long as anyone has something to say, give the person a chance to say it. When no one wishes to speak, the vote should be taken. Remember that to call out "Question" merely indicates you are ready to vote and is not a motion to call Previous Question.
8. A Division of the House may be demanded by any member on any question in which a vote has been taken. The call for Division of the House must be made before another motion has been placed before the assembly.
9. A motion to suspend the rules must be passed by a 2/3 majority of the assembly. This procedure is needed when the group wishes to consider a piece of legislation which is not on the official calendar or when altering the order of business.

#### SECTION VII: INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCOREKEEPERS

1. There will be two scorekeepers per session.
2. Speakers will be scored only for speeches which debate the bills and resolutions and for speeches which present amendments that are accepted for consideration. Speakers shall be scored on:
  - A. Pro and con speeches on bills, resolutions, and amendments.
  - B. Presentation of amendments that are seconded by a 1/3 vote of Senate.

Note: No points shall be given for motions, questions clarifications, etc.

3. Scorekeepers are encouraged to alternate the scoring of speeches. They are encouraged to take notes to assist them in rating each speech on its own merits, using the categories on the ballot.
4. The purpose of Parliamentary debate is to reach consensus through advancement of debate, clarification of issues and attempts at compromise solutions. Therefore, there are times when a one-minute speech may be more appropriate than a three-minute one.
5. At the end of each session each scorekeeper shall nominate their top six students for Outstanding Speaker. Scorekeepers do not have to choose the student with the top score but should weigh the overall impression made throughout the Senate session. Scorekeepers may not nominate students from their own schools. A scorekeeper may suggest such a student to the Parliamentarian. This nomination will be done without consultation with the Parliamentarian and shall be turned in to the PHSSL tab room representative in charge of Senate.
6. Points for Senate participants will be determined by no more than four speeches per session. This is in the spirit of promoting and forwarding debate. If more than four speeches are given by a student, then the four speeches with the highest point value will be counted.

#### SECTION VIII: INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARIAN

1. The primary duty of the Parliamentarian is to be available to settle problems that might arise relating to procedure. Ordinarily he/she should remain in the background, but step forward firmly when his/her presence is required. The Parliamentarian should be knowledgeable concerning the PHSSL Senate Procedures and Robert's Rules of Order, revised 1990, and should be available to counsel the Presiding Officer and the assembly about these rules and regulations. The purpose of the Senate is to debate legislation, and it is the Parliamentarian's duty to see that this is done.
2. Since the Senate will not use committees to set agenda, the Parliamentarian should preside initially, take roll call, and then elect the Presiding Officer for the first session.
3. The Parliamentarian will score the Presiding officer (per the Student Congress Handbook)
4. The same person will serve as Parliamentarian for all sessions in order to give the Senate a sense of continuity. In the event of the temporary absence of the Parliamentarian, the Executive Committee member in charge of Senate shall assume the duties of the Parliamentarian.
5. The Parliamentarian, as the only person to have observed all the sessions, may in writing, and without consultation, nominate six students for Senate honors. These nominations shall be turned in to the PHSSL tab room representative in charge of Senate. In the event that these students have been previously nominated by a scorekeeper, there shall be no additional names submitted.

## SECTION IX: SESSIONS

The Senate will meet for debate as follows:

Session I Friday 4:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Session II Friday 8:30-9:00 PM and Saturday 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM

Super Session Saturday 12:00 NOON to 2:00 PM

The house may take a brief recess as appropriate in each session.

## SECTION X: SUPER SESSION

1. After Session II, members of both chambers will meet in combined session with nominated students from each chamber competing in a Super Session which will consist of parliamentary debate of bills or resolutions that have not yet been debated in either chamber.

2. Entry into the Super Session will be as follows:

a. Cumulative Rank Scores based on Nomination by the Score Keepers in each Senate chamber and Nomination by the Parliamentarian of each Senate chamber

(1) In the event of a unicameral Senate, the top eight students shall advance.

(2) In the event of a bicameral Senate, the top five, six or seven students from each chamber shall advance, depending upon the number of students in a chamber. For chambers of 14-17, the top five, 18-20, the top six, and 20-28, the top seven.

(3) In the event of a tie which would otherwise cause more than the maximum of students to advance, the parliamentarian's ranks shall be used to break the tie.

3. There shall be two judges in the Super Session.

4. A Parliamentarian shall act as both parliamentarian and presiding officer as the purpose of the Super Session is to promote debate among the contestants.

## SECTION XI: SENATE HONORS AND AWARDS

1. At the conclusion of the Super Session the parliamentarian assisted by a member of the Executive Board, shall preside at the balloting for Outstanding, Superior, and Merit Speakers.

2. Voting shall be by preferential ballot, with each judge and Senate member ranking in order of preference the top six speakers. Any ballot which does not rank six speakers will be disallowed.



3. The Parliamentarian shall also vote by preferential ballot with his vote being opened only in the event of a tie.

4. All student ballots will be tallied according to the following procedure:

a. Each candidate will have his/her ranks, as voted by the members of the house, counted and totaled on a tally sheet with each rank having its own value:

1 = 6 points

2 = 5 points

3 = 4 points

4 = 3 points

5 = 2 points

6 = 1 point

b. Example:

	Ranks	Score	Total Rank
Student A	1-1-1-2-3-3-3-4-4-5-5-5	18, 5, 12, 6, 6	47 2
Student B	1-1-2-2-2-4-5-6	12, 15, 3, 2, 1	33 5
Student C	1-2-2-2-3-3-3-3-4-4-5-6	6, 15, 16, 6, 2, 1	46 3
Student D	1-1-2-2-3-3-3-4-4-4-6-6	12, 10, 12, 9, 2	45 4
Student E	1-2-3-3-3-5-5-6	6, 5, 12, 4, 1	28 6
Student F	1-1-2-2-2-2-2-3-3-3-3-6	12, 25, 16, 1	54 1
Student G	1-2-3-4-5-6	6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1	21 7
Student H	1-5-6	6, 2, 1	9 8

4. The judges will have their ballots counted and ranked in the same way.

5. Outstanding, Superior, and Merit Speakers will be selected as follows:

Cumulative Rank of House Members, Judge 1, Judge 2

6. The order of all Super Session members will be determined by the ascending rank totals with the lowest total being ranked first and the highest total 12.

a. Example:

	House	Rank	Judge	Judge	Total	Place
Student A	2	1	1	4	1	Outstanding
Student B	5	7	5	17	5	Merit
Student C	3	3	4	10	4	Merit
Student D	4	2	3	9	3	Merit
Student E	6	6	7	19	7	
Student F	1	4	2	7	2	Superior
Student G	7	5	6	18	6	Merit
Student H	8	7	7	22	8	

\*Note: All students not ranked by a judge will be given a rank of 7.

7. Awards shall be as follows:

a. Trophies Outstanding, Superior, and Merit Speakers

b. Gavels Presiding Officers

c. Certificates Students ranked 7 thru 15

d. Rank Award

1 Outstanding

2 Superior

3-6 Merit

## SECTION XII: SWEEPSTAKES

1. Sweepstakes points will be awarded to those students advancing to the Super Session according to the order in which they were placed by the balloting of the Senate membership and the judges.

Outstanding Speaker 25 points

Superior Speaker 20 points

3rd 15 points

4th 10 points

5th 5 points

6th 5 points

All other Super Session Members 2 points

1. See Article B16.13, PHSSL Bylaws.

### SECTION XIII: RULES PERTAINING TO A BI-CAMERAL SENATE

1. When a second Senate is formed the houses shall be named:
  - a. Ursin Senate
  - b. Stanton Senate
2. When possible, students shall be assigned to each chamber in a manner which will insure geographical distribution.
3. The business of each chamber shall proceed as outlined in previous sections.
4. The nominated student will then meet in a unicameral House at a time and place determined by the Senate director. This will be designated as the Super Session.
5. The procedure to select students advancing to the Super Session is as stated in Section XI, Article 2.
6. Balloting to determine Senate honors will proceed as outlined in Section XII.

### SECTION XIV: MISCELLANEOUS RULES

1. The results of all votes cast in the House will be based on the number of votes cast (aye or nay). Abstentions shall not be counted.
2. Arguing with the Presiding Officer is not permitted under any circumstances. If it is believed that the Chair has committed a serious error, a member may appeal the decision of the chair. It should always be remembered, however, that the purpose of Senate is to debate legislation not to show off knowledge of procedure.

3. Right of editorial reply will not be recognized in the Senate. However, a previous speaker has the right to question an opposing speaker.
4. Points of Information are permitted for parliamentary business only.
5. In the case of disputes regarding parliamentary procedure, the Parliamentarian shall rule based on his/her knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order, revised 1990, and the PHSSL Senate Procedures. The Parliamentarian's interpretation of these two sets of rules will serve as the final authority.
6. The Parliamentarian shall call roll to ensure that all Super Session members are present.
7. One of the Senate Presiding Officers shall be elected along with a House Clerk to read the Joint Resolution at the Awards Assembly.
8. Plagiarism or fabrication of evidence is prohibited and will result in a student being disqualified from the tournament.
9. Qualified Senators will add to a school's Individual Event (IE) judge quota.

# Congressional Debate

<b>Table of Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions</b>							
Type	Motion	Purpose	Second <sup>1</sup> Required?	Debatable?	Amenable?	Required Vote <sup>2</sup>	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. To 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 to 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 <sup>o</sup>	To modify an amendment	1/3	Yes	No	Majority	No
	3. Amend <sup>o</sup>	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 T=Time
2. The number
3. Report when or to what standing committee

\* Nos. 3 and 4 by:

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

# **SAMPLE BILL**

In The

Pennsylvania High School Speech League

by

Susquehanna High School

1. Be it enacted by the Pennsylvania High School Speech League Student Congress assembled that
2. Section 1. A federal commission will be established to mandate the use of speed governors, set at fifty-five miles per hour, by all motor vehicles in the United States.
3. Section 2. The retrofitting of motor vehicles will be mandated and vehicles will be inspected at time of vehicle licensing.
4. Section 3. New vehicles be fitted at time of manufacture in the United States and at time of importation for foreign vehicles.
5. Section 4. Emergency vehicles will be exempt from this act.
6. Section 5. A \$200 fine and removal of vehicle will be the punishment for driving a vehicle without a governor.
7. Section 6. This act will take effect on June 1, 1998.

# SAMPLE RESOLUTION

In The  
Pennsylvania High School Speech League  
by  
Susquehanna High School

1           Whereas, the United States imports 48% of its crude oil from the  
2 Persian Gulf area, and

3           Whereas, the United States' Gross National Product is highly  
4 dependent on energy, and

5           Whereas, the United States' allies are militarily dependent on Persian  
6 Gulf oil, and

7           Whereas, Russia is gradually expanding into the Persian Gulf area,  
8 therefore,

9   BE IT RESOLVED by the Pennsylvania High School Speech League  
10 Student

11 Congress assembled that the United States should increase its military  
12 and economic aid in the Persian Gulf area in order to prevent the  
13 domination of the Persian Gulf by the Soviet Union.