

## **Preparing Bill Ideas for Iowa Youth Congress Regional Meetings**

**Come up with a good idea for a bill.** You can read about current events, look into topics that interest you to brainstorm of ideas, as well as use a small team to brainstorm good ideas with. Your chosen bill idea will address an issue that you think needs to be addressed through receiving acknowledgment, action, restriction or funding. Search current and past Iowa/National State Congressional bills to make sure your specific idea hasn't already been addressed.

**Research your issue.** Georgetown's online Law Library has great online access to records of congressional meetings, committees and reports about your issue. FindLaw has overviews and news about all [legal issues](#). Google Scholar and other scholarly article databases (ask your librarian) can also give you up to date information about your topic of interest. Institute any assistants or support staff you have available to help with research.

**Develop a supportive outline.** Before you write out the bill in the correct format, write out all your thoughts and research points in this format:

Main Idea of the Bill:

Why, Reason 1:

Supporting reason/evidence:

Supporting reason/evidence:

Why, Reason 2:

Supporting reason/evidence:

Supporting reason/evidence:

Why, Reason 3:

Supporting reason/evidence:

Supporting reason/evidence:

This bill is important and urgent because: (summarize above information for this section).

***The bill itself should just be a statement of facts – telling others what you want and how you want it to happen. Use the supportive outline as a guide to your speaking points, which is the time when you will get to tell others all about why your bill is important and what evidence you're using to support it.***

**Create a bill document.** All bills have the same general structure. Look at the following outline to see how bills are formatted. You will need to divide your issue into sections based on important points/issues related to your bill.

## **The format of a basic bill:**

### Title

(try to make this an informative or interesting. Example = not the “Iowa and Student Volunteerism” bill, but rather “Youth Volunteer Empowerment” bill.)

BE IT ENACTED BY THIS CONGRESS THAT:

**SECTION 1.** State the new policy in a brief declarative sentence, or in as few sentences as possible.

**SECTION 2.** Define any ambiguous terms inherent in the first section.

**SECTION 3.** Name the government agency that will oversee the enforcement of the bill along with the specific enforcement mechanism.

**SECTION 4.** Indicate the implementation date/timeframe.

**SECTION 5.** State that all other laws that are in conflict with this new policy shall hereby be declared null and void.

*Introduced by Name*

**Come the Regional Meeting prepared with the 1) supportive outline, 2) the formatted bill draft for your idea and 3) at least two pieces of supporting research to support your bill. Please bring some extra copies for other students. Please send materials to coordinator electronically two days before the meeting or earlier.**

I can't wait to see what you all come up with.

Let me know if you have any questions or need any help. Call me at 515.725.2836 or [frances.collins-dusseault@iowa.gov](mailto:frances.collins-dusseault@iowa.gov).

Have Fun,

*Frances Collins-Dusseault*