



TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT

STATE AFFAIRS FORUM

Student Manual



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PURPOSE

State Affairs Forum is designed to broaden delegates' knowledge on pre-selected topics. State Affairs Forum uses the structure of committee hearings with parliamentary procedure to encourage debate, allow discussion, and foster in-depth understanding of topics. Students are allowed to take whatever approach they want of any of the pre-selected topics for that year.

Delegates are highly encouraged to use visual aids during the presentation of proposals. Suggested ideas include posters, skits, props, audience participation, etc. **Delegates must bring anything needed for visual aids (easel, etc.) to the District and State Conferences. Electronic visual aids are not permitted.** Delegates are encouraged to be vocal, listen intently, and participate as much as possible. The more involved delegates are, the livelier the debate and committee process will be.

It is the purpose of the SAF General Assembly to arrive at some well thought out and well discussed (debated) solutions (not legislation) for major problems facing Texas as well as national and international issues. The proposals that are passed by the General Assembly will be sent to the Youth Governor. Review the sample proposal on page 15.

ORGANIZATION

1. Students work individually or in teams of 2-3 with each person responsible for researching, writing, and presenting the proposal. In cases of multiple authors, all authors must be part of the presentation team.
2. The SAF Chair develops topics with assistance from the State Office and Section Leaders. Topics are available to all YG participants on or before September 2nd. Topics are debated as set forth in the Policy and Procedures section of this State Affairs Forum manual. At least 50% of topics will not have been debated the previous year.
3. Proposals must be broad enough to encompass all aspects of a given area, yet include terms of justifications or needs assessment, proposed plan of action, and expected outcome or future planning recommendations. **Proposals do not deal with funding requirements or funding issues related to the selected topic.**
4. **Proposals are to be typed single-spaced on white paper. Limit 1 page per proposal. Delegates' names and YMCA MUST appear on the proposal form as must the proposal topic.** Please follow format in example.
5. All proposals must be turned in by the assigned deadline to compete at the District Conference. After the District Conference, any proposals requiring revisions must be turned in to the District Director by the established deadline. **Delegates must bring a hard copy of their proposal to the District and State Conferences.**
6. Delegates are responsible for bringing any materials needed for visual aids (posters, pictures, easels, etc) to the District and State Conference. Skits qualify as a visual aid. **Electronic visual aids are not permitted.**
7. Committee chair and clerk allocations permit at least one chair and one clerk per District. District Directors submit the top-ranked committee team and a list of alternate teams with state registration. All vacancies are filled by the State Director and/or Section Leader. **Everyone** who participates in State Affairs Forum **must also be a proposal author** (including State Affairs Forum Chair).
8. An election will be held during General Assembly to choose the State Affairs Forum



Chair for the upcoming year. Applications must be submitted prior to the State Conference, and delegates must meet candidate requirements.

Policy and Procedures for State Affairs Forum

Selecting Your Proposal Topic

- **Choose from pre-selected topics areas** released each fall by the State Office
- **Focus on big-picture issues** (state, national, or international) that affect Texans
- Proposals must include:
 - Justification / needs assessment (why it matters to Texans)
 - Plan of action (your solution)
 - Expected outcome (impact)
- **Keep it broad and realistic** — no funding requirements, but practical enough to spark debate
- **Review the banned topics list** to ensure your idea does not conflict

Rules of Decorum in General Assembly

1. The State Affairs Forum Chair shall enforce, apply, and interpret the rules in all deliberations.
2. The State Affairs Forum Chair shall preserve order and decorum. In case of disturbance or disorderly conduct in the chamber, galleries, or lobby, he/she may order that these areas be cleared. He/she shall see that members conduct themselves in a civil manner in accordance with the accepted standard of parliamentary conduct.
3. No delegate may pass between the chair and the presiding officer when another delegate is speaking. Delegates may not enter or leave during proposal presentations. Delegates must be present for entire presentation of proposal to vote.
4. Sponsors and/or guests shall abide by parliamentary conduct and may only enter or leave between proposals. Videotaping and photography should be handled in a discreet manner.
5. All delegates, sponsors, and visitors are required to turn their cell phones/pagers/iPods off upon entering all committees/assemblies.
6. If at any time a delegate wishes to speak, he/she must follow General Assembly protocol:
 - Raise name placard.
 - Be recognized by the State Affairs Forum Chair.
 - Stand and state name and YMCA affiliation.
 - A delegate will be called out of order if he/she fails to comply with any of the above mentioned rules of decorum.

A person may be recognized more than once during a proposal. The Chair will attempt to keep recognition even, but if no other speakers want the floor, the same person may be recognized multiple times.

If there are no delegates voluntarily seeking the floor during pro/con debate, the State Affairs Forum Chair may appoint a speaker at his/her discretion.

Motions

1. Motions may be made at any time that a committee member is recognized by the State Affairs Forum Chair to speak.
2. Examples of when motions can be used:
 - A. To extend the time for technical non-debatable questions.
 - B. To stop pro/con debate.
 - C. To extend pro/con debate.
3. A motion must be passed by the committee in order for it to go in effect. The Chair will choose if the motion passes or fails based on the audible sound of Ayes and

Nays. If it is even, the Chair will decide on passing the motion. When the State Affairs Forum Chair rules that the motion has passed or failed, it is the final decision. **At no time may the State Affairs Forum Chair or any delegate call division during the voting of a motion.**

Opening Statement

1. Time allotted is 2 minutes.
2. Proposal author(s) may yield remaining time to closing summation.



Technical Non-Debatable Questions

1. Time allotted is a total of 2 minutes for this section (includes question and answers).
2. Proposal authors are limited to a 1 minute response time per question.

Pro/Con Debate

1. There will be two rounds of pro/con debate with a one-minute time limit for each speaker.
2. Motions are in order during pro/con debate. A motion to extend the two rounds of pro/con debate or to extend the one-minute speaking time limit must occur before the final con speaker. **Extensions cannot be made after the beginning of the final con speaker.**
3. If a speaker is out of order, the State Affairs Forum Chair will move on to the next speaker.
4. Questions are admissible during pro/con speeches if proper procedure is followed. Procedure to ask questions is as follows:
 - After being recognized by the Chair, delegate asks, "Will the author yield to a question?" or "Will the author yield to a series of questions?"
 - Author does have the right to refuse.
 - Delegate may reserve the right to speak after the question(s) by stating "I reserve my right to speak afterwards."
5. If there are no delegates voluntarily seeking the floor during pro/con debate, the State Affairs Forum Chair may appoint a speaker at his/her discretion.

Amendments

Friendly amendments are amendments proposed by the author. These must be submitted to Chair before the opening statement. Examples include spelling corrections, addition or deletion of names of authors, inclusion or exclusion of lines, etc.

Closing Summation

Time allotted is 2 minutes plus time yielded from opening statement.

Division

1. Division must be called between the gavel raps of the Chair on his/her ruling.
2. The State Affairs Forum Chair has the ability to override a call for a division and rule, as he/she deems appropriate.
3. If there is a tie during a division, the State Affairs Forum Chair has the deciding vote.
4. **Division may not be called while voting on amendments or motions.**

DISTRICT OFFICES

Whenever possible, each District provides at least one committee chair and clerk to head a State Affairs Forum committee at the State Conference in Austin Thursday evening and Friday. The committee chair does not have to be a candidate for State Conference State Affairs Forum Chair. Committee assignments for chairs and clerks will be determined at State. At the State Conference, the assigned chair and clerk must also be proposal authors. Each District is encouraged to have a candidate for State Conference State Affairs Forum Chair.

STATE OFFICE

State Affairs Forum Chair - each delegate will have only 1 vote to cast for this position. This position is elected after lunch during General Assembly of the State Conference prior to the year of service. Candidates for State Affairs Forum Chair must present a proposal at the District and State Conference. Candidate must be a junior and meet all candidate requirements, including participation in State Affairs Forum as a sophomore.

Candidate must have experience as a committee chair at the District Conference and State Conference.

OUTSTANDING DELEGATES

Award decisions will be made by adults assisting with State Affairs Forum with input from State Affairs Forum Chair and delegates. Criteria for Outstanding Delegate include:

1. Quality of Proposal Presentation
2. Organization
3. Knowledge of Subject
4. Creative Approach to Problem
5. Realistic Proposal/Feasibility

LEADERSHIP/VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN THIS SECTION

Students

- Hearing Committee Chair
- Hearing Committee Clerk
- State Affairs Forum Chair (elected Officer)

Adults

- Section Leader
- Room Monitors
- Evaluators
- Runners

PRO/CON INTENT SPEECH PROCEDURES

During General Assembly, time will be allotted for one pro and one con intent speaker for each proposal. This speaker will research the topic and present a three-minute speech to convince the audience to vote for or against the proposal.

On Friday night at 9:00 p.m., the Section Leaders will present the list of proposals that advance

to GA. To sign up for a Pro/Con Intent Speech, you must abide by the following guidelines:

- Delegates are to make a single file line in the lobby of the Renaissance.
- Once in line, we will give you a ticket number.
 - You will sign up for your speech in the order of the ticket numbers.
 - You may choose any proposal.
 - The first people in line will be the first to sign up.
- Each delegate may present ONE pro or con intent speech.
- Delegates may NOT sign another person’s name.
- Delegates may NOT save spots in line or cut in line.
- Speeches MUST be on paper and not on a cell phone

Delegates will have one night to prepare their speeches. They will present during the allotted time in General Assembly.



PROCEEDINGS FOR STATE AFFAIRS FORUM COMMITTEE CHAIR

(Adult volunteers pass out evaluations

to delegates) **Opening Statement**

section

- "The next proposal is proposal number (# of proposal)".
- "Friendly amendments from proposal authors may be presented now."
- "The author will have 2 minutes for opening statements."
- "The author has yielded minutes/seconds (amount of time left after opening statement) to closing summation."

Technical Non-Debatable Questions section

- "We will now move on to 2 total minutes of technical non-debatable questions and answers."
- "Please state questions and responses in a concise manner."
- "Time has elapsed for technical non-debatable questions."

Pro/Con Debate section

- "We now move on to 2 rounds of pro/con debate. Each round presentation will be limited to one minute."
- "Do we have a pro speaker at this time?" (If no delegate volunteers, appoint one.)
- "Do we have a con speaker at this time?" (If no delegate volunteers, appoint one.)
- "We now move to our final pro speaker."
- "We now move to our final con speaker."

Closing summation section

- "The author(s) now have (time = 2 minutes + time yielded from opening remarks) for their closing summation."
- "Thank you delegate(s)."

Voting:

1st and 2nd Committee:

- "Delegates, please fill out your evaluation form and pass it to the end of the row."

General Assembly

- "We will now vote on this proposal."
- "All in favor please signify by saying Aye."
- "All opposed signify by saying Nay."
- "In the eyes of the chair, this proposal do (pass/fail)."



CHAIR/CLERK FAQs

- **“How do I make a motion?”**
 - Delegate raises his/her placard and waits to be called on.
 - Once the Chair calls on the delegate, he or she rises and says “(Name) from (District), I rise to make a motion.”
 - Chair says, “State the manner of your motion.”
 - Delegate says “I motion to...(have a bathroom break, take our jackets off, extend pro/con debate, extend questioning, etc.).”
 - Chair may decide whether to accept or deny the motion.
- **“How do I make an amendment to a proposal?”**
 - During the questioning period, the delegate must write down his or her amendment on an amendment slip and place it on the Chair’s desk.
 - Ex: In line 2, “(original sentence)” should be changed to “(new sentence).”
 - Once the questioning period has ended, the Chair says, “There is an amendment on the floor, will the amendment authors come to the front?”
 - After the amendment author has come forward, the clerk will be asked to read the amendment.
 - The amendment author will then have 30 seconds to explain the amendment.
 - Remind the amendment author to state name and delegation before speaking.
 - The proposal authors will then decide whether to accept or reject the amendment.
 - Proposal authors will be given 30 seconds to explain why they accept or reject the amendment.
 - The Chair will then say, “The committee will now vote on this amendment. All those in favor of accepting this amendment, say ‘Aye’ in a normal speaking tone. All those opposed to accepting this amendment, say ‘Nay.’”
 - It is up to the Chair to determine whether the amendment passes or fails based on Aye/Nay breakdown.
 - Remind proposal authors that once an amendment has been made, it is permanent and will be a part of the proposal throughout the rest of the weekend.
- **“What is a technical, non-debatable question? What is a debatable question?”**
 - A technical, non-debatable question is quantitative and should be specific, asking about the facts, numbers, or clarification of the proposal. **THESE ARE ALLOWED.**
 - Ex: “How many police officers have been reprimanded for their behavior in 2015?”
 - A debatable question is ideological and is not specific to the proposal. Delegates may not ask about funding, money, or why the proposal author feels a particular way about the subject. **THESE ARE NOT ALLOWED.**
 - Ex: “How would you fund this proposal?” “Why do you think that certain ethnic groups are targeted by the police more?”
 - If a delegate asks a debatable question, the Chair says, “I’m sorry delegate, that is a debatable question and you are out of order,” and the delegate then sits down.
- **Miscellaneous**
 - How to call someone out of order:



- Say, "I'm sorry delegate, you're out of order because...(state reason), please be seated" if...
 - Delegate does not state name or delegation.
 - Delegate phone goes off.
 - Delegate asks debatable question.
- Remind delegates that if they leave the room at any time, they cannot vote on the proposal being presented.
- Remind delegates that their phone must be off or on silent.
- Remind delegates to fill out their evaluation forms in a timely manner.



Suggested Agenda for State Affairs Forum at District Conference

1. **Introductions and Placards** (10 minutes)
2. **Proposal Sharing** (50 minutes)
 - Delegates will split into small groups of unlike topics (if numbers permit). Number of topics per small group will be determined by number of proposals submitted for presentation.
 - Delegates will have 5 minutes to discuss their proposal with the committee.
 - Committee members will use that time to suggest any changes or additions that might enhance the proposal at that time. Delegates can choose to accept any changes or additions and add them as friendly amendments when presenting proposals in the General Assembly.
3. **Explanation** of Rules for General Assembly Proceedings, Decorum, and Evaluations by District State Affairs Forum Chair (10 minutes)
4. **Proposal Presentations**
*schedule time for breaks and lunch
5. **Turn in list of Outstanding Delegates**
6. **Vote** on State Affairs Forum Chair candidate for State Conference
7. Determine potentially State-bound proposals (up to top two per topic).

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR DISTRICT CONFERENCE AND STATE CONFERENCE

- Gavel for State Affairs Forum Chair
- Microphone for State Affairs Forum Chair
- Stopwatch
- Blue paint tape
- Placards
- Calculators for each adult helper
- Copies of proposal evaluation forms
- Copies of pro/con and amendment slips
- Poster board to post proposal results
- Pens for delegates
- Markers to make placards
- Rubber bands
- Paperclips
- Tables and chairs for adult workers
- Head table with 2 chairs for State Affairs Forum Chair and Clerk
- Evaluations (# of proposals X # of delegates)

Note to District Director:

Please make sure you assign at least one adult representative from your District to help with State Affairs Forum at the State Conference. Please make sure a Committee Chair and Clerk are elected to help with the first and second round of committees if you do not have anyone from your District as a candidate for State Affairs Forum Chair.

TENTATIVE STATE AFFAIRS FORUM STATE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Thursday Night

Room Set-Up and Materials

- Head table with 2 chairs and microphone
- 150-200 chairs group facing head table
- Two tables for sign-in and placards
- Markers and blank placards (or pre-printed placards)
- Gavel
- Three tables and 12 chairs for volunteers set up in center of room if in Rio Grande Ballroom
- Pens

Prior to first session: Meet with State Affairs Forum Chair and State Affairs Forum Chair nominees to discuss structure of committees and protocol.

State Affairs Forum convenes.

1. Distribute placards.
2. State Affairs Forum Chair and Section Leaders will explain evaluations, rules of decorum, committee proceedings, and importance of placard. Section Leaders will add training elements as needed.
3. Delegates will split into small groups of unlike topics (if numbers permit). Number of topics per small group will be determined by number of proposals submitted for presentation. Delegates will have five minutes to discuss their proposal with the committee. Committee members will use that time to suggest any changes or additions that might enhance the proposal at that time. Delegates can choose to accept any changes or additions and add them as friendly amendments when presenting proposals in committees or the General Assembly.
4. Introduce State Affairs Forum Chair candidates for the following year.



Friday Morning Schedule

Room Set-Up and Materials

- 9-10 head tables with 2 chairs per group
- 15-20 chairs per group facing head table
- 1 microphone in center of room by tables for adult workers
- Two tables for sign-in and placards
- Three tables and 12 chairs for volunteers set up in center of room if in Rio Grande Ballroom
- Calculators, 9-10 stopwatches, and 9-10 gavels (1 for each head table)
- 9-10 poster boards for posting proposal results along with blue paint tape
- Easels – 9-10
- Rubber bands and pens
- Evaluation forms (number of proposals X number of delegates)
- Pro/con slips
- Amendment slips

First Committee Session

1. Break into committees (9-10 based on number of proposals).
2. Need 9-10 meeting rooms (approximately 15-20 people each).
3. Each committee should have a designated chair and clerk with the State Affairs Forum Chair overseeing all committees and making sure that they are running smoothly.
4. Each delegate must fill out an evaluation on each proposal.
5. Advancement is based on pass/fail and evaluations.

Friday Early Afternoon

Room Set-Up and Materials

- 4-5 head tables with 2 chairs per group
- 30-40 chairs per group facing head table
- Microphone for each group
- Two tables for sign-in and placards
- Three tables and 12 chairs for volunteers set up in center of room if in Rio Grande Ballroom
- Calculators, 4-5 stopwatches, and 4-5 gavels (1 for each head table)
- 4-5 poster boards for posting proposal results along with blue paint tape
- Easels – 4-5
- Rubber bands and pens
- Evaluation forms (number of proposals X number of delegates)
- Pro/con slips
- Amendment slips

Second Committee

1. Break into committees.
2. Need 4-5 meeting rooms (approximately 30 people each).
3. Each committee should have a designated chair and clerk with the State Affairs

Forum Chair overseeing all committees and making sure that they are running smoothly.

4. Each delegate must fill out an evaluation on each proposal.
5. Advancement is based on pass/fail and evaluations.

Saturday Final Round

Room Set-Up and Materials

- 1 head table with 2 chairs and microphone
- 150-200 chairs facing head table
- Microphone
- Two tables for sign-in and placards
- Three tables and 12 chairs for volunteers set up on one side of room
- 1 stopwatch and 1 gavel at head table
- 1 poster board for posting proposal results along with blue paint tape
- Easel
- Pens
- Pro/con slips
- Amendment slips

General Assembly

1. Present final round proposals.
2. No evaluations need to be done during final round (voting instead).
3. State Affairs Forum Chair announces which proposals passed.
4. Outstanding Delegate forms completed by advisors.
5. Election of new State Affairs Forum Chair.
6. Closing remarks by outgoing Chair.
7. Closing of session.

At the end of the State Conference General Assembly, the State Affairs Forum Chair will submit passed proposals to the Youth Governor to be announced at the Closing Assembly.



FOR STUDENT USE

Proposal Number _____

Organization (Using Scale of 1-5) 1 2 3 4 5

- a. Did the delegate order his or her points understandably and appropriately?
- b. Did the delegate ensure his or her key message came across using strategies like repetition and visual aids?

Creative Approach to Problem (Using Scale of 1-5) 1 2 3 4 5

- a. Was the delegate's solution innovative and non-legislative?
- b. Did the delegate's use of visual aids strengthen his or her argument?

Realistic Proposal/Feasibility (Using Scale of 1-5) 1 2 3 4 5

- a. Did the delegate offer specifics regarding implementation of his or her proposal (e.g. cost, staff, etc.)?
- b. Did the delegate cite similar models that have addressed problems effectively and/or clearly explain the rationale for his or her approach to the problem?

Knowledge of Subject (Using Scale of 1-5) 1 2 3 4 5

- a. Was the delegate able to respond to other delegates' questions about his or her proposal with confidence and accuracy?
- b. Did the delegate effectively use answers to questions to reinforce his or her points?
- c. Did the delegate cite statistics, anecdotes, and/or other evidence in support of his or her proposal?

Proposal Presentation (Using Scale of 1-5) 1 2 3 4 5

- a. Did the delegate:
 - i. Stand up straight and make eye contact?
 - ii. Use proper grammar and avoid slang?
 - iii. Refrain from yelling/raising his or her voice?
 - iv. Project adequately?
 - v. Respond respectfully to challenging questions?

Total:

COMMENTS

Guidelines for (1-5) Scoring: The following represent general guidelines evaluators should apply to each category on the score sheet. It is strongly recommended that evaluators use "3" to indicate an average performance and adjust higher or lower for stronger or weaker performances.

1 — POOR PERFORMANCE

- Poor presentation
- Inadequate knowledge of proposal topic/SAF guidelines

2 — FAIR PERFORMANCE

- Awkward presentation
- Poise and delivery need more work

3 — GOOD PERFORMANCE

- Acceptable but uninspired presentation
- Needs more creativity and persuasiveness

4 — ABOVE AVERAGE PERFORMANCE

- Well organized; demonstrates thorough preparation
- Smooth, engaging, creative presentation

5 — EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE

- Demonstrates excellent preparation; well organized presentation and ideas extraordinary and realistic, not overly rehearsed or memorized

Remember, your personal political views/perception of the political feasibility of the proposal should NOT affect your ratings in any section.



ADVISOR TIMELINE FOR STATE AFFAIRS FORUM

August to mid-September

- Educate students on State Affairs Forum procedures and topics.
- Use State Affairs Forum proceedings script and example proposal to practice a mock State Affairs Forum session.
- Students can research more than one topic from topic list and share information with the State Affairs Forum group.
- Students will then be well informed on multiple topics and can then make their final topic selection.

September

- Students select topic and begin research. Work as an individual author or in a group of 2 to 3 students.
- Encourage students to run for State Affairs Forum Chair and/or serve as committee chair or clerk at conferences. Fill out necessary candidate applications and submit by deadline.

October

- Students write proposal (no more than 2 pages, limit to 1 if possible), create visual aid, and practice presenting proposal.
- Encourage students to sign up for chair/clerk training (if offered by your District) so they can chair and/or clerk at the District and State Conferences.

November

- Continue practicing proposals.
- Have two mock State Affairs Forum sessions with advisors and volunteer adults evaluating students' proposals and presentation technique.
- Students should practice evaluating each other using the evaluation form.
- Make sure students' proposals follow proposal template.
- Make sure copies of all proposals are submitted online prior to the District deadline.
- Make sure students have all necessary equipment (easels) for visual aids.
- Attend District Conference with students and volunteer to help. This will help you to become more familiar with policies and procedures.



ADVISORTIMELINE FOR STATE AFFAIRS FORUM-CONTINUED

December

- After District Conference, communicate any changes to proposals with the District Director, delegates, and school advisors.
- Re-submit all current/updated/new proposals to District Director via online submission link as a part of the State registration materials.
- If proposals are not received prior to the deadline, it will be the responsibility of the students/school and YMCA advisor to provide copies for the number of State Affairs Forum delegates at the District and/or State Conference. Furthermore, the proposal will not be in the proposal book.

December, January, February (after District Conference)

- Make any revisions to proposals and submit online to District Director by established deadline.
- Continue to have mock State Affairs Forum sessions until time for the State Conference.

At the State Conference in Austin:

- It is expected that several adult volunteers will assist the State Affairs Forum Section Leader(s) from Thursday evening through Saturday afternoon. If you sign up for this role, please bring a pen and a calculator.
- Make sure students have a hard copy of their most current proposal, the one that will be debated at the State Conference with them (i.e. the one you submitted with the registration packet).
- Make sure students have all necessary materials for visual aid presentations (easels).

***Thank you for your efforts to
make the State Affairs Forum
section of
Texas Youth and Government a
success for all individuals
involved.***

***Remember that eight-lesson
curriculum available on YG
website can also guide
timeline/efforts before District
Conference.***



PROPOSAL LAYOUT

YMCA TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT STATE AFFAIRS FORUM PROPOSAL

Author: Enter First and Last Name of ALL Authors **YMCA:** Enter Middle School/High School.
YMCA: Enter YMCA. **City:** Enter City of Residence **PROPOSAL #:** (leave blank)

1 **Title or purpose:** (Must clearly state proposal topic).
2
3
4

5 **Major areas to be affected:** (List the key entities that would be impacted by this proposal).
6
7
8
9

10 **Justification:** (In paragraph form, show why we need your proposal. Include supporting
11 information, statistics, quotes, etc. Don't include all of your facts. You will have an opportunity
12 to present additional ideas during debate. Must state what the problem is and why it is a
13 problem that needs to be changed).
14
15
16
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21 **Proposal for action:** (State your proposal, your ideas for change and the steps to be taken
22 to solve the problem. You may use outline form or paragraph form. This is the main part of
23 your proposal and should be substantial enough to explain fully what you intend to do. You are
24 not writing legislation, rather, a broad proposal).
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34 **Results to be expected:** (The anticipated outcome and why your proposal will eliminate the
35 problem).
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37
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42



STATE AFFAIRS FORUM SAMPLE PROPOSAL

1 **Title:** Lack of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) professions

2 **Major area to be affected:**

3 Texas citizens

4 **Justification:**

5 From a young age, boys are encouraged to build forts and play with fake tools. Girls, on the other hand,
6 receive dolls and kitchen sets. This trend continues throughout elementary and middle school and when it
7 comes time to select a career path, girls rarely have enough exposure to science, technology, engineering,
8 and math (STEM) fields to actively pursue a profession in one. As a result, few acquire an education in a
9 STEM field and even fewer secure jobs within a STEM field.

10 Although women hold about half of the jobs in the American economy, they only account for 24% of the
11 workforce. This has led to a general shortage of possible employees within scientific professions. For
12 example, the number of women in aerospace engineering is far less than the number of men. In a college
13 class of 70 engineers, only 5 were women. Given that 23 of the 25 highest paying fields fall into the STEM
14 category, there should be an incentive for women to consider studying in one of the fields, not a deterrent.
15 With no monetary reason for women to avoid such a profession, it must tie back to the lack of exposure
16 they receive in their early education and childhood.

17 **Proposal for action:**

18 There are several steps that could be taken to encourage women to pursue more STEM professions.
19 Establishing local robotics teams and college research programs are just some of the ways that communities
20 can help tackle this issue. Exposing young girls to science at a young age through low cost, local science
21 camps could help increase interest in STEM. To extend this interest beyond childhood and into a career,
22 mentorship programs could be established. Throughout a young woman's education, a mentor from
23 secondary school, college, or the professional world could help guide her through the challenges she may
24 face. In addition to this, organizations like the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) can help encourage young
25 women to pursue careers by arranging for public speakers to discuss the benefits of STEM professions.
26 These organizations could also collaborate with STEM based companies to set up career site visits or tours
27 of science facilities and workplaces.

28 **Results to be expected:**

29 Exposure to career options and involvement in the hard sciences will raise awareness of occupational
30 opportunities and help dispel the stereotypes surrounding women in such fields. Eventually, the
31 disproportionately small number of women working in STEM professions should be corrected to match the
32 percentage of women within the workplace. Also, the salaries of the men and women within such
33 professions will be nearly identical.