



LEGISLATIVE SECTION



WHAT IS THE LEGISLATIVE SECTION?

The legislative section offers students a hands-on opportunity to experience the lawmaking process by drafting, debating, and passing original bills.

STEPS TO GETTING STARTED

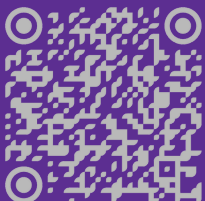
- Choose a topic you're passionate about and research how the state is already addressing the issue
- Write a bill
- Familiarize yourself with the Committee and Floor Debate
- Practice presenting your Bill
- Ask questions and debate on another delegate's bill

WHAT TO EXPECT

At Conferences, bills begin in randomly assigned small committee groups and each student will have the same amount of time to debate their bill.

Once committees have concluded, students will gather in a general assembly for a larger debate, where a small number of bills will be chosen to be debated as a group. At the District Conference, a bill does not need to be approved by its committee to move forward to the floor debate. Instead, section leaders decide which bills will be placed on the schedule, called the docket.

At the State Conference, the process is different since bills must be approved by the committee to move on. The Youth Governor and their cabinet then set the debate schedule for the Senate, while the Speaker of the House creates the schedule for House debates.



To learn more about the legislative section, scan the QR code here. This section page on ymcatexasyg.org offers a variety of helpful resources, including videos, tips, and guides designed to deepen your understanding.

HOW TO WRITE A BILL

Start by choosing a state-level topic you are passionate about, something debatable, researchable, and relevant to Texans. Make sure your topic does not appear on the banned topic list for that year and is approved by your club advisor.

Use the bill template on the website to organize your ideas. Your bill must include a heading, caption, definitions if needed, provisions, penalties if applicable, and an effective date. Once complete, get approval from your advisor and make sure the bill follows the correct format, fits on one page, and is ready for submission.

DEBATE



The goal of Texas Youth and Government has always been to follow the procedures followed by the actual Texas Legislature and Robert's Rules of Order when possible. However, modifications are made to adjust for our limited timeframe.

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

- Bill Laid Out – Clerk reads the bill's caption.
- Opening Remarks – Author presents for 3 minutes.
- Q&A Period – 5-minutes total; 1 minute per delegate.
- Pro/Con Debate – 2 pro and 2 con speakers (60 seconds each)
 - Only one question per delegate is allowed at this time.
- Amendment Period – Only 1 amendment
 - Clerk reads amendment for everyone
 - Amendment author (60 seconds)
 - Bill author responds (60 seconds)
 - Optional opponent (60 seconds)
 - Amendment author closes (60 seconds)
 - Vote on amendment
- Summation – Author gives 90-second closing.
- Motion – Request for favorable recommendation.
- Vote – Chamber votes on the motion.



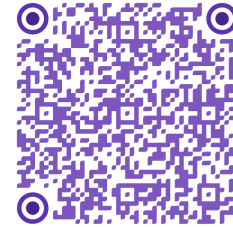
Watch a YG committee Debate on our YouTube Channel



How to Write a Bill



Students must **choose a state level topic** they are passionate about, something debatable, researchable, and relevant to Texans, while reflecting the core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Because we are privileged to use the Texas Capitol, students are expected to approach their work thoughtfully. Each student must **submit a new bill individually each year**. Topics must be approved by the Club Advisor and must not appear on the official **Bill Banned List found on the website**. Bills must follow the official format, fit on one page, and meet all submission deadlines set by the District and State Directors. To prepare, students should review the Legislative Basics, research thoroughly, and practice presenting their bill.



Use the bill template on the website to organize your ideas

HEADING

The heading identifies the author, their delegation (whether the club is a school or YMCA Branch), city they are from, and their grade. Students will be assigned a committee and a bill number to help identify the bill at conferences.

1



CAPTION

The caption is the first part of a bill and gives a short summary of what the bill is about. It helps lawmakers and others quickly understand the main topic and purpose of the bill.

2



DEFINITIONS

Include a Definitions section only if your bill uses technical, unfamiliar, or unclear terms. Although this section appears first, complete it after writing your provisions and penalties. If no definitions are needed, delete the section from the template and adjust the section numbers.

3



PROVISIONS

The Provision section is the most important part of the bill, where the proposed law or changes to existing law are written. Use formal language, avoid personal opinions, and ensure provisions match the bill's intent. Avoid vague words like "would," "should," or "will" and focus on clear actions required or prohibited.

4



PENALTIES

The penalty section is optional but needed if your bill creates a crime or requires enforcement. Decide whether penalties are necessary to support the law your bill proposes.

5



EFFECTIVE DATE

Most bills should take effect 90 days after the Youth Legislature adjourns. However, if a bill involves school schedules or time-sensitive actions, the effective date can be adjusted to better fit the context.

2



Follow the QR code to access lesson plans and resources that will guide you through how to write a bill and debate.

