



TIPS FOR EVALUATORS – STATE AFFAIRS FORUM

Welcome to Texas Youth and Government! Thank you for volunteering your time and expertise to help our students as an Evaluator!

What is Texas Youth and Government?

Since 1936, YMCA Youth and Government has offered students across the country the opportunity to serve their schools, communities, states and nation through model government, civic engagement, advocacy, leadership and character development, service-learning, and other opportunities to amplify youth voice and strengthen youth civic health.

Students may participate in any of our five sections which include Legislative, State Affairs Forum, Media, Mock Trial, and Appeals Court.

What is State Affairs Forum?

State Affairs Forum is designed to broaden participants' knowledge of pre-selected current events topic areas. State Affairs Forum uses the structure of committee hearings with parliamentary procedure where students propose solutions to important current issues. It encourages debate on these solutions and thereby fosters an in-depth understanding of the topics at hand. Delegates are encouraged to be vocal, listen intently, and participate as much as possible.

Our goal for our State Affairs Forum participants is for them to understand well-formulated solutions (not legislation) for major problems faced in Texas and the national/international community, furthering their holistic understanding of news events and empowering them to speak intelligently about feasible ways to address such problems.

At the District Conference and State Conference, delegates will present their proposals as individuals or in teams of 2 or 3 and engage in debate about their proposed solutions.

YMCA Core Values

In 1994, the Y defined "character" as the demonstration of four core values: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Today, these values continue to guide everything we do, and are the standard to which we hold the students who participate in our program. We expect our students, volunteers, and staff to show a sincere concern for others, be truthful in what they say and do, treat each other as we'd all like to be treated, and be accountable for promises and actions.

- **Respect:** Respect other delegates, value diverse perspectives, and treat others as we'd like to be treated.
- **Responsibility:** Be accountable for your promises and actions.
- **Caring:** Show compassion, kindness, and concern for others.
- **Honesty:** Be honest and truthful to ensure integrity in every conversation.



Best Practices for Scoring

In State Affairs Forum, delegates are scored both by their peers and by an evaluator.

As an evaluator, you're going to be evaluating the delivery of a proposal, debate skills, and the relevance of questions asked by the delegates. You will be given an evaluation sheet with criteria being rated 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent performance.

The following are some questions you can consider guiding your scoring for each area.

Grammar and Organization

- Did the delegate logically explain their line of reasoning and appropriately make the case for their proposal?
- Did the delegate speak using complete sentences and language that is appropriate for their topic?
- Did the delegate repeat themselves or did they consistently provide new points to support their proposal?
- Did the delegate ensure his or her key message came across using strategies like repetition and visual aids?

Quality of Oral Delivery

- Did the delegate present themselves well and make eye contact when speaking?
- Does the delegate read off what they have written down?
- Do they engage with the audience during their proposal?
- Did the delegate respond respectfully when asked questions or asking questions?
- Did the delegate utilize a visual aid in support their proposal?

Quality of Questions

- Did the delegate's questions to others meaningfully further debate?
- Was the delegate able to respond to other delegates' questions about their proposal with confidence and accuracy?
- Did the delegate respond to questions with supporting evidence that helped to support their proposal?

Demonstration of Y Core Values

- Did the delegate speak respectfully to other delegates asking challenging questions?
- Did the delegate demonstrate that they are passionate about making positive change in their community?
- Did the delegate ask questions at the appropriate time, without causing interruptions to the flow of the committee?

Relevance to Debate:

- Did the delegate only ask questions pertinent to the topic of discussion?
- Did the delegate bring a unique perspective when answering or asking questions about proposals?



Please remember to be consistent while evaluating in the committee rooms. Its important that all students are scored fairly, and consistently across the duration of the session.

- Delegates do speak fast, so be ready.
- Please be unbiased and consistent.
- Distinguished delegates at district are selected from committees.
- Delegates who frequently ask questions unrelated to the topic at hand, or that cause disruption that does not further debate should have points deducted from their overall score.
- While not all delegates on a team are required to speak for an equal amount of time, it is important that all delegates participate in the dialogue and presentation of their proposal in some meaningful way.
- Delegates may not be scored a 5 by their peers unless they effectively use a visual aid to further their presentation. That being said, visual aids should also factor into your scoring practice.

Special Awards for Delegates

Your scoring will be used to help determine which delegates are awarded with the “Distinguished Delegate” title and the “Outstanding Statesman” title. A distinguished delegate is someone who represents themselves well in all categories on the rubric, has an exceptionally creative proposal, and foster YMCA core values in their debate. An outstanding statesman is a delegate who has consistently showed leadership, innovative ideas, and creativity while also receiving the highest possible scores in all areas of the rubric. They may be creative and kind in their debate, work well with fellow delegates to foster a respectful and productive environment, and stand out amongst their fellow delegates. ***Please make note of any delegate you think falls within these categories.***



SAF Proposal Timeline

TOTAL TIME ALLOWED PER PROPOSAL IS 15 MINUTES. This does not include any motions for extending pro/con debate.

1. Opening Remarks by the proposal author (2 min)

- A. Remaining time may be yielded to closing or technical non debatable questions
- B. Friendly amendments need to be presented by the author prior to the opening remarks.

2. Non-Debatable Technical Questions and answer

- A. Total time is **2 min** plus any time the author yielded from opening
- B. Questions must be fact based not opinions

3. Pro/Con Debate 2 rounds limit 1 minute per speaker

- A. Motions may be made to increase the number of pro/con rounds
- B. Motions may be made to extend the speaking time.
- C. Extensions must be made before the final con speaker
- D. Upon recognition, a delegate shall state his/her name and delegation. He/she does not need further permission to address the floor for general statements.
- E. Delegates must seek permission, through the chair, to pose a series of questions to the proposal author(s)
 - i. Procedure to ask a question follows
 - Delegate states name and delegation, "I would like to ask the author(s) a series of questions and reserve my right to speak afterwards? (can be one question/ does not have to speak afterwards)
 - Chair asks, "Will the author yield to a series of questions?"
 - Author may refuse
- F. A delegate must reserve his/her right to make a motion or yield time to another delegate and will only be required to state the delegation name yielding to
 - i. "Delegate name/delegation, I reserve the right to yield my time to New Delegates name or delegation."
 - ii. A delegate who accepts yielded time will be allowed to either question the author or address the floor, but not both.
- G. Authors may not speak as individually recognized pro speakers during debate.
- H. 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.

4. Amendments time allowed is 5 minutes

- A. Friendly amendments are amendments proposed by the author.
 - i. These should be submitted to the chair before the opening statement.
 - ii. These may include spelling corrections, additions or deletion of names of authors, inclusion or exclusion of lines, etc.
- B. Amendments must be submitted in writing using the amendment form provided by the conference.
- C. Presiding officers will determine if the amendment is germane (relevant to subject under consideration). If it is not, it may be discarded.
- D. Time for amendments is as follows:
 - i. One (1) minute opening statement by amendment author.
 - ii. One (1) minute con speech
 - iii. One (1) minute pro speech
 - iv. Authors position (30 seconds)
 - v. If the author accepts amendment chair continues to the next amendment.
 - vi. If author does not accept amendment the State Affairs Forum Chair will call for a vote on amendment. Passage requires majority vote.

5. Closing Summations time is 2 minutes plus any time yielded from the opening.