



HMDC MODEL CONGRESS

(FALL 2024, Week 4)

What We Will Discuss (Today)

Here is the agenda for today's lesson...

Review of the Homework (ex. Quiz Questions)

Constitution Preamble Memorization (& First Amendment Review)

Writing Legislation for Model Congress (ex. Bills)

Activity: Emergency Meeting (Simulation Continues = New Updates!)

Activity: Court Proceedings (Simulation of Judicial Process)*

**Again, likely postponed until next week (we will discuss it briefly).*

Reviewing the Homework (Quiz 3)

First Amendment (Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4):

Why do we need to understand our freedoms? As a lawmaker, why is it essential for you to know the freedoms listed in the US Constitution? Can these freedoms be taken away?

Preamble to the Constitution (Last Week's Quiz):

Do you know it? Volunteers = Please recite it!

Robert's Rules of Order (5, 6, and 10):

Are we starting to understand the rules? Can the rules be abused?

US Constitution (Preamble)

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

US Constitution (First Amendment)

Freedom of Religion: We all have the right to believe in any religion we choose, or to choose not to believe in any religion at all, without government interference.

Freedom of Speech: Everyone can express their thoughts and opinions, even if they're critical of the government or unpopular, without fear of punishment for their words.

Freedom of the Press: Our news sources, including newspapers, TV stations, and websites, can report news and share opinions without government control over what they say.

Freedom of Assembly: We have the right to gather with others in public places for peaceful meetings, protests, or rallies to express our views as a group.

Freedom to Petition the Government: All citizens have the right to ask the government to change our laws by collecting signatures on a petition and presenting it to local leaders.

Understanding the Legislative Process

The legislative process is a critical part of Model Congress. It shows us how new laws are made. By taking part in this process, we learn how real government works and how decisions are made.

- **What is a Bill?:** A bill is a written plan for a new law. Lawmakers read, discuss, and vote on bills to decide if they should become laws.
- **Why Bills are Important:** Bills help us address problems in our country. They are the way we suggest changes to current laws or we can create new laws to meet people's needs.
- **How a Bill Becomes a Law:** When someone writes a bill, it goes through many steps. Groups of lawmakers study it. They talk about it and sometimes change it. Then they vote on it. If it passes all these steps, it can become a law.

Format for Writing Bills

Bill writing follows a specific format and each part of the bill serves a purpose and helps lawmakers understand what the proposed law aims to do.

Here is the format we must follow...

Bill Number, Sponsors, Title, Preamble (Optional), Enacting Clause, & Sections (Definitions (Optional), Main Provisions, Enforcement, Funding, & Effective Date.

Each of the slides that follows will describe what is expected, why it is important, and provide some type of example. A sample bill has been created for us to use throughout.

Sample Bill (Part-1)

H.R. 2488 - The School Nutrition Improvement Act of 2024

Introduced by Rep. Jane Smith

Whereas, proper nutrition is essential for students' health and academic performance;
Whereas, many schools currently lack diverse and healthy meal options;
Whereas, excessive sugar consumption among youth is a growing health concern;

Be it enacted by the Congress of the United States of America,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "School Nutrition Act of 2024".

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this Act:

- (a) "Public school" means any elementary or secondary school that receives federal funding.
- (b) "Sugar-sweetened beverage" means any non-alcoholic beverage that contains added caloric sweeteners.

Sample Bill (Part-2)

H.R. 2488 - The School Nutrition Improvement Act of 2024 (*Continued...*)

SECTION 3. IMPROVED SCHOOL LUNCHES.

- (a) All public schools shall offer at least one vegetarian meal option daily.
- (b) Sugar-sweetened beverages shall be removed from school vending machines.

SECTION 4. IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT.

- (a) The Department of Education shall oversee the implementation of this Act.
- (b) Schools found in violation may face a reduction in federal funding for school meal programs.

SECTION 5. FUNDING.

Funding for this Act shall be allocated from the existing school lunch program budget.

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect at the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

Bill Number

A bill number is assigned by the clerk of the House or Senate when a bill is officially introduced. The clerk gives each bill a unique number in the order it's received. For example, the first bill introduced in the House becomes H.R. 1, the second H.R. 2, and so on. This numbering starts over at the beginning of each new two-year session of Congress. Senators and Representatives don't choose these numbers themselves.

- **Definition and Purpose:** A unique identifier for each bill, consisting of letters (H.R. for House bills, S. for Senate bills) followed by a number. It's used to track and reference specific pieces of legislation throughout the lawmaking process.
- **Importance:** This system ensures each bill can be easily identified, discussed, and followed as it moves through Congress. It helps lawmakers, staff, and the public quickly locate and refer to specific bills.
- **Example:** In H.R. 2488, "H.R." means it's a House bill, and 2488 shows it was the 2,488th bill introduced in the current session of the House.

Bill Title

The title of a bill is its official name, appearing at the beginning of the document. It provides a brief summary of the bill's content and purpose. The title is carefully crafted to reflect the main subject of the proposed legislation.

- **Definition and Purpose:** The title is the official name of the bill, designed to give a clear, concise description of what the bill is about. It helps readers quickly understand the bill's main focus without reading the entire text.
- **Importance:** A well-written title makes it easier for lawmakers, staff, and the public to identify and discuss the bill. It also becomes part of the official record and is used in legal references if the bill becomes law.
- **Example:** "The School Nutrition Improvement Act of 2024" - This title clearly indicates that the bill deals with improving nutrition in schools and specifies the year it was introduced.

Bill Sponsors and Co-Sponsors

Bills in Congress are introduced by one or more legislators who become the bill's sponsors. Additional supporters, known as co-sponsors, can sign on to show their backing for the bill after its introduction.

- **Definition and Purpose:** Sponsors are the primary introducers of a bill, while co-sponsors are additional supporters. This system shows who is leading on an issue and how much support it has.
- **Importance:** The sponsor list indicates who's taking primary responsibility for the bill. The number and diversity of sponsors and co-sponsors can demonstrate the bill's level of support in Congress.
- **Examples:**
 - Single sponsor (House): "Introduced by Representative Jane Smith"
 - Multiple sponsors (Senate): "Introduced by Senator John Doe, Senator Jane Smith, and Senator Bob Johnson"
 - With co-sponsors: "Introduced by Representative Jane Smith Co-sponsored by Representative John Doe and Representative Bob Johnson"

Bill Preamble (Optional)

The preamble of a bill, when included, appears before the enacting clause. It consists of "Whereas" clauses that explain the reasons for the bill and the problems it aims to address. Not all bills have preambles, but they can be useful for complex or significant legislation.

- **Definition and Purpose:** The preamble provides background information and reasoning for the proposed legislation. It explains why the bill is necessary and what issues it will solve.
- **Importance:** While not legally binding, the preamble can help interpret the intent of the law if passed. It also serves to persuade readers of the bill's importance and necessity.
- **Example:** "Whereas, proper nutrition is essential for students' health and academic performance; Whereas, many schools currently lack diverse and healthy meal options;" These clauses from our sample bill explain the rationale behind the proposed nutrition improvements.

The Enacting Clause

The enacting clause is a formal statement that appears at the beginning of the main text of every bill. It declares the bill's purpose of becoming law and identifies the legislative body that is enacting it. This clause is required for all federal legislation and remains the same for all bills, regardless of their content or origin in the House or Senate.

- **Definition and Purpose:** The enacting clause is a standard phrase that officially proposes that the bill should be made into a law. It serves as a formal introduction to the substantive provisions (aka the substance) of the bill.
- **Importance:** This clause is required by law in most legislatures. It signifies the transition from introductory matters to the actual content of the proposed law. Without it, the bill would not be properly constituted.
- **Example:** "Be it enacted by the Congress of the United States of America,"

Understanding the “Sections” of a Bill

The "Sections" of a bill contain the detailed rules, requirements, and instructions that the bill proposes to become law. Each section is carefully structured to address different aspects of the proposed legislation, ensuring that the law is clear, enforceable, and effective.

- **Purpose of Sections:** Sections provide the framework for the bill's legal provisions. They break down the proposed law into manageable parts, each dealing with a specific component such as definitions, main rules, enforcement, funding, and the law's effective date.
- **How Sections are Written:** Each section begins with a heading that describes its focus, such as "Definitions" or "Main Provisions." The content within each section is organized in a logical order, often using numbered or lettered lists to clearly outline each requirement or rule.
- **Example:** A typical bill might have sections titled "Main Provisions" to specify the central actions required by the bill, "Enforcement" to explain who will ensure compliance, "Funding" to detail how the law will be financed, and "Effective Date" to state when the law will take effect.

Section: Definitions

The "Definitions" section of a bill clarifies the meaning of specific terms used in the legislation. This section ensures that all readers interpret the bill's language consistently, which is crucial for applying the law correctly. While this section is optional, it should be included when the bill contains technical language, specialized terms, or words that could potentially be misinterpreted.

- **Definition and Purpose:** Provides clear meanings for specific terms used in the bill. It ensures everyone interprets the language the same way.
- **Importance:** Essential for bills with technical language or specialized terms. Helps prevent misinterpretation and ensures the law is applied uniformly. Include this section when terms are not universally understood or could be ambiguous.
- **Example:** "Public school" means any elementary or secondary school that receives federal funding. This definition clarifies which institutions are affected by the bill, ensuring consistency.

Section: Main Provisions

The "Main Provisions" section of a bill outlines the core actions, rules, or requirements that the bill proposes. This section is the heart of the legislation, detailing exactly what the bill seeks to accomplish and how it will do so. Each provision should be clearly stated and directly tied to the bill's purpose.

- **Definition and Purpose:** The "Main Provisions" section contains the essential rules or actions that the bill mandates. It outlines the specific changes or initiatives that the bill will implement.
- **Importance:** This section is crucial because it provides the detailed instructions for what the law will require or prohibit. It is the part of the bill that will directly impact those who are subject to the law. Without clear main provisions, the bill would lack enforceable content.
- **Example:** For example, a provision might state that "All public schools shall offer at least one vegetarian meal option daily." This provision specifies a direct action that schools must take if the bill becomes law.

Section: Enforcement

The "Enforcement" section of a bill specifies who is responsible for ensuring that the law is followed and what actions will be taken if the law is violated. This section is critical to the bill's effectiveness, as it establishes the mechanisms for monitoring compliance and applying penalties when necessary (such as fines or even jail).

- **Definition and Purpose:** The "Enforcement" section designates the authority or agency responsible for implementing the law. It outlines how compliance will be monitored and what consequences will follow for non-compliance.
- **Importance:** This section is essential because it provides the structure for making sure the law is applied correctly. Without clear enforcement provisions, a law may be difficult or impossible to enforce, reducing its effectiveness.
- **Example:** An enforcement provision might state, "The Department of Education shall oversee the implementation of this Act." This example shows who will be responsible for ensuring that schools comply with the law.

Section: Funding

The "Funding" section of a bill explains how the money needed to put the law into action will be provided. It details where the necessary funds will come from, ensuring that the proposed actions in the bill can be implemented. Without clear funding, even a well-written law cannot be successfully carried out, so this section is crucial to the bill's success.

- **Definition and Purpose:** The "Funding" section describes where the money will come from to support the bill's actions. It explains if the money will come from current government budgets or new sources.
- **Importance:** This section is crucial because, without money, the law cannot be enforced or put into action. It makes sure that the law has the financial support needed to achieve its goals.
- **Example:** For instance, the bill might say, "Funding for this Act shall come from the existing school lunch program budget." This shows that the bill plans to use money already set aside in the budget to support its goals.

Section: Effective Date

The "Effective Date" section of a bill that specifies when the law will go into effect. This section is important because it provides a clear timeline for when the new rules or requirements will begin to apply. By setting an effective date, the bill allows time for those affected by the law to prepare for its implementation.

- **Definition and Purpose:** The "Effective Date" section states when the law will start being enforced. It provides a specific date or time frame after the bill is passed and signed into law.
- **Importance:** This section is crucial because it gives everyone affected by the law time to adjust and comply with the new requirements. It also provides a clear starting point for the law.
- **Example:** For example, the bill might state, "This Act shall take effect at the start of the 2025-2026 school year." This gives schools time to prepare for the changes required by the law.

Summary: Legislative Process is Important

Understanding the legislative process is essential for our success in Model Congress competitions. By learning how bills are created, debated, and passed into law, we can actively participate in simulations with confidence and accuracy. This knowledge empowers us to draft our own legislation, engage in meaningful debates, and navigate the same procedures that real lawmakers follow.

- **Mastering the Basics:** By knowing the steps involved in creating a bill—from writing it to ensuring it is properly funded—we gain a solid foundation to propose effective and realistic legislation. This foundation allows us to create bills that can withstand scrutiny and contribute meaningfully to the simulated legislative process.
- **Enhancing Our Debate Skills:** Understanding the legislative process enables us to argue more persuasively for or against bills. We can reference specific sections and procedural rules during debates, making our arguments stronger and more compelling. This knowledge also helps us anticipate counterarguments and respond effectively.
- **Achieving Success in Competitions:** Familiarity with legislative procedures allows us to take leadership roles in Model Congress, guide our peers, and excel in the competitive environment. The better we understand how real laws are made, the more effectively we can simulate the process and achieve our goals in competitions.

Break Time (~10 min)

During/After the break...

1. Practice making a motion and prepare to give a speech for the simulation.
2. Read the handout during the break and think about it.
3. After the break we will do the City Council Simulation:
“Water Contamination Crisis (Part-2)” = NEW INFORMATION!!!