

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A BILL:

You are **strongly encouraged** to submit one (1) Bill prior to your coming to Girls State for debate in the House & Senate in an effort to form your Party Platform.

A form upon which to write your Bill is enclosed. We are primarily interested that you give your idea for a bit of legislation. Do not worry about details of form. Send in a bill that you can explain, sell to others, and defend against opposition.

Be guided by the following suggestions:

1. Only one idea or bit of legislation to a Bill.
2. Only legislation that pertains to the State, **not** an individual Community or the Nation.
3. Keep it simple. No more than two (2) pages, please.
4. Each Bill is for serious, effective legislation for the good of our own Commonwealth or for Girls State.
5. PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE – it is difficult to read some of the writing!
6. Your proposed Bill must be mailed to me on or before May 25, 2017.
7. See page 5 for a clearer understanding on how to write a bill.

A BILL

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts Girls State assembled 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.*

Submitted by: _____

From the Bills we receive, we choose five - seven (5-7), edit them, add to them if necessary, and they will be used for debate in Girls State Cities and Towns and in the Senate and House of Representatives. They will also form a part of the party platform.

Please see next page for sample, to use for bill, and following pages on Tips for Writing a Bill.

Please forward your Bill to: Bonnie Sladeski

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A BILL (sample page)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts Girls State assembled that:

SECTION 1 _____

_____.

SECTION 2 _____

_____.

SECTION 3 _____

_____.

SECTION 4 _____

_____.

SECTION 5 _____

_____.

Submitted by: _____

How to Write a Bill

The first step in writing any good bill is to find a topic about which you're passionate, and research it. Go to malegislature.gov for ways to assist you with this endeavor. Once you've found an interesting and relevant topic on which to write your bill and have done the necessary research, the next step is actually getting your bill ready for discussion in committee. A bill should have three parts...

Preamble

This section should provide your rationale for enacting the bill. Why is your topic something that should be addressed by the government? This section's clauses should always begin with a "Whereas..."

Body

This section should be separated into sections and subsections. Each proposed idea for the implementation of the bill should be a section. Subsections should be used to provide further detail and clarification (definitions, etc.) for their appropriate bill sections.

Enactment Clause

This is the final section of the bill (and can be labeled as a section as normal). EACH BILL MUST HAVE AN ENACTMENT CLAUSE! The enactment clause tells your fellow congressmen when your bill will take effect if passed. It may specify a future date (i.e., August 20, 2017) or a certain number of days following the passage of the bill (i.e., 60 days after passage). Enactment dates within 30 days of passage are used for EMERGENCY legislation only. Enactment dates more than 90 days after passage are used for most legislation and is the enactment period for normal bills. It is worth noting that, bills with an enactment clause of 91 days after passage or more require a simple majority to pass, whereas emergency legislation requires a 2/3 majority. So unless you have a compelling reason for a shorter timetable, it's generally in your best interest to make the enactment date 91 days after passage.

Parliamentary Procedure for Meetings

Robert's Rules of Order is the standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making. Copies of the rules are available at most bookstores. Although they may seem long and involved, having an agreed-upon set of rules makes meetings run easier. *Robert's Rules* will help your group have better meetings, not make them more difficult. Your group is free to modify them or find another suitable process that encourages fairness and participation, unless your bylaws state otherwise.

Here are the basic elements of *Robert's Rules*, used by most organizations:

1. **Motion:** To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a group member ("I move that.....") A second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it.") After limited discussion the group then votes on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass (or quorum as specified in your bylaws.)

2. **Postpone Indefinitely:** This tactic is used to kill a motion. When passed, the motion cannot be reintroduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion ("I move to postpone indefinitely..."). A second is required. A majority vote is required to postpone the motion under consideration.
3. **Amend:** This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion. In some organizations, a "friendly amendment" is made. If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.
4. **Commit:** This is used to place a motion in committee. It requires a second. A majority vote must rule to carry it. At the next meeting the committee is required to prepare a report on the motion committed. If an appropriate committee exists, the motion goes to that committee. If not, a new committee is established.
5. **Question:** To end a debate immediately, the question is called (say "I call the question") and needs a second. A vote is held immediately (no further discussion is allowed). A two-thirds vote is required for passage. If it is passed, the motion on the floor is voted on immediately.
6. **Table:** To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time ("I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.") A second is needed and a majority vote required to table the item being discussed.
7. **Adjourn:** A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

Note: If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent takes precedence over the ones preceding it. For example if #6, a motion to table the discussion, is proposed, it must be voted on before #3, a motion to amend, can be decided.

In a smaller meeting, like a committee or board meeting, often only four motions are used:

- To introduce (motion.)
- To change a motion (amend.)
- To adopt (accept a report without discussion.)
- To adjourn (end the meeting.)

Remember, these processes are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas in an orderly manner. Parliamentary procedure should not be used to prevent discussion of important issues.

Board and committee chairpersons and other leaders may want to get some training in meeting facilitation and in using parliamentary procedure. Additional information on meeting processes, dealing with difficult people, and using **Robert's Rules** is available from district office staff and community resources such as the League of Women Voters, United Way and other technical assistance providers. Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance, by O. Garfield Jones, is an excellent and useful guide for neighborhood association chairs.

Tips in Parliamentary Procedure

The following summary will help you determine when to use the actions described in *Robert's Rules*.

- **A main motion must be moved, seconded, and stated by the chair before it can be discussed.**
- **If you want to move, second, or speak to a motion, stand and address the chair.**
- **If you approve the motion as is, vote for it.**
- **If you disapprove the motion, vote against it.**
- **If you approve the idea of the motion but want to change it, amend it or submit a substitute for it.**
- **If you want advice or information to help you make your decision, move to refer the motion to an appropriate quorum or committee with instructions to report back.**
- **If you feel they can handle it better than the assembly, move to refer the motion to a quorum or committee with power to act.**
- **If you feel that there the pending question(s) should be delayed so more urgent business can be considered, move to lay the motion on the table.**
- **If you want time to think the motion over, move that consideration be deferred to a certain time.**
- **If you think that further discussion is unnecessary, move the previous question.**
- **If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a motion referred to a quorum or committee, move the motion be recalled.**
- **If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a matter already voted upon, move that it be reconsidered.**
- **If you do not agree with a decision rendered by the chair, appeal the decision to the assembly.**
- **If you think that a matter introduced is not germane to the matter at hand, a point of order may be raised.**
- **If you think that too much time is being consumed by speakers, you can move a time limit on such speeches.**
- **If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts, move to divide the motion.**

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AT A GLANCE

To do this	YOU SAY	MAY YOU INTERRUPT SPEAKER	MUST -You- BE SECONDED	IS MOTION AMENDABLE	WHAT VOTE REQUIRED
Adjourn meeting	I move that we adjourn	No	Yes	No	Majority
Recess meeting	I move that we recess until	No	Yes	No	Majority
Complain about noise; rook, lcrnpc.rahtre, etc.	Point of privilege	Yes	No	No	No vote
Suspend further consideration of something	I move we table it	No	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	2/3 vote
Postpone consideration of something	I move we postpone this matter until	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Take something studied further	I move we refer this matter to committee	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move this motion be amended by	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	I move that...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to procedure or personal affront	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No vote, Chair decides
Request information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No vote
Ask for a (tally count to verify voice vote	I call for a division of the house	No	No	No	No vote
Object to Consideration of undignified vote	I object to consideration of this motion	Yes	No	No	2/3 vote
Take up a matter previously tabled	I move to take from the table	No	Yes	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	I move we reconsider our action relative to	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something already out of its schedule	I move we suspend the rules and consider	No	Yes	No	2/3 vote
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	I appeal the Chair's decision	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Not amendable

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AT A GLANCE

		Debatible	Amendable	Can be Considered	(Requires 2/3 Vote)
Privileged Motions	Fix Time at Which to Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No
	Adjourn	No	No	Yes	No
	Question of Privilege	No	Yes	Yes	No
	Call for Order of Day	No	No	Yes	No
Incidental Motions	Appeal	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Objection to Consideration of a Question	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Point of Information	No	No	No	No
	Point of Order	No	No	No	No
	Read Papers	No	No	Yes	No
	Suspend the Rules	No	No	No	Yes
	Withdrawal Motion	No	No	Yes	No
Subsidiary Motions	Lay on the Table	No	No	Yes	No
	The Previous Question (close debate)	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Limit or Extend Debate	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Postpone to a Definite Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Refer to Committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Amend the Amendment	Yes	No	No	No
	Amendment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	No	Yes	No
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	

This table presents the motions in order of precedence. Each motion takes precedence over (i.e. can be considered ahead of) the motions listed below it. No motion can supersede (i.e. be considered before) any of the motions listed above it.

PLEASE NOTE: many organizations use only the Main Motion and Subsidiary Motions, handling other matters on an **in-order basis**.

IN THE MEETING

TO INTRODUCE A MOTION:

Stand when no one else has the floor.

Address the Chair by the proper title.

Wait until the chair recognizes you.

- Now that you have the floor and can proceed with your motion say "I move that...", state your motion clearly and sit down.
- Another member may second your motion. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before the assembly and not that he/she is in favor of the motion.
- If there is no second, the Chair says, "The motion is not before you at this time." The motion is not lost, as there has been no vote taken.
- If there is a second, the Chair states the question by saying "It has been moved and seconded that ... (state the motion). . ., is there any discussion?"

DEBATE OR DISCUSSING THE MOTION:

- The member who made the motion is entitled to speak first.
- Every member has the right to speak in debate.
- The Chair should alternate between those "for" the motion and those "against" the motion.
- The discussion should be related to the pending motion.
- Avoid using a person's name in debate.
- All questions should be directed to the Chair.
- Unless there is a special rule providing otherwise, a member is limited to speak once to a motion.
- Asking a question or a brief suggestion is not counted in debate.
- A person may speak a second time in debate with the assembly's permission.

VOTING ON A MOTION:

- Before a vote is taken, the Chair puts the question by saying "Those in favor of the motion that ... (repeat the motion)... say "Aye." Those opposed say "No." Wait, then say "The motion is carried," or "The motion is lost."
- Some motions require a 2/3 vote. A 2/3 vote is obtained by standing
- If a member is in doubt about the vote, he may call out "division." A division is a demand for a standing vote.
- A majority vote is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.
- A 2/3 vote means at least 2/3 of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.
- A tie vote is a lost vote, since it is not a majority.

AMENDMENTS ILLUSTRATED

Any main motion or resolution may be amended by:

1. Adding at the end
2. Striking out a word or words
3. Inserting a word or words
4. Striking out and inserting a word or words
5. Substitution

A member rises, addresses the chair, receives recognition, and states the motion:

"I move that..."

MAIN MOTION

Another member seconds the motion.

The Chair repeats the motion and says, "Is there any discussion?"

Must be germane to the main motion

To improve the motion, a member rises, receives recognition and says, "I move to amend the motion by . . ."

PRIMARY AMENDMENT

Another member seconds the amendment.

The Chair repeats the amendment and says, "Is there any discussion on the amendment?"

Must be germane to the primary amendment

To improve the amendment, a member rises, receives recognition, and says, "I move to amend the amendment by . . ."

SECONDARY AMENDMENT
(not amendable)

Another member seconds the amendment.

The Chair repeats the amendment to the amendment and says, "Is there any discussion on the amendment to the amendment?"

- When discussion ceases, the Chair says, "Those in favor of the amendment to the amendment say 'Aye.' Those opposed say 'No.'"
- If the vote **was** in the affirmative, the amendment is included in the primary amendment. The Chair then says, "Is there any discussion on the amended amendment?"
- If there is no discussion, a vote is taken on the amended amendment. If the vote in the affirmative, the amendment is included in the main motion. The chair then says, "Is there any discussion on the amended motion?"
- At this place, the motion can again be amended.
- If there is no further discussion, a vote is taken on the amended motion.
- Even though the amendments carried in the affirmative, the main motion as amended can be defeated.