



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

COLORADO YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

LEGISLATIVE CURRICULUM

A guide for delegates of the YMCA Model General Assembly

Writing Your Bill
Presenting Your Bill
Parliamentary Procedure
Committees
At the Conference

THE LEGISLATURE

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YOUR STEPS AS A LEGISLATOR

YOUR MISSION

To create laws that you think are important and will benefit the citizens of your state.

THINGS YOU WILL DO AS A LEGISLATOR

- Research and author a bill
- Meet all deadlines
- Be aware and informed of legislative rules and procedures
- Attend the pre-conference training session
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct
- Present your bill at Youth in Government and work to get it passed
- Debate and defend your bill

The Legislative program is the oldest component of Youth in Government. This area gives participants the ability to make their voices heard on important issues, which affect the people of your state. You will research and write bills on topics that are important to you, to your school, to your family or to your community – the possibilities of topics are limitless.

At Youth in Government, you will present your bill in a committee hearing. Those bills, which have the strongest topics or the greatest possibilities for debate, may be advanced to be heard on the floor of one of the Houses, or Senates and may even find their way through to the Executive Branch, where they might be signed into law or vetoed. Legislators also work with Lobbyists and Cabinet members to ensure passage of their bills. Some people underestimate this important alliance. Representatives and Senators benefit from developing allies and advocates who can help develop strategies for putting their bills into law.

WRITING YOUR BILL

A bill is a proposal to change the laws of a state – or “draft legislation.” Legislators use a special format for wording the draft so that it fits with existing laws. The laws are called statutes, and states have a lot of them! When you put them all together, officially they are called the Colorado Revised Statutes. Nevertheless, since our lives are always changing, the laws need to adjust, too. So, as a legislator you are required to write one bill that either:

- Changes a law that already exists;
- Deletes a law that already exists; or
- Makes a new law to address an issue.

The most important part of writing a legislative bill is that you choose a topic that is meaningful to you. The strength of commitment you feel toward your bill will undoubtedly influence your overall experience in Youth in Government. Whether your interests lie in the environment, business, education, or social programs, your bill should be about something that you believe in.

Writing a bill is simple if you know a few secrets. The next few pages will reveal some of those secrets. A GREAT BILL IS THE RESULT OF SIX SIMPLE STEPS:

- STEP 1:** Choose a Topic
- STEP 2:** Research It
- STEP 3:** Fill Out Topic Analysis Form
- STEP 4:** Write First Draft and Get Feedback
- STEP 5:** Write Final Draft and Send In
- STEP 6:** Debate It

Step 1 – Choose a topic

There are many topics out there that you can choose to address. Your first step is to come up with a fantastic idea for changing life, as we know it. What you really want to do is find a problem you see in society that you would like to fix. Talk to your Delegation Director, friends, teachers, coaches, parents, and your legislator – anybody who might be helpful. Have members of your delegation look around the community and see what needs to be done. Develop a list of suggestions. What areas do you think can be improved with legislation? Which affect the quality of people’s lives? Which endanger the growth and enrichment of the human condition? On the next page is a list of only A FEW topics you could do.



Abortion Issues
Abuse
Adoption
Advertisements
Aged persons
Agriculture
AIDS
Alcoholic beverages
Animals
Assault
Bias
Building Codes
Camping
Campaign Finance
Reform
Cancer Research
Capital punishment
Change of name
Charities
Child care services
Child welfare and placement
Civil Law
Compensation and salaries
Confidentiality/Privileged
information
Consumer Rights
Corporate Fraud
Court System
Crime
Criminal Justice
Deadly weapons
Discrimination
Domestic violence
Drivers licenses
Drug laws
Drugs and medicine
Education
Elections
Employee rights
Fireworks
Fire arms
Fires
Food
Gambling
Gay & Lesbian rights
Genetic tests
Government operations
Guardians

Gun control
HandicappedpersonsHar
assment
Health care
Highways
Historic preservation
Holidays
Homeless
Homicide
Hospitals
House arrest
Housing
Hunger
Imprisonment
Income
Insurance
Investments
Jails
Judges
Jurisdiction
Jury duty
Juvenile delinquents
Kidnapping
Labor and employment
Landlords and tenants
Liabilities
Liberty
Licenses
Liens
Literacy
Lobbying
Marriage
Medical information rights
Natural resources
Pardons and parole
Perjury
Personal injury
Personal property
Pesticides
Population
Pollution
Prescription drugs
Protective services
Public health
Public lands
Public safety
Public spending
Public transit

Racial profiling
Recycling
Redevelopment areas
Rest homes
Responsible parties
Restaurants
Retirement funds
Roads
Safety
School
Senior citizen issues
Self defense
Shoplifting
Social services
State and local government
State guard affairs
Taxation
Teenage pregnancy
Telecommunications
Tobacco sales and regulation
Traffic
Transportation
Unemployment
Unicameral legislature
Water supply
Welfare reform

OTHER SOURCES OF CURRENT ISSUES:

- One of the simplest and most accessible sources of current information is the newspaper. Whether it's the hometown daily or the *New York Times*, a newspaper can give you a good idea of what people want, don't want, like, or don't like.
- Internet, internet, internet! Plug some issues into any search engine and see what comes up. You will find a variety of related issues that can make for a well-rounded bill.
- Podcasts – lots of topics are discussed in podcasts. If you hear an interesting one, research the topic to see if it could become a bill.
- See what is trending on your favorite social media platform. There are many causes that leverage social media as a platform to boost their voice, so there is a wide variety of topics represented there.
- Ask around! Your friends, family, teachers, and peers all have things that matter to them. See if any of their thoughts line up and would be a good bill idea.
- Consider any condition, which exists in your school, family or community. Then propose a solution to end the problem or resolve the issue. It's that simple!

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT PICKING A TOPIC, KEEP A FEW THINGS IN MIND:

- It needs to be a STATE issue and not FEDERAL. You also want it to address a statewide problem and not an issue that is specific to one location.
- It should be something that could really work and not just a daydream. Sometimes great ideas do not make great bills because they are not practical.
- It should be something you believe in and can passionately defend.

OTHER PLACES YOU MIGHT FIND VALUABLE INFORMATION ARE:

- Library, Internet, books, magazines
- Associations and organizations that your bill affects
- Professionals, attorneys, educators

You should have some statistics, some facts, and even some informed testimonies by people who are well informed. The more facts you can find now, the better your bill will be and the easier it will be to squash any opposition in debate! People who have done their work write the best bills! Once you have gotten your basic information, the next step will help make sure that you have hit all the major hot spots.

Step 2 – Research it

Now that you have the beginnings of an idea, you need to do some looking around to be able to develop it fully. If you only have a general topic, you may want help coming up with a more specific application. Some things that might help are:

- Media sources- Local Newspapers, Internet, nightly news, radio, online sources, etc.
- Thinking of things that have personally affected you or someone you know.
- Discussions with local leaders, teachers, family and friends.

STATE SEARCHES

Once you come up with your specific idea, you need to figure out how to make it work. First, you need to check and see if there is already a law that deals with your issue. Best place to start is the website of the state legislature –



Colorado: <https://leg.colorado.gov/>

Make sure you do a REALLY GOOD search for your topic. Pick several words or ideas that are related to yours. You don't want to write your whole bill and get up to debate it, only to find out that the same law is already on the books!

If you search well, most of the time you will find a law that deals with your issue, but it needs to be better. OR, you may find a bad law that needs to be removed. You can write a bill to change or delete a current law, and sometimes the best debates come from tweaking a current statute.

CONSTITUTIONALITY

Determine the constitutionality of your proposed law by referring to a copy of the State and Federal Constitutions. When a law is unconstitutional, it means that it goes against the constitution and the Courts will veto it. If you want to write a bill that, would invite a court challenge, great – but be prepared to defend that at Youth in Government.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Once you've checked the statutes, you need to move on to the next step - RESEARCH.

Try to collect as many facts as you can about your issue. Go back to the state legislature websites and other web sources to get full background.

Step 3 – Analyze Your Topic



Use these analysis points to see if your bill is checking all the boxes.

1. Why is this bill necessary? Why is it important?
2. How much will this bill cost? Where will the money come from?
3. Who will enforce this bill?
4. Is this in conflict with the State Constitution, Federal Constitution, or Federal Law?
5. Do other states do this?
6. Has this been tried before in Colorado?
7. Who will this bill affect?
8. When will it take effect?
9. Who might be against this and why?
10. Is this a responsibility of government or could it be taken care of in another way?

Step 4 – Write a first draft & get feedback

Next, put your bill in the correct format for publication. This means actually wording it the specific way it will appear at Youth in Government. Remember to address all the issues on the Analysis Form. Drafting a bill in the proper form is crucial to getting it passed by the legislature. It's also a lot easier than you might think!

TIPS FOR THE WELL-WRITTEN BILL

Each bill in Youth in Government must contain the following sections:

A TITLE Every bill opens with a title stating, in one sentence, what the bill does. It begins with the words “AN ACT TO” and is the part read aloud in committee and on the floor. Keep it concise and specific.

EXAMPLE: AN ACT TO Ban smoking in all public restaurants and bars.

THE ENACTING CLAUSE Directly beneath the title, every bill carries this line, using the year of the current conference: BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO.

SECTION 1 – DEFINITIONS Define any word or abbreviation another delegate may not know — types of taxes, current laws or acts, or terms not used in everyday conversation. This is a law that law enforcement will have to interpret, so the clearer your language, the better.

EXAMPLE: “Restaurant” shall be defined as any establishment that serves prepared food in exchange for money.

SECTION 2 – PURPOSE Explain the problem your bill addresses, and use data and facts as evidence that the bill is needed. This section does not need everything you gathered in research, but it should carry the most important and substantial information.

EXAMPLE: Second-hand smoke is the cause of XX% of all cancer-related deaths in the state. Removing smoke from the environment of non-smokers will result in better health for non-smokers and reduce health-care costs in Colorado.

SECTION 3 – PROVISIONS This is the main body of the bill and the section that deserves the most work. Outline every guideline and procedure that takes effect if the bill passes: who is responsible, what exactly they must do, and how often. Use lettered subsections (a, b, c) for each duty you create, and numbered points beneath them (i, ii) for the detail underneath. This is the section where you create, change, or remove a law, so be thorough.

SECTION 4 – PENALTY CLAUSE State the repercussions for any person, business, or company that does not follow the provisions. Penalties take many forms — fines, loss of a license, criminal charges — and should fit the intent of the bill. If your bill needs no penalty, write “N/A.”

EXAMPLE: The penalty for any person found smoking in a public establishment shall be a petty misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$300.

SECTION 5 – APPROPRIATIONS CLAUSE This section covers money: how much your bill will need, where it will come from, and what revenue will go toward it. New taxes, fees, the sale of bonds, and increases to existing charges all belong here. If your bill spends no money, write “N/A.”

SECTION 6 – ENACTMENT CLAUSE Say when the bill takes effect if it passes its first committee, the Senate, the House, and the Governor signs it into law. This can be a specific date or a set number of days

after passage. If you do not name a date, the bill automatically takes effect 90 days after passage. Any date you choose should fall after the Youth in Government conference.

SECTION 7 – SAFETY CLAUSE This section is predetermined and reads the same on every bill. Use this exact wording: The YMCA Model General Assembly hereby finds, decides and declares that this Bill is necessary for the preservation of public health, peace, and safety.

Every section above has its own box on the submission form. If a section does not apply to your bill, type “N/A” in that box rather than leaving it blank.

OTHER TIPS TO MAKE YOUR BILL SPECTACULAR

- Language. Use respectful language reflecting YMCA values.
- Singular Terms. Use singular terms, such as he, she, the Governor, applicant, etc. Avoid plurals where possible – they can confuse people.
- Be careful with pronoun usage. Two or more “he’s” in one sentence can get confusing.
- Watch for others your act may apply to. If you use the term “cities,” make sure you don’t also want it to apply to towns, counties or school districts.
- Watch “shall” versus “may.” One little word may force something to happen, instead of giving it the option to happen.
- Avoid “and/or.” It makes the statute difficult to read and interpret. If you must use both, consider writing two different sections.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD BILLS

CONTENT

- Written on a topic that is of interest to you and thoroughly researched before Youth in Government.
- Should relate to a state specific issue - not an issue controlled by the federal government or another state.
- Clearly and succinctly, state the objective of the bill in the title.
- Should contain definitions of specialized terms contained in the bill.
- Should contain provisions for enforcement (who will enforce, how and under what circumstances) only if needed. If a bill does not require enforcement, do not even mention enforcement in the bill.
- Should contain an effective date for when the bill will come into force. The date should be realistic for the provisions of the bill.

FORMAT

-
- Should list the name and delegation and of the author on the bill form.
- Should not list any bill number or committee name on the bill form. The youth officers and State Office staff will assign bill numbers and committees.
- May be humorous, but must still be debatable. A funny bill needs real provisions and supporting facts like any other bill. Bills that are too far out there, or that give the chamber nothing to debate, may not make it through the General Assembly. If you have questions about this requirement, work with your local Delegation Director.

FORMATTING & EXAMPLES

Airtable—the online tool used for bill submission—will do most of the formatting for you, but you still need to know how it SHOULD look. Use the following format example and make your bill look great!

FORMATTING STYLE POINTS

- **STATE STATUTE.** If you are amending a statute, you should reference the statute and detail the changes you wish to make to it.
 - If changing a current statute, copy the existing statute in its entirety, ~~strikeout any deleted text~~, and put any new text in **BOLD AND CAPITALS**. If numbering or lettering changes mess up the organization of the statute, you can suggest, “renumbering the sections to conform” in the bill. Keep the same statute number.
- **LONG TITLE.** Give your bill a specific “Long Title.” This goes at the very top of the bill. Example “An Act to Provide Stability of Foster Care.”

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED - Compose your bill in your word processing program of choice, then copy and paste the text into Airtable when it is complete, as it is easier to save and work on in multiple sessions. Once you have completed your first draft, pass it along to some peers, your Delegation Director, and/or your advisors. Ask them to edit it and give you feedback. The more people who can read your bill and give you suggestions, the clearer it will be for Youth in Government!

To the right is a Bill Template:



BILL AUTHOR #1:

BILL AUTHOR #2:

SCHOOL DELEGATION:

TITLE: AN ACT TO

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE YMCA LEGISLATURE
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO**

1. **SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS**

2.

3.

4.

5. **SECTION 2: PURPOSE**

6.

7.

8.

9. **SECTION 3: PROVISIONS**

10.

11.

12.

13. **SECTION 4: PENALTY CLAUSE**

14.

15.

16.

17. **SECTION 5: APPROPRIATIONS CLAUSE**

18.

19.

20.

21. **SECTION 6: ENACTMENT CLAUSE**

22.

23.

24.

25. **SECTION 7: SAFETY CLAUSE**

26.

27.

28.

29.

30.

Step 5 – Write final draft & submit online

After you've passed your bill around for feedback and made any necessary changes, you should write your final draft. Here is a final checklist to make sure that you have included everything you need:

- Your bill cannot be more than 2 pages in length.
- If you are changing or deleting a current state statute, you should include the text of the actual statute being changed in the body of the bill.
- Your bill should include all the info in template shown above, including the required enacting clauses.



Once you write your final draft, you will use your assigned template in Airtable. The template will have a variety of text boxes. Copy the content, section-by-section, from your text document and paste it into each corresponding text box.

Airtable allows for back-and-forth editing. It is possible for a bill to be reviewed by your Delegation Director and you may be given instructions/conditions to fulfill before the bill can be submitted to the State Office for publication in the Session Book.

Make sure you get your bill submitted before the posted deadline, so your Delegation Director can review and make suggestions for final improvements. Plan ahead in case of technical difficulties.



IF YOU DO NOT 'FINALIZE' YOUR BILL AND SEND IT TO YOUR DELEGATION DIRECTOR, IT WILL NOT BE PRINTED IN THE SESSION BOOK.

Please take care that you fully complete the process.

It is strongly encouraged that you bring a printed and digital version of your bill with you to Youth in Government, just in case something goes wrong. NO LATE BILLS will be accepted by State Office or Secretary of State's office at the conference so make sure your Bill is submitted properly and on time.

Step 6 – Final Research & Debate

Even though you have finished writing your bill, your work is not over! Just because your bill looks good doesn't mean it is going to pass. You must convince all the other legislators at Youth in Government that it should pass. You will have to speak in front of a committee and in front of the whole House (if you are a Representative) or the whole Senate (if you are a Senator). On top of that, you will have to make sure that someone in the other body is prepared to speak on your bill and that the person knows all the information and understands it enough to debate the bill. You need to know your stuff!

To prepare for your presentation, here are a few things you can do before Youth in Government:

- Interview a senator, representative, or lawyer who can help with the final preparation of the bill and in organizing debate concerning it.
- Ask these people to attend a meeting of your delegation to critique and comment on the bills of all the delegates.
- Seek out opposing views on the subject and take notes.

Ask your delegation for time to debate your idea to fine-tune it and make it MAGNIFICENT! Usually, most delegations will have time set aside for this, but you may need to talk to your Delegation Director or Chair.

When you debate the topic, keep a few things in mind:

- You are looking for weak points in your bill, so be open for arguments against it.
- Deliberating it with your peers can help you clean up any last messy sections.
- Write down areas that you may need to address as you go along.

Check out the next section “**PRESENTING YOUR BILL**” for more ideas about how debate can help you.

REMEMBER: if you are a Representative you are not allowed to speak on the floor of the Senate and vice-versa. You NEED someone to speak for you in the other body. That person can be either a friend you know or the Floor leader/Asst. Floor Leader of the opposite body (you can find them near the front of the room).

PRESENTING YOUR BILL

Once the bill is written, you must figure out how to convince everyone that your brilliant idea should be passed and become a law. This is the fun debate part! When you present your bill (either in committee or on the floor), you will have time for an opening statement, response to questions, and a closing statement.

OPENING ARGUMENT

Let's start with the opening statement first. You'll have about 3 minutes to WOW the crowd with this.

- **PROBLEM** – First off, you want to make them aware of the HUGE PROBLEM you are trying to fixin your bill. For example: pet safety in moving vehicles. Your opening argument should start out with a bang. A great story or good fact will catch their attention and make them realize that the issue you're discussing is VITALLY IMPORTANT!! Then it's your job to make them think clearly but QUICKLY, "I can't believe I never realized pets don't have to be secured when a vehicle is being operated! We need to cancel all the other bills until we solve *this* issue!" Give them a couple of facts or tell them a story to make them aware of the problem.
- **YOUR PLAN** – Next, you want to lay out the basic steps of your plan that will deal with this earth-shattering issue. Make a clear statement: "My bill will solve the problem of animals jumping out or distracting a driver while the vehicle is being operated". Then try to pick about 3-5 things that the audience needs to know to understand how your bill will do what it says it will. Where will the money come from? Who will this affect? How will you enforce it? This is where you need some solid facts as to why your bill should become a law.
- **HEAD THEM OFF AT THE PASS** – You know that the other legislators are just waiting to try to bust up your bill, so think of some common arguments that people have had about your bill. [Here is where your practice debates come in handy!] Address them right now before they get a chance to say anything! Example: You may think that it is necessary that pets be secured in a car while it is being operated, but you may find that is not the reason for many car accidents.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS - DEBATE

After you've given your opening speech, the legislators will be allowed to ask you questions and make pro and con statements.

- **BE READY** - Have a fact sheet with lots of information in an easy-to-read format so that you can be prepared to answer any questions they shoot at you, like: How many car accidents are caused by an animal who was not secure in a vehicle?

- **THINK ABOUT IT** - Before you are put on the spot, do your homework and find the answers to any questions that you were asked in practice debate. Then strain your brain to try to think of any other questions you might be asked.
- **WRITE IT DOWN** - You also want some paper and a pencil to jot down any con statements that other legislators make – that way you can address those statements in your closing speech. It does not need to be long but just enough to summarize the idea. For example, they may say: Requiring animals to be secured while a vehicle is being operated will reduce animal injuries!

CLOSING ARGUMENT

When everyone has asked their questions and made their statements, you will get a chance to finish discussion. You'll have 3 minutes to leave the audience with no doubt about passing your bill.

- **ADDRESS CON STATEMENTS** – Since you do not get to speak during debate except to answer questions, you will want to take a minute and address the con statements brought up by other legislators. *Hopefully* you jotted them down during debate. Pick a couple of the biggest arguments you heard and take a minute and give rebuttal statements that are short but to the point: “Even though it may be a Constitutional right to wear a hat, our Constitution has been amended before because of important issues, and this would certainly qualify as a major issue!” Don't try to address too many of them – just a couple of biggies. If there were no real objections to your bill, try to respond to the debate somehow. Say something like, “I would like to thank the House for its tremendous support of this bill.” It lets everyone know you were at least awake for the last ten minutes.

It's really important to address the major con statements, otherwise people won't know the answers to the good points your opponents made, and they probably won't vote for a bill that they think has such huge problems. Only spend a minute on it.

- **CLOSING THOUGHT** – The last thing you say to the audience is what they will remember the most, so you need to decide what is *most important* for them to think about. It's best to restate the problem and then your solution, just to recap. Don't introduce any new ideas – it just confuses people. Then you can add a dramatic closing thought. Have a conclusion you wrote beforehand that you can go right into if you run out of time.

HELPFUL HINTS

Try to use many types of information in your speech:

- Factual Knowledge – Information that is verifiable and agreed upon by almost everyone.
- Statistical Inferences – Interpretation and examples of an accumulation of facts.
- Informed Opinion – Opinion developed through research and/or expertise of the claim. Citing an impressive source can be helpful.
- Personal Testimony – Personal experience related by a knowledgeable party.

Think about:

- Who is your audience?
- What do they believe?
- Where do they stand on the issue?
- How are their interests involved?
- What evidence is likely to be effective with them?

Practice Your Arguments

- Try giving your opening and closing statements to your delegation, your parents, or just to a mirror.
- Consider creating visual aids (handouts or palm cards) to help present any points that may be complex or confusing rather than trying to explain verbally.
- The more calm, prepared, and concise you are the better chance you have of convincing others to support your bill.

Quality, not quantity

- You have two minutes for opening and closing, but you don't have to use them all.
- Be wise about how much you say and don't confuse the issue with too much information.
- Select the best stuff for your speeches and hold the rest in case you need it during debate time.

RELAX!!! You got this; you're prepared and ready to go!

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Our program tries to be as similar to the actual real-life Legislature as possible. You will need to become familiar with parliamentary procedure. Don't panic! It sounds complicated, but it's just a fancy way of having a conversation – and we'll teach you all you need to know!

Any time you are acting officially as a legislator (on the floor of the House or Senate, in committee, etc.) you will need to use this form of parliamentary procedure to run the meeting. It plays a major role in keeping meetings on an efficient track, using language and a format that is familiar to everyone. Because of that, it's your responsibility to know it well and use it.

For the most part, the officers and chairs will lead the meetings and tell everyone what to do. However, since you are an active participant, you will need to know how to get involved! On the next page is a table of common actions that you may want to do, or that you might see take place during the meeting.



Colorado uses two different parliamentary authorities, and which one applies depends on where you serve. The rules of the Colorado House of Representatives are based on Robert's Rules of Order. The rules of the Colorado Senate are based on Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure, which is the authority used by most state legislatures. Where a chamber's own rules are silent, that manual fills the gap.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE ABRIDGED TABLE OF MOTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

MOTION	APPLIES TO THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS	INTERRUPT MEMBER WHO HAS THE FLOOR?	MOVER MUST BE RECOGNIZED FIRST?	REQUIRES A SECOND?	DEBATABLE ?	VOTE REQUIRED	MAY BE RENEWED?	MOTIONS THAT APPLY TO IT
Set the time of the next meeting	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not when privileged	Majority	Not for the same time	Amend, reconsider
Adjourn	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not when privileged	Majority	Yes	None
Question of privilege	None	Yes	No	No	No, but resulting motion may be	Decided by chair	After progress	None
Rise to a point of order	Any motion or act	Yes	No	No	No, but appeal is	None unless appealed	No	None
Appeal the ruling of the chair	Any decision of the Chair	Yes	No	Yes	No, unless underlying matter is debatable	Majority (tie sustains chair)	No	Any
Lay on the table (set aside temporarily)	Main Motion, appeals, privilege, reconsider	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	After progress	None
Take from the table	Only a tabled motion	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	After progress	None
Close or limit debate (Previous Question)	Any debatable motion	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority	After progress	Reconsider
Amend	Any	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Any
Postpone indefinitely	Main motion, question of privilege	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Limit or close debate, reconsider
Reconsider	Any except adjourn, table, suspend rules	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Limit or close debate, table, postpone
Suspend the rules	Any	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority	Only by unanimous consent	None

Only one motion can be addressed at a time.

No other motion can be considered until the first motion has either passed or failed.

Whether a motion needs a second depends on the chamber. In Colorado, motions in a House committee of reference require a second; motions in the Senate do not. Follow the practice of the chamber you are seated in.

Two motions in this table are often misunderstood. Laying a bill on the table sets it aside temporarily so the body can handle something more urgent; it is not the way to push a bill to a later time, which is done by moving to postpone to a certain time. Postponing indefinitely kills the bill for the session. And a motion to reconsider may be made only by a member who voted on the prevailing side of the original vote.

To see how this plays out in a real room, the Colorado General Assembly puts its proceedings online. Live House, Senate, and committee video and audio are linked from leg.colorado.gov/watch-listen, and the Colorado Channel at coloradochannel.net/watch-meetings carries past sessions you can watch on your own time. The General Assembly also posts a short walkthrough of the committee process at content.leg.colorado.gov/committee-process-video. Watching even twenty minutes of a real hearing is the fastest way to get a feel for the flow — how the chair moves through testimony, where motions land, and how members question a witness. Our committees follow the same rhythm.

ADDRESSING THE CHAIR

When you speak on the floor or in committee, you must talk to the chairperson. In some ways, it's like using a translator – you tell the translator what you wish to say, and the translator explains what you're saying to everyone else. This means that all statements and requests must begin by saying "Chair," then stating what you intend to do. You can be ruled out of order by the chair if you fail to do so.

ADJOURNING

Adjournment is usually done at the end of the day or the end of the session and is done through making a motion to adjourn. You may ask the Chair to consider adjourning or the Chair may ask for a member to make the motion. You need to be recognized by the Chair to make the motion. A majority of the members voting is required for the motion to prevail. If an adjourning motion is approved, the Chair will announce the time to reconvene.

- To make a motion to adjourn: "Thank you Chair. I move that we adjourn until tomorrow at 9am."

PREVIOUS QUESTION/ENDING DEBATE

If you feel that debate is one-sided or just particularly boring, you can help bring it to an end. Any member may call for the question by saying "I move the Previous Question" in between speakers during debate. After Previous Question has been called, the Chair will ask for a vote on the Motion of Previous Question. 2/3 of the members voting need to agree with you for the motion to pass. If the motion prevails, the Chair will move directly to closing statements and voting. Moving Previous Question isn't considered to be nice because it cuts off verbal debate. Consider this when thinking about making this motion.

CLOSING STATEMENT

This is your LAST opportunity to convince the other members to vote for your bill. You also give this speech from your desk. The Chair determines the time you have for this and they should tell you before you begin. You will want to cover the following in your statement: restate their position, rebut points made during debate, and introduce new points in favor of their bill. Many sponsors will end their closing statement by moving the bill again, but it is not required.

MOTION

Motions are what moves the process forward during debate sessions. A motion can be made in committee or on the floor of the House, or Senate. Every bill must be moved both in Committee and in floor sessions (please see Opening Statement for the official motion). You need to be recognized to make any motion.

- To make a motion: "Chair, I would like to move..." or "Chair, I move that..."
- To make an amendment: In committee, "Chair, I move to amend Senate File XXX as follows..." or, on the floor, "Chair, I move my amendment."

OPENING STATEMENT

This is your chance to tell everyone what your bill is about and why he or she should pass it. As the bill sponsor, you would give the statement from your desk. During Committee is the FIRST time everyone will be hearing your speech, so make it count! When you finish making your opening statement, you must move the bill.

- To move a bill: "I move my bill."

POINT OF INFORMATION

If you have information that is important to the current debate, you can say "Point of Information" in between speakers during debate. When you've been recognized, you'll give the information to the Chair. This is especially useful if you have a statistic that the author was not able to give during questions. The Chair has the right to refuse to recognize any point of information if he/she believes that debate is being impeded by the abuse of this procedure.

POINT OF ORDER

During the debate, if a colleague has not stated their name/delegation/intent or otherwise violates parliamentary procedure, you could shout out "Point of Order." The Chair must recognize the motion. Once recognized, you would state your point. If the Chair determines the point to be valid, they will tell the delegate sit down, apologize, or whatever disciplinary action must take place.

- "Point of Order!" Then wait to be recognized by the Chair: "Isn't the speaker supposed to be speaking for the bill instead of against?"
- "Point of Order!" Then wait to be recognized by the Chair: "My colleague did not state his/her name."

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Let's say your parents came to visit you during Youth in Government and you'd like to introduce them to the chamber. You can do this during debate without interrupting the debate in progress. You would call out "Point of Personal Privilege" between speakers. Once recognized by the Chair, you would make your statement of introduction. You can also make these for other general announcements (see below).

- "Point of Personal Privilege! (After recognition by the Chair) I would like to introduce my parents in the gallery, Mr. & Mrs. Hebert."
- "Point of Personal Privilege! (After recognition by the Chair) There is too much talking in the back of the room."

RECESS

This is like the break you take during grade school! You may ask the Chair to consider taking a recess, but typically, the Chair asks the floor for a volunteer to make the motion. The Chair will usually state what the recess is for (a water break, bathroom break, stretch break, until the next morning, etc.).

- To move for recess: "Thank you Chair. I move that we take a recess until after lunch (or whatever the Chair is entertaining a motion for)."

RECOGNITION TO SPEAK

- If you would like to speak, raise your hand (or name card) and wait for the Chair to recognize you.
- After being recognized, you will stand and thank the chair, simply by saying, “Thank you, Chair.” If you simply wish to speak, you may begin your statement immediately. (You do not have to reserve your right to make a statement). If you wish to do something else, you must state your intent.
- To ask a question of the author: “Will the author yield to a question?”
- To ask more than one question: “Will the author yield to a series of questions?”
- To make a motion: “Chair, I move that....”
- If, after asking questions of another member, you wish to make a statement, you may simply do so; again, you do not have to reserve your right to make a statement.
- When done, you may either formally yield the floor by stating, “I yield my time to the Chair,” or you may simply sit down. Either is acceptable.

SPEAKING ON THE FLOOR

You may speak only to the issues, avoiding personalities and not referring to the proceedings in the other chamber. In debate, unless you are the author of the bill, if you have spoken, you will generally not be recognized to speak again if other members wish to speak. This gives more people a chance to participate in debate. If you wish to speak again, and a colleague does not, you can ask the colleague to yield his/her speaking time to you. This is usually allowed, but it is within the presiding officer’s discretion not to recognize a yield of time (especially if a legislator has spoken a lot and there are others who wish to be heard).

- To refer to a comment made by another member: “In reference to the statement made by “a/the previous speaker,” “my friend”, “my colleague” . . . (follow with your point).”

A Note about Personal References: At no time should you or anyone else addressing a committee or the House/Senate refer to another delegate by name. It’s considered to be rude. Reference to comments of another member may only be made if relevant to the issue at hand and not in reference to discussion in the other chamber. Remember you are debating the TOPIC, not the PERSON.

SUSPEND THE RULES

When the chamber wants to do something that it cannot do without violating one of its regular rules, it can adopt a motion to suspend the rules. Typically this motion is used to hear a bill that was previously defeated or vetoed by the Governor. Rules may NOT be suspended to allow members of the opposite chamber or the Governor/Lt. Government to speak on the floor!

- “Chair, I move that the rules be suspended and that the chamber (state reason for suspension of the rules)...”

VOTING

Get used to voting – it happens a lot on the chamber floor! The primary voting procedure is a voice vote. On the floor, at the time a vote is called, the Chair will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to seal the doors of the chamber – no notes shall be passed, and no one may enter or leave the chamber during a vote. Sometimes the vote is so close that the Chair may ask people to stand and be counted or to press the buttons on their desk if they vote “Aye” or “Nay.” When calling for a vote, the presiding officer will use the following forms (please refer to the Debate Procedure section for when abstentions may apply).

- For the affirmative vote: “Those in favor, say ‘Aye’.”
- For the opposing vote: “Those opposed, ‘Nay’.”

COMMITTEES

Well, here it is at last. The big finale. The main event. What you've been waiting for: The Youth in Government conference.

COMMITTEES

One of your first challenges will be to get your bill through committee. Every legislator (including yourself!) will be placed on a committee, usually the same one as your bill. These committees are on subjects like "Education" or "Transportation." Each committee will have a chair and co-chair who will run the show. The committees

- look at all the bills that fall under their subject;
- debate them;
- decide which ones will Pass to be discussed on the House, Assembly, or Senate floor; and
- decide which ones will Fail and go to the great hopper in the sky.

Each author will have a chance to present their bill (see *"Presenting Your Bill"*) and the committee will debate it. As a committee member, you want to pass good bills that are well thought out and have the potential for good debate. At this point, even if you don't agree with a bill or you don't think it's a great idea, you should try to be as unbiased as possible. Your job is simply to decide if the entire chamber should get to debate on this bill or not.

When it's time for *your* bill to be debated, you'll step down from your position on the committee. This is your moment to shine, and all your practice and hard work will be put to the test.

Here are some examples of committees of each legislative body:

- Commerce
- Education Development
- Environment
- Government Operations
- Human Services
- Transportation

COMMITTEE SCRIPT

Below is the order your committee will actually follow, taken from the Committee Chair Handbook. Chairs run the room from this script, so knowing it ahead of time tells you exactly when you will get to speak and what is expected of you when you do.

THE FIRST COMMITTEE SESSION

1. Attendance.
2. Introductions by the chair and the clerk.
3. Establish the rules — speech length (3 minutes), how questions will work (either a length of time or a number of questions), whether the clerk reads the title or the entire bill, and the amendment period.
4. Establish the docket. This takes a 2/3 vote.
5. Begin debate on the first bill.

ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR DEBATING A BILL

The bill is laid out. The chair announces, “We will now hear Bill #X by X. Would the reading clerk please read the caption of the bill.” The clerk reads the title of the bill plus the phrase “Be it enacted by the YMCA Legislature of the State of Colorado.”

Lobbyist and cabinet statements — 3 minutes. Once the bill has been laid out and before the author speaks, the chair asks whether a lobbyist or a member of the governor’s cabinet wishes to make a statement on the bill. These may be persuasive and follow the same rules of decorum as other speeches. Lobbyists and cabinet members may not ask questions or vote.

Authorship speech — 3 minutes. The author explains the bill. No persuasive language is allowed here — nothing like “this bill should be passed because” or “this is a good idea.” If time remains, the chair asks the author what to do with it: waive it, yield to questioning, yield it to another speaker, or yield it to the author’s summation.

Question period — 3 minutes. The chair recognizes committee members, who stand, state their name and delegation, and ask their question. Lobbyists and members of the governor’s cabinet are not committee members and may not ask questions. One question per person until everyone who wants to ask has had a turn; whether you get a follow-up on a two-part question is up to the chair. A member may move to suspend the rules and extend questions by two minutes, which needs a second and a 2/3 vote. Questions may not run longer than ten minutes in total. The previous question is not in order until the question period has ended.

Consideration of amendments. The chair asks whether any amendments were submitted. If there are, the clerk reads the amendment and its author has 2 minutes to explain it, again with no persuasive language. The chair asks the bill author whether the amendment is friendly or unfriendly. Then comes a 2-minute question period for the amendment author, 2 minutes for opponents, 2 minutes for proponents, and 2 minutes for the amendment author to summarize — persuasive language is allowed in the summary. The chair asks the bill author whether they want it to pass, and the committee votes. A majority is required to consider an amendment, and a majority to pass it. A secondary amendment (an amendment to the amendment) is allowed at half the time allotments; tertiary amendments are not.

Debate on the bill — 3 minutes per side. The chair asks for opponents first. If no one wishes to speak in opposition, there can be no proponent speakers either, and the chair moves straight to the author's summation. Speeches alternate with opponents first and last: opponent, proponent, opponent, proponent, opponent. Each side divides 3 minutes among all of its speakers. Leftover time may be waived, yielded to another speaker, yielded to questions of the speaker, yielded to questions of the author, or yielded to the author's summation — except that opponent speakers may not yield time to the author.

Author's summation — 3 minutes.

Voting on the bill. The chair states, "We will now proceed to a vote on the passage of this bill (as amended). All those in favor, please say aye. All those opposed, please say nay," announces the result, and sounds the gavel. If a member calls "Division!" before the gavel sounds, the committee moves to a standing vote, with the clerk counting alongside the chair. If the count is still in question, the chair may go to a roll-call vote. A tie is broken by the chair.

Who may vote. Only representatives and senators vote in the chambers. In committee, every delegate may vote as long as they were present for the entire debate on that bill.

On the floor. House, Senate, and joint sessions follow the same order with two changes: the question period runs 5 minutes, and each side gets a 2-minute intent speech before the 3-minutes-per-side debate.

AT THE CONFERENCE

AMENDMENTS

In committee, you can also suggest changes to bills – this is called “amending.” The chair should have information and the forms to create an amendment. The author may decide that they want to make a last-minute change, or you may find some incorrect information in debate those are both good reason for amending a bill.

THE FLOOR

Once you’ve finished your committee duties, whether or not your bill passed, you will move onto the floor of the House or Senate. The rest of the weekend will be spent debating the bills that passed through committee in whatever order the Rules Committee decided. Your job here is to listen, ask good questions and vote for legislation that will help the people of your state.

If your awesome bill passed through committee, and it’s placed early enough on the agenda, you may get to present your bill once again to the whole chamber.

THIS TIME, YOU’LL BE TRYING TO CONVINCE THE WHOLE HOUSE OR SENATE TO PASS YOUR BILL!

If it passes there, it will go onto the opposite chamber, where a friend or the Floor Leader/Assistant Floor Leader will speak on behalf of your bill using your notes.

THE GOVERNOR/LT. GOVERNOR’S OFFICE

If your bill passes the House and Senate, it’s headed straight to the top – the Governor or Lt. Governor’s desk!!! This is your LAST opportunity to persuade the Governor or Lt. Governor why the bill is a good idea.

Hopefully, it will pass your chamber...

then your sponsor in the other chamber will help it pass there...

and the Governor or Lt. Governor will like it and sign it...

you’ve helped to create a NEW LAW!

NEXT YEAR

Before you pack up the bills and put the parliamentary procedure guide into storage, you should think about next year and what you might want to do.

If you like the debating part of being a legislator...

You may want to consider being in the Court Program.

The Court program gives you a lot of time to debate (our fancy word for arguing!). As an attorney, you represent one side of a case and try to convince a panel of judges that your arguments are better than the other side's. If you become a judge, you get to listen to the arguments of others and poke holes in them with your piercingly intelligent questions. It's all about the debate!

If you really enjoyed getting legislation passed...

You may want to consider being a Lobbyist.

A lobbyist is the person behind the scenes who pushes the legislative process. You probably had some experience with them in committees or debate this year, and hopefully you got to talk to your own teammates. Lobbyists represent clients, and they try and get certain bills to pass or fail depending on how it affects their client's interests. You can use all your debating and negotiating skills to convince legislators to think your way one-on-one, or you can organize campaigns about legislation to reach whole groups. Your primary focus is still legislation and you also get to use your debating skills. If you like networking, have a cause you believe in passionately, and love to convince others to join your cause, being a lobbyist might be right for you. Note: Lobbyists are appointed, so don't forget to fill out your application!

If you loved being a part of Youth in Government...

You may want to become an Elected Officer or Appointed Official

YOUTH OFFICERS

Officers for the program are elected by participants in each program area at Youth in Government, to take office at the conclusion of Youth in Government and complete their leadership the following January. Youth Officers preside in the Model Legislatures and Courts and lead all program areas during the Model Session.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Shortly after Youth in Government, the newly elected Youth Officers appoint delegates to assist in the leadership of their program area. Some appointed positions include: Floor Leaders, Committee Chairs, Commissioners, Administrative Assistants, and Presiding Judges/Justices.