PURPOSE OF THE CONTEST. The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to understand real-world social and political policies debated within the framework of a legislative body modeled after the United States Congress, with formal discourse guided by parliamentary procedure.

NATURE OF THE CONTEST. Contestants will formulate legislative bills and resolutions, debate them, and adopt or reject them by casting votes. Speaking in legislative congress is conducted within a structured environment of specific procedural rules.

STRUCTURE. Congressional districts will be organized into districts according to the twenty educational service center regions (ESC) designated by the Texas Education Agency. All schools, regardless of UIL conference, will compete with each other within their school’s Region ESC unless conference entry numbers warrant separate chambers. Regardless, each conference competing in the Congressional District will be eligible to advance a minimum of three representatives to the State Congressional competition.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CONTEST DIRECTORSHIP. A directorship of five for each Congressional District contest within their Education Service Center region will conduct the district contest. A Congressional District Clerk appointed by the UIL State Office will chair the directorship. The Congressional District Clerk shall be the final authority until the Congressional District competition is completed.

ENTRIES:

REPRESENTATION. Each school desiring to participate in UIL Congress should file an Intent to Participate form on the UIL website no later than October 1 of the current school year. Each school in all conferences may enter three competitors in the Congressional District competition. Two alternates may be registered. Entries shall be submitted at least ten calendar days prior to the Congressional District competition in accordance with district submission requirements. In the event ten or less total contestants per conference are competing in a Congressional District, both alternates from each school with a full entry in that conference may be seated. Only one alternate may be seated if there are 11-15 entries within the conference.

ELIGIBILITY. Each contestant shall be eligible under subchapter M of the UIL Constitution & Contest Rules. Only students in high school are eligible for this contest. Speech plan, section 1000, regarding specific speech eligibility shall not apply to this contest. Entering the pilot Congress competition does not impact a student’s eligibility to enter any other UIL high school academic event. (i.e., CX Debate, LD Debate)

SUBSTITUTIONS. An eligible student may be substituted for any name on the official district entry form by providing the contest director with a letter or official substitution form signed by the superintendent or designated administrator certifying the student’s eligibility. The letter shall be presented to the contest director before the contest begins.

LIMIT ON SUBSTITUTIONS. After a given competition has begun, no substitutions shall be allowed.

PLANNING THE DISTRICT MEET. In order to maximize participation by all schools and provide equal opportunity to all students to enter regardless of the existing academic conflict pattern, the congressional pilot competition will be held during the fall/winter. The Congressional District Directorship, with input from all participating schools, shall schedule Congressional District competition during the two designated district weeks beginning on November 1 and ending on November 15. Location and entry fees will be determined by the Directorship.
SIZE OF CHAMBERS. The optimum size is 20 legislators per chamber for a three-hour session; otherwise, a session should be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20. If a conference has fewer than fifteen competitors, see combining conferences at Congressional District below.

If a school has more than one entry and there are multiple chambers at Congressional District, school entries must be assigned to separate chambers, whenever possible.

NUMBER OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CHAMBERS:

**24 or less entries** – There shall be one chamber, which will conduct morning and afternoon sessions. Each session should be three hours of debate time, lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional congressional contestant beyond 20.

**25 to 48 entries** – There shall be two chambers, which will conduct a preliminary session consisting of three hours and should be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20. The top half of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage will advance to a final congress session). The final session shall not be less than three hours, and shall be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

**49 to 72 entries** – There shall be three chambers, which will conduct a preliminary session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20. The top one-third of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage) will advance to a final session of congressional debate. The final session shall be three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

**73 to 96 entries** – There shall be four chambers, which will conduct a preliminary session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20. The top one-fourth of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage) will advance to a final session of congressional debate. The final session shall be three four hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

**97 – 120 entries** - There shall be five chambers, which will conduct a preliminary session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20. The top one fifth of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage) will advance to the final session that will be three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

COMBINING CONFERENCES AT CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS. In the event there are an insufficient number of competitors in some conferences to constitute a chamber, Congressional Districts will combine conferences to achieve the desired chamber(s) size(s). The District clerk and/or Directorship committee should do this in a random fashion as determined.

Those advancing from preliminary to final chambers must be proportionate to the conferences represented. If a conference is represented by only one school, then three of that school’s members shall advance to the final chamber and to State.

LEGISLATION. Participating district schools should author and submit bills and/or resolutions for debate and are encouraged to author legislation that has a direct impact on the state of Texas. Schools should assume members of the chamber to be United States Congress representatives. If a school chooses to submit legislation, all legislation submitted should meet UIL formatting and shall be the original product of the school. Plagiarism is unacceptable and shall result in the legislation being ineligible for inclusion on the agenda. It shall be the duty of the coach to affirm that the legislation submitted is original.

Legislation must be submitted to the district clerk by September 15 to be eligible for review by the clerk and district committee, which will determine the legislation to be debated at the district
meet. The clerk shall then forward the district legislation to the UIL State Director for final review and posting on the official UIL website.

SCORERS/PARLIAMENTARIANS. The congressional district directorship will determine requirements for providing scorers and parliamentarians for the district competition.

DISTRICT SCORING. A parliamentarian and a minimum of two scorers shall score each chamber. In districts with fewer than 24 competitors, there will be two sessions with a single chamber. The scorers will score each session separately. The parliamentarian will rank only at the end of the second session, ranking all contestants from 1st through the total number of members in the chamber. In districts with more than 24 competitors, there will be one preliminary session with multiple chambers and one final session. The scorers will score both sessions. The parliamentarian will rank at the end of each session.

Legislators may have five rated speeches per session. They may deliver more than five speeches, but only the initial five shall be scored. The parliamentarian and scorers shall rate each speech 1-6, with 1 being worst and 6 being the best. Ratings should be based on originality of thought, organization and unity, evidence and logic, and overall delivery. A ballot should be completed for all members of congress whether they spoke during the session or not.

For the session they are scoring, the cumulative rank of the parliamentarian and judges in any chamber shall determine overall ranking. The lowest cumulative rank of the judges and the parliamentarian shall be first in the chamber, the second lowest shall be second in the chamber, and like manner. The parliamentarian’s vote shall break all ties. The congressional district directorship shall conduct the tabulation.

ADVANCEMENT. Advancement from District preliminary to final congress, and from District final to State preliminary congress shall be determined by ranking legislators. Students will be advanced based on low cumulative rank total of all scorers, including the adjusted parliamentarian score (parliamentarian ranks converted to 8 or less). Ties shall be broken by

1) judges preference; 2) reciprocal fractions; 3) rank by parliamentarian (raw score).

From the final district chamber, each congressional district shall advance the top three candidates from each conference to state. Congressional districts with more than 40 entries within a conference will advance the top candidates from each conference based on a ratio of one student advancing for every 10 entries in a given conference (40 – 49 entries = 4 students advancing to state; 50 – 59 entries = 5 students advancing to state. The ratio applies to all students entered per conference at the congressional district tournament. Conference entries shall not be combined for the purpose of determining the ratio qualifying for state.

DISTRICT AWARDS. Each district competitor should be recognized for participation. Each state advancing congress competitor and state alternates shall receive an award for their accomplishment. Further, each final chamber will vote, using the same method employed for selecting a presiding officer for the outstanding presiding officer of that chamber. Outstanding presiding officers shall receive an award for his/her accomplishment.

ALTERNATES. A first and second alternate to State should be named from each conference in each Congressional District, if possible.

THE STATE MEET:
In order to participate, each Congressional District and each school qualifying a contestant to the Congressional State Meet shall be required to provide the following:

LEGISLATION. At the completion of Congressional District competition, those students for each conference advancing to State competition shall select one resolution or one bill to be submitted to the State Clerk to be considered as legislation for the State Meet.
STATE PARLIAMENTARIAN/CLERKS/SCORERS. Each Congressional District (ESC) advancing competitors to State shall provide one qualified parliamentarian for the duration of the Congressional State competition. Deadline for submission of state parliamentarian by the District Clerk is December 1. Each school qualifying a legislator shall provide one individual qualified to serve as a scorer/clerk for the duration of the Congressional State competition. Deadline for submission of state scorer/clerk by each qualifying school is December 1.

CHAMBER DIVISION. State-qualifying competitors shall be assigned to a chamber within their own conference at the state meet. Preliminary chambers will be evenly divided, in so much as possible, and shall conduct debate for a morning and an afternoon session.

STATE SCORING. During preliminary and final sessions, parliamentarians will remain the same in each chamber, but the scorers will be rotated from that chamber after each session. Thus, there should be four scorers and one parliamentarian who have scored the chamber during state preliminary sessions. The parliamentarian’s vote shall break all ties in the preliminary rounds.

STATE RANKING. At the end of each session, each scorer shall rank the top competitors 1st (best) – 7th. All other competitors shall be ranked 8th. The parliamentarian ranks competitors only at the end of the second session. All members of the chamber will be ranked by the parliamentarian, from 1st (best) through the total number of members present in the chamber.

For State competition, ties shall be broken by: 1) judges preference; 2) reciprocal fractions; 3) rank by parliamentarian (raw score). UIL State Officials shall conduct the tabulation.

ADVANCING FROM PRELIMINARY TO FINALS AT STATE: both the preliminary and final chambers shall be scored in the fashion herein specified. The number of legislators advancing from each conference chamber must be proportionate to providing 18-20 in the final chamber.

STATE AWARDS: Each student advancing and participating in Congressional State will receive recognition. Additionally, students advancing to the final chamber at State will be recognized. Competitors in the final chamber ranked 1 – 6 in each conference will receive medals respective to their rank as Superior Members. Each chamber shall vote, using the same method employed for selecting a presiding officer for the best presiding officer of that chamber. Each outstanding presiding officers shall receive an award for his/her accomplishment.

UIL COMPETITION RULES

ORDER OF BUSINESS:
- Oath of office (collectively or by chamber)
- Audition of Presiding Officer candidates (order should be drawn by lots)
  - The first candidate’s obligation shall include the consideration of “rules of the day,” which will remain binding for the duration of the session, unless amended as allowed.
  - Candidates shall NOT be scored during their candidacy, nor shall their candidacy be a consideration for precedency or recency.
- Conducting the business of the chamber
- Vote on presiding officer (should be recorded and will be picked up by the Clerk)
- Conducting the business of the chamber
- Chamber adjourns at the established time

ORDERING THE DOCKET: chambers may set their own docket.
At District and State, all legislation intended for that portion of Congress may be altered by a two-thirds vote, but no new legislation (beyond a resolution of appreciation) may be introduced to the chamber.

Invitational tournament hosts are not prohibited from using UIL district legislation at their meets.

**LENGTH OF DEBATE:** The length of debate on each piece of legislation may be set in the rules of the day. When no one seeks the floor for debate, the parliamentarian may prompt the presiding officer to ask the chamber if they are “ready for the question,” at which point, if there is no objection, voting may commence on the legislation itself.

**TIME:** Times are absolute in Congress. They can neither be diminished, nor increased by a vote of the chamber.

- Thus, the first affirmative (author/sponsor) has three minutes to speak on the question, followed by a two-minute question and answer period. If, for instance, the speaker only uses 2 minutes and 30 seconds of his/her speaking time, the remaining 30 seconds does **NOT** accrue to his/her question and answer period – the first affirmative and negative speaker receives only those two minutes.
  - After the first affirmative and negative speakers have spoken, subsequent speakers will have 3 minutes to speak on the topic and a 1-minute question and answer period.
  - One legislator may **NOT** yield any portion of his/her time to another legislator, except to ask a question as provided above.

**RECOGNIZING MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER:** Members must speak only after being recognized by the presiding officer. Members should be addressed formally as Congresswoman, Congressman, or Representative when addressing another member of the chamber.

- At the District Contest, when legislation is first placed in order by a main motion, the presiding officer will call for the author of the legislation. Until precedence and recency (defined below) can be established, s/he may choose whomsoever s/he pleases, giving attention to geography of the chamber. That is, s/he should not choose only from one location of the chamber or from one school known to him/her or from one conference known to him/her.

  At the state contest, legislators will be designated on a computer-generated seating chart for their chamber where each contestant will be randomly assigned a number. Until precedence and recency can be established, if more than one contestant wishes to speak, the presiding officer is required to recognize the contestant with the lowest computer-generated number.

  If two or more contestants wish to speak that have previously spoken, the precedence rules below will apply in selecting the contestant that has precedence:

  - As speakers are recognized, the presiding officer shall record that the legislator has spoken and in what order. Once a portion of the chamber has spoken, the presiding officer, when recognizing speakers, shall recognize those who have not spoken or who have spoken the fewest times (precedence). If all legislators seeking to speak have the same number of speeches previously, that legislator who has spoken earliest shall be recognized first (recency).

  - During any session, precedence/recency should not reset, to ensure that all students in a chamber have an equal opportunity to speak. Precedence/Recency will be reset when a new session begins.
UIL CONGRESS RULES 2014 – 2015

• A member of the chamber speaking on the wrong side, that is, speaking on the affirmative when (s)he should have spoken on the negative or who speaks on the wrong legislation shall receive no points for that speech, but the speech will be recorded for the purpose of precedence and recency.

PRO-CON BLOCK: The pro-con block does NOT exist.

• The affirmative shall be followed by a negative speech, if one is offered. In like manner, the negative shall be followed by an affirmative speech, if one is offered. If, however, there is no negative after the affirmative or affirmative after the negative, it is permissible to hear two or more affirmatives or negatives in a row.

TWO-PART OR MULTIPLE PART QUESTIONS: Two-part or multiple-part questions are NOT allowed and cannot be amended by the rules of the day. Members may ask only one question per questioning period, unless members who have not asked a question seek no recognition.

DECISIONS OF THE CHAIR: A member may appeal the decision of the chair, which requires a second and a majority vote.

• As a rule, this is discouraged. Members elected the chair and should have confidence in his/her decisions. This action should be reserved for only the most egregious acts, and should always be preceded with the motion “point of order” to allow the chair the opportunity to reconsider on his/her own.

DECISIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARIAN: If the parliamentarian and clerk are not the same person, a member or the chair may appeal to the Clerk a decision of the parliamentarian. Such appeals must be made in writing, must be accompanied by a two-thirds vote of the chamber’s members, and no appeal will stop the proceedings of the congress.

DISCUSSION WITH THE PARLIAMENTARIAN: Prior to an appeal of the decision of the Parliamentarian, two members in opposition, one for the decision and one opposed, may seek to discuss their positions in conference with the Parliamentarian. These are non-scored speeches, and may not be considered by either the Parliamentarian or judges in ranking the student. They are intended only to allow a brief period of time for advocacy.

• A two-thirds vote to appeal the decision of the Parliamentarian is necessary to appeal.

DECISIONS OF THE CLERK: The decisions of the Clerk of Congress are final. There is no other authority to which a legislator may appeal.

RIGHT TO IMPEACH: The members and officers of the congress may not be impeached; however, the parliamentarian of the chamber may request a member be removed for cause.

PREVIOUS QUESTION: The motion to previous question should be used sparingly and only when debate has lagged, evidence of which is no new or extended arguments are being made.

• It should NOT be entertained by the chair, nor allowed by the Parliamentarian, merely to dispatch legislation in order to debate a different piece of legislation.

TABLING LEGISLATION: As with a motion to previous question, tabling legislation should be used for very limited purposes and not to deny legislators the opportunity to speak on the legislation.

• It should NOT be entertained by the chair, nor allowed by the Parliamentarian, merely to dispatch legislation in order to debate a different piece of legislation.

OWNERSHIP OF LEGISLATION: Legislation does NOT belong to the chamber until it has been first introduced by the author/sponsor.
• Objecting to the consideration of a question will not supersede the right of the author/sponsor to introduce the legislation to the chamber before any other motions may be made on the legislation.

AMENDMENTS: Amendments and amendments to amendments must be presented, written on the appropriate form, to the Parliamentarian first, who shall solely determine the appropriateness of the amendment offered. After the Parliamentarian either approves or disapproves the amendment, he/she will pass the amendment to the chair, who shall recognize the author of the amendment at the earliest possible time for his/her motion to amend.

• No amendment shall seek to alter the fundamental intent of the legislation.

• There is no guarantee of a speech. Upon a one-third vote of the chamber, a delegate may move the question, or the PO may call for speeches in affirmation of the amendment. The amending legislator is not guaranteed this privilege; it is based on precedence and recency.

SCORED SPEECHES: Speeches will only be scored (rated) when the member of the chamber has been recognized to give a speech for or against the legislation or amendment at hand.

• Judges and the Parliamentarian shall record point 1 – 6.

• Motions or a member offering “floor debate” shall NOT be a scored speech.

RANKING LEGISLATORS: At the end of the preliminary session, the scorers will rank the members of the chamber 1-7 (1 = best, 2 = 2nd best, etc. for that session and only that session). All other members will receive a rank of 8. The parliamentarian shall rank the members 1-7 and the remainder of the chamber shall receive a rank of 8 for the purposes of cumulative rank. However, the Parliamentarian shall proceed to rank all members of the chamber first through the number present.

The cumulative sum of the scorers and parliamentarian will determine members’ final rank.

For example, Legislator A receives a 2 from scorer 1, a 3 from scorer 2 and a 1 from the Parliamentarian. The legislator’s cumulative score would be 6. If this cumulative score were lower than all other legislators’, this member would be ranked first in the session, even if another legislator had a cumulative score of 6, because he was ranked first by the Parliamentarian.

• If a tie occurs, the Parliamentarian’s rank of the legislator will break the tie.

• This method is used regardless of the number of scorers.

• If there is more than one preliminary session, the cumulative ranks will determine final ranking for the purposes of recognition or advancement to a final chamber.

• Scorers may be changed after a session (and it is recommended they are changed), but the Parliamentarian remains with the chamber until it stands adjourned.

VOTING BY THE CONGRESS:

VOTING IN CHAMBER: Only those members present at the time of a vote shall have their vote counted for all matters before the chamber, including but not limited to motions, amendments and to pass legislation.

QUORUM: The chamber must have a quorum of 50% plus one member to conduct business. This is based on the original number of legislators seated at the beginning of the session.

ADVANCEMENT BY THE CONGRESS: Voting for the purposes of ranking in the chamber, for advancement to a final round, or both, will be done by the cumulative vote of the scorer and parliamentarian, not the members of the chamber.
VOTING FOR PRESIDING OFFICER: The nominees for Presiding officer should have an audition period, which should not last more than a total of one hour irrespective of the number of auditions in the chamber. The Parliamentarian will divide this time equally. At the end of the audition period, the parliamentarian with the assistance of the chamber clerk shall ballot the membership of the chamber. Voting shall be done by preferential balloting until a clear majority is established.

- In each balloting, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be removed from the next round of balloting.
- If the total number of ballots received by multiple candidates is less than the next highest candidate, all the lower candidates shall be removed from the next round of balloting.
- If there is a tie among the lowest candidates and the total number of votes received is greater than the next lowest candidate, a separate ballot between those candidates must be conducted.
- Repeat this process until only two candidates remain. Conduct a ballot between the two remaining candidates. The candidate who receives the most number of votes will have the choice of serving as presiding officer in the morning session or the afternoon session and the other candidate will serve as presiding officer in the other session.
- Only those members elected in a preliminary session may offer their candidacy in the final legislative session. If no preliminary presiding officers advance, open auditions will be conducted.
- In any consolation congress, any member may offer himself or herself for the position of presiding officer.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CHAMBER: The use of laptop and tablet computers and other electronic retrieval devices by competitors in UIL Congress is allowed so long as wired or wireless connections are disabled and remain disabled throughout the contest. Rules are synonymous with those in UIL Debate and Extemporaneous Speaking. Cell phones and smart phones are prohibited in the chamber. Traditional timing devices are permitted.

VISUAL AIDS: If any member uses visual aids, the visual aids shall be left before the chamber and shall be available for use by all members.

OPEN CHAMBER: UIL Congress shall be an open chamber, but congress members shall request and must receive permission from the presiding officer to leave the chamber. Members are encouraged to limit time absent to a strict minimum. (i.e. 5 minute break)

CONGRESS SHALL BE PUBLIC. Congress is public discourse. Therefore, all congressional chambers shall be open to the public. No coaching or cheering shall be permitted during the contest.

RECORDING: Schools and/or individuals are prohibited from recording (audio and/or video) district or state Congress sessions. The UIL reserves the right to record for educational purposes.