

UIL CONGRESS RULES 2015 – 2016

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

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

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

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

19 **ENTRIES:**

20 **REPRESENTATION.** Each school desiring to participate in UIL Congress should file an Intent
21 to Participate form on the UIL website no later than August 15 of the current school year. Each
22 school in all conferences may enter three competitors in the Congressional District competition.
23 Two alternates may be registered. Entries shall be submitted at least ten calendar days prior to
24 the Congressional District competition in accordance with district submission requirements.
25 Entries submitted after the 10-day deadline require a majority consent of the district congress
26 committee. In the event ten or less total contestants per conference are competing in a
27 Congressional District, both alternates from each school with a full entry in that conference may
28 be seated. Only one alternate may be seated if there are 11-15 entries within the conference.

29 **ELIGIBILITY.** Each contestant shall be eligible under subchapter M of the *UIL Constitution &*
30 *Contest Rules*. Only students in high school are eligible for this contest. Speech plan, section
31 1000, regarding specific speech eligibility shall not apply to this contest. Entering the pilot
32 Congress competition does not impact a student's eligibility to enter any other UIL high school
33 academic event. (i.e., CX Debate, LD Debate)

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

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

40 **PLANNING THE DISTRICT MEET.** In order to maximize participation by all schools and
41 provide equal opportunity to all students to enter regardless of the existing academic conflict
42 pattern, the congressional pilot competition will be held during the fall/winter. The
43 Congressional District Directorship, with input from all participating schools, shall schedule
44 Congressional District competition during the two designated district weeks beginning on
45 November 1 and ending on November 15. Location and entry fees will be determined by the
46 Directorship.

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47 **SIZE OF CHAMBERS.** The optimum size is 20 legislators per chamber for a three-hour
48 session; otherwise, a session should be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student
49 beyond 20. If a conference has fewer than fifteen competitors, see *combining conferences at*
50 *Congressional District* below.

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

53 **NUMBER OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CHAMBERS:**

54 **24 or less entries** – There shall be one chamber, which will conduct morning and
55 afternoon sessions. Each session should be three hours of debate time, lengthened by 10 minutes
56 per each additional congressional contestant beyond 20.

57 **25 to 48 entries** – There shall be two chambers, which will conduct a preliminary session
58 consisting of three hours and should be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student
59 beyond 20. The top half of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage will
60 advance to a final congress session). The final session shall not be less than three hours, and shall
61 be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

62 **49 to 72 entries** – There shall be three chambers, which will conduct a preliminary
63 session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student
64 beyond 20. The top one-third of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage) will
65 advance to a final session of congressional debate. The final session shall be three hours and
66 lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

67 **73 to 96 entries** – There shall be four chambers, which will conduct a preliminary
68 session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student
69 beyond 20. The top one-fourth of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage) will
70 advance to a final session of congressional debate. The final session shall be three four hours and
71 lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20.

72 **97 – 120 ENTRIES.** There shall be five chambers, which will conduct a preliminary
73 session consisting of three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student
74 beyond 20. The top one fifth of each chamber (or whole number closest to that percentage) will
75 advance to the final session that will be three hours and lengthened by 10 minutes per each
76 additional student beyond 20.

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

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

84 **LEGISLATION.** Participating district schools shall author and submit bills and/or resolutions
85 for debate and are encouraged to author legislation that has a direct impact on the state of Texas.
86 Schools should assume members of the chamber to be United States Congress representatives.
87 All legislation submitted should meet UIL formatting and shall be the original product of the
88 school. Plagiarism is unacceptable and shall result in the legislation being ineligible for inclusion
89 on the agenda. It shall be the duty of the coach to affirm that the legislation submitted is original.
90 Legislation must be submitted to the district clerk by September 10 to be eligible for review by
91 the clerk and district committee, which will determine the legislation to be debated at the district

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92 meet. The clerk shall then forward the district legislation to the uil state director for final review
93 and posting on the official UIL website.

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

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

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

108 For the session they are scoring, the cumulative score of the parliamentarian and judges
109 in any chamber shall determine ranking. The lowest accumulated score of the judges and the
110 parliamentarian shall be first in the chamber, the second lowest shall be second in the chamber,
111 and like manner. The parliamentarian's vote shall break all ties. The congressional district
112 directorship shall conduct the tabulation.

113 **ADVANCEMENT.** Advancement from District preliminary to final congress, and from District
114 final to State preliminary congress shall be determined by ranking legislators. Students will be
115 advanced based on low cumulative rank total of all scorers, including the adjusted
116 parliamentarian score. Ties shall be broken by 1) judges preference; 2) reciprocal fractions;
117 3) rank by parliamentarian (raw score).

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

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

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

132 **THE STATE MEET:**

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

135 **LEGISLATION.** At the completion of Congressional District competition, those students for
136 each conference advancing to State competition shall select one resolution or one bill to be
137 submitted to the State Clerk to be considered as legislation for the State Meet.

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138 **STATE PARLIAMENTARIAN/CLERKS/SCORERS.** Each Congressional District (ESC)
139 advancing competitors to State shall provide one qualified parliamentarian for the duration of the
140 Congressional State competition. Deadline for submission of state parliamentarian by the District
141 Clerk is December 1. Each school qualifying a legislator shall provide one individual qualified to
142 serve as a scorer/clerk for the duration of the Congressional State competition. Deadline for
143 submission of state scorer/clerk by each qualifying school is December 1.

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

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

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

156 For State competition, ties shall be broken by: 1) JUDGES PREFERENCE; 2) RECIPROCAL
157 FRACTIONS; 3) RANK BY PARLIAMENTARIAN (RAW SCORE). UIL State Officials shall
158 conduct the tabulation.

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

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

169

170 **UIL COMPETITION RULES**

171 **ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

172 **Oath of office** (collectively or by chamber)

173 **Audition of Presiding Officer candidates** (order should be drawn by lots)

174

- 175 The first candidate’s obligation shall include the consideration of “rules of
176 the day,” which will remain binding for the duration of the session, unless
177 amended as allowed.

178

- 179 Candidates shall NOT be scored during their candidacy, nor shall their
180 candidacy be a consideration for precedency or recency.

181 **Conducting the business of the chamber**

182 **Vote on presiding officer** (should be recorded and will be picked up by the
183 Clerk)

184 **Conducting the business of the chamber**

185 **Chamber adjourns at the established time**

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184 **ORDERING THE DOCKET:** chambers may set their own docket.

185 At District and State, All legislation intended for that portion of Congress may be altered by a
186 two-thirds vote, but no new legislation (beyond a resolution of appreciation) may be introduced
187 to the chamber.

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

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

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

195 • Thus, the first affirmative (author/sponsor) has three minutes to speak on the question,
196 followed by a two-minute question and answer period. If, for instance, the speaker only
197 uses 2 minutes and 30 seconds of his/her speaking time, the remaining 30 seconds does
198 **NOT** accrue to his/her question and answer period – the first affirmative and negative
199 speaker receives only those two minutes.

200 ○ After the first affirmative and negative speakers have spoken, subsequent
201 speakers will have 3 minutes to speak on the topic and a 1-minute question and
202 answer period.

203 ○ One legislator may **NOT** yield any portion of his/her time to another legislator,
204 except to ask a question as provided above.

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

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

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

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

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

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228 • During any session, precedence/recency should not reset, to ensure that all students in a
229 chamber have an equal opportunity to speak. Precedence/Recency will be reset when a
230 new session begins.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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273 **OWNERSHIP OF LEGISLATION:** Legislation does NOT belong to the chamber until it has
274 been first introduced by the author/sponsor.

- 275 • Objecting to the consideration of a question will not supersede the right of the
276 author/sponsor to introduce the legislation to the chamber before any other motions may
277 be made on the legislation.

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

- 283 • No amendment shall seek to alter the fundamental intent of the legislation.
- 284 • There is no guarantee of a speech. Upon a one-third vote of the chamber, a delegate may
285 move the question, or the PO may call for speeches in affirmation of the amendment. The
286 amending legislator is not guaranteed this privilege; it is based on precedence and
287 recency.

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

- 290 • Judges and the Parliamentarian shall record point 1 – 6.
- 291 • Motions or a member offering “floor debate” shall NOT be a scored speech.

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

- 298 • The cumulative sum of the scorers and parliamentarian will determine members’ final
299 rank.

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

- 305 • If a tie occurs, the Parliamentarian’s rank of the legislator will break the tie.
- 306 • This method is used regardless of the number of scorers.
- 307 • If there is more than one preliminary session, the cumulative ranks will determine final
308 ranking for the purposes of recognition or advancement to a final chamber.
- 309 • Scorers may be changed after a session (and it is recommended they are changed), but the
310 Parliamentarian remains with the chamber until it stands adjourned

311 **VOTING BY THE CONGRESS:**

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

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

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317 **ADVANCEMENT BY THE CONGRESS:** Voting for the purposes of ranking in the chamber,
318 for advancement to a final round, or both, will be done by the cumulative vote of the scorer and
319 parliamentarian, not the members of the chamber.

320 **VOTING FOR PRESIDING OFFICER:** The nominees for Presiding officer should have an
321 audition period, which should not last more than a total of one hour irrespective of the number of
322 auditions in the chamber. The Parliamentarian will divide this time equally. At the end of the
323 audition period, the parliamentarian with the assistance of the chamber clerk shall ballot the
324 membership of the chamber. Voting shall be done by preferential balloting until a clear majority
325 is established.

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

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

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

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

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

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