



# New Jersey Youth and Government Junior Legislation Manual

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## **What is Junior Legislation?**

Since 2010, the New Jersey Youth and Government Program has invited middle school students to build a legislative experience of their own. Junior Legislators lead one another as they learn to write bills and have thoughtful, respectful, and exciting discussions about current issues. Collaboration and community help all delegates to create a powerful, empowering experience.

The Junior Legislators will be primarily writing and defending their own bills as well as the bills of their peers. NJYAG gives them the opportunity to share their beliefs and inspire change in the future of New Jersey and above all, NJYAG promotes learning.

Junior Legislators are able to experience conference from a unique perspective, not only working with their peers, but being able to shadow older delegates. This gives them an inside look into other committees and serves as an amazing learning opportunity.

We at conference can't wait to meet the newest generation of delegates!

## **Responsibilities**

- Before Pre-Legislative Conference
  - Delegates must have a bill written
- During Pre-Legislative Conference
  - Read and revise their own and their peers' bills
  - Practice debate and bill presentation
  - Learn about parliamentary procedure
- During Conference
  - Debate bills
  - Participate in breakout mentoring sessions with older delegates (more details below!)
- At all times
  - Learn
  - Listen
  - Be respectful
  - And most importantly... Have fun!

## **What Will We Do?**

At conference you will be split up into 2-3 committees in the beginning. Within each group you will be further split up into buckets. A bucket is just a small group of 3-5 bills that have similar topics (for example, school curriculums or traffic laws).

While in buckets, every bill author will be able to present their bill in an opening statement and answer questions. After every author in a bucket presents, delegates will vote and about half of the bills will move on.

Afterwards, we will combine again. In our full committee we will begin individual pro-con debate for each bill.

Below you can find a general idea of what the schedule will be.

### Friday

- Opening Ceremony
- Icebreakers
- Dividing into bucketing groups
- Begin bucketing

### Saturday

- Finish bucketing
- Begin pro-con debate
- Breakout mentoring sessions (see the next page!)

### Sunday

- Continue pro-con debate
- Closing

## **YAG Essentials**

Packing for conference can be daunting. What do you bring?

We recommend bringing:

- A notebook and pencils
- A reusable water bottle
- Snacks (like granola bars or fruit snacks)
- Enthusiasm (and maybe a pocket constitution?)

## **Breakout Session**

During Saturday, the Junior Legislators will be able to shadow older delegates in the committee of their choice. They will select a committee of interest and will be paired with an older delegate. This is an opportunity for the Junior Legislators to experience aspects of other committees.

**Legislative:** Modeled after the New Jersey legislative system, our two fully independent legislatures each consist of an Assembly and a Senate, in which bills are debated and passed through by their respective delegates, and potentially signed by the Youth Governor.

Here you can debate in a way similar to what you've been practicing all of conference!

**Judicial (Courts):** Modeled after the appeal process of the Appellate Division of the New Jersey judiciary, Courts debates and creates an experience of Constitutionality Debate on legislation as done in the Supreme Court.

Here you can participate in the debate and analysis of a real Supreme Court case and learn about constitutionality!

**Lobby Corps:** Lobbyists represent different firms and organizations. They are able to go in and out of different committees and speak on bills in favor of their organization. They also facilitate Think Tank where lobbyists can review bills and give feedback and suggestions for supportive arguments (you can go to Think Tank with your bill too!)

Here you can participate in Think Tank as a lobbyist or visit any other committee you'd like to speak on behalf of a bill, court case, or proposal!

**Executive Response Committee (ERC):** All the time there are unavoidable crises that happen in New Jersey. ERC is responsible for learning about a crisis and creating a comprehensive plan to help.

Here you can assist in writing proposals to solve different types of crises!

**Press Corps:** Everything run and associated with YAG is publicized by the Press Corps. They are responsible for the YAG mag (newspaper), Between the Gavels (video news), and all of our social media.

Here you can participate in press conferences, filming, and even write an article for the YAG mag!

# Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary Procedure (often shortened to parli-pro) is essential for all delegates. Here's a helpful cheat sheet!

Introduction: You use this **every time** you speak

**Name**

**Delegation**

**Thank you, Chair**

Making a motion: You can make two motions every time you speak. The most common are asking the bill author questions and then speaking afterwards. After your introduction say:

**Will the author yield to a series of questions?** [yes/no]

**I reserve my right to speak thereafter**

Then ask your questions and give your opinion on the bill!

You can also yield speaking time. You can yield to another delegate or the author's closing statement. To do this you must reserve your right. After your introduction say:

**I reserve my right to make a motion** [that is your right]

**I reserve my right to yield time to a fellow delegate**

OR

**I reserve my right to yield time to the author's summation**

Then speak! After you are done say:

**I yield the remainder of my time to** [delegate name] OR **the author's summation**

Afterwards, you do not need to yield your time to the chair.

After you are done speaking say:

**I yield the remainder of my time to the chair**

Parli-pro seems complicated at first, but don't give up! Soon it will be second nature. Don't be afraid to ask questions or make mistakes.

## Flow of Debate

There are several components of bill debate:

- Author's opening statement
  - Here is where the author can introduce and explain their bill. Having a prepared speech may help, but isn't necessary. If you aren't the one presenting, pay attention!
- Non-debatable technical questions (NDTQs)
  - Here you can ask the author questions that are not debatable. Ex: Definitions, clarifications, or statistics.
- Con-Pro debate
  - Con-Pro debate is where you can state your opinion on the bill and sway others to your side. You can also ask questions and make motions.
  - Con=disagree and Pro=agree.
- Author's closing statements
  - The author will address any unanswered questions and make any clarifications. This is the final push for the author to sway fellow delegates to vote for this bill.

# How to Write a Bill

(You can copy and paste this into a doc!)

**Sponsor:** Your first and last name

**Delegation:** Your delegation name

**Title:** An ACT to...\*\*insert bill topic here\*\*

- The title clause should briefly describe the purpose of your bill. What change do you want to make that your bill will address? State it here.
- Examples:
  - An ACT to increase the minimum wage
  - An ACT relating to rebuilding infrastructure

**Enactment Clause:** Be it enacted by the Youth Model Legislature of the State of New Jersey that...

- *The enactment clause is where you explain how you will bring about the change that you stated in your title. Your title is the purpose--the thing that you think is important and needs changing--and your enactment clause is where you briefly summarize how you will achieve that change. What is the best way to achieve your title's goal? State it here.*
- Examples:
  - Be it enacted by the Youth Model Legislature of the State of New Jersey that the minimum wage be raised to \$9.90 an hour for all workers.
  - Be it enacted by the Youth Model Legislature of the State of New Jersey that that a surcharge on gasoline be established to fund the improvement of infrastructure.

**Section I:** Define any terminology specific to the topic that your bill addresses

- *Section I is your opportunity to define words that you will use frequently within your bill. Define all of the important ones--even if you think that most people should know what they mean--because, if you provide a concrete definition, no one can debate with you on the meaning of any term that you use to support your argument. You are*

*the expert on your bill topic, so help us become experts too by defining the words you'll be using, within the context of your bill.*

**Section II:** Detail how your bill is bringing about the change that you outline in your enactment clause

**Section III:** Detail how your bill is bringing about the change that you outline in your enactment clause

**Section IV:** Detail how your bill is bringing about the change that you outline in your enactment clause

- *It doesn't matter how many Sections the body of your bill has, so long as you feel that you cover every aspect of what your bill actually does within them. This is the technical heart of your bill! How are you going to achieve the change? State it here.*

**Statement of Intent:** Why is this bill important? Why is it necessary? What changes will it bring to the state of New Jersey and why is that change important or significant?

*Use this section to talk about why you think your bill is important! Use statistics and arguments that you feel emphasize the importance of the change that your bill brings. Keep it concise, though: you can save any arguments/stats not listed here for when you actually debate your bill at Conference, so don't give away all of the good ones! Why should New Jersey pass this bill into law? State it here.*

Effective date: This bill shall come into effect on... **\*\*insert future date here\*\***

*Make sure that the date you choose is at least well enough into the future that it is reasonable. "January 1, 2021" is usually a safe starting point, but consider your bill and topic, specifically, when coming up with an effective date.*

**Funds Summary:**

Funds necessary for the implementation of this bill will be covered by the **\*\*insert state department here\*\***

The implementation of this bill will fall under the jurisdiction of the **\*\*insert state department here\*\***

*As you fill out your Funds Summary, think about which state department would be most likely to be involved in overseeing that your bill is carried out, and funding it.*

**Check-list**

- Title
- Enactment Clause
- Body (Section I, Section II...)
- Statement of Intent
- Effective Date
- Funds Summary

Flip to the next page for an example of a bill!

**Sponsor:** Sydney Kang

**Delegation:** Hunterdon Central

**An act** relating to food borne illness

**Be it enacted** by the Youth Model Legislature of the State of New Jersey that a curriculum be implemented in school health classes to educate the youth about food borne illnesses, prevention methods, and the dangers they cause

**Section I:** This bill refers to the awareness and education of foodborne illnesses and further prevention of them

- a) **Foodborne illnesses** are defined as any illness resulting from the food spoilage of contaminated food, pathogenic bacteria, viruses, or parasites that contaminate food

**Section II:** All schools' health classes must teach lessons covering all food borne illnesses and the proper ways to prevent them as well as the dangers of contracting one.

- a) The lessons will come from the Utah Education Network curriculum that covers food borne illnesses.
  - i) The aforementioned lessons will consist of a coverage on the most common food borne illnesses in the United States as well as prevention methods and proper sanitizing measures and the dangers of not following these prevention methods.
- b) The entire span of lessons will not exceed one to three classes, depending on the length of time each class is, as it is different for every school.

**Section III:** The aforementioned curriculum will be taught in grades 7, 9, and 11 in New Jersey.

- a) This will be taught in all public high schools in New Jersey.

**Section IV:** If any school fails to comply they will be fined \$1000 for every semester they fail to implement this curriculum.

- a) The Department of Education will be enforcing and collecting this fine for any public school that does not comply.

**Statement of intent:** This bill has the goal of preventing food borne illnesses by educating youth and implementing the knowledge with them so they understand the proper prevention methods and the risks.

**Effective Date:** August 2019, before the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

**Financial Statement:**

a) Funds summary

- i) Funds necessary for the implementation of this bill will be covered by the Department of Education.
- ii) The implementation of this bill will fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education and all fines collected will go to the state.

