Congress Judging Instructions

Each event has its own special characteristics, requirements, customs and conventions that you will come to understand more fully as you judge different events. The following is a brief synopsis of the different events along with some of the judging criteria for each. If at any time you are assigned to an event that you are not sure about, please ask for some general help from the tournament staff.

Debate Events General Notes:
- In Congressional Debate, judges preside over a room of student's as they simulate a session of Congress. Prior to the start of the round, the judge will pick up a set of **ballots** from the tournament organizer. These **ballots** are where judges will record their thoughts on each performance, suggestions for improvement, and general feedback for the performer. At the end of the tournament, each school will receive all the **ballots** written about their competitors so contestants can use your feedback to improve!
- A typical Congress session lasts longer than rounds for other speech and debate events, and rounds are usually divided into morning and afternoon session. As student's debate proposed bills and resolutions, judges evaluate each speech that is given during the round.
- Congressional Debate uses *Robert's Rules of Order*, a manual describing parliamentary procedure, which most competitors will be familiar with. However, you don't need to be an expert to judge Congressional Debate! At the beginning of each session, each house will elect a **Presiding Officer (PO)**, a competitor who will abstain from speaking in order to orchestrate the proceedings. The **PO** will do things like keep time, call for speakers, count votes, etc. Because the **PO** does not give any speeches, judges are given a special ballot to evaluate the **PO**, which should be done at the end of the session.
- At the end of the session, judges should compile all their **ballots** and return them to the tournament organizer.

Judging Criteria	Time Limits

Content & Analysis:
• An interesting introduction – grabs the listeners attention
• Impact statement
• Statement of how senators should vote (affirmative or negative)
• Two (or three) areas of analysis (distinct reasons for an affirmative or negative vote)
   o Each of these areas of analysis need to be supported by specific evidence and analysis
• Affirmation and refutation
   o Extends the debate – does not simply restate what has already been said
	3 minute speeches
	3 minute questioning
	Presiding Officer will "run the chamber"

| Refutation:
• Refers to other senator's (by name) statements
   o Summarizes statements and either expands upon the analysis or refutes the statement
Logic & Organization:
• Preview of areas of analysis
• Clear topic sentences
• Clear connection between points
• Review of areas of analysis
• Reminder of how Senators should vote
Evidence:
• Citation of sources or experts – both from where it was retrieved as well as the date of the source
Presentation:
• Makes eye contact with the members of the chamber (fellow students)
• Good pace
• Good articulation and enunciation
• Good energy/persuasive tone |

Second table (right column continued):

How to fill out ballots
Comments: • **Comments are essential to student improvement!** As you listen to the speech, please include several comments. Always try to provide both a comment on a positive aspect(s) of the speech as well as suggestions for improvement.   **Scoring**   • Each of the speeches is scored on a scale of 1-6, competitors can speak more than once in a round. • At the end of the round each competitor should have SPEECH ballots and a master ballot where you rank the debaters in the round. You'll identify and rank the top 8 in the room, and the rest will receive a score of 9

Thank you for Judging!