

## PENNSBURY FALCON INVITATIONAL CONGRESS RULES for PARLIAMENTARIANS

1. **Agenda.** The Preliminary Session agenda is determined by the tournament to vary topics and the region of sponsorship. The order of debate CANNOT be changed and legislation may not be tabled. Supplemental legislation may be considered, in any order, if time remains after the three pieces of legislation assigned to a session have been debated and voted upon. A motion to amend the agenda is valid only in such a situation.
2. **Limitations on debate.** Debate on any individual legislation has a minimum length of one speech and a maximum length of 45 minutes of session time. There are no side balance requirements or mandatory moves to previous question other than the 45 minute maximum time. No legislation may carryover from one session to another or be considered more than once.
3. **Authorships.** When a new piece of legislation comes to the floor, a student from the submitting school should be granted the first affirmative speech as an authorship. If no author is present, any member of the house may speak as a sponsor of the legislation.
4. **Questioning.** There is a mandatory questioning period of one minute for each speech – two minutes for the first affirmative and negative speech on each bill. In the Preliminary Sessions, questioning will follow the standard one question per questioner format, recognized by the Presiding Officer in turn. Ignore any remaining speech time; do not add it to time available for questioning. Motions to extend questioning periods are NOT allowed.

In Finals *only*, questioning will follow a direct questioning format in which questioners selected by the Presiding Officer will be allotted 30 seconds to question the speaker on the floor.

5. **Precedence/Recency.** Precedence should reset to a clean slate at the beginning of each session. President Officers should be discouraged from using “activity” or questions to determine recency. ONLY recency should be used to determine who can speak and when; before recency is determined, speakers should be chosen randomly.
6. **Scoring.** Judges may not score speeches by students from their schools; the Parliamentarian should score those speeches. A judge or Parliamentarian may rank a student from their school, but may not score the speeches. All judges will score the Presiding Officer. There is no requirement to rank the Presiding Officer; s/he may be ranked as each scorer sees fit.
7. **Ranking.** Judges will rank the top 8 contestants at the end of each session; the Parliamentarian completes one ranking sheet at the end of all sessions, ranking ALL students.
8. **Voting.** Approximately 5 minutes before the scheduled end of the final session, a representative from the tab room will arrive to collect judges’ ranking sheets and begin the student voting process. Please ensure that the chamber is prepared to complete the session at this time.

**Please refer to NSDA rules for any issues not specified by PFI rules. Refer to Congress Tab with any questions or needs that may arise during the session.**

# PENNSBURY FALCON INVITATIONAL

## INFORMATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE JUDGES

### **BALLOTS**

Please fill out a ballot for each speech in the round and give comments and a score (from 0-6) to the speaker. Each ballot sheet (if using paper) can be used for 4 speeches from the same speaker. You may continue comments or notes on the back of the sheet. Please **DO NOT** score different speakers on a single sheet, even if they are from the same school. Notify the parliamentarian if you run out of ballots.

At the start of the round, inform the parliamentarian if any contestants are from your school – you may rank those students, but may not score their individual speeches.

### **RANKINGS**

Please rank the **top 8** competitors in this session on the enclosed sheet, and turn it in as soon as possible after the conclusion of the round so that the students may vote. Rankings should reflect the overall impact of each legislator on the course of debate and the session as a whole.

Rankings should take into account both quantity and quality of speeches, as well as other participation in the session (questions, motions, decorum, etc). The tournament frowns upon repetitive debate, and on the abuse of parliamentary procedure to change the agenda or rules excessively. You may make note of these issues on the back of a speech ballot for individual competitors.

### **SPEECHES**

Congress is a DEBATE event! Speeches, whether constructives, rebuttals, or crystallizations, are all equally valuable. Please reward students who advance debate and engage with prior speakers, and students who move the chamber forward to the next legislation rather than giving a repetitive speech filled with “rehash.” Students do not possess the right to speak on every legislation, and students should not be penalized for moving the previous question to end debate on an exhausted topic.

### **QUESTIONING**

In preliminary rounds, each speech will have a mandatory one-minute questioning period (except the first affirmative or negative speech on each piece of legislation, which will have two minutes). In Finals, we will utilize a direct questioning format where questioners will be selected for 30 seconds of back and forth with the speaker.

You should not score questioners, but should consider the quality of their questions and participation in questioning when ranking contestants at the end of the session. As part of the effort to turn the event into Congressional *Debate*, speakers are expected to be able to defend their arguments during questioning. How a speaker handles questioning should be part of the score for their speech, as well as part of their overall ranking. Keep in mind that although the questioner holds the floor, an overly aggressive or hostile posture should be discouraged.

### **PRESIDING OFFICERS**

The Presiding Officer is an essential role in a Congressional Debate round. Students serving as the PO are sacrificing their opportunity to speak to serve the community. This is a leadership position. Accordingly, consider the PO when completing your rankings; rankings are a search for the Best Legislator, not the Best Speaker. It is not required that you rank the PO, but it is encouraged if they are able to run the chamber in a fair and efficient manner and contribute positively to the quality and quantity of debate.