

What You Must Do to Get Your Legislation on the Docket

1. **Use the template.** You can download the templates from the FGCCFL website <<https://www.fgccfl.net/home/congress/>> and open them in the word processor of your choosing. Type (don't paste) the text of your legislation directly into the template, referring to the **highlighted guide text** for further instructions. **Do not change the formatting.** The template breaks lines and indents text automatically (if you need to create a new subsection, press Enter, then Tab). Save the finished product as a Microsoft Word document (.docx).
2. **Pick a suitable topic.** Your bill or resolution must constitute a valid legislative response to a timely and significant issue of national interest. In addition, if the topic that you're looking at is on the list of suspect topics (check the manual), you'll need to be especially timely or to take a nonobvious approach to the issue.
3. **Choose the right format.** Resolutions are about *why* and not *how*. Bills are about *how* and not *why*. Choose the legislation format that emphasizes what matters to the Congress. Additionally, remember that Congress chambers are national legislative bodies, so a resolution might be able to suggest state or local policies that the Congress couldn't enact directly.
4. **Do your research.** I can generally tell when you don't know what you're talking about. If your legislation is inadequately researched to the point that it's undebatable, it will be rejected.
5. **Write a descriptive title.** "Descriptive" does not mean "catchy." The idea is to inform somebody looking at the legislative calendar (e.g., your judges). Silly titles, tortured backronyms, and rhetorical excess will be stricken.
6. **Proofread your legislation.** You're creating something that will represent you and your school. Check your work. Get a teammate to peer edit. If you're not sure how something should be written, consult a style manual. *Your legislation will be reproduced as written.*
7. **Additional items for bills:**
 - a. Keep Section 1 as brief as possible—one sentence will usually suffice.
 - b. Don't define terms that aren't used elsewhere in the bill. Don't define any term used for its plain meaning. Be sure your audience can understand what your definitions include *and exclude*.
 - c. Your enforcing agency **MUST** be an actual federal agency, almost always in the Executive Branch and usually at Cabinet level. The manual lists a few exceptions in a footnote, which you'll probably never need.
 - d. You **MUST** specify a means of enforcement. However, you do not need to specify that Congress will exercise oversight, that the courts will interpret the law, or that public officials who don't do their jobs will be penalized in some fashion (unless that's actually the focus of the bill).
 - e. If you are addressing a traditional state- or local-level issue, you **MUST** resolve jurisdictional concerns. How you do this is up to you, but I expect to see that you've given the matter some thought.
 - f. Your effective date may be one of the following: "immediately upon passage"; some time period after passage ("6 months after passage"); or on a specific month, day, and year ("on January 1, 2021"). That's it. Those are your options. Don't add material to Section 4. *Don't change Section 5 at all.*