Harvard Model Congress
Europe 2024

Guide to Bill Writing

Below, you will find each section of the bill template with information about how to complete it and considerations you may have. For many international committees, you will pass <u>resolutions</u> instead of bills - though the format will be essentially the same.

Preamble

In this section, you can give context for the bill. In full session, delegates often turn to the preamble to find out <u>why the bill is being written</u>. What problem does it solve? Each clause in the preamble begins with "Whereas" and is separated with a semicolon. For instance: "Whereas the US government recognizes the need to regulate the sale of popcorn in movie theaters; Whereas demands for in-movie snacks have reached an all-time high." If it doesn't make grammatical sense, that's alright!

Content

This section will make up the bulk of your What is the bill about? This section is where you place the, you guessed it, content of the bill. Usually, the bill is arranged in sections:

1. The main idea of this part of the bill.
   a. Clarifying points
      i. Important details about the clarifying points
         1. So, on and so forth

2. Repeat!

Bills should use clear, <u>actionable</u> language such as "Each state will be required to monitor the carbon output of its factories through means including ..." Resolutions, however, use less demanding language, such as: "The United Nations Human Rights Council strongly urges all member parties to ..." Remember: incredibly long and complicated bills often fail simply because there is a higher chance that any given person can find something they don't like about it. If you compromise extensively, while each party may be able to find something they agree with in the bill, they can also usually find something they disagree with. This can make it tricky when trying to gather votes!

Funding

This section of the bill is usually overlooked but is one of the most important parts of any bill. Here, you describe how the bill is going to be funded. It is important to be as specific as possible. Instead of saying "Funding for this bill will come from the Department of Defense's budget," mention specifically where those funds will come from inside the budget. Will funding come from cuts in military spending? Aircraft expenditures? Military family resources? Remember, the broader you make this section, the more questions people will have, and the more questions you will have to answer.

This is also an area to watch out for party clashes. You wouldn't want to fund a Republican bill through increased taxes and cuts to military spending (typically, measures Democrats favor), for example.

Tip: If you are unsure where funding for a bill should come from, you can write "Funding for this bill will come from the House Ways and Means/Senate Appropriations Committee, the committees responsible for taxing and spending in government.

Enactment Clause

This section is usually a cookie-cutter. Simply write: "This bill/resolution will take effect 91 days after passage." If the enactment clause says the bill or resolution will be enacted in a shorter period of time, this is considered an <u>emergency bill/resolution</u> and requires a ⅔ majority vote to pass.

Authors

In HMC Europe, we allow a maximum of four authors on a bill. These four delegates will be giving the authorship speeches. For G20 this year, four teams may author a bill, but only 4 delegates can give the authorship speech.

Signatories

You may have as many signatories as you wish, but you must have at least four in addition to the authors in order for the bill to be considered. Acting as a signatory means you think the bill has merit and you would like to see it debated, but you are not required to vote for the bill if you sign onto it.

Bill writing may seem complicated at first, but if you work from the template that we provide and aren't afraid to ask questions along the way, you'll find that it is actually quite easy and very fun.

One of the most important things we look for in a good bill is collaboration, so make sure to work with your fellow delegates and to incorporate everyone's ideas!