



# Palm Beach Catholic Forensics League

## Congressional Debate Rules

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This document serves as a guide to the PBCFL's congressional debate rules. Always refer to the bylaws (revised May 2023) for the most current regulations.

### Submitting Legislation

- All full-text legislation must be emailed as a Microsoft Word attachment in proper CFL format no later than the posted deadline.
- Send legislation to [pbcflcongress@gmail.com](mailto:pbcflcongress@gmail.com).
- All legislation must be Federal in nature. No State legislation is allowed.
- Schools may send no more than ONE piece of legislation for a tournament.
- Improperly formatted legislation can be rejected at the discretion of league officers.

### Electronic Devices

- The use of computers, electronic storage and retrieval devices, etc., is allowed in Congressional Debate.
- Connectivity to any persons other than the competitors or judges in the round is not allowed (exceptions apply for students communicating with coaches). Competitors violating this rule will be disqualified from competition.
- No guarantee of power or of internet connectivity should be presumed. Students wishing to use digital devices must be responsible for providing these resources and for having an alternative plan if the digital devices fail.

### Docket

- Mixed chambers will set the docket the day of the tournament.
- Legislation from schools in a specific chamber **must** be given priority over legislation without sponsors. This does not include schools that are absent, even though they were originally intended to be in the chamber.

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## Speeches

- All legislative items brought up for debate must go through a minimum of one complete cycle (three speeches).
- All speeches must be a minimum of one minute in length; anything shorter receives a “zero” score.
- Any presentations considered “joke” speeches shall receive a score of “zero” and shall result in the legislator being disqualified from the tournament.

## Cross-Examinations

- Extending the questioning period is not allowed.
- Two-part questions and any other forms of prefacing are not allowed.
- The style of question (direct/indirect) is at the discretion of the presiding officer.
- All authorship/sponsorship and first-negative speeches have a mandatory two-minute questioning period. All other speeches have a mandatory one-minute questioning period.

## Time & Recesses

- At least 2 hours of debate must take place each session. The 2 hours begins once the first speech of a session begins.
- Recesses are allowed under PBCFL rules, with a maximum of 10 minutes of recess per session. Students are encouraged to wait until the recess is called and NOT to move to a point of personal privilege during a session, as to maintain a smoother flow during the session.
- There is 30 minutes prior to the morning session that should be used for electing presiding officers, setting dockets, etc.
- Tabling legislation is allowed.



## Presiding Officer

- Recency does NOT reset after lunch.
- Remind Congress judges that the PO gets 2 speech ranks (equivalent of 2 speeches = up to 12 points) and that the PO can be ranked.
- The “Chamber’s Choice” Presiding Officer shall be elected by a written ballot process at the end of the final session of the day. The judges shall count the ballots and report the winning Presiding Officer to tab.
- If the chamber fails to conduct a vote, or if the vote ends up a tie, the Chamber’s Choice Presiding Officer shall be based on all Presiding Officer ballots submitted during the tournament.

