

## **BILL DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION**

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A major focus for your delegation will be the development of your "bill," or legislation. Your bill will be presented in committee and, hopefully, the Senate and Assembly at the Model Government. This is what students in grades 9 - 12 who are in the legislature submit.

The following information outlines the bill development process and provides samples, forms and descriptions for you to refer to as you develop your bill.

**The deadline for bills will be strictly enforced! Delegates not submitting bills in time to be reviewed by the State Director will be dropped from the program.**

**Each legislative student must submit at least one bill to participate in the program.**

### How to write a bill...

A bill is simply draft legislation. Legislators use a special format for wording the draft so that it fits with existing laws. Writing a bill is really very simple if you know a few secrets. The next few pages reveal some of those secrets. This information needs to be shared with your students in early fall.

The most important part of writing a legislative bill is that you choose a topic that is meaningful to you. The strength of the commitment you feel toward your bill will undoubtedly influence your overall experience in YIG. Whether your interests lie in the environment, business, education, or social programs, your bill should be about something that you believe in. There are lots of people who can help you with your bill; community groups, librarians, lobbying organizations, teachers, legislators, lawyers business owners, **other delegates, and bills from past Model Government sessions.** Use these resources!

Be sure to start the bill writing process early; talk to people about your topic and spend some quality time determining what your legislation will accomplish. After the bill is written, be sure to research and prepare information for debate in committee and in legislative sessions. Students are encouraged to look in previous bill books for topics, as the topics are **a great starting location.**

## **DEVELOPING A BILL**

- A Determine the topic of your bill.**
- B. Prepare a preliminary draft of the bill.
  - Go to the library and ask the librarian to help you find materials; books,, magazines, newspapers, videos, or anything else that can provide the facts you need to support your bill. *(There is a page at the end of this section that contains some websites that may help you in gathering information)*
  - Check with local authorities to see if your topic is all right (Public Health, School, Police, City or County Officials, etc.).
  - Determine the constitutionality of your proposed bill by referring to a copy of the State and Federal Constitutions, or by talking with a lawyer. When a law is unconstitutional, it means that it goes against the constitution and the Supreme Court will annul it.

- C. **Talk to other delegates and your advisors about your bill.** Ask **them** to critique your bill and highlight arguments for and against your bill. **Extremely critical! Most important step towards gaining confidence and creating a good experience for new delegates!**
- D. Draft your bill in the proper form. Type your bill neatly on the official bill form. Bills will be printed in the bill book exactly as received and the appearance of your bill will make an impression on your fellow legislators.
- E. Research your bill topic for your presentation. Organize your resource materials carefully so that they can be use effectively in committee meetings and on the floor.

### **DETERMINING A BILL TOPIC**

The best thing to do when you begin to look for a topic for your bill is to ask everyone you know to help think of a topic. A brainstorming session with your delegation is also helpful. Develop a list of suggestions, such as housing issues, schools, playgrounds and recreation, farm programs and agriculture, youth and adult crime, water safety and conservation, traffic safety, public health problems, pollution, financial security and safety for Senior Citizens, taxes, unemployment, whatever. Which of these areas do you think can be improved by legislation? Which affect the quality of people's lives? Which endanger the growth and enrichment of the human condition? **Choose an issue that is important to you and holds meaning in your life.**

### **DRAFTING A BILL**

Drafting a bill in the proper form is crucial to getting it passed by the legislature. It's also a lot easier than you might think.

The real trick to writing an outstanding bill is knowing one simple fact. Any subject you can think of has already been thought of in some form and it's all in one set of books, the Wisconsin Statutes. A statute is just another word for a law that has been written down or put into print. There is a law on everything from agricultural subsidies to real estate fraud.

How is this going to help you? Since everything has been written down in the statutes, the easiest thing to do is change an existing law to make it say what you want to say. You can find current copies of the statutes at your local library, court house, or the office of a helpful attorney.

## **BILL WRITING**

*The bill must start with 2 things:*

Title of Bill:

Every bill must begin with: "Be it enacted by the Youth Model Government of the State of Wisconsin, ..." This is an enactment clause.

*The bill has 5 sections:*

Purpose: **One sentence explaining exactly what you want your bill to accomplish.**

Body: **All of your details and facts go here. You want as much support as possible for your bill in this section. It is your body section that gets people thinking about your bill. Give other delegates something to debate. It is better to have too many details than too few.**

3. Financing:  
If revenue is needed, how much and how it will be secured.
4. Penalties:  
Penalties, if any for violators.

Effective Date:

Bills will become effective according to the date set in the State Constitution, unless an earlier date is desired and specified in the bill.

## **The perfect bill length is one page long!**

**To help you write a bill, ask yourself these questions:**

What is the purpose of this bill?  
What is the intention of this bill?  
How will this bill be paid for?  
What if someone doesn't comply?  
When does this bill go into effect?

### **Bill Form:**

The following page is an example of the bill form to be used for every bill proposal turned into the state office.

The bill sheet is broken into three areas:

The Upper Section:

**YMCA Model Legislature • 2010**

**Bill Number:**

**Author(s):**

**Delegation:**

**Title of Bill. An Act to:**

The upper section contains the information about the author or authors. This area should include:

**Author(s) names including delegation**

Title of the proposal:

***BE IT ENACTED BY THE MODEL LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WISCONSIN:***

**Section 1 – Purpose:**

*Description - One sentence explaining exactly what you want your bill to accomplish*

**Section 2 – Body:**

*All of your details and facts go here. You want as much support as possible for your bill in this section. It is your body section that gets people thinking about your bill. Give other delegates something to debate. It is better to have too many details than too few.*

**Section 3 - Financing:**

*If revenue is needed, how much and how it will be secured*

**Section 4 – Penalties:**

*Penalties for violators*

**Section 5 - Effective Date:**

*Bills will become effective according to the date set in the State Constitution, unless an earlier date is desired and specified in the bill.)*