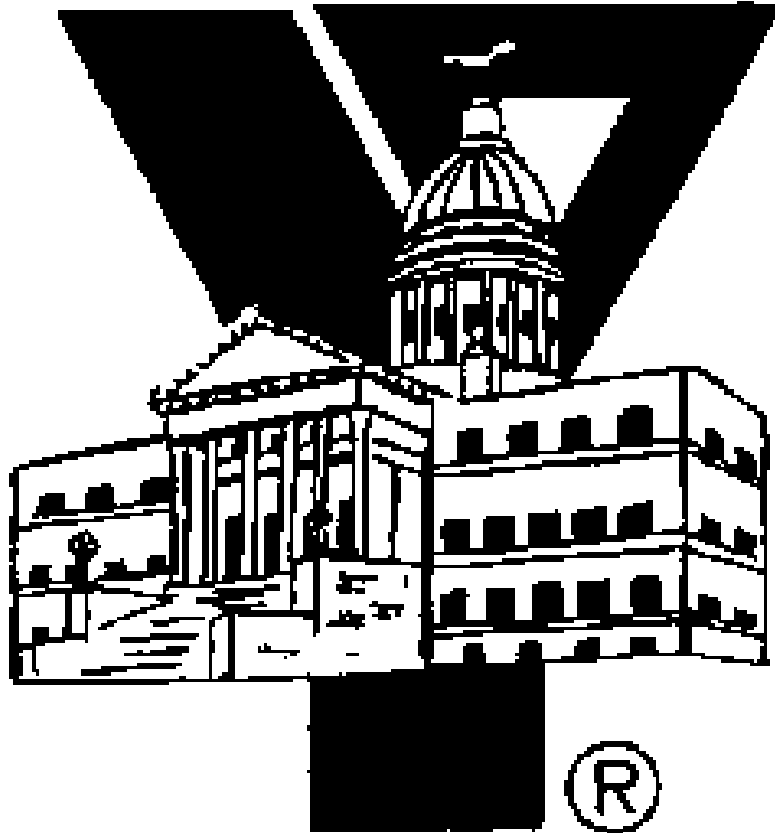


# Mississippi Youth & Government



## Committee Chair Manual

## **•DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE**

The duty of Senate and House Committees are to prepare bills that have been submitted for final consideration on the floor of the Senate or House. In order that the merits of a bill may be fully explained and discussed, the bill has been referred to an appropriate committee for either a favorable, favorable as amended or unfavorable recommendation for the chamber where the bill was introduced.

The standing committee officers are chairpersons who have already been appointed. When two chairs are present, one chair will preside, the other will aid in parliamentary procedure. In the event of only one committee official being present, the chairman will appoint members of the committee to serve in necessary positions. Advisor or staff will be available to each committee to help with the work.

First committee is held the first day of the Legislature (all delegates attend.) The purpose of the committee meeting is to consider, analyze and make corrections or changes, if necessary, on the legislation.

After calling the committee to order, the Chairperson(s) will call up each bill by number. The secretary will read the bill and keep a record of the vote on each bill. Voting shall be by a show of hands.

After the reading of the bill by the secretary, the committee evaluates the bill by debate and discussion. The chairman may permit questions from the committee members and answers by the sponsor of the bill. The sponsor may initially speak in behalf of the bill. The following steps should be considered:

1. Purpose - what is hoped to be accomplished?
2. Will it benefit the majority of the citizens?
3. Is there a similar law or bill now in existence?
4. Is it constitutional?
5. Is the wording satisfactory?
6. Does it cover the intended purpose?

During the hearing, any bill may be amended. If the committee finds the bill deficient in any area, it may be corrected by amendment. Amendments must be written on a proper form and attached to the original bill or resolution.

If the committee finds two or more bills dealing with the same subject in such a way as to cause conflict, they should be combined by amendment or a new bill written under joint sponsorship of the authors involved. In this case, both original bills would be "killed" or "not reported out."

Action of the committee must be one of three decisions: "do not pass," "do pass" or "do pass as amended." The action is recorded on the bill jacket & signed by the chairman.

**ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS** - As stated earlier, the first committee meeting is held on the first day of the conference, immediately following the first reading of the bills. Other committee meetings will take place as follows:

After a bill has passed one chamber it is taken to the other chamber. If time allows, it will follow the same procedure as it went through in getting passed originally. It is read the first time and referred to a committee. The committee meetings are one of the most important parts of the program. Attendance in all committee meetings is required.

### **DUTIES OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON(S)**

1. Locate meeting room of committees in advance of the meeting.
2. Secure the bills to be considered from the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House following the first reading. Also, be sure to secure committee report forms and amendment sheets (these will be included in your committee packet which you will receive on the first day of the conference).
3. Check with the committee secretary to make sure of his/her presence and give him/her the bills arranged in order of the docket.
4. Call the meeting to order PROMPTLY.
5. Pass committee attendance form to be signed by those present.
6. Introduce yourself, any officers and the adults who are present to help with committee work.
7. Ask for the reading by the secretary of the first bill for consideration.
8. Ask the author or sponsor to explain the bill.
9. Ask for open debate and follow standard parliamentary procedure.
10. Use advisors in your committee to help study the bill, give proper phrasing and help edit any amendments.
11. The first meeting of each committee will deal only with the bills from its legislative chamber.

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS SHOULD ALWAYS:**

- Demonstrate knowledge of parliamentary procedure
- Maintain order in their committee
- Be able to project his/her voice
- Act as a positive role model
- Remain poised in stressful situations
- Be respectful at all times and helpful and fair
- Be clean and well groomed

## **DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE SECRETARY**

1. Secure amendment sheets, bills and committee report forms. The forms will be provided in your committee packet. Additional forms may be picked up at the registration desk throughout the duration of the conference.
2. Read the bill when requested by the chairman.
3. Record the vote on the bill jacket. This is extremely important.
4. Record all amendments to bills. Do not write on the original bill but on amendment sheets. If an amendment passes, attach it to the original bill.
5. Each Bill should be sealed in the envelope provided. Immediately following the committee meeting, take all bills to the Clerk/Secretary.

## **BILL PRESENTATION PROCEDURE**

3 Minute Author Presentation  
3 Minute Questions to the Author  
5 Minute Open Debate (this is the time for amendments)  
3 Minute Con/Pro Debate (6 rounds of 30 seconds-no questions)  
2 Minute Author Summation  
Vote!!!

When there are many bills on the docket and very little time you may use the following procedure:

1 Minute Author Presentation  
2 Minute Questions to the Author  
3 Minute Open Debate (this is the time for amendments)  
2 Minute Con/Pro Debate (3 rounds of 30 seconds-no questions)  
1 Minute Author Summation  
Vote!!!

## **COMMITTEE PROCEDURE**

- Arrive at least ten minutes before your committee is set to begin. Make sure you have all necessary bills and materials for your committee.
- Introduce yourself and your co-chair (if applicable). If you need a committee clerk, appoint one at this time.
- Call roll.
- Announce the Committee Docket and Post a copy on the door.
- Begin debating bills.

### **Procedure for Debating Bills**

Presiding Officer: “The first bill on the docket is House (Senate) bill \_\_\_\_\_. The Clerk will read the bill.”

*Clerk read the bill’s purpose and author information.*

When the bill is read and the presiding officer asks:  
*“Is there an author present?”*

### **Author presentation**

This is the bill author’s opportunity to present a case as to why this bill should become a law.

The author stands and replies:

**“Mr./Madam Speaker/President, I move that House/Senate Bill \_\_\_ be placed on final passage and wish to speak on the same.”**

The author should present any statistics, research, or pertinent examples that demonstrate the need for this law. Charts, graphs, or any other visual aids may be used, but should be large enough to be seen by the entire legislature. The author will usually have from 2-5 minutes to give your presentation.

### **Questions to the Author**

After making the Author Presentation, members of the legislature will have the opportunity to ask questions to the author about the bill. These may pertain to funding, feasibility, need, or other relevant subjects.

A legislator that wishes to ask a question to the author must first be recognized by the presiding officer and then ask:

***“Will the Representative/Senator yield to a question?”***

If a legislator wishes to ask more than one question, then they would first be recognized, and then ask:

***“Will the Representative/Senator yield to a series of questions?”***

If the you the author would like to be asked a question by that legislator, then you would reply:

***“The author will yield.”***

The author may refuse to yield to any legislator who wishes to ask a question.

### **Open Debate**

Open debate is the opportunity for any legislator that wishes to speak their opinion on a bill to come forward and do so. In open debate, a legislator may speak either for or against the bill. They may also come forward to present relevant facts without stating whether or not they want the bill to be passed. As many legislators may speak during open debate as time will allow. Open debate is the only time amendments to a bill may be presented from the floor.

In order to speak during open debate, a legislator must stand up, be recognized and request:

***“May I approach the well?”***

The well is the area before the legislature where legislators stand to speak. Once a legislator is speaking from the well, they may continue to do so until either:

- 1) They finish speaking and wish to yield the well
- 2) They are asked to yield the well and agree to do so
- 3) Time runs out during open debate

While they are speaking, a legislator may ask for the speaker to yield the well. This may be done by interrupting them while they are speaking.

To do so, they would stand up and be recognized by the presiding officer, then ask:

***“Will the Representative/Senator yield the well?”***

The legislator in the well then has the option to continue speaking or yielding the well by answering a simple ***“Yes” or “No”***

A question may also be asked to any Representative/Senator who is speaking in the well. This process is the same as asking a question to the author.

A Legislator in the well may also prevent such interruptions from happening by request to the presiding officer once they are speaking in the well. They would simply request to the presiding officer:

***“I wish to not be interrupted.”***

At this point, the presiding officer will no longer recognize any legislators attempting to be recognized.

### **Pro/Con Debate**

Pro/Con debate immediately follows open debate. During Pro/Con, speakers will alternate speaker either for the bill or against it. The first speaker must speak against the bill, the second speaker must speak for the bill, the third speaker must speak against the bill, the fourth speaker must speak for the bill and so on. Pro/Con Debate will last four rounds or until a set time has expired. A round is one Con speaker and one Pro speaker. Each speaker has thirty seconds to speak. No amendments may be presented during Pro/Con debate. No questions may be asked during Pro/Con debate.

The speakers for Pro/Con debate are recognized by the presiding officer who will ask:  
*“Is there anyone wishing to speak against the bill?”*

After the Con speaker concludes, the presiding officer will ask:  
*“Is there anyone wishing to speak for the bill?”*

If a legislator wishes to speak either for or against the bill, they stand to be recognized at the appropriate time, and after receiving proper recognition, ask:  
**“May I approach the well?”**

### **Author Summation**

After Pro/Con Debate ends, the process moves to Author Summation. This is the opportunity for the author to give any closing thoughts, arguments, or facts about the bill. It is also an excellent opportunity to refute any negative comments that have been made during Open Debate or Pro/Con debate.

When Pro/Con debate ends, the presiding officer will state:  
*“It is now time for author summation. Does the author wish summation time?”*

At this point, the author may come forward and present their summation. The author does not have to be recognized or ask permission to approach the well. Once the summation is concluded, the author will state to the presiding officer:  
**“I wish to place HB/SB \_\_ on final passage.”**

### **Voting**

After the author places the bill on final passage, the committee votes.

**Chairperson:** "The question is on the passage of Senate (House) Bill number \_\_. The Committee shall proceed to vote. All those in favor of the bill shall rise and stand until counted." (This means to raise your hand. The Secretary will count the hands.) "On the passage of Senate (House) bill number \_\_, the ayes were \_\_ and the nays were \_\_. This bill having received (failed to receive) the requisite constitutional majority is therefore passed (lost)!"

## **WHEN TO USE WHAT!?!**

POINT OF ORDER - Used when someone is out of order.

POINT OF INQUIRY - Used to ask a question.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE - Used when you need to be excused.

POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE - Used when you have a question to the chair.

## **PRESENTING AMENDMENTS FROM THE FLOOR DURING DEBATE**

Any Senator (Representative) may present an amendment to a bill. The procedure is as follows:

In order for an amendment to be accepted for consideration, the amendment must be written on an amendment form and presented before the previous question is ordered. No amendment may be presented after the question is ordered.

DELEGATE "Mr. (Madam) CHAIR!"

CHAIR: "The chair recognizes the Senator (Representative)\_\_\_\_\_."

DELEGATE "Mr. (Madam) President (Speaker), I have an amendment."

CHAIR "Present your amendment to the Secretary." (Delegate hands Secretary the amendment.)  
"The Secretary will read the amendment."

As the Secretary reads the amendment, the author of the amendment comes to the well. The speaker who is in the well (if there is a speaker) moves to the side and allows the author of the amendment to take the well. After the amendment is read by the Secretary the author of the amendment explains the purpose of the amendment and why it is being presented. After the author's remarks there is a brief question and answer period followed by Pro and Con debate. The amendment may be discussed for a set period of time (that time is announced by the chair) and then the previous question is ordered.

## **CUTTING OFF DEBATE (MOVING THE PREVIOUS QUESTION)**

In order to move the previous question (which will limit the amount of debate prior to the vote on the bill) the well must be vacant before a motion can be made.

DELEGATE "Mr. (Madam) President (Speaker)."

PRESIDENT (SPEAKER) "The chair recognizes the Senator (Representative) from \_\_\_\_\_."

DELEGATE "I move the previous question."

PRESIDENT (SPEAKER) "Is there an objection to the call for the previous question? Hearing none, it is so ordered. Debate is now limited to \_\_\_\_ minutes for the Pro and \_\_\_\_ for the Con."

## **OBJECTING TO THE CALL FOR THE PREVIOUS QUESTION**

If a delegate does not want the remaining time for debate on a bill limited, he/she may object to the call for the previous question.

PRESIDENT (SPEAKER) "Is there an objection for the call for the previous question?"

DELEGATE (Does not have to be recognized) "Objection!"

PRESIDENT (SPEAKER) "There is an objection. All those in favor of the call for the previous question say 'aye'. Opposed, 'nay'. On the call for the previous question, the ayes (nays) seem to have it; (pause), the ayes (nays) do have it. The previous question is ordered (lost)!"

## **CALLING FOR A DIVISION**

If a delegate does not agree with the ruling of the chair on whether the ayes or the nays are in the majority, he/she can call for a division (meaning a hand count will be taken). However, the delegate should get the chair to call for the division before the delegate asks for it.

PRESIDENT (SPEAKER) "The ayes seem to have it;" (pause)

DELEGATE "Division!"

PRESIDENT (SPEAKER) "There has been a call for division. All those in favor of the previous question shall rise and stand until counted. (Secretary [Clerk] counts hands.) Reverse your position. On the call for the previous question, the ayes were \_\_\_\_ and the nays were \_\_\_\_\_. The question is therefore ordered (or lost)!"

If the "nays" win debate will continue until the previous question is ordered.

## SAMPLE MINORITY REPORT

The minority report is shown here to give you an example of what a minority report contains and what should be included in the report. Remember, the announcement of the intent to file the minority report is made immediately after the report of the committee is read **in the chamber**. After the report is written, it is presented to the Secretary (Clerk) and, when the author of the report (who is usually the author of the bill) so desires, he may ask for the presiding officer to call for the reading of the report. After the report is read, the author will have one (1) minute to speak on the report.

Minority reports are usually filed by authors whose bills were narrowly defeated in committee, although a member of the opposition can file a report on a bill that narrowly passed a committee.

### MINORITY REPORT FOR SENATE BILL 13

The minority report is addressed to the Legislature [or Junior Youth Assembly) of the State of Mississippi in regard to the unfavorable report that Senate Committee Three (3) gave to Senate Bill Number Thirteen (13). We hope to prove the worthiness of further consideration of this bill and ask for the Senate to disagree with the Committee's report for the following reasons:

First, there was inadequate time allotted for a complete and proper discussion of the bill. The committee members saw merit in the bill; however, the committee members thought that there was a need for amending the bill in the following form.

The bill in question needed to be a more comprehensive, including math as well as English skills. Therefore, it was agreed to amend the bill in that manner.

Merit notwithstanding, one member of the committee became impatient and blurted out that she did not want to take time to amend the bill to the degree that was desired. The discussion was immediately ended by the call for the question.

Secondly, a serious problem arose. The author of the bill was not present during the training session on parliamentary procedure and was not familiar with what was involved with committee procedure. Due to this lack of knowledge, the Senator was unable to react to the call for the question. This problem was further complicated by the impatient and restless nature of the committee.

In summary a variety of factors led to an incomplete and inconclusive presentation of the bill and thus, it was defeated in the committee.

After the report is read the author gives his/her presentation and the Senate (House) then votes on whether to accept the minority report. If they do, then the bill is placed on the bottom of the calendar and will be brought up at the proper time for its third reading.

AMENDMENT FORM

REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR \_\_\_\_\_

FROM (NAME OF TOWN) \_\_\_\_\_

OFFERS THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENT TO HB/SB NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

ON PAGE \_\_\_\_\_ , LINE \_\_\_\_\_ , STRIKE THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

AND INSERT IN LIEU THEREOF THE FOLLOWING:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE \_\_\_\_\_

MOVED THE ADOPTION OF THE AMENDMENT WHICH (WAS ADOPTED/FAILED).

REPORT OF HOUSE/SENATE COMMITTEE NUMBER

MR. (MADAM) SPEAKER/PRESIDENT: THE ABOVE NUMBERED COMMITTEE HAS HAD UNDER CONSIDERATION THE FOLLOWING MEASURE(S) AND REPORTS SAME BACK WITH THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN



## Chairing your Committee: The Basics

Introduce yourself and your co-chair, and any officers or advisors that are in the room.

Have members sign the attendance form, announce and post the docket.

Begin debating bills:

**Chair:** *"The first bill on the docket is \_\_\_\_\_. The Clerk will read the bill."*

**Clerk reads title, purpose and authors**

**Chair:** *"Is there an author present?"*

The author stands and replies:

**"Mr./Madam Speaker/President, I move that House/Senate Bill \_\_ be placed on final passage and wish to speak on the same."**

**Chair:** *"That is your privilege."*

**If Times runs out for Author Presentation, rap gavel and declare:**

*"Time has elapsed for Author Presentation. We will now move into a period of questions to the author? Does any wish to question the author?"*

**If Author concludes before time expires:** *"The author has yielded the remainder of his/her time to the chair. We will now move into a period of questions to the author? Does any wish to question the author?"*

**After Delegates receive proper recognition:**

***"Will the Author yield to a question?"***

If a legislator wishes to ask more than one question, then they would first be recognized, and then ask:

***"Will the Representative/Senator yield to a series of questions?"***

If the author would like to be asked a question by that legislator, then you would reply:

***"The author will yield."***

The author may refuse to yield to any legislator who wishes to ask a question.

**If time runs out for Open Debate, rap gavel and declare:** *"Time has elapsed for Questions to the Author. We will now move into*

*a period of Open Debate. Amendments are now in order. Is there anyone wishing to speak on the bill?"*

**If there is still time but no one wishes to ask a question, state:** *"Seeing as no delegate wishes to question the author, we will now move into a period of Open Debate." Rap gavel. "Is there anyone wishing to speak on the bill?"*

In order to speak during open debate, a legislator must stand up, be recognized and request:

**"May I approach the well?"**

**Chair responds:** *"That is your privilege."*

Once a legislator is speaking from the well, they may continue to do so until either:

- 1) They finish speaking and wish to yield the well
- 2) They are asked to yield the well and agree to do so
- 3) Time runs out during open debate

While they are speaking, a legislator may ask for the speaker to yield the well. This may be done by interrupting them while they are speaking.

To do so, they would stand up and be recognized by the presiding officer, then ask:

**"Will the Representative/Senator yield the well?"**

The legislator in the well then has the option to continue speaking or yielding the well by answering a simple **"Yes"** or **"No"**

A question may also be asked to any Representative/Senator who is speaking in the well. This process is the same as asking a question to the author.

A Legislator in the well may also prevent such interruptions from happening by request to the presiding officer once they are speaking in the well. They would simply request to the presiding officer:

**"I wish to not be interrupted."**

At this point, the presiding officer will no longer recognize any legislators attempting to be recognized.

**If Time Runs out for Open Debate, rap gavel and declare:** *"Time has elapsed for Open Debate. The Previous Question is now*

ordered. We will now move into a period of Pro/Con Debate. Amendments are no longer in order. Is there anyone wishing to speak against the bill?"

**If there is still time left but no one else wishes to speak in Open Debate, declare:** "The chair will now entertain a call for the Previous Question."

**The Previous Question may not be called for when someone is in the well.**

**When a delegate moves the Previous Question:** After proper recognition: "I move the Previous Question."

**Chair:** "There has been a call for the Previous Question. Are there any objections?"

**If there are no objections:** "Hearing none, the Previous Question is now ordered". **Rap Gavel.** We will now move into a period of Pro/Con Debate. Amendments are no longer in order. Is there anyone wishing to speak against the bill?"

**If there are objections:** "There is an objection. All those in favor of the call for the Previous Question, please signify by saying "Aye". **Listen to votes.** "All those opposed please signify by saying "Nay". **Listen to votes.** "In the eyes of the chair, the \_\_\_ seem to have it" **Pause for a call for division, if none, continue:** "The \_\_\_ do have it, therefore the Previous Question is ordered (lost). **Rap Gavel**

**If there is a call for Division:** "There has been a call for Division. All those in favor of moving the Previous Question shall rise and stand until counted." **Count votes.** "Reverse your position." **Count votes.** On the call for the Previous Question, the "Ayes" were \_\_\_ and the "Nays" were \_\_\_, therefore the Previous Question is ordered (lost). **Rap Gavel.**

**If the Previous Question is Ordered, move into Pro/Con Debate.**  
**If it is lost, continue with Open Debate until Time Elapses or another call for the Previous Question is made.**

### **Pro/Con Debate**

Pro/Con debate immediately follows open debate. During Pro/Con, speakers will alternate speaker either for the bill or against it. The first speaker must speak against the bill, the second speaker must speak for the bill, the third speaker must speak against the bill, the fourth speaker must speak for the bill and so on. Pro/Con Debate will last four rounds or until a set time has expired. A round is one Con speaker and one Pro

speaker. Each speaker has thirty seconds to speak. No amendments may be presented during Pro/Con debate. No questions may be asked during Pro/Con debate.

The speakers for Pro/Con debate are recognized by the presiding officer who will ask:

**Chair:** *"Is there anyone wishing to speak against the bill?"*

**Con speaker must receive proper recognition, ask to approach the well, then may speak for 30 seconds against the bill. Alternate Pro/Con speakers for 5 rounds, ending on a Con. No amendments or questions to the speaker during Pro/Con debate.**

**When all rounds of Pro/Con Debate are over, rap gavel and declare:** "Time for Pro/Con debate has now elapsed. The Committee will now move into a period of Author Summation time. Does the Author wish Summation time?"

**The Author does not need to seek recognition, but may simply approach the well and begin their summation.**

**If time runs out for Author Summation: Rap Gavel.** "Time for Author Summation has elapsed. Would you like to place your bill on final passage?"

**If the author concludes before time runs out, they state** "I wish to place HB/SB \_\_ on final passage."

**Chair:** "The Question is on the passage of \_\_\_\_\_, the committee shall proceed to vote. All those in favor of the passage of the bill, please rise and stand until counted."  
**Count votes.** "Reverse your positions". **Count Votes.** "On the question of the passage of \_\_\_\_\_, the "Yays" were \_\_\_\_\_ and the "Nays" were \_\_\_\_\_. This bill having therefore received (not received) the requisite constitutional majority is therefore passed (lost). **Rap Gavel.**

**Move on to next bill on the docket.**