



THE JUNIOR STATESMEN FOUNDATION

A non-partisan, educational organization of high school students founded in 1934 as The Junior Statesmen of America

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Dear Summer School Student,

Congratulations on your admission to JSA Summer School! This packet contains an overview of Congressional Workshop and instructions regarding your first assignment, which is due when you arrive at Summer School. Please read through the packet carefully and let us know if you have any questions (800-317-9338) or (800-334-5353).

Congressional Workshop (CW) is one of the most exciting elements of the Junior Statesmen experience. Each evening, you will have the opportunity to debate current, controversial policy issues with your peers. Whether you are new to debate or a seasoned speaker, you will experience success in Congressional Workshop. However, success requires curiosity about the issues, a commitment to sharing what you learn, and preparation!

In order to get the most out of this unique experience, please complete the following prior to your arrival on campus:

- 1) **Read through the attached CW Welcome Letter and Frequently Asked Questions.**
- 2) **Complete both sides of the Congressional Workshop Sign-Up Sheet.** Side One asks for your background as a speaker. You can be successful in Congressional Workshop without having any prior debate or public speaking experience. However it is important that you accurately describe your background. Side Two asks for your topic choices. Remember that we want your top 10 choices as well as your position (“Affirmative” or “Negative”) on all 25. You will be turning in the Sign-Up Sheet once you get to campus, so please make a copy for your records.
- 3) **Begin your research. You must turn in one magazine or newspaper article for each of your top 5 topic choices on the first day of Summer School.** You will not have time to do this on campus, and you will be graded for completing this preparatory work, so bring the five articles with you.

As you read the attached list of topics, I hope you are excited and curious to learn more about the policy questions facing our nation. We look forward to hearing what you have to say this summer!

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Congressional Workshop Welcome Letter

On behalf of the staff of the Congressional Workshop, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 2010 session of JSA Summer School. The purpose of this packet is to help prepare you for one of the major portions of the Summer School curriculum, Congressional Workshop.

The Workshop is a Congressional (Parliamentary) style debate program that is a crucial part of the Summer School experience. You and your classmates will be divided into legislative houses where you will research and then debate a variety of controversial resolutions almost every night beginning the second week of Summer School.

To successfully complete the Congressional Workshop, you will be required to actively participate in at least 4 debates: In one debate, you will be responsible for leading the debate and discussion by giving the main speech, either for or against one of the resolutions (see the attached list). Additionally, in a minimum of 3 debates, you will be expected to make a supporting or subsequent speech for or against other resolutions.

Every Congressional House will debate over a dozen issues from among those listed in this packet, and you should start preparing for the Congressional Workshop debates prior to your arrival at Summer School. The more prepared you are when you arrive at Summer School, the less you will have to do at the last moment.

You are therefore asked to complete the following prior to arriving on campus:

Indicate on the attached form your ten favorite topics in rank order (with "1" being your most favorite). From among your top ten, we will try to pair you with a student of similar debate experience on the opposing side, and the two of you will lead the debate on that particular issue.

On the same form, indicate on which side you stand for all 25 of the topics. If you are in favor of the resolution as it is written, circle "Aff;" if you are against, then circle "Neg." You must circle either "Aff" or "Neg" for each issue. If you don't know where you stand on a particular issue, discuss it with your parents, teachers and friends and do some research on the topic.

After selecting your top ten preferred resolutions, begin researching those issues. Avoid using dated materials for this research; use magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, or *The Economist*. Newspapers with national reputations such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The L.A. Times* or *The Christian Science Monitor* make excellent source materials, as do *The Congressional Quarterly*, *Facts on File*, and many books and reference materials. If you don't have access to any of the newspapers or magazines noted above, try researching through Web addresses to access such sources; they're available online!

Do some library or internet research of greater depth on your top five preferred resolutions. Remember that the most popular resolutions will be debated, so anything you can do in advance will be to your advantage.

As you are doing this early research, set aside one key newspaper or magazine article on *each* of those top five preferred resolutions. Make a photocopy of these articles to take with you to **turn in at Summer School. At the top of each article, please write your name and the resolution number that it addresses (e.g. Jane Doe, #11) so that you receive credit for your research. The articles will be due on the first day of Summer School.**

During Summer School, you will be asked to put together a synopsis of the issues surrounding the resolution for which you will be delivering a main speech. You will then be asked to participate in a Faculty Committee discussion on your topic. In addition, an outline of your detailed arguments and a bibliographical list of your sources will be part of a debate "brief" that you will be asked to turn in; sample briefs will be made available during the Workshop Orientation lectures. Now turn this sheet over for more helpful information . . .

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will I receive a grade for Congressional Workshop? How about academic credit? Is it a class like my American Government course? Will I have a textbook?

Yes, you will be graded on your participation in the Congressional Workshop. This grade constitutes 20% of your course grade, so it is a fairly significant component of Summer School. It is not a separate class; instead, it supplements and extends the information you learn in your classes and through the Speakers Program. There is no textbook per se, but you will have access to research packets to help you prepare. During the first week, we will review all of the requirements for Congressional Workshop and an extensive series of large and small group presentations will be made by the Congressional Workshop staff to introduce you to the concept of Congressional Workshop.

2. How will the topics and sides be assigned? When will I know which topic and side I have been assigned for my main debate?

You will be assigned to be the main debater for one of your top ten choices from the page of resolutions. Hopefully, most of you will be assigned to one of your top five choices. You will be assigned to uphold the side - either "Aff" or "Neg" - that you circled, so be sure to make that choice correctly. You will be designated to debate a topic in your house with another Summer School student of comparable debate experience to yourself. These topic choices and partnerships will be published and announced early in the first week of Summer School. **It is imperative, however, that you arrive at Summer School registration with your Sign-Up Sheet completed and your five research sources in hand.**

3. If I have never participated in Junior State debate before, will I be able to survive?

As mentioned above, we pair students by interest and debate experience. That is why we ask you to accurately fill out the Congressional Workshop Sign-Up Sheet. Help will always be available from your Resident Assistants, from the Summer School faculty, the Congressional Workshop staff and Summer School Director; you will be guided and assisted with Congressional Workshop, no matter what your skill level. All students experience a series of orientation sessions to help explain how to research, how to put a speech together and how to participate in the Workshop debates. At the end of the summer, students evaluate each aspect of the program; Congressional Workshop always ranks high, especially by some of the most inexperienced debaters who enjoy this activity immensely.

4. When will the Moderators of the Houses be announced? Can I be one? Will I receive any training?

A preliminary list of Congressional Workshop Moderators will be selected using the information you provide on the Congressional Workshop Sign-Up Sheet. Additional Moderator candidates will be chosen based on Resident Assistants and professor recommendations after the start of Summer School and on self-nominations once the Congressional Workshop process is under way. All candidates will receive special instructions and training during the first week of Summer School and will be assigned to moderate one of the first debates in their House. At the conclusion of the first week of debating, each House will elect a permanent Moderator for the remaining debates.

5. What should I do if I have further questions about the process?

Feel free to call the Junior Statesmen office for more information at (800) 317-9338 or (800) 334-5353. You can also send email to summerprograms@jsa.org.

Please note: The Junior Statesmen Summer School is a nonpartisan program. The following topics were written to provoke debate and do not reflect the position of The Junior Statesmen Foundation or its staff members who take no position except that high school students should be prepared for active and informed citizenship and leadership in our system of law and democratic government.

Congressional Workshop Sign-Up Sheet

(Please complete carefully and bring with you to Summer School registration)

Your Name _____ Date _____

Instructions: First, indicate your **ten** favorite resolutions (from the list on the reverse) by placing a "1" in front of your first choice, a "2" in front of your second choice, etc. These should be the resolutions for which you would most like to lead the debate as a main debater (affirmative or negative) in the order desired, 1st-10th.

Second, indicate your stand on each of the 25 topics listed by circling **affirmative** or **negative**.

Third, to help us match you for a debate, we need the following information from you:

1. Have you participated in the following debate-oriented programs? (Circle all that apply)

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|------------|
| Junior State | NFL (Team) | Mock Trial | Model U.N. |
| Lincoln-Douglas Student Congress | Parliamentary Debate | None of these | |

Other (Please be specific): _____

2. How do you perceive your debating ability and experience? (Circle one)

Very experienced Experienced Rather inexperienced Not experienced

3. A number of Summer School students will be selected to serve as a Chair for their Congressional House. Selections of the Chairs will not be made immediately at Summer School; you will learn more about the schedule and requirements at the first Congressional Workshop session. Knowing that you should have some experience as a presiding officer to be selected - or a willingness to learn - would you like to be considered for this position?

Yes ____ No ____

If yes, please describe your previous experience as a presiding officer or debate moderator:

Finally, please follow these guidelines as you prepare for Congressional Workshop:

A. Complete both sides of this form. You will be expected to turn it in when you arrive at Summer School. Also, please make a copy for your records.

B. Any questions or problems? Call (800) 317-9338 or (800) 334-5353.

C. **Begin researching your top ten choices**; you will be the main debater on one of them!

D. **Photocopy at least one article or clipping on each of your top five topics to take with you to Summer School. You will be expected to turn these in when you arrive. Please note that articles and links provided on the JSA webpage ARE NOT valid for this assignment. Please conduct original research.**

(Topic Choices on Reverse)

CONGRESSIONAL WORKSHOP TOPICS -- SUMMER SCHOOL 2010

Name _____ Summer School _____

Reminders: Rank your top ten choices in order by marking 1 thru 10. Also mark whether you are "Aff" or "Neg" for ALL of the topics listed. Don't be too quick to select your top choices; read over the entire list of topics completely and be sure that you understand the difference between the Affirmative and Negative position prior to making your selection. Also, choose at least 3 of your top five topics from the subject material in your course. "Affirmative" means that you are in favor of the resolution; "Negative" means that you are opposed to the resolution.

International Relations Topics:

- _____ aff neg 1. Resolved, that the United States approve the use of torture in the War on Terror.
_____ aff neg 2. Resolved, that the emergence of China as a global superpower is a threat to American security.
_____ aff neg 3. Resolved, that protecting global human rights is more important than respecting national sovereignty.
_____ aff neg 4. Resolved, that the United States significantly reduce its nuclear arsenal.
_____ aff neg 5. Resolved, that the United States recognize an independent Palestinian state.

Constitutional Law Topics:

- _____ aff neg 6. Resolved, that the US ban the use of capital punishment.
_____ aff neg 7. Resolved, that the President be elected by popular vote.
_____ aff neg 8. Resolved, that physician-assisted suicide be legalized.
_____ aff neg 9. Resolved, that handgun ownership in the United States be banned.
_____ aff neg 10. Resolved, that the constitution be amended to define marriage as between one man and one woman.
_____ aff neg 11. Resolved, that prayer at public school events be allowed.
_____ aff neg 12. Resolved, that the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010) be overturned.
_____ aff neg 13. Resolved, that the Constitution be amended to limit Supreme Court Justices to one 14-year term.

American Government/General Policy Topics:

- _____ aff neg 14. Resolved, that the legal drinking age be lowered to 18 in the United States.
_____ aff neg 15. Resolved, that abortions may not be performed on women under 18 without parental consent.
_____ aff neg 16. Resolved, that teacher compensation be directly linked to student performance.
_____ aff neg 17. Resolved, that marijuana be legalized, regulated and taxed by the federal government.
_____ aff neg 18. Resolved, that the United States should increase its reliance on nuclear energy.
_____ aff neg 19. Resolved, that the legal voting age should be lowered to 16 in the United States.
_____ aff neg 20. Resolved, that the economic stimulus package of 2009 jump-started the American economy.
_____ aff neg 21. Resolved, that the United States federal government should substantially increase alternative energy incentives.
_____ aff neg 22. Resolved, that English be established as the national language in the United States.
_____ aff neg 23. Resolved, that affirmative action at public universities be abolished.
_____ aff neg 24. Resolved, that Congress passes comprehensive immigration reform that includes an expedited pathway to citizenship.
_____ aff neg 25. Resolved, that the United States impose a beverage tax based on caloric content.