

# GUIDELINES FOR LEGISLATION

Each pair of Girls Nation Senators has the opportunity to prepare a piece of legislation that will represent an idea to the Girls Nation Senate. It is strongly recommended that you work with the other Senator from your state on either a bill or a resolution of Federal significance. **A maximum of one piece of legislation will be accepted from each state (One Bill or One Resolution)**

In order to prepare for the Senate session, it is necessary for the Government Staff to receive your legislation prior to Girls Nation. Please email your legislation by July 8, 2009. This will allow the Government Staff time to carefully review as many pieces of legislation as possible prior to the first Girls Nation Senate session.

**IMPORTANT:** email a copy of your legislation to Mary Beth Richardson at [mrichardson@legion-aux.org](mailto:mrichardson@legion-aux.org) and to Ilene Bailey at [mcbailey1@verizon.net](mailto:mcbailey1@verizon.net). The staff at the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters will send you a return email confirming the receipt of your legislation. The Government Staff will also contact you by email if problems appear in your legislation so that you may make corrections before your arrival to Girls Nation. **The deadline is July 8, 2009.** Save a copy of your legislation on a memory stick/CD and bring it with you. **DO NOT BRING COPIES OF YOUR LEGISLATION WITH YOU.**

Girls State Legislatures from each state operate differently. Please follow these instructions as closely as possible. Your bill/resolution will receive a low priority on the Senate docket if it is not in the correct format and if timelines are not followed! This packet is intended to assist you in drafting your legislation.

## 1. Generate an idea

The Girls Nation Senate represents the Federal government. The Senate will only discuss and debate legislation of national jurisdiction. Please refer to the attachment entitled "*Examples of National vs. State Issues.*" It is important that your bill or resolution deal with a topic that falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal government. Legislation dealing with state topics will not be accepted.

If you cannot think of a topic:

1. Look in newspapers or watch TV to get ideas for national issues.
2. Refer to the attachment entitled "*Government Resources on the Internet*"
3. Discuss your ideas with other people and get their input.
4. Check with your congressman or senator about issues.

## 2. Develop your legislation

When you have chosen a topic, decide if your idea should be structured as a bill or as a resolution. **Bills:** Bills create new laws or amend old ones and require a majority vote of both the House and the Senate. Bills may originate in either House, except for taxation bills, which must originate in the House of Representatives. Therefore, bills concerning taxation issues or bills creating new taxes will not be considered at Girls Nation.

**Resolutions:** Resolutions express an opinion of the Senate. They are not for the purpose of creating policy.

**Simple Resolutions:** Simple resolutions deal with internal matters affecting the Senate. They express an opinion of the chamber such as congratulating a member, appointing a special committee or a variety of other items. Both a sample bill and a sample resolution are attached to assist you in drafting your own legislation.

## 3. Finalize the mechanics of your legislation

Guidelines for writing legislation can be found in the attachment "*Components of a Bill*" from the Legislative Manual. The key section of your legislation is the *Main Body of the Bill*. Please refer to the enclosed samples as models. It is often easier to amend a piece of existing law than to create a new law. If you can find legislation on a topic that interests you (in the United States Code) you might consider amending it.

## 4. Important Reminders

Each piece of legislation should be one typed page (follow examples). Include your name and state at the top of your legislation. The government staff will fill in the date, number and committee. Limit your bill or resolution to one idea. Keep it simple and accurate!

Remember, Girls Nation will receive a great deal of publicity! Your legislation, debate and votes may be publicized on television, on the American Legion Auxiliary website, on the radio or by the press. We expect your legislation to be debatable.

Bring your legislation on a computer disk or jump drive using Microsoft Word. Please, label it! Bills that do not follow these guidelines will receive a low priority, lessening the chance of the bill being debated at Girls Nation.

*Prepared by Andrea Dobson and Ilene Bailey, Girls Nation Government Staff  
April 2009*

**The next few pages contain helpful information for you to use when preparing your legislation.**

## **EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL ISSUES VS. STATE ISSUES**

<b><u>National Issues</u></b>	<b><u>State Issues</u></b>
Election and Campaign Regulation	Criminal Penalties
Minimum Wage	Death Penalty
Environmental Issues	Adoption Regulations
Children's Issues	Highway Transportation
Foreign Affairs	Prisons
Regulation of Industry	School Curriculums
Entitlement Programs (Such as Social Security)	Drinking Age

There are several issues, which are dealt with at both the state and national level. (Welfare policies are a good example). Feel free to explore these topics, but make sure that your legislation deals with federal jurisdiction.

## **GOVERNMENT RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET**

Every day more and more government information becomes freely available over the Internet. Below are a few of the more extensive sites for government information.

**FEDERAL WEB LOCATOR**— <http://www.infoctr.edu/fw/>

This site is the best one-stop shopping source for federal government information on the World Wide Web. It is organized by branch of government and then agency.

**GOP ACCESS**—<http://www.gpoaccess.gov>

This site offers full text access to House and Senate bills, debate, the Federal Register and the current United State Code.

**THOMAS**—<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

THOMAS gives hypertext access to congressional information including bills from the 107 the legislature, the Republican "Contract with America," and committee schedules, phone and fax numbers, as well as e-mail addresses.

**WHITE HOUSE WEB SITE**—<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

The White House web site gives access to a variety of government information. It includes presidential speeches and publications, executive agency reports, and connections to other government resources such as web sites and the Library of Congress.

**LEGISLATIVE MANUAL**  
(1ST Edition)  
**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
February 1996  
Printed for the use of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight  
U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
Washington: 1996  
(104th Congress Session: HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES)

An essential part of the process of drafting legislation is the basic articulation of the policy, or problem, which is sought to be resolved by the legislation. In addition, the methods and practice of implementing the policy must be carefully thought through and developed. The Office of the Legislative Counsel can assist staff in determining the appropriate legislative vehicle to accomplish desired goals, as well as provide support to staff in the actual drafting of legislation. The Office of the Legislative Counsel is located in the 136 Cannon, x-5—6060.

**COMPONENTS OF A GIRLS NATION BILL**

There is no standard format or arrangement to follow in the drafting of the bill, although certain elements are commonly found in legislative proposals. Some of these components and a basic description of them to follow: *Bill Number*: (e.g., H.R. \_\_\_\_, H. Res. \_\_\_\_).—Bills and Resolution are assigned a unique number of chronological order, beginning with each new Congress. The form of legislation, e.g., H.R. or H. Res. is identified along with bill number. The government staff of Girls Nation will fill in the date, number and committee.

Please follow the samples that we have enclosed. Only the divisions that we have listed here are necessary for you to include:

*Title of the Bill*—The bill title briefly describes the general purpose of the legislation.

*Both authors* and the state should be listed.

*Title of the Bill*--Repeat the bill title.

*Enacting clause*—The enacting clause (*Be it enacted by the Senate of Girls Nation Assembled.*)

SECTION 1. *Title*—The inclusion of an abbreviated version of the formal title may be convenient for reference purposes.

SECTION 2. *PURPOSE*—The statement of purpose describes the general objectives of the legislation. Sometimes it is combined with the statement of findings, described above.

SECTION 3. *Definitions*—Definitions are frequently provided to clarify some of the terms found in the legislation. They can also be helpful in clarifying the scope of the proposal. They are also sometimes included to minimize repetitious usage of terms, which appear throughout the text of a bill.

(If there are no definitions, adjust your sections accordingly)

SECTION 4. *Main Body of the Bill*—The main body of a bill may consist of any, none or all the following components:

Programs, plans, specifications; Details; Responsibilities; requirements;  
Administrative provisions.

SECTION 5. Effective date clause.

### **Important tips when writing your bills/resolutions:**

1. Each state should send just one piece of legislation, 1 bill or 1 resolution. Please do not make the government staff choose. The government staff will not use both a bill and a resolution.
2. Legislation should be short. ONE PAGE ONLY. See Samples.
3. Use ONLY NATIONAL Issues.
4. Remember this is the Senate—no taxation bills.
5. Bills—include all the SECTIONS shown on the sample. (Section 4: should include the body of the bill and show penalties).
6. We have a limited amount of time for the Senate, so choose your subjects wisely. Research your subject. Don't be wordy. Authors will be expected to explain their legislation.
7. Use both senators' names from your state. Even if only one of you is the author.
8. **DEADLINE is JULY 8, 2009.** We will not be accepting any legislation after that date. E-mail your bills/resolutions to us before that date so if corrections need to be made we can do so before July 8<sup>th</sup>.
9. You do not need to bring any hard copies of your bills/resolutions
10. Questions and concerns regarding bill/resolution writing please email Ilene Bailey at [mcbaily1@verizon.net](mailto:mcbaily1@verizon.net)