

How to be a Committee Chair at YMCA Youth Legislature

Starting the Committee Meeting

Be conscientious of how much **time** you have. Allot five minutes for bill ranking, which will occur at the end of the committee session. Then, take the remaining time and divide it evenly among the bills. (For example, if you had 60 minutes and 10 bills, you would dedicate 5 to voting and about five to each bill).

Spend a short amount of time at the beginning of the meeting explaining what is important when ranking a bill. Bills need to be ranked on:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ★ Debatability | ★ Preparedness (how well the author knows their stuff) |
| ★ Relevance (importance to the State) | ★ How Well Written it is |

Remember!!! We do not want to debate a bunch of boring bills—we want to have an interesting chamber with diverse debate.

Discussion of Bills

- ✦ Let the author give a brief description of his or her bill. This is not the formal opening that will be used in chambers—it is a simple, “My bill makes running red lights a Class A felony” type description.
- ✦ A good opening explains why a bill is debatable, as well as describes what it does. Also, the patron should address any known issues with the bill (questions that came up in the process). Remind the committee members that the more time they spend on an opening; the less time people have to ask questions
- ✦ A closing may be in order to answer any questions that came up, but the speaker doesn’t need to be redundant. (My best advice to you is to let someone experienced in the committee go first—outside of that, you need to decide what order bills will be discussed in. My suggestion is to go in numerical order, because that’s fair.)
- ✦ If someone decides they want to amend their bill while in committee, encourage them do to so! They can make an amendment without debate or adding another patron—you will have amendment forms; just make sure the amendment is returned with the original copy of the bill to the Rules Committee.

Beware!!!

- ✦ The most difficult thing about this process is debating the bills. Do not debate bills in committee! Questions should be limited to points of clarification, such as, “What does Section I do?” or “Under this law, would smoking inside bars now be illegal?”
- ✦ If people start asserting their opinions, stop them!!! We do not have time, and you don’t want to be the last committee done—you’ll hold up everyone else (you will be mocked).
- ✦ If you can’t keep up with time and lead the meeting, rely on a trusty co-chair or committee member to help you keep time. Remind everyone that they’ll have lots of time in chambers to discuss the bills.

Favorable or Un-Favorable

- ✦ At the conclusion of discussion on each bill, take a simple vote of weather or not this bill is Favorable or Unfavorable. **Favorable** = Debatable and should go on.
Unfavorable = Should not be debated on the floor. Not Debatable.

Ranking

Remember those five minutes? You will hand out ballots and tell the folks to rank the bills that have been deemed favorable. Members assign the bill they like the most five points, and the bill they like fifth most one point. Bills that fall into sixth, seventh, etc place will not be ranked. The ballots go one per bill, not member and are fairly self explanatory.

Your Job

Collect the ballots, and liberate your committee members. Make a list of the bills, and add up the number of points (from the ballots) that each bill received. Your list to turn into Rules Committee will be numbered and have the bills in the order they were ranked (the bill with the most points is the top ranked bill, etc). Make sure you turn in the original copies (with amendments) of ALL the bills with your list!!!

Thank you for your time and dedication!!!

