



**Texas Forensic Association**  
**Constitutional Amendment Form**

*The following must be provided before your proposal will be accepted by the Executive Committee.*

Name: Weston Elkins

School: Lamar Consolidated High School

Region: 4

Email address: weston.elkins@lcisd.org

Rationale for Amendment: Included on attached document.

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**Section of the Constitution where Change occurs:**

- Constitution
- ByLaws
- Code of Professional Standards
- Standing Rules: Competition Event Guide
- Standing Rules: IQT Operations Manual
- Standing Rules: State Tournament Operations Manual

Page number of change: 96,97, 101

Select One of the Following:    Add Language    Delete Language    Amend Language

Implementation Time Frame: Immediate (before the 2020 state meet)

**Proposed Change(s)** *(List the change/add here. Changes should include any language you are replacing from the existing constitution along with the proposed new language.)*

See attached document.

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## An Amendment to add the Senate back to the TFA State Tournament

See following two pages.

Changes to each page are highlighted in yellow.

These changes will go into effect immediately for the 2020 TFA State Tournament.

### Rationale:

- Least possible burden on rooms and judges. As Senate chambers can have upwards of 18-24 students each (we could really put as many as we wanted within reason), the event offers our organization a means of providing a free spot that does not put enormous strain on the state hosts for space or adjudication.
- Congress draws from both debate and platform speaking skills. Good Congressional debaters must blend argument development, refutation/clash, and strategy with well-paced delivery, effective rhetorical strategy, and a commanding presence. In short, good Congress competitors combine the strengths of good Extempers, orators, and debaters. This also makes the event accessible to students from any of those disciplines which provides coaches more freedom in choosing who to assign the spot.
- The preparation burden before state and some of the anxiety is reduced by the freedom competitors have to choose when, on what legislation, and on what side to speak. This is unique to Congress as opposed to the other debate events.

I am not suggesting that Congress is inherently more important than other debate events. I would, however, suggest it is more accessible to students from a variety of other platform speaking and debate disciplines while also providing flexibility to choose when and how to speak AND creating a substantially smaller footprint for a tournament in terms of rooms/judges. We do need to draw a line, but that line should probably be somewhere between the two extremes and not right on one of them (zero free spots). I'm not a fan of calling the spot "free" either. A coach who doesn't want to use it, doesn't have to. If this spot is antithetical to your views on what a state tournament should be, don't bring anybody in it. However, there is a valid position on the other side that says a single spot that a coach can assign to a student who has worked hard or been disadvantaged for x, y, z reasons does not devalue the state competition at all.

Submitted by Weston Elkins

**Amend pages 96 and 97 (Congressional Debate) to read:**

# Congressional Debate

## General Rules

### 1. Entry:

a. Entries in the United States House shall be based upon qualification at IQT's that offer Congressional Debate. The students' names shall be submitted on the entry form for the State Tournament.

b. Students qualified for the United States House at the State Tournament may compete in up to two Individual Events in which they have also qualified, at the discretion of the TFA Executive Council. ~~Each member school may enter one contestant in the United States Senate. These students may not have qualified in any other event and will compete in a separated division from the United States House.~~

**2. Judging:** Parliamentarians and Scorers will be selected by the Congressional Debate Committee prior to assigning judges for other events. All schools entering students in Congressional Debate will automatically be placed in the pool to serve as either a scorer or a parliamentarian if needed.

**3. Chambers:** There will be preliminary houses as determined by the number of entries. Each chamber shall contain no more than 20 students and shall be regionally balanced.

**a. Preliminary Sessions:** There will be two 4 hour sessions aligned with 4 debate rounds. Parliamentarians shall be assigned to a chamber for the entire round. Scorers are reassigned each session (4 hours).

- i. A preliminary round is defined as including:
- ii. Minimum of 3 hours
- iii. 18-20 students as the optimum number for a 3 hour session
- iv. Election of a Presiding Officer
- v. New seating chart
- vi. Resetting of precedence/recency

vii. New legislation that has not been debated in a previous session in the tournament

b. Semifinal Congress: In the event that there are three or more preliminary chambers, up to four semifinal chambers will be created for a round which shall be two 2 hour sessions in length

c. Super Congress: There will be one "finals" round of three hours which will be known as Super Congress.

## Procedural Rules

**1. Order of the Docket:** Docket order for State will be released following conclusion of the IQT season.

**2. Floor Debate:** See section under IQT's.

**3. Presiding Officer:** A presiding officer shall be elected at the beginning of each House/Senate preliminary session. At the conclusion of the Prelim sessions, each chamber will vote for their outstanding P.O. This student will be presented with a gavel at the awards ceremony.

**4. Authorship speeches:** Schools, whose legislation is selected for the Preliminary round at State, are guaranteed an authorship speech. The author of the bill or resolution shall be recognized to open debate, but shall have no other preference in speaking on said bill or resolution. Amendments are not allowed authorship speeches. A brief statement of justification is allowed but will not be scored.

a. The authorship speech shall be a maximum of three minutes with an additional two minutes of cross-examination time.

b. If the author of the legislation is not in the chamber, the chair shall recognize a member to begin debate. This will be treated as a sponsorship speech, not one of authorship and will be followed by two minutes of cross-examination. The first negative speech will also be followed by a two minute questioning period.

**5. Tiebreaking Procedures:** Each individual chamber is calculated independent of the others. Legislators with the lowest cumulative rank total advance to the next level of competition, employing the following tiebreakers.

a. Judge's preference

b. Reciprocal fractions

c. Rank by their parliamentarian

## Scoring

Speaker points shall be awarded by the official scorers ranging from 1-6 with 6 being the highest score. Presiding officers shall be awarded points by the parliamentarian ranging from 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest score.

a. Points shall be awarded only for speeches with Cross-examination also being a factor.

Rankings should include activity in the chamber as well as speeches and questions/responses to questions.

b. The Parliamentarian shall award the presiding officer a score at the conclusion of each hour of service.

c. The Parliamentarian will be assigned to a chamber for the entire Preliminary sessions.

The Ranking of the Top 8 Legislators, by the scorers in each chamber, will be used for determining advancement and tabulation of all rounds at the TFA State Tournament.

## Semifinal Congress

- 1. Sectioning:** Semifinal chambers shall be sectioned by rank balance between houses while maintaining regional balance.
- 2. Judges:** Parliamentarians and Scorers shall not have judged in preliminary sessions and shall be assigned to a chamber for the entire round.
- 3. Number of Members:** Semifinal houses shall not contain more than 16 persons each.
- 4. Minimum Preliminary Rounds:** If there are less than three preliminary chambers, no Semifinal Congress shall be held.

***Amend page 101 (Awards) to read:***

## **Awards**

- 1) Debate Speaker Awards: Speaker awards for Policy, Public Forum, and Lincoln-Douglas Debate at the State Tournament shall be determined by the following criteria.
  - a) adjusted points
  - b) total points
  - c) total ranks win-loss record
  - d) opponents' win-loss record
  - e) opponents' speaker points
  - f) opponents' ranks
  - g) adjusted ranks
  - h) blind draw
  
- 2) Speech and Interpretation Event Awards: Awards will be given to all finalists. First, Second, and Third place awards will be presented to the top three placing students.
  
- 3) School Sweepstakes Awards: School sweepstakes will be presented to the top schools based on the following criteria:
  - a) Qualifying Events
    - i) Two points shall be awarded for advancing to debate double-octofinals and semifinal participation in the United States House. One point shall be awarded for semifinals participation in the United States Senate. Two points shall be awarded for participatings in semifinals in the United States Senate.
    - ii) Four points shall be awarded for reaching quarterfinals in individual events, duo, and duet.
    - iii) Six points shall be awarded for reaching semifinals in qualifying events, finalists in the United States House not making the top 8, and non-advancing octofinalists in debate.
    - iv) Ten points shall be awarded for each non-placing finalist in qualifying events, 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> place finalists in the United States House, and non-advancing quarterfinalists in debate.
    - v) Fifteen points shall be awarded in qualifying events for each third place awarded, twenty points for each second place, and twenty-five points for each first place awarded.

b) Consolation Events (Prose, Poetry, and Impromptu, Senate)

- i) One point shall be awarded for semifinals participation
- ii) Two points shall be awarded for participating in semifinals in consolation events
- iii) Five points shall be awarded for non-placing participants in finals in consolation events
- iv) Eight points shall be awarded for each third place awarded, ten points for each second place, and fifteen points for each first place awarded.