**STEP 3: DELIBERATIONS: Discussing, editing and voting on the Bills**

**The Process for Passing Bills:**

1. A bill is introduced to the Senate/House.

2. The bill is referred to a committee.

4. If the bill is approved and signed by the Committee, then it goes to the full Senate/House for debate.

5. If the bill is passed by a majority of the Senate/House, it goes to the other chamber where the above process is repeated.

6. If the bill is passed by the second chamber, then it is sent to the President in the hopes that he will sign it.

**The Process for Committee Work:**

*On the first day, elect a committee chairperson.*

1. The chairperson will read each bill, one at a time. Discuss the bill. Everyone should focus on the same bill at the same time!

2. If a simple majority (one more than half) of your committee approves of the bill, then the chairperson signs it on the appropriate line.

3. If the committee agrees with most of the bill but disagrees with a specific part, the committee may decide to amend the bill. The amendment should be neatly written. If part of the bill’s original writing is being eliminated, that part should neatly be crossed out.

4. If a majority of your committee does not approve of the bill, then pigeon-hole (set aside) it by writing the name of your committee on the back. Place all pigeon-holed bills face down in your committee folder.

5. Keep any bill which are still being debated or have not yet been discussed face-up in your folder.

**The Procedure for Congressional Debate:**

 Bill is read by the author of the bill.

  Author makes a statement explaining the importance of the bill.

   Bill is open for discussion (members raise their hands in order to be recognized to speak). Member begins by stating last name and the state he/she represents and then comments on the bill.

  If you wish to amend a bill, you must say, “I move that the bill be amended to read…” There must be a second in order to discuss it. At that point discussion is focused only the amendment and not on the bill in its entirety.

  To vote on the amendment, someone must say, “I call the question on the amendment.” There must be a second on the motion in order to vote on the amendment.

* We continue with further discussion on the bill, if any.

   If you think the bill has been sufficiently discussed and you wish to call for a vote on the bill, you say “I call the question on the bill.” (There must be a second)

  If there are no objections to voting, then members will be asked to raise their hands at the appropriate time. Members may vote in favor of the bill, opposed to the bill, or may abstain from voting (You can only abstain on a maximum of three bills during the entire activity). You will then be asked to record your votes and explanations.

RUBRIC FOR PARTICIPATION IN DELIBERATIONS

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| STANDARD | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Engage in Civic activities | Student is able to discuss, question and elaborate on the bill. They are voluntarily and politely engaged in discussions. Student adds comments and questions to the discussion, and can reference the materials to support ideas. The information added is thoughtful. Student may seem to be the “leader” of the committee and discussions. | Student needs minimal cues or prompting to join the discussion. Student can elaborate on ideas when prompted, and frequently references the materials to support ideas. Student appears to be an active member of the group. | Student can discuss with cues and prompts. There is minimal elaboration, and minimal reference to the materials. Student appears to be on the “outskirts” of the group. | Student participates only minimally (once, or not at all), or it is obvious that the student is guessing at answers and has not read the bill. They are not engaged with the discussion. |

**Voting Record:**

As a respected member of our Mock Congress, you are responsible for keeping a record of your voting decisions on bills that are debated on the Senate/House floor. Part of your grade will depend on how well you explain your vote. Your voting explanations should be at least 3-4 sentences. You should demonstrate an understanding of some of the effects that the proposed bill will have, express your opinion on the bill’s topic, and express how your constituents would feel about the bill.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| STANDARD | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Engage in Civic activities: Voting record | All of your explanations demonstrate a strong defense of your vote including: understanding of the effects of the bill, your opinion, your constituents’ opinions, and the needs of your state. | Your explanations demonstrate a defense of your vote including: understanding of the effects of the bill, your opinion, your constituents’ opinions, and the needs of your state. | Portions of your explanation may be lacking. It is short and does not present all the elements a representative must consider. | Your voting record is not complete and does not have explanations. |

Complete your voting record on a separate sheet of notebook paper and follow the following format:

BILL #: TITLE: YOUR VOTE:

EXPLANATION: