

Bill Writing Procedure

1. All members must write a bill.
 - A. Two people may co-write a bill.
 - B. The bill must be in the correct form (See sample attached)
2. Bill must include:
 - A. Title: “A Bill to”, i.e. tells what the bill is supposed to do.
 - B. Enacting Clause: “ The people”, refers to Michigan as the point of origin.
 - C. Body of the Bill: Specifies how the bill fulfills the requirements set forth in the BILL TITLE.
 - D. Sections: Similar to a paragraph, or a complete thought.
 - E. Effective Date: All bills need to have a time when the bill becomes effective.
 - F. Penalty: Bills must specify a penalty for non-compliance of the law.

Where to Begin?

1. First, come up with an idea for a bill.
 - A. Where to find ideas
 1. School Board members
 2. Local business leaders.
 3. County Commissioners
 4. State Senators, Representatives
 5. Superintendent of Schools
 6. Newspapers
 - B. Most ideas for bills come from communities outside of Lansing.
 1. Senators and Representatives come up with an idea and turn the idea over to the Legislative Services Bureau who will write the bill in its proper form.
 2. The bill must be a state issue, not a federal or national issue.
2. Rough Draft
 - A. Write the bill in a rough draft at first.
 1. Make sure you eliminate ambiguous words (Double meaning words)
 - a. Will instead of MAY, etc.
 2. Debate the bill in a committee session (if possible) to refine it into its final form.
 3. Type the final version in the proper form.
 - B. Write the bill for one of the following committees:
 1. Environment
 2. Transportation
 3. Judiciary
 4. Workplace
 5. Education
 6. Social Services
 7. Economic Development and Taxation
 - C. Do not assign the committee the bill is for. YIG will do this.
3. Bills that won't be accepted.
 - A. Bills not in correct form
 - B. Bills not typed
 - C. Bills not of a state issue

Preparing Good Legislation

Every kind of legislation that is passed and signed by the governor makes some change great or small, in the lives of the people of the state. Each legislator should consider carefully the intention of the proposal, should weigh the public need against his suggested solution before sponsoring or voting on any bill. Such careful analysis will help him/her to decide whether to vote "yes" or "no" or to propose improving amendments.

As he or she analyzes each problem and the proposed legislative solution, the legislator will add a measure of his own philosophy concerning the proper role of government.

Here are some considerations regarding new legislation which may help the youth legislator, and which should be used as guidelines in evaluating bills.

A. Does this bill truly serve the public interest? That is, does it improve the use of the state's human, material, or natural resources?

B. How will it affect the nature of government? Is it permitted by the federal and state constitutions? Could the function be performed better at some other level of government? Would it be better handled by government, by private enterprise, or by some combination?

C. What will it cost now and in the future? Can the cost be met from existing taxes, or must new taxes or service charges be imposed? Is it worth the cost?

D. How will it affect the overall structure of government? What part or parts of government should be assigned administrative responsibilities? What is the most effective way of providing the service?

E. Prepare the final draft of your bill, paying particular attention to the instructions for bill drafting and the sample bill contained herein. Type it in its final form and submit to the Youth In Government office. ***Late bills are not included in the bill book.***

Do not allow any adult to compose your bill for you. This is YOUR own project. You are urged to get the advice and counsel of an adult on your bill -- but be sure the final ideas are your own.

A. The prime essential is that it be a cooperative and instructive process. All group members should share in the study and discussion necessary to good preparation. Use the facilities of your local library; the internet, interview your public officials and civic leaders; get opposite points of view on the subject of your bill. The relation of your bill to existing legislation and the constitution should be investigated. Revise in the light of all the facts that can be uncovered so that your final bill will be the result of clear thinking based on full knowledge.

B. **The Title:** The first part of a bill is the title. The Michigan Constitution provides that: "No bill shall embrace more than one subject, which shall be expressed in its title." Make the title as concise as possible and broad enough to indicate clearly the scope of the bill.

C. **The Enacting Clause:** Next comes the enacting clause. Under our constitution every bill begins: The People of the State of Michigan Enact".

D. **Body of the Bill:** Next comes the real substance of the bill. Again remember the constitutional requirement: "No law shall embrace more than one subject..". The best advice on this question of singleness or unity of subject is to avoid putting unusual combinations in the same bill even though your title may be broad enough to cover both.

E. **Arrangement of Subject Matter:**

1. If several things are to be done in a said order, the enactments that require them should be in order.
2. Permanent and general provisions should come first.
3. Temporary provisions should be grouped together as far as subject matter allows.
4. Formal procedure matter should be put later in the bill.
5. Dependent clauses should follow those on which they depend.

F. **Repealer:** A bill providing for the cancellation of a law (or part of a law) should contain a repealing cause showing what is repealed.

G. **Taking Effect:** Under our Constitution "No act shall take effect or be in force until the expiration of ninety days from the end of the session at which the same is passed, but the legislature may give immediate effect to acts by two-thirds vote of the members elected of each house." If your bill is important enough, immediately after passage in the house of origin it would not be improper for the proponent of the bill to move that it take immediate effect. If on a similar motion in the other house the bill receives a two-thirds vote of the members elected, a statement shall be added thereto at the enrollment of the bill in words to this effect: "This act is ordered to take immediate effect."

H. Language: As far as possible, the words should be used in their ordinary and accepted sense. Each sentence should be as short and simple as possible.

I. Special YMCA Youth In Government Legislative Rules as to Bills: Bills are not to exceed one typewritten page in length and should conform in style to the model bills enclosed.

J. Each youth legislator is to be the author or co-author of the bill they submit.

Bill Drafting Instructions

All bills must carry the names of the SPONSORS who will introduce the bill. Bills will be assigned a house of origin (senate or house).

All bills must be received in the Youth In Government office by the deadline.

A. Read all instructions first. Study the bill contained herein which is a sample of the form you are to use. Say what you want to say in as few words as possible.

B. A bill is a proposal ready for introduction in a legislative body. The bill becomes an act when approved by that legislative body, becomes a law when all of the formalities including approval by the executive have been completed.

C. Tense and Mood. Use the present tense and indicative mood. The law is regarded as speaking in the present and continuously. The subjective mood has no place in an act because statutes deal with facts, not with hypothetical cases.

D. Consistency. Use the same arrangement and form of expression throughout unless the meaning requires variations. Consistency helps to avoid having different meanings placed on similar provisions.

E. Choice of words and phrases. Select short, familiar words and phrases that best express the intended meaning according to common and approved usage. Do not use synonyms, and do not use the same word in different senses.

Use pronouns only if their antecedents are unmistakable. Do not use the words "said," "aforesaid," "hereinabove," "beforementioned," "whatsoever," or similar words of reference or emphasis. Avoid using the word "such" where an article may be used.

F. Brevity. Omit every needless word. If a word has the same meaning as a phrase, use the word. Use the shortest sentences which bring out the meaning intended. For example, use "may" instead of "is authorized to." Courts consider each word and endeavor to give it meaning. Unnecessary language is more likely to mislead than to help.

G. Definitions. Use definitions only: when a word is used in a sense other than its dictionary meaning, or is used in the sense of one of several dictionary meanings; to avoid repetition of a phrase; to limit or extend the provisions of an act. Place definitions at the beginning of the act.

H. Numbers and Figures: Monetary sums, dates, age and time. Numbers and figures should not be expressed both in words and figures; always use words. Monetary sums should be expressed in words.

What Does a Good Bill Look Like?

A bill is a proposed law put in writing by a member of the legislature. All bills are not "good" ones. Some bills deal with extremely worthwhile ideas, but are written in such a way that they haven't a chance for passage. A "good" bill will meet these tests:

- A. It will deal with only one subject.
- B. It will express the subject accurately in the title of the bill.
- C. It will deal with a matter which is within the field of state legislation as distinguished from federal, county, or municipal law.
- D. It will conform to the provisions of the constitution of Michigan State and the United States.
- E. It will express the author's intent in concise, everyday language
- F. It will be capable of being easily applied

- G. It will represent clear and analytical thinking by the author, who will "boil it down" to its essentials
- H. If the bill proposes a new law, it should be divided into sections as short as possible in view of the subject matter.
- I. If it amends an existing law, each section amended constitutes a separate section of the bill; the proper method of indicating what is to be amended and what the amendments are must be followed.
- J. Each separate section of the bill will be numbered consecutively in order.
- K. Definitions of terms, if needed, will be included in an early part of the bill.

How To Find A Good Topic For A Bill

Consult with the group advisor, YIG director, legislators, lobbyists, and others who may be helpful. Then hold a discussion to choose an area or areas in which your group will sponsor legislature.

In preparing for such a group discussion, the members will wish to develop a list of suggestions. Look around your community and see what needs exist; for example, the housing shortage, crowded schools, difficulty in hiring enough teachers, playgrounds and recreation, juvenile delinquency and adult crime, gambling, liquor control, water use and congestion, labor-management difficulties, problems of employment, taxation, health concerns, etc. Which of these are important enough to require legislation? Which affect the quality of people's lives? Which endanger the growth and extension of democratic living?

Here are some ways in which members may be able to uncover "live issues":

- A. Read current newspapers.
- B. Interview newspaper editors, city officials, teachers, union leaders, business people, social workers, public officials, ministers, veterans. Ask them what they feel to be the most important issue affecting the community which might involve remedial legislation by the state legislature. Explain what use you expect to make of the information they provide.
- C. Consider the following areas concerning which the state legislature takes action from time to time. They may suggest an area for special investigation:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Housing • Labor-Management Relations • Taxation • Agriculture • Business and Professions • Water • State Institutions and Agencies • Public Health and Safety • Senior Citizens • Hunger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution • Racial Problems • Civil Rights • Crime • Motor vehicle control • Fish and Game • Recreation • Veterans Affairs • Indian Affairs • Unemployment
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- D. Consider any conditions which exist in the school, neighborhood, village, or city which make it difficult for youth to get the best out of their education, recreation, health protection or employment.
- E. Interview or write a local state representative or senator and explain the Youth In Government Program. Ask him what important issues are coming up before the next legislature which might be appropriate topics for study by your group. Invite him to speak to your group on several public issues. Solicit the help of your advisor or YIG director in getting an appointment.
- F. Review the list of proposed constitutional amendments presented in the last state election. Do they suggest needed legislation?
- G. Are there courses which the club feels should become required parts of the high school curriculum?
- H. Study the types of laws passed by other YMCA Model Legislatures for possible suggestions.
- I. The following have been listed by one Youth In Government committee as essential to the preservation of democracy:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∑ Respect for the dignity of the individual ∑ Freedom of enterprise and opportunity ∑ Respect for private property | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∑ Majority rule ∑ The indispensable opposition ∑ Right of petition and assembly |
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Σ The search for truth Σ Freedom of speech and press	Σ Freedom of religion Σ Universal support of education
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What new or revised laws are needed to protect or provide these items?

J. In submitting a bill have the names of the introducers of the bill on the bill. If a delegation is submitting several bills, have various persons as introducers. Include your school name on all bills.

HOW AN IDEA BECOMES LAW

A trout stream is polluted, a child becomes ill, a crime wave develops, the growing number of senior citizens need help, overcrowded schools and colleges and universities must expand to enable Michigan to grow and prosper, the problem of the mentally ill requires changes in hospital space.

All of these are the raw materials of ideas to meet problems concerning the people or to prepare for the future of a growing Michigan.

The legislator prepares a bill or a proposed law with the help of professional bill drafters in the Legislative Service Bureau. Its fiscal aspects are researched by the fiscal agency. The regular staffs of the House and Senate are members of the legislative team at all these stages.

After the bill is drafted, the legislator introduces it by filing the bill with the secretary of the senate or the clerk of the house. The idea takes form.

- A.** The bill is read twice by title only, except in rare instances, and referred to the appropriate committee.
- B.** The committee studies the bill, calls in experts in the field to counsel its members on all its aspects, conducts hearings for interested citizens, and finally—after long hours of work—takes action. A majority vote of the committee is needed to report the bill to the floor of the House or Senate.
- C.** The bill is placed on the daily calendar for debate. At this stage in the procedure, the legislature technically stops being a house or senate and becomes the committee of the whole. No final vote on a bill can be taken until the committee of the whole again becomes a house or senate.
- D.** When the bill has been approved by the committee of the whole, it is advanced to the stage of final passage, or third reading. The bill is read a third time and the roll call is taken.
- E.** The bill is then sent to the opposite chamber where the same action is taken. Instead of being drafted again, however, the bill is received, read twice and then is referred to a committee.
- F.** If both chambers pass the bill, it returns to the chamber in which it started for enrollment, then is sent to the governor.
- G.** In Michigan the governor has 14 days, measured in hours and minutes, to consider it. If he approves, he must sign it within the time limit and send it to the Secretary of State. With this action, the bill which started as a problem, an idea, a pressing need, becomes a law.
- H.** If he/she disapproves, he must state his objections and return the bill to the house in which it originated within 14 days. This is the process of the governor's veto power. The House and Senate can override the governor's veto with a two-thirds vote in each house and the law still becomes law.
- I.** But, if the governor neither signs the bill into law nor vetoes it within 14 days, it becomes law as if he/she had signed it.

J. In Lansing most of their work is done in committees. The debate or formal action seen by the public in the House and Senate is just a fraction of the time and effort a legislator must put into his career. The legislature is a hardworking, sincere and dedicated body, deserving understanding and support.