

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works



This committee will see bills on issues like sustainable development, energy, governmental and public building restorations, environmental reform, public library budget issues that are closing various branches and other related topics. The senators/delegates in this committee should chose topics that they care about in their communities.

Chairs will be judging the delegate on the quality of the written bill, ability to form coalitions for or against amendments and resolutions, and most importantly, the delegate's ability to present a bill. The quality of the public speaking and matters, not the size of the issue; for example, someone can write a great bill on the closing of a local public library and do just as well as someone writing a bill on environmental reform. Do not be afraid to present an unpopular position like an anti-global warming bill. All students will be judged with fairness and respect no matter what the topic. Students are only asked to defend their positions with facts and refrain from making assumptions that they cannot defend with logic and factual evidence.

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations



This committee will look at any foreign policy bills dealing with the issue of relationships with other nations, be it allying or warring. Many topics can be pursued in this committee like conflicts in relations with countries like Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq or alliance with Israel, England, and France. Bills can be for or against relations, be it conflict related or otherwise. Do not shy away from pursuing bills on other issues like emergency aid for Haiti and African nations. Senators can also propose reforms in emergency aid. Other great topics can focus on alliances like the G8 and G20 Summits or the European Union and US position on the inclusion/exclusion of Turkey, etc.

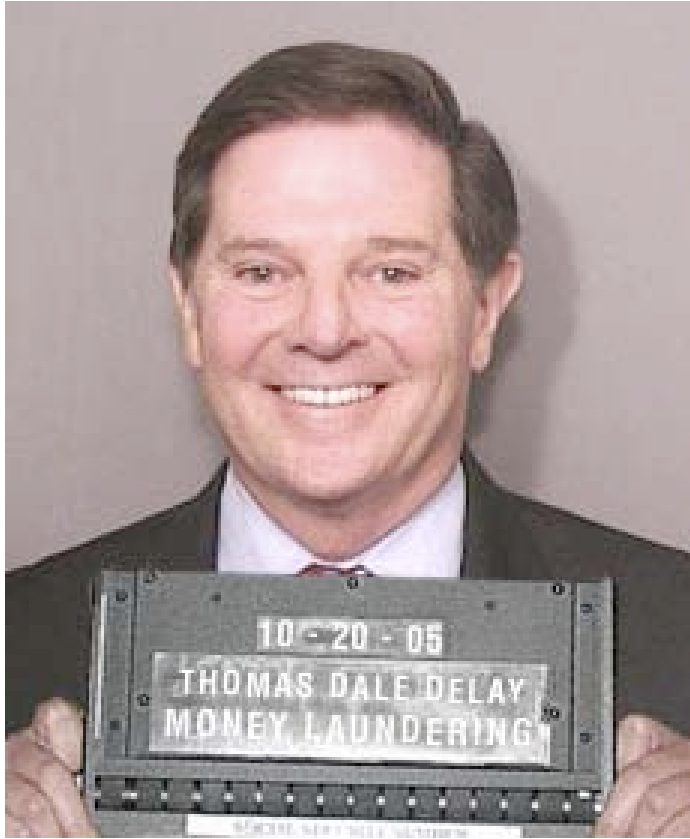
Chairs will be judging the delegate on the quality of the written bill, ability to form coalitions for or against amendments and resolutions, and most importantly, the delegate's ability to present a bill. The quality of the public speaking and matters, not the size of the issue; for example, someone can write a great bill on US position on Turkey and do just as well as someone writing a bill US relations with Iran. Do not be afraid to present on a controversial topic like the Israel-Gaza War, the object of our simulation is to learn how politicians discuss difficult questions. All students will be judged with fairness and respect no matter what the topic. Students are only asked to defend their positions with facts and refrain from making assumptions that they cannot defend with logic and factual evidence.



This committee will be expecting bills on topics like health care reform, the current universal health care bill, education reform, minimum wage, social security, 401k, the No Child Left Behind Act, the rising cost of college education, disabilities act, insurance, etc. Because of the broad range of topics this committee covers, delegates are encouraged to be creative in find new and interesting topics to debate.

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House Committee on Ethics



Columbia Model Congress gives this committee more flexibility in the range of topics this committee may see in order to enrich the debate. Ethics issues may range from political conduct issues like affair scandals (e.g. Clinton, NY Governor Spitzer or SC Governor Sanford) to promotion of friends in high powered government positions. Other exciting topics may be capital punishment, religious freedoms, hate speech v. free speech, abortion, LGBT rights, etc.

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House Committee on Homeland Security



This is a very exciting committee concentrating on sensitive issues like security v. American values. National security, warrant less wiretapping, Black Water controversy, Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and Bagram prison necessities and practices, legal v. illegal immigration, racism, racial profiling and Bush Era torture documents are only a few of the topics that students can focus on. It is recommended that extensive research be done on the topics before righting a bill because these are particularly sensitive issues that have multiple layers of discussion.

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House Committee on Judiciary



This committee is very exciting because it deals with a lot of Judicial Branch related issues that other Congressional committees do not discuss. All topics on courts, constitutional issues, interpretations, federal and state crimes, prison reform, torture and its Bush Era legal document release, the recent unpopular Supreme Court decision on campaign finance, etc are welcome.

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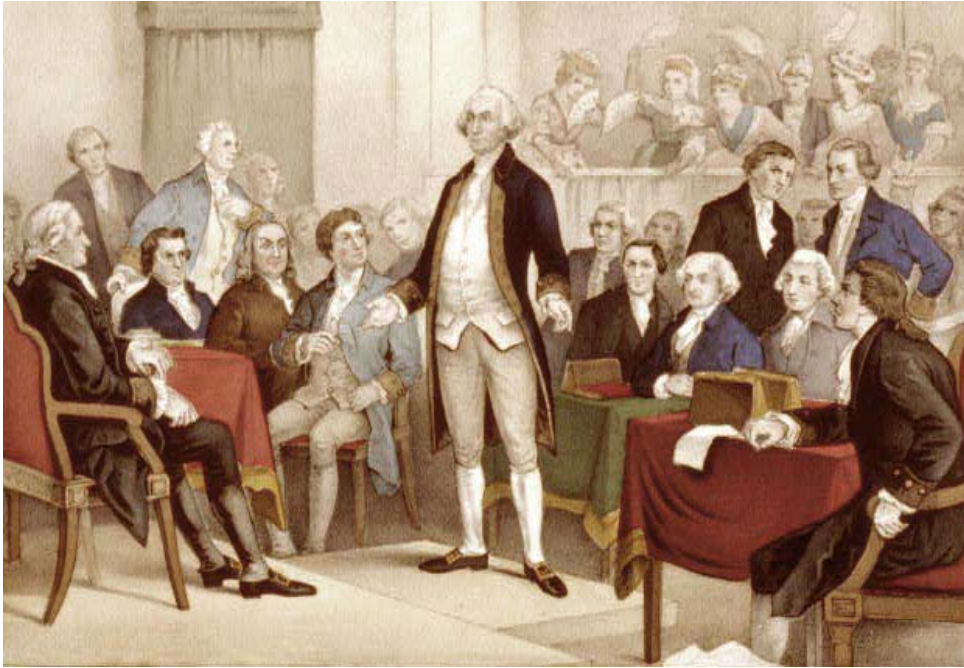
House Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation



This again is a multidisciplinary committee that can entertain a range of political topics ranging from funding for scientific research, technological research like Gate's Microsoft, science education issues around the world, Bush era science policies, future energy plans, stem cells, and cloning to trade with China, divestment in Iran to domestic road reconstruction and bridge formation.

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The Third Continental Congress (historical)



This is a historical committee that we have brought back because of the resounding success of last year's experiment. Columbia Model Congress has instituted the Third Continental Congress so that the framers can gather and discuss any left-over issues from the Second Continental Congress. Are there any issues that were left out? Are there any amendments you would like to act? Any phrases in the U.S. Constitution you would like to change? What about the elastic clause? Leave it as it is or make it more specific? There are all angles that your bills can take. This is an experiment for you as framers, so take your chances and write bills on everything from gay marriage, to changing the government type to a monarchy or theocracy. You can bring in modern constitutional issues. These modern framers in the Third Continental Congress are aware of the issues that challenged everything from the 3/5th compromise to the 14th Amendment. You can even decide to take up something radical like reconstructing the Constitution if you think it is outdated! The point is to have fun and defend your position, whatever it may be.

Once more, chairs will be judging the delegate on the quality of the written bill, ability to form coalitions for or against amendments and resolutions, and most importantly, the delegate's ability to present a bill. The quality of the public speaking matters, not the size of the issue; for example, someone can advocate the changing of the elastic clause and do just as well as someone writing a bill on reconstructing the entire Constitution. All students will be judged with fairness and respect no matter what the topic. Students are only asked to defend their positions with facts and refrain from making assumptions that they cannot defend with logic and argument.

(Barack Obama's) Presidential Cabinet



Last year's successful Presidential Cabinet is back yet again! Due the excellent work of last year's cabinet in presenting bills on a broad array of issues that concern the President, we have decided to bring the committee back, but this time, you will be selecting yourself in this challenging multi-disciplinary committee. Topics may range from climate change to terrorism, from Egypt to taxes—if you think there is an issue the President needs to focus on this is where you present it. A good guide to finding issues is to see who is currently on President Obama's and what the issues they are most concerned with.

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Justin Turetsky

President, Columbia Model Congress

January 30th 2011