

2021-2022

BILL WRITING

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OVERVIEW

The legislative branch is one of the three branches of our state government, along with the judicial (courts) and the executive (Governor + Lt. Governor). The legislative branch is bicameral, meaning it has two houses: the House of Representatives, and the Senate. All laws in Massachusetts must pass through both houses before being sent to the Governor for passage or veto. Prior to being presented to either the House or Senate floor, a bill must first be approved by a committee.

In the Massachusetts Youth & Government program, the legislative branch uses a similar process:

BILL > COMMITTEE > HOUSE/SENATE > GOVERNOR > VETO OVERRIDE

1. Each delegate will write a bill that works to solve real-world problems faced by Massachusetts. Try to select issues that can be understood by non-experts and easily explained in a short amount of time. **Think big.** Large policy initiatives are often much more interesting than small policy refinements. **Successful bills catch people's interest and spark debate.**
2. Each bill is presented to a committee by the author where they provide 2-minute opening and closing statements, answer questions about their bill, and hear the merits of their bill debated by the committee members, then ranked on the following five competencies: **State Importance, Evidence of Author Research, Feasibility, Preparation & Presentation, Originality.**
3. Top-ranked bills will move on to be presented and debated in the House/Senate which is presided over by the Speaker of The House/ the Senate President. Bills are then voted on and, if passed, will be given to the Massachusetts YMCA Youth Governor to be signed into law or vetoed. Vetoed bills may be brought to a special veto override session and overturned if passed by a super majority.

BILL FORMAT

Author: Name & Delegation

Title: One sentence high-level overview (Headline) of your bill. Begins with "An Act To"

Areas to be Impacted: A list of geographic locations, people, departments, organizations, etc.

Purpose: A paragraph describing why your bill is needed. *(Recommended 3-5 sentences)*

Proposal for Action: A bullet list or step-by-step directions for how to implement your bill idea and how it will work. *(Recommended 3-7 components)*

SAMPLE BILL

Author: Moby Dick, Gloucester Delegation

Title: An act to Build a Wall from Rockport to Cape Cod to Protect Massachusetts.

Areas to be Impacted: Coastal Massachusetts people, Homes, and businesses.

Purpose: Climate change has become an undeniable truth. Extreme weather, warmer global temperatures, and rising sea levels are only going to increase unless all of humanity drastically changes their ways - and let's be honest, that's not likely. Our only hope for protecting the high population and economic areas of Massachusetts is to build a wall.

Proposal for Action: Wall will be adhered to the sea bed and seal off the waterways from Rockport to the tip of Cape Cod.

- Conduct an environmental impact survey to determine the best means of construction
- Work with industry-leading environmental engineers to create construction plans
- Accept bids for construction in accordance with state protocol
- Construct wall