

MISSOURI YMCA YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE ADVISOR GUIDE

ADVISOR ROLE

Without a doubt, all advisors realize their primary responsibility is to serve the needs of their own delegation. However, the success of the program also depends on the extra effort all advisors share in making the State Convention and its many parts run smoothly. Due to the size and intensity of the Legislative Program, some behind-the-scenes teamwork on the part of adult advisors is essential. Therefore, many advisors are encouraged to perform extra duties in this area, usually by assisting during committees and judging participants in the chambers for awards.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The Legislative Program is the largest program area. All of the participants write bills, make speeches, engage in debate, and ultimately vote on their legislation. Bills passed by both the Senate and the House may be signed into MOYAG law by the Youth Governor.

LEGISLATIVE COORDINATORS

Questions regarding any aspect of the Legislative program may be directed to one of the Legislative Coordinators.

Senate: Brendan Webber
House: Jacob Davis and Matt Easley

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

As a Legislative Advisor, it is important to remain available and yet avoid interference with the students' activities and decisions. Essentially, advisors should follow the activities of the committee and chamber to which they have been assigned, except, of course, when there are pressing needs elsewhere concerning their delegation. The job of a Legislative Advisor is simply to observe and remain aware of the legislators' activities. Thus, advisors should not get involved with the students' legislative activities, unless asked to do so by a participant. Then, after the questions or problem is addressed, the advisor should return to the background and allow the students to continue. It must be remembered that the basic purpose of the program is for the students to learn by running the government as they see fit, mistakes and all.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

In order for advisors to be effective, they must be familiar with the rules and procedures of the Legislative Program. It also helps to be able to find information about participants. There are some important materials in the Bill Book. Questions about this material or any other logistical issues that arise should be referred to the Legislative Coordinators.

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CONDUCT AND DECORUM

It is important that students adhere to the Code of Conduct and maintain proper decorum while in the chambers of the Missouri General Assembly. Students are required to live by the code, and encouraged to behave in a manner appropriate to their roles as legislators and to their surroundings. Thus, the desks and chairs belonging to Missouri General Assembly may be used but should not be moved about or left in disarray, and particular care should be used by students when speaking in microphones.

Advisors should be watchful of anyone who begins to abuse the furnishings in the Capitol by stressing vandalizing, or sleeping on these items. In addition, certain standards of decorum should also be expected in the chambers. If it looks or feels inappropriate, then it probably is in appropriate. Lastly, all participants much be in Capitol Dress (including name tags) in order to participate in any of the legislative sessions.

Advisors who become aware of problems regarding conduct and decorum should alert the Presiding Officer or Legislative Coordinator. In urgent matters, advisors may deal with the problem directly.

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LEGISLATIVE AWARDS

During Committee and General Sessions, advisors should observe the activities of the legislators carefully. Legislators should be judged not only by their activities in the chambers, but also based on their efforts in committee sessions. Near the end of the State Convention, all Legislative Advisors are asked to gather as part of their respective Awards Selection Committees, which usually meet on the 3rd Floor in their respective chambers. Be sure to bring Bill Books, forms, and any notes taken so that the Selection Committee can conduct their business as efficiently as possible. Outstanding Bills will be presented in each of the chambers on Saturday. Outstanding Statespersons will be presented during the Closing Session.

LEGISLATIVE AWARDS CRITERIA

Outstanding Bill and Outstanding Statesperson that are awarded at the end of the legislative session. It should be noted that these awards should be considered prestigious and valuable to the students who receive them, so please make every effort to consider the best legislators and bills for each award.

OUTSTANDING BILL

Legislative advisors are asked to evaluate all bills to help determine Outstanding Bills. This award is based strictly on the written bill, and not on the presentation and/or debate of the bill. The number of bills selected in each chamber is left to the advisors to determine. Advisors are encouraged though to award a reasonable number so that the award does not lose value because too many are given out. Below are the criteria used to determine the Outstanding Bills.

1. State Importance (how relevant and important is the bill to Missouri)
2. Evidence of Research (does the author include quality research in the written bill)
3. Feasibility (capability of being implemented)
4. Should be in correct form and include necessary and pertinent information
5. Does not have to pass committee or be debated in chamber
6. Should have clarity and conciseness
7. Should be free of any grammar, syntax, and punctuation errors

OUTSTANDING STATESPERSON

Legislative advisors are asked to observe and evaluate students to help select Outstanding Statespersons. The number of students selected in each chamber is left to the advisors to determine. However, a goal should be to select 5 to 10 percent of the total chamber. For example, in a full House of Representative, this would be about 8 to 16 students. In the Senate, this would be 2 to 3 students. Below are qualities that an Outstanding Statesperson should emulate during the State Convention.

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1. Well prepared with pros, cons, and background of their bill
2. Good speaker when sharing their views and concerns
3. Knowledgeable of parliamentary procedure
4. Fair and open minded, willing to listen to others
5. Helpful and shows concern to other students
6. Exhibits poise and tact
7. Displays the Four Core Values of the YMCA: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility

The easiest way to monitor the participants is to use the Speaking List and a simple grading system defined below.

Rating	Leadership	Debate
+ +	Clear evidence of servant leadership, puts group success over personal success, sets clear direction for group, actively encourages participation, adjusts to varying situations, respected and trusted, good knowledge of parliamentary procedure	Speaks with sincere authority, able to strongly disagree while maintaining respect and dignity of others, strong grasp of parliamentary procedure, ability to honestly persuade others, consistent excellent bill presentation
+	Takes initiative and ownership, seeks out opportunities, educates others, provides leadership when not in formal leadership role	Seeks recognition on wide variety of topics, clear arguments, respectful of different points of view, responds to criticism positively, comments contribute positively to debate
0	Adequately participates in assigned leadership role if assigned one	Seeks to participate in discussion
-	Avoids assigned responsibility, takes advantage of leadership role, neglects servant aspects of leadership, unprepared for role, sloppy or lax in following rules and procedures	Avoids recognition, muddled thinking or arguments, confused or incorrect use of parliamentary procedure, too much emphasis on style over content, unprepared for criticism, inadequate bill presentation
- -	Abuses position of responsibility, puts personal success over group success, denigrates others, takes credit for work of others, frequent disregard of responsibilities	Abusive use of parliamentary knowledge, personal attacks in debate, intentional use of rude language, repetitive use of inappropriate comments, poor bill presentation