

Bill Writing Assignment. Your first bill must be submitted to Legsim by Nov. 18. Please do your best to write a strong, well-researched bill. **Your written assignment (graded) portion is due Nov. 21,** so you have only limited time to respond to committee concerns, write an improved bill, support your bill with argument, etc. If your first try doesn't go over well (or receives a lower grade than you anticipated), **you are welcome to turn in a 2nd bill (or a revised 1st bill) for a grade, but this must be done by Dec. 14, 8:00 AM.** You are encouraged to author additional bills, whatever your grade on the first. To be clear, the bill writing process is an iterative process—it involves re-writing, amending, and improving the legislation in order to clarify points, draw additional support from colleagues, etc. Thus, you may turn in revised versions for the final bill grade.

Students must research and write original bills and committee reports for this class. Writing a good bill is obviously something that requires thought, lots of research, and practice.

Bill Drafting.

Students are required to author an original bill. Do not just make up your cost numbers, etc. Instead, be reasonable and researched in your presentation. I do not expect students to use “legalese” in their writing or to address every part of a policy in their bill. Try to be comprehensive, though, and write using layman’s terms. Your bills will more than likely be 1-3 pages (single-spaced) for the actual bill, plus additional pages (2-7) of justification and research (“rationale and justifications”). See the EXAMPLES posted on Blackboard. I expect bills to be accurately researched and documented.

While the “findings and purposes” section of the bill will provide the summary of why the bill is needed and its intended purpose, **you should provide additional justification for the legislation.** This will be the next “section” in your bill, and should be titled “Rationale and Justifications.” Here you want to provide rationale for the need for the legislation, etc., in terms a “layperson” would understand (w/o legalese) and make an argument for your bill.

When developing your rationale, you will be required to link your proposal to some enumerated or implied power of Congress. Committees are unlikely to move on bills that obviously transgress on state powers—those that may raise federalism issues must state their legal reasoning for Congress’s power here—or otherwise violate the Constitution.

Additionally, here you want to provide the evidence for your estimated costs and rationale behind your implementation plan. This document will be used by the committee to assess your bill. Be sure to source and research your bill effectively, or you may not persuade the committee and your bill will be doomed from the start. The final section of your bill will include your references, listing details regarding your references. You will do this so the committee can go to the source for information regarding your proposal (and to cite properly). Remember, you are the expert on your bill/topic!

SOURCE MATERIAL.

The most comprehensive source for actual legislative histories, reports, and documents is Thomas (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>). You may use this web site to research current law or laws currently proposed in Congress (or previously proposed). Do not, however, just copy bills from Thomas. You may use Thomas for examples of current legislation (to see how it’s done in the real world) and to get a sense of the comprehensive nature of bill writing. You may also use Thomas as a source for ideas on how to handle real-world problems (just be sure to cite!).

Congressional Quarterly Weekly, available in the Library or online from a university computer at: <http://libproxy.clemson.edu/login?url=http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly>, is also an excellent source for information regarding legislation in Congress. Go here for ideas on legislation if you cannot think of an idea on your own. Again, do not just copy from current or past legislation. Feel free, however, to use CQ as a source for your proposal, and be sure to cite! If your bill is similar to a past bill, state so, and refer to the other bill’s number.

Other sources available include web sites for interest groups that keep an eye on the workings in Congress. For example, if you’re concerned with the environment, you may want to visit the Sierra Club’s web page (<http://www.sierraclub.com/>) and check out their policy links. Each congressional committee also has a web site outlining their legislative actions/agendas. These can be a great source for ideas. Finally, pay attention to the news, either in newspapers or on television. You will see all kinds of reports about problematic laws (i.e., unintended consequences) that you could fix with your bill and/or societal problems that need to be addressed by a new law.

NOTE: Students are prohibited from copying current or prior bills and introducing them as their own, although they may certainly draft bills on the same topic. Similarly, students are not allowed to write bills that are based on laws already in

place (e.g., states must set drinking age to 21 if they want federal transportation funding). Bills proposing to change those laws are acceptable of course. When citing the funding requirements of the legislation, don't just make estimates off the top of your head. You can get an idea of the cost of programs at the web site of the Office of Management and Budget in the White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>