

How to Write a Piece of Legislation

The whole week of programming at Nevada Girls State is set up to take us to a mock legislative session. Throughout the week, we'll work together to craft legislation about issues that are important to you. In order to make this process move along as smoothly as possible, we ask all our delegate to come prepared with a piece of legislation.

DON'T PANIC! This document will help you get started and the staff will help you refine your legislation during the session.

We want your experience to be as close to how things really work as possible. In order to make this happen, there are a few rules on what topics can be addressed at Nevada Girls State:

- **Only issues that can be addressed at the state level.**
Because this is NEVADA Girls State, all topics must be at the state level. What does this mean? Some topics can't be legislated by the State because they are outside of its jurisdiction, notably those that are strictly local issues (such as zoning) and those that are strictly federal issues (such as Yucca Mountain).
- **All legislation must abide by the Nevada Constitution and the Constitution of the United States.**
The Nevada Constitution and the Constitution of the United States are the governing documents for our legislature and so we abide by them as well. This means that legislation can't seek to do such things as establish a religion for Nevada or limit freedom of the press (because freedom of religion and freedom of the press are protected by the U.S. Constitution). For this reason, we don't allow resolutions that seek to regulate abortion, because this is protected by the Nevada Constitution.
- **Legislation can't duplicate existing laws.**

If your piece of legislation doesn't comply with one or more of these rules, don't worry – the staff WILL help you to work out the kinks.

Let's get started!

Features of a Nevada Girls State Bill

- A **PREAMBLE**, which states the purpose of the resolution
- **SECTIONS**, which each give one (1) reason why this resolution is needed. (You may include as many SECTIONS as you need to give the reasons for supporting your resolutions, as long as they're relevant.)
- A **FINAL SECTION**, which states: This act will be effective upon final passage.

Formatting

The following shows you how to format each element of your bill. You'll need to use this **exact** working and punctuation. Portions in *italics* will be what you write.

- **Your first and last name at the top of the page**
- **Single-spaced**
- **The first line of each bill will start with:**
An ACT that will... (This is then followed by your PREAMBLE.)
- **Each SECTION (except the last one) will be formatted like this:**
SECTION 1: (one reason for why this legislation is need).
Number each section in order.
- **The final SECTION will say:**
SECTION (X): This Act will be effective upon final passage.
This section should have whatever number follows from your last section.

An Example Act

The following Act was written and passed during our 2019 session.

AN ACT that will prohibit polystyrene products, also know. as Styrofoam, in restaurants, caterers, coffee shops, grocery stores, and convenience stores from using to-go foam containers due to the fact that they cannot be recycled in Nevada.

Section 1: It takes a minimum of 500 years for polystyrene products to decompose because it is non-biodegradable. It breaks down into microscopic styrenes and other harmful chemicals that linger in the soil, water, and air for centuries.

Section 2: Polystyrene utilizes chemical toxins that harm the ozone layer and evaporates fumes which contribute to climate change.

Section 3: Polystyrene leaches from landfills into drinking water which causes liver, kidney, or circulatory problems.

Section 4: Current polystyrene products may remain, but effective until 2022 when all products and distribution in such establishments are prohibited.

Section 5: This act will be effective upon passage.

EXAMPLE

To Help You Get Started

Remember, you only have to use as many SECTIONS as you need, and they can be as long as you need. If you need more, just attach another page.

An ACT that will _____

_____.

SECTION 1: _____

_____.

SECTION 2: _____

_____.

SECTION 3: _____

_____.

SECTION 4: _____

_____.

SECTION 5: _____

_____.

SECTION X: This Act will be effective upon final passage.