

Congressional Debate

What is Congress?

- **Congressional Debate** is a state and national **debate** event that highlights **both speaking style** and the **skill of argumentation**
- **10-20 competitors** in a round, 1 presiding officer, **1-5 judges** (up to **30 competitors** and **9 judges** at Nationals)
- Rounds are **60-90 minutes** (**3 hours** at Nationals)

What is Congress?

- **3 minute** speeches on **alternating sides** (for/against the bill or resolution being debated)
- Each speech is followed by **1 minute of cross-examination**, where the speaker is questioned by competitors chosen by the PO
- **1-2 weeks** to prepare speeches on around **5 topics** per tournament (**1 month** for about **40 topics** at Nationals)

Interesting Point:

- At the end of the debate, the competitors in the chamber vote on whether or not pass the legislation debated on
- **This vote has absolutely ZERO weight in how you are ranked in the round.**

- Congress is the only debate event where **WINNING THE DEBATE** does not determine your **score**; you are ranked among your competitors based on **your arguments**, how well **you** spoke, and how involved **you** were in the round.
- NOT whether you were on the **winning side** of the debate.

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Why is **Congress** the most **competed-in** and most **successful** event at Arcadia...?

Top 5 Reasons to do Congress

(in no particular order)

1. **Easy** to pick up, **hard** to master

- Hybrid of speech and debate
- Don't be intimidated by debate! (I was)
- Much simpler than other debate events
- Simple for novice, DEEP at varsity level

Top 5 Reasons to do Congress

(in no particular order)

2. Provides **confidence** for speaking in front of a larger audience

Top 5 Reasons to do Congress

(in no particular order)

3. Instead of being **assigned** a side on an issue, you get to **choose** which side to argue

Top 5 Reasons to do Congress

(in no particular order)

4. Combines **arguments** with **style**, all in an **extemporaneous** environment (more **lay** than other debates, let me explain :D)

Top 5 Reasons to do Congress

(in no particular order)

5. Lots of topics