



UNITED STATES CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE
Guide Book



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Committee Overview

Honorable Representatives, welcome to the United States Congressional Committee (USCC)! This section should act as a primer for the basic concepts of the USCC and how it deviates from typical MUNs you may have attended in the past.

The USCC is a combination of Security Council and Historical Crisis Committees. It aims to replicate the debate and ongoing issues being considered in government and is a more action-focused type of MUN. It could be considered a form of introduction to HCC, due to the crises that members of the government have to respond to. If you are thorough in the knowledge of government procedure, you may notice some changes that have been made in the interests of debate.

The main objective of the USCC is to, as an individual and as a committee, form bills on set topics, while also reacting to an ongoing series of events which will change based on the passage of time as well as your own decisions and actions. How you react will determine the events which follow.

As senators, you will be representing the key people related to the government; the power and authority you wield will reflect those of these people. Information is asymmetrical, not everyone will be working with the same knowledge. This creates the opportunity for intrigue and espionage. The wider world as well as specific sections of government related to the specific committee are represented by the Crisis Directors and backroom.

Compared to typical MUN committees, as previously mentioned, the pace is greatly heightened. The debate would alternate between entertaining rounds of debate, and unmoderated caucus (where the presidents may choose to tighten the rules on certain aspects at certain times) when senators will react to dynamic Crisis Updates.

You will represent people in The Senate, rather than countries. You will have to research your character and the power and authority or affiliations that character holds. You will also need to research your political party, your interest groups and your constituency, which influence your decision making.

Because you will be a member of a political party, there will be no opening speeches, as most party members will support, with slight variations or degrees of support, your party's policy.

Yes, this means that personal pronouns ARE allowed. The fact that you are characters in houses of government, rather than countries at the UN, means that there is a much greater focus on action. You don't have to 'recommend' or 'urge' in Crisis, you can take direct action - if you want something to happen, you can make it happen. Of course, this hinges upon two things: the action being realistic and being detailed.

As a political leader, your focus will be on maintaining not only your position in power but also the general happiness and welfare of your people by issuing specific statements and enacting specific policies to reinforce this.

Roles and Powers of The U.S. House of Representatives

The House of Representatives powers and duties are as follows:

- The House has the exclusive authority to initiate bills for raising revenue.
- The House has the sole power to impeach federal officials, including the President, Vice President, and federal judges.
- In the event of a tie in the Electoral College during the presidential election, the House elects the President.
- The House has the authority to conduct investigations and oversight of the executive branch and federal agencies.
- The House, along with the Senate, has a role in confirming certain presidential appointments, such as ambassadors and federal judges.
- While the Constitution grants the power to declare war to Congress as a whole, the House plays a significant role in this process.
- The House shares legislative powers with the Senate, including proposing, debating, and voting on bills.
- The House controls government spending by originating appropriations and budget bills (Power of the Purse).
- Representation of the People: Members of the House represent the interests of their constituents and serve as their voice in the federal government.
- The House establishes committees to specialize in various policy areas and oversee specific government functions.

Due to Senators' longer term of 6 years compared to the House's 2-year terms, they can avoid caving to public opinion (for at least 5 of those years before having to gain support for re-election) and make decisions based on the overall good of the country rather than voters. The House is meant to be more representative of the people's desire, hence their power over tax.

Committee Structure

The Senate

Composed of 100 members known as senators, each state receives 2 representatives in the Senate. Considered the more senior chamber of congress, where each senator serves a six year term. Once a bill has passed in the House of Representatives, it is voted on by the Senate where it is either passed or denied. In addition to passing legislation, the Senate also has the responsibility of confirming presidential appointments (e.g. judges, US attorneys, agency administrators, etc.) and ratifying treaties. At the current moment, the democrats hold a 51-49 majority in the Senate, a simple majority. While this majority is able to pass certain bills, the filibuster requires certain bills to receive 60 votes before continuing to voting procedure.

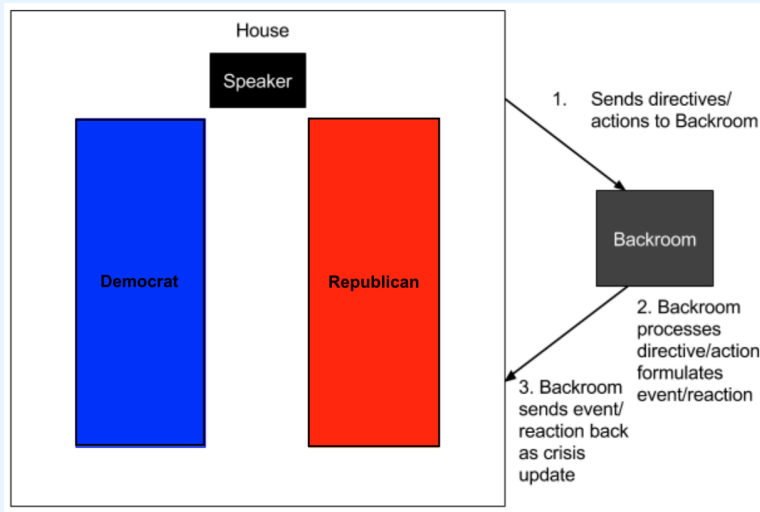
The House of Representatives

As the second chamber of congress, the House of Representatives divides its 435 representatives among the 50 states based on population. With each representative holding terms of only 2 years, it is regarded as the more junior chamber of congress; however, it still has some key responsibilities. To begin, the legislative process begins here, where bills are introduced by House committees, and then voted on before either being passed onto the Senate or rejected. Additionally, the committees as mentioned earlier, are composed of representatives that conduct investigations into several topics ranging from issues of public interest to oversight of federal agencies. The last key aspect of the House of Representatives is the speaker of the House, who is almost always the House majority leader. In the order of succession, the speaker of the House becomes the third in line for the presidency, behind the vice president. At the current moment, republican Kevin Mccarthy holds the title with a 222-212 advantage over the democrats.

Committee Rooms

The committee rooms are composed of the key politicians who make up the USCC. You will have to take actions based on the interests of your committee as well as your personal interests - depending on your role and the strength of your views- such as supporting abortion rights or free healthcare, these two things may be at odds.

The USCC is split into a committee and a backroom. The structure is as follows:



Backroom

The backroom is the second ‘room’ of the USCC and is occupied by the Crisis Director and Crisis Analysts, collectively referred to as ‘backroom staff’. If you consider the USCC to be a game, the backroom represents the computer running the game, keeping track of all the information and responding to the players’ (i.e. senators’) actions.

The backroom can represent all the countries, organizations, sections of government and individuals not included in the houses, so communication and action from within the house are not just limited to the characters represented within the USCC.

For example, the USCC has the House of Representatives, President, Secretaries of the Departments and the Presidential Cabinet being represented by the backroom. The Secretaries of the Departments will be the ones that the bill relates to. For example, a bill on defense spending will have the Secretary of Defence review, revise and accept/deny the bill in the backroom.

The backroom staff are, as previously mentioned, the occupants of the backroom and will be the ones deciding on how to respond to the actions taken in the house. How senators communicate with the backroom and how the backroom translates these into actual events will be expanded on in the rules of procedure.

Crisis Staff

“Crisis Staff” is a term that is used to encompass both the backroom staff and the presidents in the individual houses. Previous experience gives an ideal minimum of four GC staff in total; two presidents and two crisis directors. While it is theoretically possible to have presidents process

directives and manage committees, they can quickly become overwhelmed during periods of high activity.

USCC Terminology

All speeches must be addressed to the presiding officers, who are addressed as either "Mr. President" or "Madam President", and not to another member; other Members must be referred to in the third person. In most cases, House of Representatives do not refer to each other by name, but by state or name, using forms such as "Ms. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez", "the representative from California", or "my distinguished friend the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee". Representatives address the House of Representatives standing next to their desk. The House of Representatives can use the first person.

No Representative in debate shall, directly or indirectly, by any form of words impute to another Representative or to other Representative any conduct or motive unworthy or unbecoming a Representative. (This can be done only at the discretion of the presiding officers)

No Representative in debate shall refer offensively to any State of the Union.

When a Representative is called to order they shall take his seat, and may not proceed without permission from the presiding officers.

Key Procedural Differences

Characters and Research

One of the key differences between the USCC and regular MUN is that you are representing a character, not a country. You have specific roles, power and responsibilities related to your character. Your research should contain biographical information as well as information about the character's current and former positions and experiences. It should include any affiliations your character has and this will influence your actions. For example, a Representative who is lobbied by those who support gun ownership rights would not vote for a bill implementing gun ownership restriction!

This is the simplest but most fundamental difference between the USCC and regular MUN. You will have noticed that you are not a country's delegation to the UN, but a person in a specific cabinet. What this means is that, unlike what you would normally do as a delegation to the UN,

you are able to take direct action as your character. This ability to have a direct effect on the crisis means that a much greater standard of specificity is required in the actions than in normal bills. This will be covered in a later section.

Funding

Usually, only the House of Representatives has the power to introduce revenue-related bills or legislation governing the use of federal money; however, in the interests of debate, some of these rules will be modified. Furthermore, the question of source/methods of funding can be raised in the House of Representatives as opposed to traditional Model United Nations committees.

Taxes and Budgets:

As only the House of Representatives has the power to create legislation to raise taxes and set fiscal budgets, Senators must send a personal directive to the backroom to ask specific Representatives of the House to put forward legislation, which specifies as to which tax and how much it will be increased or decreased. If this passes, this will then naturally pass into the Senate, where it can be agreed upon and then the new funds can be used in a separate bill. The Senate can pull out funds from specific agencies or simply state that it will be funded on the *House Committee on Appropriations*. *The House (only contains House of Representatives) Committee on Appropriations works with the Senate to regulate and allocate spending across all branches of government.*

Grants

The National/Federal government can give grants and aid to the State government as incentives to follow certain policies. These can be mentioned in the Funding section of the bill. There are different types aid given through grants:

Formula grants: When the amount of funding for the State is determined by a mathematical formula. E.g. For every person classified as poor, a State gets a certain amount of money to help them.

Project grants: When States submit proposals to the Federal Government to obtain aid. The States then compete for the grant.

Block grants: When the Federal Government gives a State a large grant for general development in a sector e.g. Infrastructure. The State can then determine how to spend the grant.

Miscellaneous:

Other **VITAL** key differences include; actions delegates can take, bill drafting, crisis, and amendments. More in depth step by step explanations are found in the USCC rules of procedure document.

Crisis Staff and Secretariat

This section is not meant for delegates, although those of you who are interested in the inner workings of the GC Committees are welcome to read it. Included are lists of things to consider on both the micro (for the Crisis Staff) and macro (for the Secretariat) level.

Please note that all backroom and front room staff for USCC must go through preliminary training by the secretariat before they begin the committee session.

Organization: Crisis

- Team organization:
 - The backroom should consist of two full-time members for each committee .
 - The committee requires two chairs
- In the lead-up to the conference, you must prepare the following:

- Placards:

The Placards must have the name of the Senator, the County or State name and any governmental role, for example Shadow Secretary or Treasurer.

- Crises scenarios and scope

You must work out not only which crises you are doing, but how long they are and when they will be implemented in normal debate. Will they be implemented regardless of the progress on the topics, or only if debate is slow or there are successful bipartisan efforts with no resistance? This also includes working out how much real time per in-crisis day you are allocating (for example, three crisis hours equals one real hour). It goes without saying that the committees should be decided here as well.

- Directive submission method

Possibly the next most important aspect of Crisis is sending directives. The method for delegates submitting their directives to the backroom must be efficient and easy to track. American conferences favor a paper system, which can work but may result in lost directives. A proven method used in THAIMUN is Google forms, where delegates fill in the type of directive

(a multiple choice option) and the content of their directive (a long form answer box). If using a Google form, remember to record the sender's username so you know who it came from

○ An update presentation method

The crisis element of the USCC would be pointless if the delegates could not see what effect their actions have on the world. The delivery of both global and cabinet-specific crisis updates must be considered. The most low-tech and usually most amusing option is for crisis staff to act out the crisis update to the cabinets, temporarily taking the role of some other character. Alternatively, an update can be written out by the backroom and read out to the cabinet by the chairs or, as the most high tech option, a webpage set up where delegates can access the crisis updates. Tumblr has also been used in the past.

Creditories:

Much thanks must go to the following people, without which the development of this Handbook and the committees would not have been possible.

Resources used:

The HCC Rules of Procedure

The Harvard MUN Rules of Procedure

The Thammasat University MUN Rules of Procedure

<http://www.parliament.uk>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_Rules_of_the_United_States_Senate

<https://www.thoughtco.com/about-the-us-senate-3322271>

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<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvffeelTrqvhrz8H>

The GCs Handbook:

The THAIMUN V Secretariat:

- Secretaries General: Nafis Mahboob (BPS) and Jing Jing Piriyalertsak (HIS)
- Parliamentarians: Dillon Rajakarier (BPS) and PunPun Leelamanthep (ICS)

THAIMUN V UKPC Staff:

- Gwen Needham (HIS)
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- Chittawan Boonsitanon (CIS)
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