How to Write a Bill

Whether you notice a problem in the news or it's something that's always annoyed you, solution via legislation must be written a certain way in order to achieve your goal. Research is incredibly important to ensure you are well-prepared and well-educated, as poorly supported legislation will not pass with even the best presentation.

Is it really a bill?

There are three main pieces of legislation you can propose at SCSL, and what you want to accomplish determines the type:

**1. Bill** - Adds to, removes from, or changes the [South Carolina Code of Laws](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/statmast.php). This is the most common form of legislation in SCSL, but don't forget to cite the specific passage you want to change!
**2. Amendment**- Adds to, removes from, or changes the [South Carolina State Constitution](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/scconstitution/scconst.php), or the [SCSL Constitution](http://www.scstudentlegislature.org/uploads/1/4/4/9/14491136/scsl_constitution_4-12-13.doc). There is a slightly different process required to hear and pass an amendment, which is spelled out in the [SCSL Constitution](http://www.scstudentlegislature.org/uploads/1/4/4/9/14491136/scsl_constitution_4-12-13.doc). Harder to enact, and harder to change.
**3. Resolution**- Declares or recommends something, but does not change the Code of Laws or Constitution (almost all SCSL legislation concerning education falls into this category). Can be used to recognize an individual for service, etc.

Components of Bills

Purpose Statements:

The opening sentence of your bill, this announces the purpose of your legislation and what you intend to achieve. It should not be particularly lengthy, but should be fairly specific (because of its function in the amendment process). It will form the first impression of your bill to most delegates, and as such the wording should be exact and calculated.

The purpose statement is the only part of the bill that cannot be amended, and the role it plays is crucial: amendments may not be considered that change the purpose of the bill (as stated in the wording, not in the author's intent). Also, the purpose statement itself may not be amended either.

Whereas Clauses:

This is, simply put, the presentation of the problem which you are trying to solve with your bill/amendment/resolution. Here is where you can present facts and information that lend credence to why your bill is necessary (and why people should vote for it). A great deal of research is necessary for the construction of a good "Whereas" section.

Sections:

This is the heart of your bill, where you will actually change the South Carolina Code of Laws, Amend the Constitution, or declare something. You should directly refer to or quote the passage you are trying to alter.

* **If adding a section:** put the new section's number (ie. "Section 59-121-###"), then the exact language you want to add.
* **If changing a section:** quote the exact text currently in the [SC Code of Laws](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/statmast.php)

Therefore:

This statement serves as the transition between your "Whereas Clauses" and your "Sections." It will **always** read: "Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:"

Closing Statement:

"This act shall go into effect on [INSERT DATE HERE], after passage by the General Assembly and signature of the Governor."