



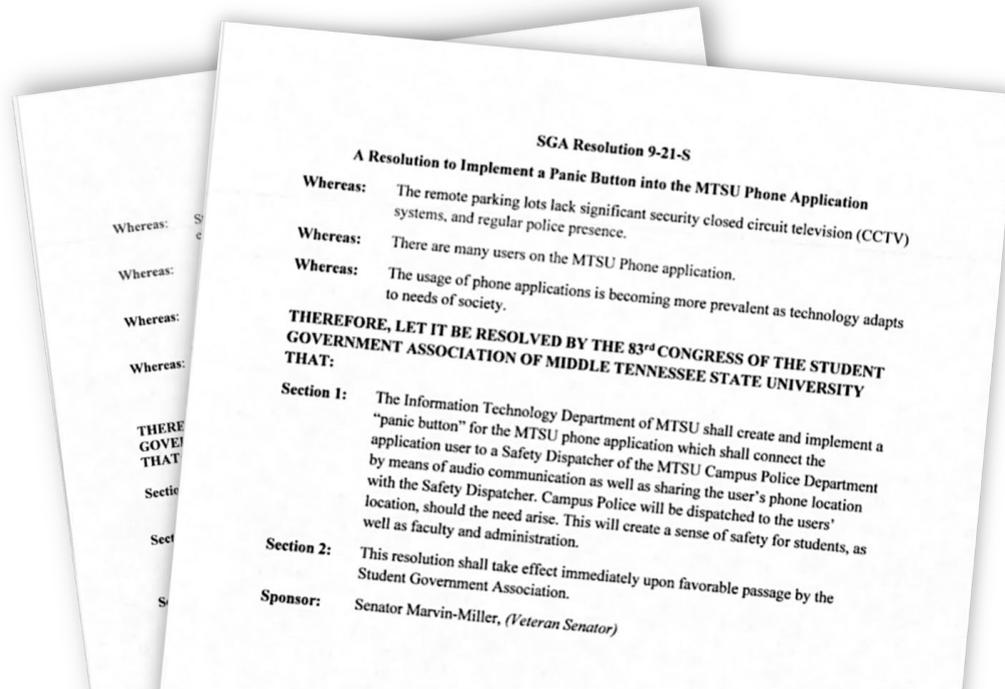
HOW TO WRITE LEGISLATION

Adapted July 2021

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

WHAT IS LEGISLATION?

Legislation is a way for the Student Government Association to express a sentiment of the Senate, request the assistance or action of a University department, require a mandate from Senate, or to amend the constitution of the Student Government Association.



RESOLUTION

All legislation voicing the opinion of Senate on any topic not within the constitutional jurisdiction of the Senate is presented in the form of a resolution. Resolutions may also recommend actions to University departments/officials.

RESOLUTION OF STUDENT OPINION

The Senate may bestow recognition upon any member of the University Community in the form of a Resolution of Student Opinion

BILL

May or may not express a sentiment, but it always mandates action on behalf of the Senate or makes a change within the Student Government Association.

AN AMENDMENT

A constitutional process which requires a 2/3^d vote by the Senate and Student Body to make a change to the Student Government Association Constitution.

PETITIONS

A *petition* is a formal request signed by students to the Student Government Senate with respect to a cause or legislation. It is an avenue for students to directly place issues to the Student Government Association Senate for consideration.

THE PROCESS OF LEGISLATION

WHY? To *support, encourage, congratulate, request*, etc.

- Before writing, answer the following questions:
 - Have students expressed concern or requested a change for a current policy or resource?
 - Have you administered a survey to students?
 - Have you met with faculty or staff regarding the issue?
 - Have you properly researched this idea?
 - Is there a need for this change or idea?
 - Have you compared this to other institutions?
- After it has passed the Senate:
 - Deliver the resolution to the appropriate department or organization and follow up with action steps for the initiative.

HOW TO WRITE A RESOLUTION

SGA Bill X-21-F

A Bill to (Insert Topic of Bill Here)

Abstract: Describe the purpose of the Bill as well as any changes it will make to the current governing documents.

Whereas:

Abstract Example: Work to correct the inconsistencies that exist between the intentions of Article X, Regarding the Bylaws of the Senate, and the current form of the constitution that has segments that contradict amendment adopted by the 83rd Congress.

WHEREAS CLAUSES

- No specific amount of WHEREAS Clauses are required
 - General rule of thumb, 4-8 Clauses
- Each WHEREAS clause should be only one sentence
- WHEREAS clauses are similar to building blocks
 - Introduce
 - Why is it important/relevant?
 - Important facts/details
 - Action/solution

FLOW

WHEREAS, foundational information for your resolution;
and,

WHEREAS, supplemental information for your resolution;
and,

WHEREAS, additional information about your resolution;
and,
WHEREAS, the core of your resolution; and,

WHEREAS, explanation of the core of your resolution;
and,

WHEREAS, support for the core of your resolution; and,

WHEREAS, solid proof for the core of your resolution;
and,

WHEREAS, any important times or dates to consider in
your resolution; then,

RESOLUTION EXAMPLE

WHEREAS, mental wellness has become more important than ever before, particularly at universities across the country where students have to cope with stress and anxiety; and,

WHEREAS, 53% of students at the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) have reported feeling overwhelmed with anxiety; and,

WHEREAS, 49% of students at MTSU have reported feeling hopeless in the previous year; and,

WHEREAS, MTSU currently has over 36,000 undergraduate and graduate students, and as of 2015, only a mere 2,393 students have received treatment or face-to-face assessment with Counseling Services, resulting in approximately 6.5% of students seeking treatment or assessments in regard to mental wellness; and,

WHEREAS, MTSU prides itself in having on-campus resources for students to seek attention and affirmation for their mental health concerns; and,

WHEREAS, Health Services offers such services through MTSU Counseling Services, which serves as an invaluable resource for students throughout their time at MTSU; and,

WHEREAS, when asked to draft a statement to include on syllabi campus-wide, Counseling Services, with consultation from the Student Advisory Health Committee, drafted a statement focusing on "student success" and "faculty support."

A Resolution to Add a Mental Health Statement to Syllabi

THEREFORE CLAUSES

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED BY THE 84th CONGRESS OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY THAT:

Section 1: this is the main point of the resolution (what are you trying to accomplish); and,

Section X: this puts any second action/points to be made; and,

Section X: this is where you put action steps that this resolution is recommending.

RESOLUTION EXAMPLE

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED BY THE 84th CONGRESS OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY THAT:

Section 1: The Student Government Association encourages the University to implore professors to include a statement regarding mental wellness resources available on-campus; and,

Section 2: The statement to be included on syllabi, as drafted by Counseling Services, shall be as follows:

- University Health Services serves as a safe space and central resource for the MTSU campus community regarding physical, mental health & wellness. Below are several ways to access mental health resources:
 - Free workshops/classes/coaching led by licensed clinicians or health educators to provide students with tools to manage stress, anxiety, relationships, social etc.
 - Student leaders, MTSU Faculty or Staff may schedule for their group, a wellness program or training with a health educator or licensed clinician.
 - MTSU has several resources for a student seeking mental health services and/or crisis support.

Section 3: Upon passage of this legislation, the University shall consider the above addition to campus syllabi, as stated above, and, if passed, work with the Provost's Office to oversee its campus-wide adoption.

FOOTNOTES & APPENDICES

- When using either type of footnote, insert a number formatted in superscript following almost any punctuation mark. Footnote numbers should not follow dashes (–), and if they appear in a sentence in parentheses, the footnote number should be inserted within the parentheses.
- Use the footnote feature in Google Docs for citing sources
- The footnote should be outside punctuation (including parentheses and quotations)
- **The format should be as followed:**

¹ Middlebrooks, Marlee. “Student Depression and Anxiety, Demand for Counseling Services Rises.” *The Red and Black*, 10 Dec. 2015

² Simon, Mollie. “CAPS Struggles to Balance Limited Resources with Student Demand for Mental Health Counseling.” *The Red and Black*, 17 Dec. 2014

- **Appendices should be labeled alphabetically and referenced as footnotes as followed:**

¹ University of Georgia, Daily Class Schedule, bulletin.uga.edu/Bulletin_Files/Daily_class_schedule.html

² See Appendix A

³ See Appendix B

⁴ See Appendix C

⁵ See Appendix C

PROOFREADING & IMPORTANT TIPS

- Make sure each WHEREAS Clause *enhances* the argument
- Each statement should be as *clear* as possible
- Be sure to cite all factual information with a valid footnote (Preferably a website included)
- Ask your fellow Senators to Co-sponsor Legislation! Be smart, gather support!
- Do your **RESEARCH**
- Get input from your Committee Chair and fellow Senators
- Utilize office hours with Senate Leadership (posted on SGA Website)

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS OVERVIEW

1. Research and Write a Resolution
2. Submit it to the Speaker of the Senate for Review by the appropriate Committee
3. Standing Committee Votes and forwards legislation to Senate
4. Presented and Voted on by the Full Senate
5. Signed by the Speaker, President, and VP of Student Affairs

84TH CONGRESS OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Adapted from the University of Georgia Student Government



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