**Parts of a Bill**

Your bill must include each of the parts listed below:

**Title**: Introduces the bill and catches the attention of other Legislators

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed the Social Security Act, he didn't call it the "Dignity in Old Age Act" or the "Keep Grandma out of the Poorhouse Act." Lately, things have changed, and since Republicans took control of Congress in 1995 bills have been named much more creatively. A tax-cutting bill, for example, was named the "American Dream Restoration Act," and the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation bill's name was changed to the "Balanced Budget" bill to garner more favorable attention.

Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) wondered aloud on the House Floor if the immigration bill entitled the "Immigration in the National Interest Act" should be renamed the "Statue of Liberty Was Wrong Act." One representative, in an attempt to promote a bill requiring football, baseball, basketball, and hockey to use instant replays, named his proposal the "What Really Happened Bill" after rejecting his first choice, "It Wasn't a Touchdown, Stupid, Bill.”

**Description:** Explains the goals of your bill

The next step is to explain the purpose of your legislation. This is the heart of your bill. The title of your bill should grab the attention of your fellow legislators – now it's time to tell them exactly what the title means. The purpose does not need to be lengthy, but it should describe the goal(s) of your bill. When other e-Legislators read your purpose statement, they should be able to picture what this bill could do for our country.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | H.R. 5251 | Give Us Time to Vote Act of 2003 | | Purpose | To establish federal Election Day as a public holiday for voters to have time to vote. | |

To get yourself started, describe what you hope to accomplish or the problem you plan to solve. Try to state it in a way that shows your fellow legislators why this issue is important and deserving of their attention. Remember, you will need their support.

**Purposes:** Next, describe the steps your bill will take to solve the problem. You don't need to discuss details like exactly who the bill applies to or how much it will cost; those will be included in the next few sections. You do need to mention specific actions that your bill requires, such as creating an agency or program, setting a standard, or instituting a penalty.

**Eligibility**: Identifies who will receive the services outlined in your bill

This step of the bill-writing process asks you to identify which groups of people will be affected by the bill you propose. This should be the people who will receive a benefit or penalty if your legislation is enacted. For example, one group of students wrote a bill that increased the minimum wage for workers who were drug-free. Read their eligibility section below:

**ELIGIBILITY:**  
An individual will receive a minimum of $7.50 per hour if he or she

1. is legally employed at any American business;
2. has a work permit;
3. passes a federally regulated drug test at least once a year.

Notice that this eligibility section is very specific. Defining eligibility is a good first step toward thinking about how much your bill will cost. The more people your bill affects, the more it is likely to cost. For instance, if your eligibility includes all Americans, it will cost much more than if it only applies to college graduates who would like to become public school teachers.

**Terms and Benefits**: Explains the extent and duration of services provided by the bill

This section of your bill adds detail to the general information in the Purpose and Eligibility sections of your legislation. You will now need to think about what specific requirements your bill will contain. You may want to consider how many people can be served by your bill or how long the bill will be in effect.

**TERMS AND BENEFITS**

1. Participants will receive loans of up to $10,000 per year ($20,000 over two years) for a term not exceeding two years in order to achieve a master's degree in any field of education;

2. A six-month training institute is required, and after completion participants will be placed at a school;

3. Teacher salary is left to the discretion of the local school board;

You need to be as specific as you can in writing your Terms and Benefits. Other Legislators are more likely to support a bill that covers each of the following issues:

* Which Americans would be affected by this bill? All? Only those under 18? Potential immigrants? Anyone with a driver's license?
* What benefits or penalties would this bill create?
* Who will enforce the terms of this bill?
* How long will your bill be in effect? One year? Five?

**Fiscal Impact** (Funding, Administration, Appropriations): Provides information on the costs of the legislation

The last step in writing a bill is to determine how much it will cost. This is incredibly important for a lot of reasons. Remember that most of the government's money comes from the taxes it collects from each of us. Do you think other legislators will agree that the bill you propose is worth spending their money on?

Remember that other legislators will use this financial information as they evaluate the merits of each bill and set priorities for their committees. Accurate data will help your colleagues make informed decisions during committee sessions and when voting on the House floor.