

Nuggets of Wisdom

Dodd weighs in words of advice

By: Caroline Duke



Dr. Courtney Dodd, the legislative advisor to the Governor, made her speech debut last night and gave wisdom to new district representatives as they take on their week of Congress.

Dodd, a Congress alumni, gave four tips to follow to make Congress a success. The first advice she shared was to “maximize your opportunity for learning about your government... It’s up to you to get into role. You get out what you put into it.” Congress is a great opportunity to grow in knowledge about government and legislature. Getting into character will provide a different perspective and make the Congress experience more immersive.

A second tip from Dodd entails asking Texas 4-H State Council any questions that present themselves. State Council has planned for many months, and they are tirelessly working on making the 2018 Texas State 4-H Congress a success. They will gladly answer any arising questions. The third pearl of wisdom Dodd shared was to “approach the week with respect,” in regards to beliefs and opinions, property of the hotel and other people, rules of the hotel and State Council, respect for lawmakers, and respect for visitors to the hotel.

Finally, Dodd finished off the night with a final hint for making congress a success: to have fun. Though it seems simple, it makes all the difference. The choice to have fun is one that is not thought about often, but can significantly change the way a person experiences Congress. Keep these four nuggets of wisdom in mind and have a safe, successful, and enjoyable Texas 4-H State Congress!

WHAT DID THE HERRON CATCH TODAY?

Congress Girls here, your one and only source into the scandalous lives of the Congress elite. With everybody arriving Sunday, drama was the first to check in. Yesterday, we all saw Governor Herron get sworn into his position. Some of us were lucky enough to get invited to his exclusive Governor’s Reception for a sneak peek of the week ahead. But the question is, what is really going on behind the scenes with Governor Herron? A little birdie told us that thought-to-be ‘strong’ friendships with the Governor were pushed aside for those with bigger benefits. Long standing promises have already been broken for the sake of Congress. As the man himself said in his speech, we are to “lead by example”. But that leaves us wondering... What example is Governor Herron really following?



-Xoxo, Congress Girls

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Dodd swears in new legislative officials serving at congress.

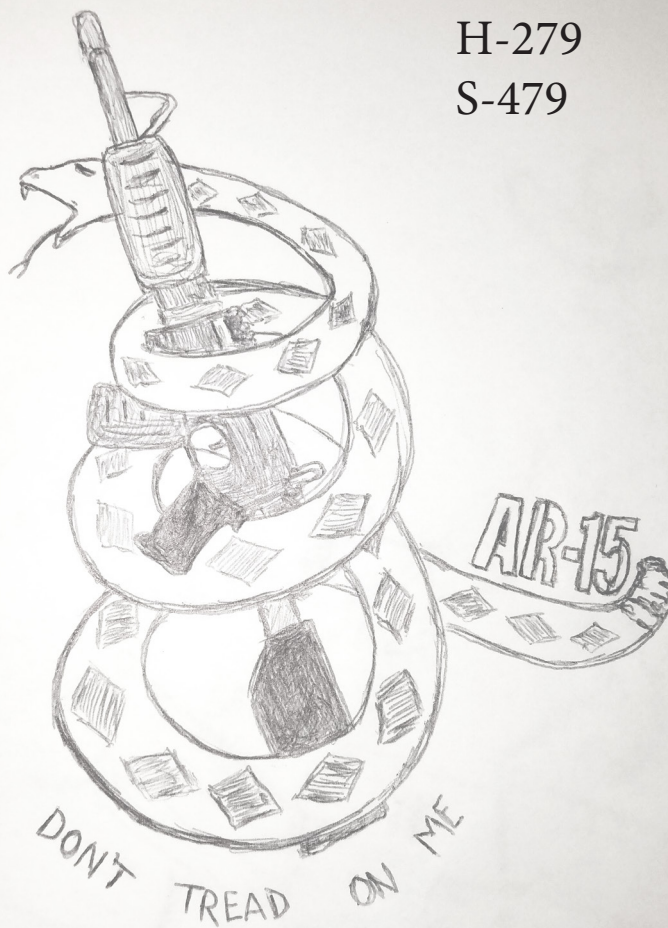
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“The Sssssssecond Amendment”

By: Garry Branham, District 7 4-H Specialist

Digging Deeper: A guide for analyzing bills

By: Clara Raabe

With over 200 bills, heated disagreements, busy schedules, and the excitement of Texas 4-H Congress, sitting down and preparing arguments for debates in the House and Senate can be a challenge. However, a few simple questions can be used to thoroughly analyze any bill from top to bottom and identify its weaknesses.

Here is a simple guideline to use for analyzing bills. It should be used for both the bills you support and the ones you oppose because after some evaluation, a bill might not be as appealing as it seemed at first. After all, the devil's in the details!

There are three steps to analyzing a bill. The foundations of a bill are the first area to analyze. If you disagree with the goal of the bill or if one of its assumptions is flawed, the entire policy crumbles. Take, for example, a bill that proposes building a border wall. The goal of this policy might be to protect Texas' security, and it assumes or claims a number of facts: illegal immigration is rampant, illegal immigration is harmful to Texas' security, illegal immigration would be significantly reduced with a wall, and that Texas can afford building a wall. Whether you agree with this policy or not, the goal must be a commonly-shared goal, and each of these assumptions must be proven if the bill is to succeed. Identifying the foundations of a bill is necessary for a good debate.

Most debates are spent on the effects of the bill because that is where most of the disagreement occurs, but even a bill that enforces an idea everyone agrees with might not be passed because it was poorly written. Thus, the technical details of a bill are important to evaluate as well.

Step 1: The Foundations

- What is the goal of the bill?
- What principles does the bill value?
- What assumptions does the bill rely on?

Step 2: Effects of the Bill

- Has the bill been tried before?
- Who will the bill impact?
- What will the impacts be?
- Are the impacts beneficial or harmful?
- Do the beneficial impacts outweigh the risk of harmful impacts?

Step 3: Technical Details

- Are there similar laws already in place?
- Should the law be made mandatory?
- Is it the government's responsibility to mandate it?
- Is the bill clear enough to be effectively enforced?
 - Is there enough funding?
 - Are there clear penalties for violating the law?
 - Is the bill vague?
 - Are there loopholes that reduce the bill's effectiveness?