

HOW TO STRENGTHEN A BILL...

Some things for you to consider:

1. Funding

- How will I pay for my bill?
 - *Am I funding with taxes, fines, or pre-established budget allocations? Or am I using a different method?*
 - *If I am using a tax or fine to fund my bill, does it appropriately relate to my topic at hand?*

For Instance: Is it appropriate to be taxing cigarettes to pay for a new road system?

- Does my bill *actually* cost as much as I've originally perceived? Are there any unforeseeable, less obvious financial implications?
 - *Will my bill increase prison sentences? Does my bill require increased wages/hiring individuals? Does my bill require a particular program or group of people to be funded?*

2. Enforcement

- What are the penalties for a failure to comply with this law?
 - *Am I taking away funding from an institution? Am I implementing a fine or prison time? Have I specified the penalty?*
 - *Are my penalties appropriate for the topic at hand? (for instance, am giving a person who does not buckle his seatbelt a 10 year prison sentence?)*

- How can I ensure my law is actually being enforced? Are inspections of some sort needed? If so, who will be conducting them?

For Instance: I may make it required for all owners of firearms to have child locks on said firearms... But how can I actually *make sure* these locks are in place?

- Who is in charge of making sure this bill is implemented?
- It is important to note that some laws (such as a redesign of the state flag) may not *necessarily* need an "enforcement" component

3. Compliance with current state statutes

- Does the statute I am implementing already exist in the state of New Jersey?
- If I am changing a current statute, do I know which statute I am changing? Is it included in the bill?
- Does this contradict with an already established law?
- Am I sure my bill falls under *state* jurisdiction, as opposed to federal or municipal jurisdiction?
- Is my bill constitutional?

4. Practicality

- Is this bill addressing a problem that needs to be readily addressed?
It is useful to do some research on the problem itself (i.e. if I am increasing prison time for sex offenders, I may want to find some New Jersey statistics on the rate of sexual crimes committed per year, percentage of repeat offenders, etc.) This kind of information will give your bill more legitimacy.
- How long will the implementation of this bill take? How much, if any, physical labor will it require? Is it a practical, doable undertaking?
For instance: if I am putting solar panels on all government funded buildings, do I have the manpower, time, and money to carry it out?
- What, if any, are the extra “consequences” of my bill (on the environment, economy, NJ employment rate, etc.)?
For Instance: If my bill topic is trade, have I only considered the effect it will have on the economy? Or have I also considered any possible social, environmental, and political effects?

5. Coherency

- Is my bill too vague?
 - *A vague bill tends to be debated on details, rather than the merit of the bill itself.*
- Is every detail of my bill specified (Funding, enforcement, etc.)?
- Does my bill’s title clearly indicate what it is about?
 - *Remember, your bill’s title should essentially summarize the bill*
 - *Make sure it relates to the bill’s body!*