

The Constitution of the Civics and Government Institute

We the students of the Civics and Government Institute in order to further our understanding of the process of government, the experience of producing legislation, and the dynamics of politics, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution of the Civics and Government Institute. We acknowledge that the students of the Civics and Government Institute have come together to form a student-driven government. It is the duty of this Institute to provide that government and to educate its students in the business of government. The students of the Civics and Government Institute hereby pledge to uphold the mission and laws of the Civics and Government Institute.

Article I

Structure of Government

Section One

A government is hereby established with three distinct branches: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. No member holding a position in one branch may hold a position in any other branch. It is the duty of the Legislative Branch to create law that ensures the goals of the Civics and Government Institute (hereafter referred to as CGI) are attained. It is the duty of the Executive Branch to ensure the execution of the laws of CGI. It is the duty of the Judicial Branch to interpret legislation and conduct trials in the Ethics Court.

Section Two

All actions of CGI may only be discharged upon teacher approval and in adherence with school, Board of Education, and New Jersey Department of Education policies, and local, state, and federal laws.

Article II

The Legislature

Section One

The Legislature of CGI is tricameral, consisting of the Council, the Senate, and the House of Representatives.

1. Any proposed legislation must pass in the House of Representatives and either the Council or Senate in order to become law, with the exception of funds appropriation bills.

Section Two

The Council of CGI shall consist of an equal number of students from each grade represented in CGI. The total population of the Council may not exceed one-sixth of the total population of the Institute rounded up to the nearest whole number.

1. Any bill dealing with the Executive Branch must pass the Council in order to become law.
2. The Council has the sole power to bring impeachment charges on an elected or appointed official. A minimum of three-quarters of the population of the Council must be in favor for the impeachment charges to be levied.
3. Councilmen will serve a semester-long term.
 - a. Sophomores elected for the first semester term will serve a marking period-long term, starting second marking period.

Section Three

The Senate of CGI shall consist of an equal number of students from each grade represented in CGI. The total population of the Senate may not exceed one-sixth of the total population of the Institute rounded up to the nearest whole number.

1. Any bill dealing with the Judicial Branch must pass the Senate in order to become law.
2. It is the duty of the Senate to try cases of impeachment. The Senate is also responsible for creating the regulations for such a trial.
3. Senators will serve a semester-long term.
 - a. Sophomores elected for the first semester term will serve a marking period-long term, starting second marking period.

Section Four

All members of the Legislative Branch who are not in either the Council or Senate shall hold a position in the House of Representatives.

1. The House has the sole power of the purse. All bills requiring funds appropriation must pass in the House and need not pass in either of the smaller bodies.

Section Five

Each Legislative body shall elect a Speaker. The Speaker must be a member of the body by which he or she is elected. The Speaker shall be elected by a majority vote. The Speaker shall moderate the debate using proper Parliamentary Procedure, and vote only in the event of a tie. Each speaker shall serve for a term not to exceed one semester. The Speaker may appoint sergeant at arms and a secretary, as deemed necessary by the Speaker.

Section Six

Senators and Councilmen may not have more than three unexcused absences per term. If that limit is breached, they are automatically removed from their position and a new election shall be held to fill their place.

Section Seven

All Senators and Councilmen shall be elected the semester before they are to serve their term.

Article III *The Executive*

Section One

The Executive Branch shall consist of the President, Vice President, and a Class President for each grade represented in CGI, and any appointed members of the Executive.

1. All executive orders may go into action only if they receive a unanimous vote from the voting members of the Executive.
 - a. The voting members of the Executive are the President, Vice President, and Class Presidents.
2. It will be the duty of the Executive Branch to set the agenda of the Legislature. They shall vote on every bill submitted for debate and determine if the bill should be debated in Congress. They shall also write the agenda of the bills to be discussed in Congress.

Section Two

The President of the Institute shall be entrusted with certain duties and powers to ensure the operation of the Institute,

1. The President of the Institute may sign passed legislation into law within 24 hours of passage. If they do not, the legislation still becomes law.
2. The President has the power to veto passed legislation, in which case all three Houses of the Legislative Branch must pass the bill by a simple majority in order to override the veto.
3. The President may create any position he or she feels necessary, and appoint any person to fill that position. The appointee may choose to accept the position or not.
4. The President of the Institute shall be required to deliver a “State of the Institute” address on the first Congress session of the month to the members of CGI.
5. Should the President of the Institute become incapacitated or be absent from school, he or she shall be replaced first by the Vice President, then by

the Senior Class President, the Junior Class President, the Speaker of the House, Speaker of the Council, and Speaker of the Senate.

Section Three

Class Presidents shall be entrusted with certain duties and powers to ensure the effective representation of their constituency. Class Presidents shall meet and discuss the occurrences in the Executive with their respective classes once per marking period, and will convey the will of their classes to the Executive.

Section Four

Certain procedures and requirements shall be followed for the election of voting members of the Executive.

1. To be eligible for the position of President of the Institute, the candidate must hold a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above at the time of the election, and must be completing their junior year at the time of the election.
2. The candidate for the position of Vice President of the Institute must be completing their sophomore or junior year.
3. The election shall take place at the beginning of the fourth marking period of the school year, and the President elect shall take power the following year.
4. One Class President shall represent each grade of students in CGI. The Class Presidents shall be elected in the fourth marking period and take office the following school year, except the Sophomore Class President, who shall be elected in the first marking period of the school year and assume office during the second marking period.
5. It shall be a requirement that the Class President be a member of the class which they are representing

Article IV *The Judiciary*

Section One

The Judicial Branch shall consist of seven Justices, who comprise the Supreme Court and Ethics Court.

1. The Supreme Court shall consist of three Justices in their senior year, two Justices in junior year, and two Justices in sophomore year.
2. The Senior and Junior Justices shall be appointed in the fourth marking period when the new President of the Institute takes office. The Sophomore Justices shall be appointed in the first marking period of the following year.

- a. All Justices shall assume their positions in the first marking period following their appointments and confirmations.
3. The Justices shall be appointed by the President and subsequently confirmed by the Senate. One of the Senior Justices shall be selected as Chief Justice by the members of the Court.
 - a. The Chief Justices shall preside over the affairs of the Court.
4. The Supreme Court must review all passed legislation. The Court will then determine if it violates any of the stipulations of the Constitution of CGI. If the Court finds a law to be in violation of the Constitution, such a law shall be rendered null and void.
5. The Justices are permitted to observe and speak during the proceedings of the Legislature, but they may not vote.
6. Should a complaint be raised against any member of CGI, either by the faculty or another member of CGI over a violation of the Honor Code, the accused violator shall be brought to a hearing before the Court. The Justices shall be given the option to vote prior to trial as to whether they choose to hear or dismiss the case. If they choose to hear the case, the accused may choose to represent themselves, or request the counsel of any member of CGI who is not presiding over the case.
 - a. A faculty member shall be selected on a rotating basis to monitor the case. This faculty member may not vote on the case, but may speak and give advice regarding the case.
 - b. The accused may retain the right to remain anonymous to the body of CGI and to the body of the Court during presentation of the case.
 - c. Upon hearing both sides of the case, the Justices must vote on whether the accused is guilty or not guilty of the crime of which they are accused. Should the Court find the defendant guilty, the Court must unanimously decide on a punishment, which must then be approved by a faculty member.

Article V

Maintenance of the Constitution

Section One

Should any member of CGI feel that a Constitutional amendment is necessary, he or she shall submit the amendment as if it were a Bill. The amendment shall require a two-thirds majority in each Legislative body to pass. Should an amendment pass, it becomes part of the Constitution.

Section Two

On each even numbered year, a vote will be held during the month of April on whether or not CGI will hold a Constitutional Convention. If a majority of the citizens of CGI vote to rework the Constitution, the Institute shall go directly into a Constitutional Convention for the purposes of amending, rewriting, or overhauling the Constitution. All members of CGI shall participate in this vote.

Amendments to The Constitution of the Civics and Government Institute

AMENDMENT I

To Article II of the Constitution of the Civics and Government Institute

1. Section Five shall be added to Article II as follows:

Section Five

The Senate must confirm all Judicial appointments with a two-thirds majority. The Council must confirm all Executive appointments with a two-thirds majority. Those appointed officials who are not confirmed may not assume that office to which they were appointed.

2. Upon passing with a two-thirds majority in each Legislative body, this Amendment shall be added to the Constitution.

Presented by Speaker Pope, Senator Carlton, Representative Goldmeier and Councilman Andre

AMENDMENT II

To Article III of the Constitution of the Civics and Government Institute

1. Article III, Section One, Subsection 2 shall be stricken
2. Section Seven shall be added to Article II as follows:

Section Seven

A Rules Chair shall be elected by the entire Institute. The Rules Chair shall be a non-voting member of the Legislative Branch entrusted with the duty of setting the agenda for Congress.

3. Upon passing with a two-thirds majority in each Legislative body, this Amendment shall be added to the Constitution.

Presented by Speaker Pope, Senator Carlton, Representative Goldmeier and Councilman Andre

AMENDMENT III

*To Article III, Section Four, Subsection 2 of the Constitution of the Civics and
Government Institute*

1. Article III, Section Four, Subsection 2 shall be changed to the following:
 2. The election shall take place at the end of the third marking period of the school year, and the President elect shall take power at the beginning of the fourth marking.
2. Upon passing with a two-thirds majority in each Legislative body, this Amendment shall be added to the Constitution.

Presented by Speaker Pope, Senator Carlton, Representative Goldmeier and Councilman Andre