Write Your Own Bipartisan Lame Duck Legislation!

The period between the November election and the beginning of the new Congress in January is known as a "lame-duck session." While the purpose of these sessions is principally to conclude urgent but commonplace legislation, these sessions have occasionally produced significant and at times even monumental new policies – including the creation of the [Superfund environmental-cleanup law](#), OSHA and the Department of Homeland Security as well as a [voluminous medical research bill](#).

In most cases, significant lame duck legislation is the by-product of bipartisanship, often via unlikely alliances of lawmakers who share an interest in something that will benefit their respective states and even at times of great division. Often, outgoing Presidents, Speakers and Senate leaders often work together to "clear the barn" of contentious issues or a big fiscal impasse.

It can be done! By way of example, the 111th Congress – marked by ferocious battles between President Obama and Congressional Republicans – was one of the most productive lame duck sessions in American history, resulting in the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy that had barred gay, lesbian, and bisexual people from openly serving in the military; income tax cut extensions; new health care benefits for 9/11 workers; and the ratification of the New START treaty with Russia.

In 2024, Washington's decision makers will include a lame duck President, Joe Biden, a savvy and legacy-minded Senate Republican leader and a newly-elected President who will be working with Congress to set up his or her first 100 days in office.

So what do you think they should take on?

The Challenge:

- In teams of 2 to 5 students, write a two page summarized Congressional bill on any issue that you believe could pass during a lame duck session.
- You must emulate an actual Democratic member and Republican member of Congress who for this exercise will be the sponsors of your bill.
- There are no specific parameters for the policy area or topic – it could be something small but meaningful to the two lawmakers you emulate or of expansive consequence to the nation.
- Include an assessment of what President Biden's equities and views might be on the issue as part of end of year negotiations.
- Teams will be judged based on their bill's impact, creativity, feasibility, and how well they outline the process of passing their bill.
- Teams will present their bill to an expert judge panel on Thursday, November 14th. The top three teams will move forward to our final round, and present their bills on Monday, November 18th. The winning team will be awarded **$500 per person**.

NO POLICY EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! This competition is open to all UChicago students. Just bring your brains and passion to the table. Each team will have access to experts on the current Congress, lame duck sessions and their policy area of choice in order to help craft proposals.