

Make Congress Work Better, with Music

Problem Statement

It's Broken



Require filibusters > 15 Mins to be sung

- Increasing tempo and key as time goes on - Anything over 2 hours must be done in falsetto
- Allow chorus of dissenting party to sing in call-and-response fashion
- Allow cloture votes to be accompanied by Grunge Rock

Form a bi-partisan Chorale

- Require 100 hours of rehearsal each year - Force positive working relationships through collaboration
- Performance for the public at the beginning of each session - Participation by civic chorales from Districts
- Form a bi-partisan chorale or orchestra of Members' children - Bi-annual concerts - Program about the need to build a working future
- Mini-performance at the beginning and end of each day

Theme music for all groups

- Theme music for each Committee - Committee reports begin and end with their themes
- For each Party - Each party must listen (headphones) to the other's theme during voting breaks
- For each State Delegation
- For House and Senate

Create a Congressional Symphony integrating all of these

Have Ken Burns produce a music-rich Film on Great (and not-so-Great) Moments in US History, featuring the contributions of Congress

- Featuring
 - Constitution
 - Bill of Rights
 - Voting Rights Act
 - Social Security Act
 - Prior periods of impasse, and how we got past them
 - Civil Rights Act

Create Inspiration

- Have a public airing, with commentary by Congressional leaders afterward
- Have pop groups set this to music for play in mass outlets

Lunch Talks by Great Musicians on Collaboration in Music and Life

- Learning to Listen - Understanding through listening
- Call and Response - Creativity through Dialogue
- The role of Solos - State Rights
- Harmony - Greater Good
- Capturing the importance of dissonance - Difference and Debate
- Blending ideas in Fugues - Federalism
- Egos and how to manage them

Music-centric Discussion Sessions, added to Legislative Agenda

- What makes American Music Great?
- Appreciation of music from around the World
- What can we learn from Music?

Hold a square dance nostalgia party in The House

- Televise Nationally
- The President as Caller

Play music tied to progress during sessions

- Play upbeat music every time a bill is passed with bi-partisan support
- Play Mozart Requiem each time an opportunity for progress is missed
- Calming music throughout - Particular focus on works of genius and inspiration
 - Goldberg Variations
 - Beethoven's 9th
 - Louis Armstrong La Vie En Rose
- Music breaks periodically, and whenever discourse breaks down - John Cage's 4'33 used liberally
- Broadcast over CSPAN - Local feeds to local constituencies

Reduce Congressional Budget, and...

- Apply to music education programs in primary and secondary schools
- Apply to support for the Performing Arts

Reduce Campaign Spending Limits, and...

"It's not what you play that matters, it's what they hear"

Adapt ideas from J. Haidt - Aimed at building empathy and understanding

Concerts assembled around key legislative issues

Reduce the number of days In Session, replacing them with Public Concerts

Form bi-partisan composing teams to work out ideas

- Hold a battle of the bands competition to choose the best results
- Criteria: ability to combine and balance contrasting ideas
- Switch roles periodically
- Winner plays at Kennedy Center and receives Medal of Freedom Award

Provide Members with Music Generation Software

- Encourage experimentation
- Require that sponsors accompany each bill with a composition laying out the core ideas in musical terms

Frame the opening of each debate with an appropriate piece of music capturing the essence of the issue

- For Theme - Selected by opposing sides
- Against Theme - Have a composer improvise on a compromise of the two

Record Impressions by local, set to music and play for Congress

Take Regional Music acts on road shows outside of their home base, introduced by their hometown pols, to build understanding

- Jazz into mid-America
- Bluegrass into Manhattan

Form bi-partisan teams of musically literate and illiterate Members

- Jazz
- Rock
- Country
- Have the former teach the latter, and then collaborate to create performance pieces of music
- Start a "Hall of Fame" - Judged by Joint Committee of Congress

"Moments: Building our Country's Future"

- Bi-partisan, wherever possible
- Hopeful, uplifting
- Recognize differences
- Short music videos highlighting Congressional progress toward building a better America

America Pavilion at EPCOT feel

Re-decorate Capital Hill in Musical Themes

- "Send in the Clowns" - A Little Night Music - Committee Chambers as Broadway Musicals
- La Traviata - The Senate as Grand Opera
- CBGB - The House as a Rock Club
- Cafe Carlyle - Cloak Rooms as Cabarets
- Avery Fisher Hall - The Rotunda as Symphony Hall
- Drum Sets in Gym to all Members to work out Aggression
- Harp music playing triggered by movement down halls

Appropriate theme music playing in each

- Harmonies to express agreement
- Dissonances to express deadlocks
- Silence as marker of lack of progress

- Rap Song?
- Symphony?
- Jazz piece?
- Opera?

Composer assembles a (Fugue?) representing the results of an entire session

Have a composer track progress on major bills by laying down notes only as agreements are achieved

- Play at July 4th concert to highlight results of Congressional year
- Encourage audience reaction
- Arrange for concerts where these can be played in contrast
- Create comparable compositions for our Founding Documents

Replace Party Convention talks with Music Videos

- Emotions don't lie (or at least they lie less) - Should focus on how they want American public to think about their party and their key ideas

Hold a contest for musical groups to compose songs letting Congress know how Americans feel about their performance

- Amateurs
- Professionals
- Children
- Have a televised concert where Congress must sit through performances of this as an audience
- Responses from both parties captured and aired later