NATIONAL ANIMAL LAW COMPETITIONS

LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING & LOBBYING COMPETITION

2027 RULES

PRESENTED BY:

ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

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RULE I. ORGANIZATION

The National Animal Law Competitions (NALC) is an individual event comprised of two distinct components for the 2026/2027 season:

- Appellate Advocacy Competition
- Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition

NALC is an exciting educational opportunity presented by the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF), originally organized from 2004-2016 by Lewis & Clark Law School with support from ALDF and Harvard Law School, then subsequently revived in 2023 by the Brooks Institute for Animal Rights Law & Policy. The purpose of the event is to provide students with an opportunity to develop knowledge in the field of animal law and policy and to hone their written and oral advocacy skills.

RULE II. PARTICIPATION

A. Competitor Eligibility.

Participation in the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition is done on an individual basis. All students who are current full- or part-time J.D. students at an ABA-approved law school in the United States are eligible to compete, regardless of year* in school, as are students currently enrolled in a related master's or PhD program.

** First-year law students are eligible to compete in the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition of the National Animal Law Competitions. First-year law students are not eligible to compete in the Appellate Advocacy component.*

B. Registration.

Registration for the 2027 National Animal Law Competitions will open on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).

Registration will close promptly at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Friday, November 6, 2026.

To register, please visit **ALDF – National Animal Law Competitions**.

During registration, competitors must submit arrange payment of the $25 registration fee per individual competitor. Note that registration does not guarantee in-person participation in the competition.

The qualifying round written materials must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Tuesday, December 1, 2026, and will be judged electronically. On Tuesday, January 5, 2027, up to eight (8) competitors will be notified of their selection to compete in the semi-final rounds, taking place via Zoom on the weekend of February 20, 2027.

After the semi-finals conclude, four (4) competitors will be notified of their selection to compete in the final rounds on **Friday, March 12, 2027**, at the Portland Hilton Downtown in Portland, Oregon. The selected finalists will have their reasonable travel and accommodation expenses for the in-person competition in Portland, Oregon covered by the Animal Legal Defense Fund. More information about submitting your materials and the selection process for the qualifying, semi-final, and final rounds is provided below.

RULE III. COACHING

A. Timing and Qualifying Round Assistance (VERY IMPORTANT!).

Do not risk disqualification! Competitors are not allowed to receive ANY coaching or assistance with the problem prior to January 5, 2027.

This means that any qualifying round submissions must be the sole work product of the competitor. Before the materials due date, all competitors must submit a **Certification of Authenticity form** attesting to the originality of their work product and consenting to have the final rounds video recorded.

Note that the use of AI large language models (such as ChatGPT) in preparing to write or writing any NALC submissions is prohibited. Any use of AI large language models will be considered as not the competitor's own work and that competitor will be subject to immediate disqualification from the Competitions. Please be aware that the competition

administrator reserves the right to check individual Competition entries for the presence or use of ChatGPT or other generative AI outputs.

As a reminder, registration is due no later than November 6, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. (ET). Failure to meet the registration deadline will result in disqualification from the competition.

In addition, competitors may *not* discuss the problem with anyone, including professors, coaches, students, colleagues, or any other individuals prior to January 5, 2027, which is when the semi-final round competitors will be announced and notified.

After January 5, 2027, and through the end of the competition, the selected semi-finalists and, later, finalists, may receive coaching assistance to prepare for the semi-final and final lobbying rounds pursuant to the additional restrictions outlined in these rules.

In sum, only after: 1) you have registered; 2) you have submitted your qualifying round written materials; 3) the semi-final round competitors have been notified on January 5, 2027; and 4) pursuant to the additional restrictions outlined in these rules, may competitors receive assistance from coaches in preparation for the semi-final and final lobbying rounds.

Violating any of these rules will result in automatic disqualification.

B. Other Restrictions.

Competitors also may not receive any coaching, advice, or assistance at any time from individuals who:

1. Served as the lead author of the 2026/27 Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition problem; or

2. Are serving as a judge for the 2026/27 Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition.

The burden of determining coaching eligibility rests on the competitor. Therefore, before receiving any coaching, advice, or assistance from anyone, competitors first should

inquire whether the person was the lead author for the problem or if they will be serving as a judge of the 2026/27 Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition. The competition judges will be finalized by January 5, 2027, which is the date competitors first may receive any assistance, advice, or coaching.

C. During the Semi-final and Final Round.

Every effort is made to make NALC as fair as possible. Consequently, competitors and their coaches who are invited to compete via Zoom for the semi-final rounds may not observe any semi-final rounds other than those in which they or their team are participating. Final round competitors and their coaches may not observe any final round presentations other than those in which they or their team are participating. Semi-final competitors and their coaches who are not participating in the final round may observe the final round. Otherwise, all the final rounds will be open to the public. Recording of any sessions by any competitors, coaches, or the public is prohibited.

D. Communication with Judges.

At all stages of the competition, competitors and coaches may not discuss the rules, problem, cases, strategy, or scoring with any NALC judges. Competitors and coaches also may not seek or receive any advice, feedback, or coaching from any NALC judges beyond the feedback that is provided immediately after each lobbying round. Likewise, competitors and coaches may not disclose to any NALC judges which school they represent until after the competition has concluded.

RULE IV. COMPETITION PROBLEM

A. Distribution and Components.

The Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition qualifying round problem consists of one (1) mock bill scenario. The semi-final rounds will consist of three (3) different mock lobbying scenarios for the bill. The final round will consist of one (1) mock lobbying scenario. The lobbying scenarios include specific legislator profiles and lobbying objectives.

Qualifying Round

The Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition qualifying round mock bill scenario will be posted on the NALC website on **Tuesday, September 15, 2026**, by 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). Please visit **ALDF – National Animal Law Competitions**.

For the qualifying round, competitors must draft a proposed bill with an accompanying fact sheet. Those submissions are due as set forth in Rule V(B).

Semi-Final and Final Rounds

On January 5, 2027, up to eight (8) competitors will be selected to participate in the semi-final round via Zoom on the weekend of **February 20, 2027**, where each will be provided with three (3) mock lobbying scenarios. See Rule VI(A) for the semi-final round format. By the evening of February 21, 2027, up to four (4) finalists will be selected to compete in the final round, which will be held in-person on **Friday, March 12, 2027**, during the Student Convention at the Portland Hilton Downtown in Portland, Oregon.

B. Questions and Competition Administrators.

If you have any questions about the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition problem, requirements, or rules, please contact the competition administrators at events@aldf.org at the earliest date possible using the subject line "NALC Question." Be sure to read both the problem and the rules in their entirety before requesting clarification. Also be sure to refer to the rules again prior to the semi-final and final competition rounds. The competition administrators will not be able to respond to questions that already are answered in the rules and, if needed, can provide only minimal clarification on the problem.

RULE V. QUALIFYING ROUND REQUIREMENTS

The written and oral lobbying components are both crucial aspects of the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition. Therefore, competitors should strive to submit the very best products possible. Note that special awards for the overall Best Bill and,

individually, for the Best Fact Sheet will be given at the awards ceremony which will be held at the conclusion of the National Animal Law Competitions on Friday, March 12, 2027.

A. Format.

For the qualifying round, you must complete and submit the following:

1. Draft a federal bill that accomplishes the desired objectives outlined in the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition problem. (Note: you may use U.S. state or federal laws or bills to guide your research. You also may refer to any existing judicial opinions and resources from any bar association.).

2. Create a fact sheet for your bill. At a minimum, the fact sheet should provide relevant information on the bill for those unfamiliar with the issue and describe what your bill would accomplish.

The length of the bill shall be no less than one (1) page and no more than five (5) pages. Competitors should determine proper formatting based on their own research; however, font size must be no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman font type with one-inch page margins. Inclusion of "findings" or "purpose" at the beginning of the bill is discretionary and will be included in the final page count.

The fact sheet must be no more than one (1) page and one (1) side in length with the same style requirements as set forth above for the bill.

B. Submission of Qualifying Round Materials.

Competitors must submit their written proposed bill and fact sheet according to the specifications above no later than 11:59 pm (ET) on Tuesday, December 1, 2026. Competitors should consult the example fact sheets available on the problem webpage for guidance. The submission of work produced by any person other than the competitor is strictly prohibited, and competitors may not receive assistance from anyone prior to January 5, 2027.

Each competitor must submit, by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Tuesday, December 1, 2026:

a) an electronic copy of their written proposed bill and fact sheet to events@aldf.org; and

b) the online Certificate of Authenticity form (submission link to be shared with participants by the competition administrators).

To avoid disqualification, the competition administrators must receive all required documents by this deadline.

The use of AI large language models in preparing or writing the proposed bill or fact sheet also is prohibited; see Rule III(A) for the full restriction and its consequences.

RULE VI. SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL ROUND REQUIREMENTS

A. Format.

During the semi-final round, competitors will meet individually via Zoom with three (3) "legislators" and/or their "staff" to secure specified objectives, such as bill sponsorship, co-sponsorship, hearings, votes, etc. Competition judges will play the role of the "legislators" and "staff." Please note, because judges are playing fictitious characters, he/she/they are not necessarily expressing personal opinions during competition rounds. Competitors should approach each round as they would a real-life lobbying endeavor. This means competitors should expect the unexpected and prepare just as they would for actual lobbying.

Competitors may not bring, provide, or use anything other than copies of their bill and fact sheet during the semi-final and final round meetings with the "legislators" or "staff." Competitors can draw from their own research and their own life experience when communicating with judges—however, whether in written documents or during the lobbying rounds, competitors are not allowed to fabricate levels of public or private support, polling numbers, or other statistics to persuade or prove a point.

It is permissible for competitors to extrapolate likely outcomes based on real-life information generally available to the public. To use an example, if the competitor's proposed legislation focuses on animal cruelty issues, it would be permissible to look at past animal cruelty-related legislation and extrapolate those polling numbers to the current problem. However, the competitor must base his/her/their extrapolation on actual numbers based on real polls and other data.

Although this is a fictional problem, it is essential that competitors tether their arguments to credible information as opposed to simply making up information that benefits or supports their position. This rule also applies to the fabrication of facts from real or fictitious persons, organizations, agencies, etc. For example, the competitor may not create a fact sheet with logos from fictitious organizations or names of individuals to support their position. However, the competitor may extrapolate a position of actual organizations or individuals (even if not used in the problem) if the statement or position can be supported with factual and reliable existing sources. For example, if true, it is permissible for the competitor to state to a "legislator" that a particular nationally known organization has supported similar bills in Illinois and California, so your analysis indicates it is likely they also will support this legislation.

B. Timekeeping for the Semi-Final and Final Rounds.

Competitors will have ten (10) minutes to lobby the legislator and staff in each semi-final and final round. A timekeeper will display a green card until only three (3) minutes of the competitor's allotted time remains. At the three (3) minute mark, a card displaying the number three (3) will be displayed. When one (1) minute remains, a yellow card will be displayed. When the competitor's time has expired, a red card will be displayed, signaling that the competitor must conclude promptly.

C. Semi-Final Rounds.

Up to eight (8) qualifying round competitors will be informed on January 5, 2027 if they have advanced to the semi-final rounds based on their proposed bill and fact sheet scores. The schedule for the semi-final rounds also will be relayed to semi-finalists and posted on the

NALC website on January 5, 2027. This schedule, however, is subject to change at any time.

The semi-final competitors will lobby via Zoom for their submitted mock bill in the semi-final rounds on the weekend of February 20, 2027. There will be three (3) separate semi-final rounds, one mock lobbying scenario per round. Competitors will receive feedback from the judges ("legislators" and "staff") immediately after each round.

D. Final Round.

The top four (4) semi-final competitors will advance to the final round of the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition (See Rule VII). By Monday, February 22, 2027, the finalists will be announced and receive the new information and instructions for the final round which will take place on Friday, March 12, 2027, during the Student Convention in Portland, Oregon. The order of the final round presentations will be assigned randomly .

The competitors in the final round, and their coaches, will not be permitted to view the lobbying presentations of the other finalist competitors. Otherwise, the final rounds are open to the public. Recording of any sessions by any competitors, coaches, or the public is prohibited.

RULE VII. SCORING

A. Qualifying Round.

A committee of experienced lobbyists, legislators, attorneys, and/or professors will score the submitted bill and fact sheet. The factors that will be considered for the scoring include language clarity, persuasiveness, precision in drafting, and design (fact sheet only). A total score for each competitor will be calculated as follows:

50% – based on the competitor's proposed bill; and,

50% – based on the competitor's fact sheet.

Based on those combined scores, up to eight (8) Qualifying Round competitors will be selected to participate in the Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition semi-final rounds via Zoom the weekend of February 20, 2027.

B. Advancement to Final Round of the Competition.

At the conclusion of the three (3) semi-final rounds, a total score for each competitor will be calculated as follows:

> **25% - based on the competitor's proposed bill & fact sheet; and,**
>
> **75% - based on the competitor's combined oral scores from each of the three (3) semi-final rounds (25% per round). Oral scores are based on a competitor's persuasiveness, clarity of message, ability to respond effectively to questions, and knowledge of the laws related to, or impacting, their proposed bill.**

The four (4) semi-final competitors with the top total scores will advance to the final round. The names of the competitors advancing to the final round will be announced by Monday, February 22, 2027.

C. Final Round Scoring.

Upon completion of the final round, the competition winner will be determined by considering the total score given to each competitor for their overall lobbying performance during the final round. In the event of a tie, the competitors' bill and fact sheet scores will determine the outcome.

RULE VIII. AWARDS

Awards will be given at the awards ceremony which will be held at the conclusion of the National Animal Law Competitions on Friday, March 12, 2027. Awards will be given to the top four (4) finalists as follows: 1st Place, Runner-Up, Finalists. The winner of the competition will receive an individual plaque, as well as a plaque for display by his/her/their law school. The Runner-Up will receive an individual plaque, and the two (2) additional finalists will receive certificates.

Awards also will be given for the Best Bill and, individually, for the Best Fact Sheet. The winners of the Best Bill and/or the Best Fact Sheet awards may not necessarily be competition finalists.

The competitors' names and photos may be posted on the Animal Legal Defense Fund's websites/platforms, along with video recordings of the final round competition.

RULE IX. PENALTIES

Scoring penalties, up to and including disqualification, may be assessed at the competition administrators' sole discretion for failure to comply with any rule or deadline set pursuant to these rules.

RULE X. INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES

Requests for interpretation of these rules should be made to the competition administrator at events@aldf.org at the earliest date possible using the email subject line "NALC Rules Question." All competitors will receive prompt notification of any new rules, as well as revisions to or interpretations of existing rules. All competitors shall be bound by any changes effective at the time of notification.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund wishes you an exciting and productive 2026/27 Legislative Drafting & Lobbying Competition. Best of luck to all competitors!

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