

Synopsis of Problem Areas and Resolutions for 2020-2021

PROBLEM AREA I: CLIMATE CHANGE

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase market-based regulations requiring reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2002, the phenom from St. Louis, Nelly noted “It’s getting hot in here.” While it is clear that he was probably not talking about climate change, seventeen years later he very much could be. The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report argues that the world needs to massively reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid an increase of 1.5-2 degrees Celsius. However, according to Julia Hollingsworth in a 2019 CNN article we are currently on a do-nothing trajectory which will yield a higher temperature increase. She writes “...if global temperatures rise 3 degrees Celsius by 2050, 55% of the world's population across...would experience more than 20 days of lethal heat per year, "beyond the threshold of human survivability.'”

Affirmative teams would be required to use “market-based” regulations to reduce emissions. These regulations offer an incentive or penalty to regulate high-pollution behaviors. Mechanisms could include: carbon pricing, emissions trading, renewable portfolio standards, renewable production targets, removal of fossil fuel subsidies, and energy efficiency standards. For each mechanism, there are multiple proposals, guaranteeing a variety of affirmatives. Specific advantage areas could include: climate, economic innovation, manufacturing, environmental justice, and modeling.

Negative teams have access to a wide range of economic sectors for disadvantages with quick timeframes (fossil fuels, innovation, agriculture) and private agent counterplans, in addition to a states and federalism debate. Negative teams could also defend why command-and-control regulations are better than market-based ones. Critical positions include: environmental managerialism, neoliberalism, and a variety of identity-politics based criticisms grounded in discussions of environmental racism.

As a community, we have never taken the opportunity to directly debate greenhouse gas emissions. This resolution forces debaters to focus on how to actually mitigate climate change rather than just focusing on just its potential impacts. The Trump administration has rolled back domestic climate policy. There is a broad consensus in the academic and scientific communities that the United States needs to do something to either mitigate or adapt to climate change, yet nothing is being done. Time is not on our side, and we must use the research and argumentation abilities of the next generation of leaders to help save the planet.

PROBLEM AREA II: CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Resolved: The United States federal government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following: forensic science, policing, sentencing.

The First Step Act was a bipartisan effort which made minor changes to the criminal justice system that didn’t go far enough. What it did was spark a conversation which in turn produced a wealth of literature that would be ripe for debate. As the nation with the most incarcerated people per capita we have an obligation to find ways to reform our current system; this resolution offers students the opportunity to explore a plethora of options. Affirmatives can explore different ways to improve policing. These could include, but is not limited to, body cameras, increased community policing, instituting community review boards to investigate police misconduct or can overturn Supreme Court decisions that have increased protections for police officers. When seeking to address forensic science affirmatives can explore the accreditation standards for crime labs, change how evidence is handled, increase testing to establish validity in crime lab results, or institute statutory mechanisms that allows individuals to prove their innocence in court based on evolving science or expert reputation. With respect to the third area of sentencing, affirmatives can change/end mandatory minimum sentencing, can change the way drug crimes are sentenced, or could abolish/change the requirements for the death penalty. Negatives can argue that reforming forensic science would have catastrophic impacts for

evidence collection or would lead to an increase in mistakes made in crime labs. When negating policing, teams can argue that increased reform on policing would lead to officers leaving the profession, could mobilize the creation of underground militias, or would cause an increase of violence towards police officers. A generic circumvention argument available to negatives could be that those in power, specifically, Attorney General Barr, will choose to not enforce whatever the affirmative does. Negative teams have access to agent CPs that test the mechanism of the aff; there is a debate to be had on whether Congress or the courts are more effective at initiating reform in the Criminal Justice System. Disadvantage ground would include Federalism DAs that challenge the roles both the federal and state governments play in the criminal justice system, Backlash DAs in the form of police officers rebelling against the affirmative or funding DAs since a lot of the funding will have to be absorbed by state governments.



NFHS BALLOT FOR TOPIC SELECTION

Proposed Topic Areas and Resolutions for 2020-2021

Mark **only** the topic and resolution you prefer. The area that receives the most votes will be the 2020-2021 debate topic and resolution.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

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Name: _____

School: _____

Note: Schools must fax (309-663-7479) or e-mail (ccarr@ihsa.org) their ballot to the IHSA by December 15, 2019.