



Building Up Successful Schools & Minority Students Through Speech & Debate

Presenter:

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- Lafayette, La. Native
- Graduated from Lafayette High School, Alabama A&M University (UG), and Grand Canyon University(GD)
- Taught Social Studies, English, Science, Algebra, Speech & Debate, Law Studies, Special Ed., and Obtaining School Counselor & Leadership License
- Started my career in 2006 as an educator in New Orleans and taught in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee.
- Former leader for AMIKids Alternative School (BR) and Campus President for Strayer University (TN & WI)



Building a Community of Educated Believers

- “Whatever we believe about ourselves and our ability comes true for us.”
-Susan L. Taylor, Journalist
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Teaching Debate In School Is Critical

- It has been demonstrated already that debaters in high school show improved academic performance and fewer disciplinary and behavioral problems than non-debaters.
- Student debaters also have a much higher likelihood of attending and graduating from college than their non-debater peer groups.
- Debate curriculum teaches young people much of what they'll need to know in these areas by active, engaging, and highly direct means. (grit, creativity, collaboration, research, empathy)
- Research tells us that middle school is a period of considerable brain growth with the shift from concrete to abstract processing and growing capabilities in problem solving, planning, and critical thinking. Debate can support and enhance brain development as an activity requiring and honing these skills.

(<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/08/12/01deards.h34.html>)

Debate Enhances Student Outcomes

- "Debate can support and enhance brain development as an activity requiring and honing. . . skills" such as "the shift from concrete to abstract processing and growing capabilities in problem solving, planning, and critical thinking."



Skills Students Acquire Through Debate

Debate requires students to

- "think through issue[s] with an open mind and, channel empathy, to see how others might present a case in which they might not personally believe."
- "the ability to cite sources is critical."
- "draft persuasive language to convey the points."
- "facility with consolidation is key"

Debate gives students practice with identifying truly important information out of the volumes they can find at their fingertips.

- "Stand in front of a crowd and speak"
- "think on their feet"
- "listen carefully"
- "Teamwork is critical"
- "the rewards of hard work are immediately evident."
- "it teaches many of the so-called softer skills now linked to future success."

College Preparation Statistics



increase in
ANALYTICAL SKILLS



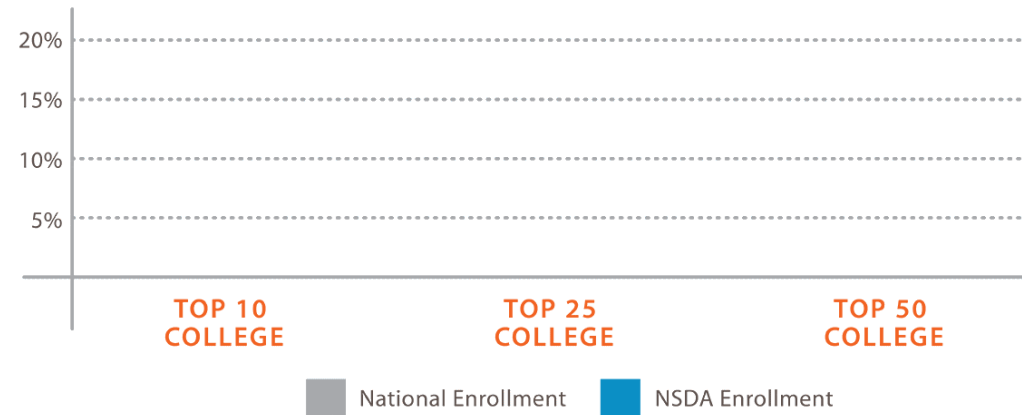
increase in
READING TEST SCORES



higher
SELF-ESTEEM

Source: Snider, A. C. & Lawrence, E. W. (2011). DEBATE: Important for Everyone. Retrieved from <https://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/DEBATE-%20Important%20for%20Everyone.pdf>.

Student Enrollment at Top Schools



Based on 1,156 surveys collected from the NSDA class of 2019.

Prepare For College, Career, & Future

- A LinkedIn survey of more than 660+ million professionals revealed the most in demand soft skills in 2020. Here's how speech and debate helps students master them:
- **Creativity** – Students are empowered to make artistic choices about how they bring words to life through performance. Unique arguments are encouraged and thinking outside the box differentiates students from their peers debating the same topics.
- **Persuasion** – Students learn how to best convince an audience in the face of equally well-informed, persuasive competition.
- **Collaboration** – Students work with teammates and coaches to craft stories, create arguments, build upon feedback, and perfect their performances.
- **Adaptability** – Students learn to think on their feet and tailor a performance to a given audience.
- **Emotional Intelligence** – Students learn to see both sides of an issue and to use appropriate strategies for questioning things they do not understand.

School Environment

- School Debate Improves School Behavior
 - Improved classroom performance
 - Higher student confidence and self esteem
 - Increased attendance rates
 - Decreased negative student behavior
 - Increased school pride
 - Increased engagement in the classroom
 - Higher test scores

(National Speech & Debate Association, 2021)



Impact of Participating in Debate

- Students who lack secondary literacy skills are more likely to drop out of school and are less likely to be college-ready.
- Recent evidence suggests that race and class achievement gaps are substantially the result of unequal access to opportunities. The achievement gap between Whites and disadvantaged minority students (Black and Latino) has been primarily (but not exclusively) attributed to differences in the quality of instructional opportunities provided between and within schools.
- Participating in debate expands time spent with teachers and debate peers through after-school practices and weekend tournaments throughout the school year that each consist of three to six debate rounds.
- *Impact of participating in a policy debate program on academic achievement: Evidence from the Chicago Urban Debate League (Mezuk, et.,al. 2021)*
- In practical terms, the activity of policy debate is characterized by the training of six academic skills:
 - (1) reading and interpreting complex non-fiction text,
 - (2) developing and writing arguments based on these texts,
 - (3) verbally expressing and defending evidence-based claims,
 - (4) listening to and interpreting opponents' arguments,
 - (5) collaborating with peers, and
 - (6) time-management. Policy debate involves the practice of “secondary literacy” skills including comprehension and interpretation of arguments from non-fiction (informational) texts.

What Results Come From School & Competitive Debate

- Overall, accounting for propensity to debate, participation was associated with significantly greater likelihood of scoring at or above the college-readiness benchmarks in Reading (15% more likely), English (15% more likely), Science (27% more likely) and Mathematics (10% more likely) relative to comparable students who did not debate.
- The relationship between debate participation and ACT performance was evident even among this group that successfully graduated: participating in debate was associated with significantly greater scores on all four ACT sections relative to comparable students who did not debate.
- The primary finding from this study is that even after accounting for the influence of self-selection, students who participated in debate were more likely to graduate from high school, performed better on the ACT, and showed greater gains in cumulative GPA relative to similar comparison students. Debate participation was associated with significantly better scores on all four components of the ACT, particularly the Reading and English sections.
- Students who participated in debate were also more likely to reach the college-readiness benchmarks on all four sections of the test relative to similar students. These results are consistent with the interpretation that participating in debate is associated with statistically significant and substantially meaningful academic performance on the ACT.
- Students who debated had an average spring 12th grade GPA of 3.06 as compared to 2.30 for non-debaters students, and among students who graduated debaters had an average GPA of 3.23 as compared to 2.83 for comparable students who did not debate.
- *Impact of participating in a policy debate program on academic achievement: Evidence from the Chicago Urban Debate League (Mezuk, et.,al. 2021)*

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Debate Topic Breakdown Analysis

Big Questions Debate, Public Forum Debate, Policy Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and
Congressional Debate

Big Questions Debate
Resolved: Humans are primarily driven by self-interest.

Affirmative Arguments

The affirmative has many avenues to approach the topic of self-interest. A great deal of both social and physical science is based on the assumption that human beings are essentially self-interested, so the topic has been studied, discussed, debated, and researched for years.

The affirmative can frame the debate in several ways to its advantage. First, it can attempt to place the burden of proof on the negative by arguing that the resolution does not require them to prove that self-interest is the ONLY motivation for action, but that it is the PRIMARY motivation. Second, the affirmative can argue that, since motivation cannot be measured, the judge should accept the simplest explanation – and then argue that survival instincts and self-interest are simple ways to explain a great deal of human action.

Perhaps the most obvious argument comes from evolutionary biology. The basic idea of evolution is the survival of the fittest, not the survival of the kindest. If a “self-sacrificing” gene did exist, then it would not be around long enough to be passed on to the next generation. Those with “self-interest” genes would surely have taken advantage of the altruists and survived while the altruists died out. The basic human (and animal) drive for survival may be evidence enough of this theory. After all, humans experience “fight or flight” instincts, not “fight, flight, or forfeit your advantages” instincts. Evidence from neurobiology will also serve the affirmative well here.

Beyond biology, social sciences provide evidence that humans are self-interested. Economic models that use self-interest as an assumption are far from perfect – but the fact that they operate fairly well is evidence that, in the aggregate, the assumption holds. Similar models in political science and sociology also perform tolerably well and thus lend credence to the idea that humans must act the way these models assume they do – self-interestedly.

Psychology especially contains a great deal of evidence in favor of the self-interest (psychological egoism) model. When put in laboratory situations, humans often act exactly as one would predict self-interested actors to behave. When abstracted from the pressing realities of real life, humans will often make decisions as if they are the only one that matters.

Of course, the affirmative will have to defend itself from a wide variety of attacks from the negative. One of these attacks will certainly be to provide examples of seemingly selfless acts and demand that the affirmative explain how these acts can coexist with a self-interested humanity. The affirmative will have to be quick-thinking to describe how the individual examples are either ultimately self-interested or are insufficient to

overcome the primacy of self-interest as a motivation.

Negative Arguments

The negative can draw on a vast store of literature that has attempted to portray humanity not as self-interested but as cooperative, altruistic, and kind. This literature often directly responds to the assumptions and arguments of those who argue that humans are essentially selfish, making it especially useful in a debate setting.

Just as the affirmative has many avenues to make framing arguments, so does the negative. Perhaps the most powerful framing argument for the negative, however, is that the burden of proof placed on the affirmative should be large. The negative should argue that the affirmative must prove that humans are, in all situations, acting for themselves. Expanding the definitions of each word in the resolution will generally play to the negative's advantage, making the statement broader and thus harder to defend.

In terms of major areas of argument, the negative has access to the same basic areas as the affirmative. In terms of evolution, arguments about inclusive fitness (described above in the "Evolutionary Definitions" section) will likely be popular means of attack. The negative may also wish to introduce "Cultural Evolution," the idea that those who are fittest to live in community are more likely to survive than those who make themselves disliked by other members of the community. Coupled with arguments about how young children appear to be conditioned to help other altruistically (suggesting that altruism is a biological, not simply social drive).

Social sciences also provide arguments to the negative. Determining on one's tolerance for model error, models built on assumptions of rationality and self-interest may not perform as well as the affirmative claims. No model is perfect, and perhaps a misunderstanding of human drives can explain these errors. Additionally, many experiments designed to show human self-interest often fail outright. Though proponents of self-interest often have methodological explanations for these failures, the negative should attempt to frame these failures as proving the very thesis can't possibly be true.

Psychology also has much to say in favor of the negative. Many experiments establish that humans are very interested in fairness and may sacrifice their own self-interest to maintain a fair outcome. Humans also appear to get satisfaction from helping others. These psychological drives may work against the affirmative's case.

Finally, the negative will almost certainly have to defend itself from arguments that seemingly selfless actions can always be assumed to benefit the individual on some level. By attempting to frame the debate in terms of proximate intentions (what the individual THINKS they intend) rather than the ultimate (what the individual may be ACTUALLY driven by) the negative can make this method of attack much weaker.

Conclusion

The debate you are about to enter has many aspects and has been debated by scholars for centuries. There is a great deal to digest and critical review. This review has given an overview of some of the most robust areas of the debate. Use it as a map to guide the beginning your research, then follow the research where it carries you. Happy debating!

Public Forum Debate

Resolved: The United States' strategy of Great Power Competition produces more benefits than harms.

Background Information

The concept of great powers was introduced following World War II as the globe was trying to make sense of the geopolitical landscape following the turmoil caused by the war. At this time, three major countries presented as the great powers: Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Since that time the desire to expand global influence and curtail the expansion of adversaries has caused a variety of changes in the geopolitical climate. The fall of the USSR leading the current Russian regime, and the rise of China have led to them joining the United States as the current great powers. Debaters should largely look to foreign policy decisions made by Russia, China, and the United States and their implications as the core of this topic.

Russian expansion is a topic we've visited often in Public Forum Debates. Last year, questions about NATO in the Baltics and Turkey revolved around questions of power competition between the US and Russia. With this topic, debaters can dig a bit farther back and look at conflicts like the Korean War, Vietnam War, Space Race, and much more. Of course, much of the debate is going to center on the War in Ukraine. Debaters will need to be well-read on this topic to have successful debate rounds.

China's emergence as a great power is an interesting one for the United States. While relations were cold for much of the 20th century, Carter's granting of full normalization in 1979 quickly escalated US-Chinese interactions. In the last forty years, China has grown into one of the largest economies in the world, one of the United States' largest trade partners, and a regional hegemon. As they've established itself on the world stage, China has also sought the expansion of its regional and global power. That expansion has created tension with the United States and puts China firmly in the center of the current great power competition. Most of the debate around China will focus on potential conflicts in the South China Sea, relations with North Korea, and expanding economic influence. Debaters will likely need to be well-read on these topics. Additionally, there is the potential for an interesting environmental argument as power competition is driving economic competition which is in turn increasing Chinese emissions. Due to the War in Ukraine, many debaters may focus on Russia, but the power competition with China is a rich ground for debate.

Affirmative Argumentation

The affirmative is likely going to gravitate toward big-stick impacts revolving around war. Specifically, affirmatives are going to focus on arguments based on deterrence or mitigating the severity of the conflict. The deterrence press is likely going to focus heavily on preventing nuclear escalation and mutually assured destruction. For example, the Ukrainian conflict is going to be a point of emphasis for both sides on this topic. While the negative may argue that the Ukrainian conflict proves that great power competition doesn't contain a Russian threat, the

affirmative gets to make arguments that the construction of ally groups such as NATO through the great power competition was vital in preventing further Russian expansion.

Moreover, they can argue that instances of military tension were de-escalated thanks to great power competition.

The same is true for China. Despite tensions being high in the South China Sea, US- Chinese relations have yet to rise to the level of full-on conflict and proxy conflicts between the two have been significantly curtailed. The affirmative can argue that China and the United States have created a codependent relationship through economic entanglement which makes conflict increasingly detrimental to both parties. That entanglement likely is the product of both countries' desire to expand their power and now creates a significant disadvantage to military engaging each other.

Next, the affirmative can argue that the great power competition has had the effect of rising almost all participants in the globalized economy. As countries seek to expand their sphere of influence, they have expanded their markets as a form of economic allyship. This has helped emerging economies leave poverty around the world and has significantly sped up development in some parts of the world. The need for production and markets to sell goods has been necessitated by the great power competition, and in turn has had the benefit of integrating more countries into a globalized, neoliberal regime. Affirmatives can find a plethora of impacts on economic development in emerging economies from this integration.

Negative Argumentation

Negatives equally have ample argumentation avenues. First, they can focus on military- based arguments. Specifically, they can argue that great power competition is what incentivizes the global military-industrial complex. In a world in which these countries aren't attempting to expand their global influence, is there a reason for them to feel threatened by other countries' expansion? Or is there even a need to expand if they aren't trying to grow their power? Rising tension through competition has led to things like global nuclear arms races, increased risk of miscalculation, and a host of other military issues. The negative can focus on this tension.

Moreover, the negative can discuss proxy wars that have popped up because of the great power competition. While the great powers may be disincentivized to directly fight each other, they historically have been willing to have proxy wars. Vietnam, Korea, potential conflicts in the South China Sea, and many more are all instances in which great powers engage to curtail expanding power from their competitors. In a world in which the US has not adopted a great power competition strategy, are these proxy wars necessary or likely to occur at all? This also allows for the negative to talk about the response from non-great powers to the great power competition. North Korean and Iranian nuclearization can be argued as other countries feeling threatened by the great powers and needing to respond. Again, absent our great power competition, do they feel that threat? And if not, could decreasing our power competition decrease the need for global nuclearization? This also allows for a strong securitization Kritik from the negative if that is an avenue they wish to pursue.

Finally, the negative can pursue economic arguments. If the great power competition is about attempting to curtail other great powers' sphere of influence, then one way the United States has approached such mitigation of power is by integrating countries into our sphere of influence through markets. This was discussed as an affirmative argument, but it most certainly can be a point of a direct clash with the negative. The terms "first world," "second world," and "third world" were coined during the Cold War to discuss the US and its allies, the Soviet Union and its allies, and everyone else respectively. Often, the "third world" was viewed as too unimportant to be a major player in the Cold War. The logic then goes, that if they weren't important enough to be relevant to the war why would they be important enough to integrate into the global economy? This line of logic is problematic and has led to emerging economies being left out of global markets or their growth significantly capped by the willingness of great powers to integrate them into the larger global neoliberal order. Not only does this argument provide some interesting kritikal ground for the negative, but it can be a very compelling policy argument as well.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Resolved: The Supreme Court Justices of the United States ought to be term-limited.

There is a lot to our Supreme Court topic, but any discussion needs to be situated in the actual life experiences of the judges hearing the debates. What did they think about the recent case that ended the Roe vs Wade precedent, a precedent which stood for nearly 50 years? How do they feel about taxpayer dollars going to private (potentially even religious) schools? Would they like the court to take a different stand on the Second Amendment, perhaps recognizing that the private ownership of automatic weapons actually ought to be tied to participation in “a well-regulated Militia”?

I hasten to point out that I don't believe debaters ought to discuss abortion on either side of the topic, mostly because such discussions can upset your opponents and/or judges and because their views on abortion, and yours, could be diametrically opposed to one another. What I do recommend instead is investigating the current court docket to see what other, presumably less divisive decisions, might be handed down this term, as well as looking back to previous decisions handed down since the three Trump appointees were added to the court, in addition to looking at the cases the newest justice, Ketanji Brown Jackson, has so far participated in.

It was while I was talking with two friends recently about the topic that I realized what I really want to do is explore five questions the judges you'll have might be thinking about, and even if they're not thinking about them yet, how you get them to think about the answers to these questions, which build on one another, will ultimately generate the core reasons why judges should affirm or negate.

Question #1 – Would term limits improve the stability of the Supreme Court?

Answering this question is important because the court can't do its job as well, or in some cases at all, without a full compliment of attentive and engaged justices. If there were term limits for Supreme Court justices that would minimize the time when the court was operating at less than full strength (5-4 decisions are not infrequent and 4-4 decisions are not decisions at all). In the current world, if the Senate is controlled by one party, and the president represents another, the court could be left with only eight justices for an extended period, as happened in the Spring of 2016 when the Senate refused to even hold hearings on Obama nominee Merrick Garland. That space remained vacant for a year until Donald Trump appointed Neil Gorsuch to the Court. On the other hand, and coming as no surprise to anyone who understands partisan politics, the Republican controlled Senate wasted no time approving Donald Trump's third nominee -- Amy Coney Barrett -- just days before the 2020 election. Mitch McConnell apparently “forgot” his own insistence that the people should decide by their voting in 2016 who the next Supreme Court justice should be. I'd recommend looking up the cases that ended in 4-4 deadlocks during the many months the Court had only eight members to uncover potential or real injustices.

If term limits were implemented along the lines discussed in a wide range of sources, Supreme Court justices would serve for a maximum of 18 years, with a new justice appointed and ratified by the Senate every two years. This would mean that a one-term president would get two and a

two-term president would get four nominees, as opposed to Obama's two in eight years and Trump's three in only four years. There couldn't be delaying tactics, if term limits were implemented as is suggested in the literature, and every president would get two nominees in every term. Now, a two-term president would be allowed to appoint four people during their time in the White House, and that could mean a significant shift in the court's views, but that concern is covered in one of the other questions. From the perspective of this question, however, I think the affirmative is on the right side of the topic. A stable and predictable addition of one person to the court every two years, with the longest serving member of the court cycling off at that time would keep the court at full strength nearly all of the time, and it would prevent the political snatch and grab of seats that is possible without term limits. As a side note, if I were running things, I'd have presidents do their appointing near the end of their first and third years in office each term to keep the appointments as far away from mid-terms or general elections as possible while still maintaining consistency, so if that also makes sense to you, your challenge will be to find legal scholars who agree.

Question #2 – Would terms limits do a better or worse job of preserving any precedents worth preserving, and overturning any that need to go?

By tradition, the Supreme Court follows the principle of stare decisis, a Latin phrase which essentially translates to “let the decision stand.” In other words, the Supreme Court is supposed to follow past precedents when making new decisions. Sometimes, however, the past precedents are terrible, such as the Plessy v. Ferguson decision, back in 1896, which found that racial segregation was legally acceptable in public places. Although the original decision related to a train, the decision was broad enough to include schools and other public facilities and it was not until the Brown v. Board decision in 1954 that school segregation was found to be against the 14th Amendment. I would hope that a bad decision like Plessy could have been overturned in far less time than it actually took, but I am not sure whether that would have been better or worse if term limits for Supreme Court justices had existed during that time.

We do know that there were a series of Civil Rights decisions in the 1950s and 1960s that were made possible by what was referred to as a liberal court, and almost certainly the justices responsible for the Plessy decision would never have issued the Brown v Board decision, but it is probably impossible to guess whether a more regular turnover of justices would have shortened the period of time before the “liberal” court began to issue decisions, or shortened the period of time when “liberal” decisions were rendered. What we do know is that the three Trump appointees had as a major goal the overturning of the Roe v Wade precedent, although even under a term limits system, Trump would have appointed two justices, and the decision to overturn Roe was 6-3. Assuming Trump had only appointed two justices, it is reasonable to assume the decision would have been 5-4, but we'll probably never know whether one of the longer-serving justices who voted to overturn Roe might have switched their vote had they known the vote was going to be a 5-4, because that potential vote-switcher might have believed a nearly 50 year precedent ought not be overruled, at least not without a stronger statement from the court.

In the end, I don't think Question #2 points clearly in either direction, which is why this is such a debatable topic. Certainly, a planned adding and subtracting of justices as one comes to the end

of their 18 year term would smooth out the blips, and perhaps make the court a little less partisan (more on that later), but because so much of what the court does is done in secret it is not really clear to the public how the deliberations work or how justices decide what to include in the majority opinion, and sometimes even more importantly, what appears in concurrent opinions (agreement with the majority decision for different reasons) or dissenting opinions (disagreement with the decision which lays out points that can be used as arguments in future cases). It is these uncertainties about the deliberative process that lead to the next question.

Question #3 – Would term limits make the court more efficient?

Like the previous question, I think the answer here, in terms of debate arguments, is that it depends, but I think I'm leaning negative. After all, cases are presented publicly and briefs (legal documents that make arguments not necessarily included in the oral arguments) are also public, but after the public phase, conversations between justices are confidential, as are the draft opinions they write. If you are a regular news watcher, you might recall the considerable controversy caused by the release of a draft decision in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (the decision that overturned *Roe*) in early May 2022. Draft decisions aren't released, and given the very controversial nature of that decision in particular, its release got a lot of attention. Whether one agrees with the justices who promised swift punishment if the leaker was found or whether one thinks that all this secrecy is questionable in a democracy and possibly damaging, the fact that we don't know what happens behind closed doors could be a problem, and not one that term limits can solve. I think that means that if affirmatives discuss all the great things term limits can do, negatives can respond by saying that the deliberative process itself is broken, which means term limits don't matter.

Question #4 – Would term limits reduce, maintain or even increase politicization of the Court?

My simple answer is that the Court is already far too politicized. When one of Donald Trump's most persuasive arguments during the 2016 campaign, especially with evangelical Christians (a group that hated nearly everything else about Donald Trump) was his promise to put anti-*Roe* justices on the Supreme Court, enough of them to overturn a nearly 50 year precedent, it seemed to me that the Court had passed the point of no return on politicization and become potentially dangerous to persons of color, gender minorities, immigrants, low income people and other groups, in addition to women. Even though I have recommended that debaters not discuss abortion, there are plenty of potential civil rights issues that should be discussed, and affirmatives would be wise to find upcoming cases that will take away voting rights or criminalize medical procedures for groups beyond pregnant women.

I also think it is important to talk about John Rawls here – no one likes the veil of ignorance more than I do -- and in this case, it really applies. My novices asked how people can give examples of good and bad decisions or discuss whether term limits would change those decisions without offending their judges by presenting the "wrong" views on political questions. My advice was to stick the decisions behind the veil of ignorance and see what happens. People, including your judges, are far less likely to object to an activist court when what that court does matches their own views, but justice ought to be evaluated without knowing whether you will personally benefit or be worse off. It would be far better if Supreme Court justices could make

decisions without considering the desires of the politicians who got them where they are, but I'm not sure term limits does that.

Negatives should be able to argue equally persuasively that even with term limits, people can reach the Supreme Court owing favors to presidents or members of the Senate, and that politicization cannot be avoided. Perhaps even more alarmingly, instituting term limits might actually make the court worse because justices nearing the end of their term might want to "make their mark" in bigger and more attention-getting ways. Besides there is a sense that time on the court mellows the justices in the current system (although that is not always true) and if no one serves longer than 18 years there won't ever be elder states-people on the court. Historically, the average justice served for about 16 years, but in modern times justices can serve for 20 or even 30 years or more, especially given longer lifespans and the appointment of younger justices. Whether I like the elder states-people or not is a separate question, but change, even slow and predictable change, might formalize partisanship as much as resolve it.

Question #5 – Would term limits preserve, or even enhance, Supreme Court legitimacy?

A legitimate Supreme Court is one which makes decisions based on the Constitution, in conjunction with displaying respect for the diverse peoples and interests that make up the United States. I'd like to believe we've all learned and grown as respecters of people over the decades, although I sometimes wonder. I'd also like to believe that even strict constructionists would admit that a lot of elements in our modern world were never imagined by the people who wrote the Constitution. Sometimes people disappoint me, however, and nearly everyone has had cause to be disappointed with the Supreme Court at some point in our history. If I were to conclude that the affirmative best represents court legitimacy, I'd be looking at the benefits of term-limits including regular and predictable changes to the make-up of the Court which could lead to a greater respect for legally acceptable precedents while still avoiding becoming too political. On the other hand, as the negative, I'd argue that term limits won't solve politicization and that long-standing precedents (even those supported by the majority of current citizens) could still be taken down by a two term president with a particular ideology, as long as they kept Senate support. I might add, as the negative, that until the entire process is more transparent, we won't even know if the change is for the better. In short, this is a very debatable topic for the time in the year when resolution-based debates are best for everyone.

Policy Debate

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase fiscal redistribution in the United States by adopting a federal jobs guarantee, expanding Social Security, and/or providing a basic income.

Economic inequality permeates all areas of American life and has a profound psychological and material influence on American society. Economic inequality influences life expectancy, physical and mental health, economic mobility and educational attainment. Inequality multiplies across generations and generates disenchantment with politics and our entire system of government.

Contemporary times have been dedicated to understanding this important issue from multiple perspectives. Economists, political scientists, legal scholars, philosophers, and people from many other fields have discussed a wide range of causes and potential solutions to the inequality dilemma. Under the proposed topic, affirmative teams would fiscally redistribute resources in three areas: a basic income, federal jobs guarantee and expanded social security. Fiscal redistribution requires a process of tax and transfer of resources. In addition, each of those areas has multiple sub-areas that allow more affirmative specificity. For example, an affirmative could advocate a wealth tax to fund a universal or means-tested basic income. An affirmative could also advocate for a corporate tax to fund a larger Social Security payment or a lower Social Security age.

Negative teams will have a wide arsenal of arguments at their disposal, such as arguments about workability, economic disruption, political feasibility, funding tradeoffs, or alternative ways to address economic inequality without fiscal redistribution. In addition, the negative would have a strong critique of using economics as the starting point for structuring societal changes and a critique of capitalism that is particularly strong versus the jobs and Social Security parts of the resolution.

The public education system portrays itself as a promoter of expanded opportunity, yet fails to focus on inequality and potential solutions. Unfortunately, such a discussion has been relatively sparse in high school debate. Although economic inequality has been an ancillary feature of some recent topics, it has not been the core focus since the 2009-2010 social services topic. This

topic allows everyone the chance to debate systemic economic inequality, not solely programs aimed to mitigate absolute poverty.

A season of debate, focused specifically on economic inequality, can create an opportunity to fully engage with such an immense literature base and form fully developed opinions on issues that directly impact their everyday lives. According to Inside Higher Ed, doing so is a precondition for “healing the wounds of the past, generating social solidarity and rebuilding a more just society.”

A Bill to End the Systematic Suppression of Literature in Schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

SECTION 1. Currently, many books that deal with important ideas and topics are being systematically removed from school libraries by political groups. These books deal with societal issues like racism, mental health, philosophy, and discrimination and are being removed in order to decrease awareness of these issues and perpetuate misinformation.

SECTION 2. In order to prevent systemic suppression of books discussing these crucial topics, high schools are no longer permitted to ban books for any reason, nor are school systems to allow a parent or guardian to request the removal of books.

The permanent removal of books from the high school's library will only be permitted if the books met one of the following criteria:

- 1.The book is damaged in a non-superficial manner
- 2.The printing of the book is over 15 years old

Section 4. The United States Department of Education will oversee the implementation and enforcement of this bill.

SECTION 5. This legislation will take effect immediately upon being passed. All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.

A Bill to Implement a Universal Basic Income

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:
2. **SECTION 1.** All U.S citizens over the age of 18 years shall receive a guaranteed
3. monthly income, with no conditions set related to use of the income.
4. **SECTION 2.** Guaranteed monthly income shall be defined as monthly payments of
5. \$1,000 to every U.S citizen over the age of 18.
6. **SECTION 3.** The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shall oversee the
7. implementation of this legislation.
8. A. Funding will come from a 10% Value-Added Tax (VAT). Products such as groceries
9. and clothing will not be subject to the VAT.
10. **SECTION 4.** This legislation will take effect on January 1, 2024.
11. **SECTION 5.** All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void