

## Synopsis of Problem Areas and Resolutions for 2018-19

### PROBLEM AREA : POVERTY

**Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase funding and/or eligibility for one of the more of the following: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid enrollment, Housing Choice Vouchers Program.**

Poverty in the United States is a seemingly intractable problem. The issues surrounding federal anti-poverty programs range from policy details, to outlines of how they operate, to whether the programs should exist at all. This topic addresses the federal government's programs to assist persons in poverty and asks how (or if) they can or should be improved. The combination of macro-level approaches, specific policies, and critical approaches provides for a wide variety of arguments. Students will gain a better understanding of poverty, specific anti-poverty and federal policies, and philosophical approaches to addressing poverty. The topic also intersects with other prominent policy areas including housing, healthcare, and hunger.

Affirmative cases can focus on increasing availability of affordable housing using the Housing Choice Vouchers, increasing access to health care for low income populations, extending anti-poverty programs to persons currently excluded by immigration status, assisting domestic violence survivors, improving welfare-to-work programs, increasing nutrition programs to decrease hunger, ending time limits for receiving benefits, increasing funding for anti-poverty programs as economic stimulus and various other limitations on eligibility for federal programs. Negative positions include: states counterplan, counterplans for other means of addressing poverty such as increasing minimum wage or guaranteed income, spending disadvantage, federalism disadvantage, welfare dependency, capitalism critique, biopower/social control critique, antiblackness critique, counterplan to end welfare, private philanthropy counterplan and block grant counterplan.

## **PROBLEM AREA: IMMIGRATION**

**Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce its restrictions on legal immigration to the United States.**

According to the **Pew Research Center**, 70% of voters listed immigration as “very important” to their decision in the 2016 election - more than social security, education, and environment. With extensive news coverage on immigration, even novice students have a basic working knowledge of immigration, making the experience of learning policy debate more interesting. Advanced debaters can employ nuanced and specific critical and policy arguments. Immigration reform offers a rare example of federal policy where the key questions do not often involve spending money. Instead, the debate will focus on matters of social justice and fairness. Defenders of immigration reform argue America is a nation of immigrants, and a progressive immigration policy will strengthen the economy, as well as enrich our culture. Affirmative cases might focus on particular categories of Visas - their criteria and numerical limits; they might focus on different populations, or areas of the world; they might examine types of skills under-represented in the United States. Opponents have voiced the concern that immigrants take jobs from Americans and might pose a threat to public safety. Examples of possible affirmative cases are: Comprehensive immigration reform, amnesty for immigrants already living in the United States, reversing restrictive state laws, changes to visa/quota requirements, the DREAM Act, and increasing work permits for immigrants with special skills in medicine or engineering, among others. Negative positions could focus on the economic and employment harms of increased immigration, increased risk of a terrorist attack, disruption of federalism, and the political implications of immigration reform.