

# MHSAA Policy Debate Presentation

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NFHS Topic Selection Meeting, Mississippi Voting Delegate

# The 2021-2022 National High School Policy Debate Topic:

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its protection of water resources in the United States.

# So how is this topic decided?



- Academic year '20-'21: Topic reports written by authors throughout the country.
  - Mixed/International/Domestic cycle
  - First draft (5/15) → review → final draft (7/1)
- Topic Selection Meeting (August '21)
  - Marshall Subcommittees → Wording Committee to draft resolution wordings.
  - Resolutions voted down from submitted reports (9 in '20-'21) to 5 “semifinalist” resolutions.
- States and organizations use ranked voting to narrow topics down to 2, released in October.
- National topic announced on January 10, 2022.
- Final debate on the selected topic: NSDA Nationals, June 16, 2023.

# The “Semifinalist” Resolutions for ‘22-’23

1. Climate Change -- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its support of multilateral greenhouse gas emission reduction regimes.
2. Emerging Technologies -- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its security cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in one or more of the following areas: artificial intelligence, biotechnology, cybersecurity.
3. Global Health Security -- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its international support for global health security against naturally-occurring infectious disease.
4. Russia -- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its diplomatic engagement with the Russian Federation on one or more of the following: the Arctic, cybersecurity, human rights.
5. Treaties -- Resolved: The United States federal government should consent to be bound by the entirety of one or more of the following:
  - the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
  - the Convention on Biological Diversity
  - the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
  - the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

“But, like, don’t my kids have to know everything about the topic before the first tournament starts to debate it?”



- Nope. In fact, that’s not even true by the end of the year. Here’s what you *really* need:
  - An affirmative case.
  - A handful of core negative positions that are usable against most affirmatives.
  - Access to the internet.
  - A means of keeping track of what arguments are being run by other teams.
  - Some conscientious and hard-working kids. If they’re conscientious and hard-working enough, 2 is sufficient, but at least 4 is better.

# Why this year might be particularly good to get started

- The topic is relevant to everyone.
- More than enough research that is easily accessible
- Attrition in this event in Mississippi -- of the five best teams in the state from last year, no more than two are returning intact.
- NCFL -- if you want to get people to NCFL Nationals, Policy Debate has the easiest road there (and when you get there, some teams that qualify are just not, um, good).

And why policy debate (but really most debate events) is good to do at any time

- Research skills (high schoolers engaging academic journals)
- Critical thinking/strategic decision making
- Teamwork
- Advocacy
- Organizational skills within academic writing

# Sources for FREE Research and Evidence

- Open Evidence Project of the NDCA -- [openev.debatecoaches.org](http://openev.debatecoaches.org)
- NDCA Novice Packet -- <http://www.debatecoaches.org/2021-2022-novice-packet>
- *Water Policy* -- <https://iwaponline.com/wp/> (official journal of the World Water Council, other resources of which many are free, the general site is <https://iwaponline.com/>)
- *Water Resource Issues in the 117th Congress* -- <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R46712.pdf> (published by the Congressional Research Service)
- “Water Policy in the Biden Administration: What’s On Tap?”, published by the McGeorge School of Law at the University of the Pacific, <https://onlinelaw.pacific.edu/water-policy-in-the-biden-administration/>
- Circle of Blue -- <https://www.circleofblue.org/>

## Resources that will cost a little money

- *Policy Debate Quarterly* -- published by the National Federation of High Schools, 4 volume set available in print or online. About \$25
- *Superman's Not Coming: Our National Water Crisis and What We the People Can Do About It* by Erin Brockovich. \$12.99 on Amazon
- *The Water Problem: Climate Change and Water Policy in the United States* by Pat Mulroy. \$35 new but available for \$9 used plus shipping on Amazon.
- *When the Rivers Run Dry: Water -- The Defining Crisis of the Twenty-First Century* by Fred Pearce. \$22 new, about \$16 plus shipping on Amazon.
- *Troubled Water* by Seth M. Siegel. \$14.99 new, about \$7 plus shipping on Amazon.
- *A Twenty-First Century U.S. Water Policy* by Juliet Christian-Smith et al. \$29.95 new and about \$27 plus shipping on Amazon.



## “That’s great. Any resources on Policy Debate?”

- Dr. Debate Policy Debate Video Series on YouTube. 30 videos, all less than 20 minutes. Cost -- free, nada, zip, zilch, zero, one big goose egg.
- *Policy Debate: A Guide for High School and College Debaters* by Shawn F. Briscoe. \$25 new, about \$14 used.
- *Competitive Debate: The Official Guide* by Richard Edwards. \$17.59 new, about \$4 plus shipping used -- also covers other debate formats.
- *Start Here: Teaching Policy Debate*, online lesson plans provided by the NSDA originally written by Pam McComas, Renee Motter and Sharon Volpe, compiled by Keegan D. Bosch. Free, even to non-NSDA members.

# Questions?

If you think of something after we leave,  
email me at [maierd@gosaints.org](mailto:maierd@gosaints.org).