



Policy Debate Intent of the Resolution

Dear Coaches and Students,

In an attempt to clarify the intent of the resolution, avoid confusion, refine your research, and perhaps avoid disappointment for losing topicality rulings, the Debate Committee is sending this pre-season letter of clarification.

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should reform its policy for the domestic agricultural production of food.

The intent of this year's resolution is to foster debate about those United States federal policies that are specifically directed at domestic agricultural production of food. The resolution is meant to include policies for domestic agricultural production of food, not every aspect of food production or agricultural policy.

Special notes:

1. Due to our recent debating of energy policy (2009), and a desire to avoid that aspect of agricultural policy, for the purposes of this resolution, ***food does not equal fuel.***
2. The word ***toward*** has been replaced by the word ***for*** in the resolution. This was done in an effort to create more clarity regarding the intent of the resolution. Not all policies that effect domestic agricultural production of food are policies ***for*** domestic agricultural production of food.
3. The word ***substantial*** has been removed from the resolution. The stock issues of significance (drawn from the harms and/or advantages) and solvency (drawn from the mandates) are sufficient in and of themselves for the evaluation of this aspect of an affirmative case without this additional qualifier.
4. In CCA debate, the stock issue of Topicality is defined by the imperative of the resolution; this resolution's imperative is to ***reform.*** Therefore, topicality, with this resolution, flows exclusively from the mandates; the motivation for reform (harms) and benefits of reform (advantages) are immaterial with regards to the question of topicality.

Judge Instructions:

Judges will be instructed in the following manner regarding topicality:

The affirmative team must do the following regarding topicality. (Whether or not the plan succeeds in doing these things is a question of solvency, significance, or inherency.)

1. Attempt to reform
2. U.S. federal policy
3. for the domestic agricultural production of food



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The affirmative case must **propose** to do **all** three to be a topical case; if your case does not **attempt** to do **all** of these, it is not topical. Words have meaning, and if the resolution states this is what you are to do, do it and you will have little trouble with topicality. The affirmative team should enter the round prepared to show how and why their case fulfills the resolution. In the event of a topicality challenge, the affirmative must **convince the judge** that their case is topical -- it is not enough that you believe it to be so.

Fiat Power:

Fiat is the convention in academic policy debate that, for the sake of argument, participants may assume the implementation of a reasonable policy. This allows debaters to focus on the question of whether a policy **should** be adopted, and to avoid the irrelevant arguments about whether the policy **would** (or will) be adopted. The purpose of fiat is to require the debaters to debate the merits of the resolution, and not the political machinations of how one might garner the votes necessary for enactment. However, the political fallout of enacting the affirmative plan may be subject to debate.

Take note, as well, of the limitations of fiat. The affirmative may use fiat power to focus on **should**, but fiat goes no further.

- The affirmative may not fiat that advantages will flow from the plan; advantages must be proven.
- The affirmative may not fiat attitudes. For example, the affirmative may not fiat that the public will love and comply with the plan.
- Fiat is not a magic wand; it may not be used to make a plan work.

Fiat power as defined in the CCA Debate Glossary is as follows: *“The affirmative’s authority, as defined by the resolution, to implement its plan.”* The central issue here is the phrase “as defined by the resolution.” This year’s resolution limits the fiat power of the affirmative team in the following ways:

- The agent of reform is the USFG. (Specifically that portion that makes or reforms the policy(s) in question).
- The reform must be of USFG policy for the domestic agricultural production of food.

Fiat **does not** extend to the states or the courts; they are not the bodies that reform federal policy. Nor does fiat extend to foreign countries, as they are not the agents of change cited in the resolution.