

primary function of states and localities. The negative team fears, however, that the affirmative will claim the disadvantage is nonunique because of existing federal funding of secondary education. The negative team could eliminate this uniqueness argument by proposing a counterplan to end all federal funding of secondary education.

COUNTERPLAN MECHANICS

How does a negative team introduce a counterplan? First, the counterplan should be presented in the first negative constructive speech. The counterplan should include the following components.

- Counterplan text
- Nontopicality explanation
- Competition arguments
- Solvency or advantage arguments

The counterplan text should follow the same format as an affirmative plan. There should be a written text detailing what will be done, which agency will do it, and how it will be funded and enforced. Often the affirmative team asks to see the text of the counterplan.

The nontopicality explanation identifies the word or words in the resolution that the counterplan fails to meet. Sometimes the negative team reads definitions of the terms in the resolution to establish why the counterplan action lies outside of those terms.

The competition arguments explain the reason(s) the judge should choose between the plan and counterplan. Often the negative offers both mutual exclusivity and net benefits explanations. The mutual exclusivity explanation describes why it is logically impossible to adopt both the plan and the counterplan (the “can not” standard). The net benefits explanation (the “should not” standard) identifies the disadvantage arguments that apply to the plan but not the counterplan.

The solvency or advantage arguments explain why the advantages of the counterplan outweigh the plan advantages. Sometimes the negative team argues that the counterplan can solve the affirmative harms better than the affirmative plan itself. Suppose the affirmative team has proposed increased federal funding of renewable energy alternatives, arguing that the United States must overcome its dependence on oil from the Middle East. The negative team might counterplan with opening drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve, arguing that this would be the quickest and surest way for the United States to achieve energy independence.

It is not necessary, however, that the counterplan solve for the affirmative harm. The negative could, for example, argue that the advantage of the counterplan outweighs the