

said or point out that a speaker has contradicted herself. Often contradictions occur at the meeting of the theoretical and the practical; a team may extol the benefits of a smaller state but, in dealing with a particular problem, one of their speakers calls for greater government involvement.

- *Factual Oversights.* Obviously, this is a catchall group that could cover anything from a speaker calling for the creation of an agency that already exists to urging an action that would be illegal. Serious factual errors—for example, calling for the introduction of a school uniform policy in a state that already has one—can devastate a case. More common are errors that ignore an implication or are grounded on an assumption. An example would be calling for the introduction of uniforms on the basis that wearing uniforms would encourage greater discipline in schools, only to discover that a state that did not have uniforms topped the national rankings for educational attainment. This latter error doesn't undermine the logic of the case per se—wearing uniforms may still have some benefit—but it raises serious questions about why you would bother introducing the policy.
- *Questioning the Paradigm.* A “paradigm” is a particular worldview that tends to consider some things as unquestionable benefits and others as assumed problems. This approach could also be thought of as a “meta-critique”—that the other side has not just overlooked an important consideration but has failed to understand the question altogether. This form of rebuttal can be useful when the Affirmative has put forward a technically solid and reasonable case. If the case has been largely grounded in technical considerations, attack the moral implications.

A moral response to a practical case is best typified by discussions about issues such as increasing the minimum wage. For the purpose of this example, let's look at how the Affirmative can use rebuttal. The motion under debate is THW Increase the Minimum Wage. The Affirmative has proposed an increase in the minimum wage as a stimulant to the economy. Poorer people spend a greater proportion of their income than the rich; consequently, an increase in the minimum wage would act as a financial stimulus and cause employment to rise. It would also bolster business confidence by demonstrating the existence of a greater domestic market for goods and services. The Negative counters that a higher minimum wage will negatively affect smaller businesses, which cannot afford an increase in costs. If such businesses fail, employment would drop and, ultimately, raising the minimum wage would have the exact opposite effect from the one the Affirmative is trying to establish.

At this point the debate is, broadly, tied. Both sides have fair points; a higher minimum wage would inject cash into local economies but only where employers can absorb the cost. The Affirmative needs to use their rebuttal to gain the upper hand. They