

a case that another policy is a better option. The concept is logical because change requires effort and involves risk. Thus, the benefits must outweigh the potential dangers to convince people to try change. The negative must keep before the audience the advantage associated with maintaining presumption, then the team can begin to develop other strategies for debating against changes in policy.

DEFENDING THE STATUS QUO

Defending the status quo is the strategy that most clearly benefits from the concept of presumption. If the negative team defends the present system, they capitalize on the idea that we should presume the system should remain until a better alternative is presented. The negative has at least three options in defense of the status quo:

1. **Argue that the problem does not exist** or is not as serious as the affirmative suggests. Only rarely will the negative be able to prove the complete absence of a problem in the present system. Nevertheless, the negative might provide substantial evidence that the problem is not as important or widespread as the affirmative team suggested. The negative might argue that there is no point in implementing a plan (spending time, effort, money, taking unnecessary risk) designed to solve a minor problem (one that does not affect a lot of people or whose effects are not serious).
2. **Arguing that the present system can solve the problem.** The negative also can argue (and support with evidence) that the current system will solve the problem given sufficient time. Consequently, adopting a new plan cannot be justified. The team can argue that solving complex problems requires a long time and, consequently, we cannot yet judge the success of the current system.
3. **Argue that the affirmative team has identified the wrong cause.** By arguing that their opponents have identified a wrong cause of the problem, the negative is able to suggest that the affirmative plan will not solve the problem. In the process of arguing about the cause of the problem, the negative needs to suggest that the present system can address the cause of the problem, while the affirmative plan cannot.

DEFENDING A POLICY OTHER THAN THE STATUS QUO

The negative can also consider defending a plan other than the status quo. The team should choose this option when the status quo has more problems than the negative wishes to defend or when the negative can suggest some changes or additions to existing policies that are superior to the status quo and to the affirmative's plan. In using this option, the negative employs two strategies: advocating minor repairs and presenting a counterplan.

Advocating minor repairs to the present system is an alternative that the negative might choose when the present system is structurally and conceptually sound but needs some minor alterations. If, for instance, the negative team believes that the failure of the status quo is the result of a lack of resources, they should advocate adding those resources.