

# GETTING OUT OF THE CARDS AND INTO THE ARGUMENTS: STRATEGIES FOR REFUTATION

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If judges were asked to identify their largest gripes with debaters, it is safe to say that the inability to effectively refute the other team's arguments without relying on additional evidence is somewhere near the top of the list. Although we all wish we had the necessary evidence to respond to the claims made by our opponents, the reality is that sometimes we don't. Furthermore, we don't need it. Too often debaters get caught up in thinking that argument comparisons are things that only need to take place in that brief overview at the top of the 2NR. Instead, we fight fire with fire and read a bunch of new cards to answer what we know is a "bad" piece of evidence. For some reason, debaters assume judges don't care for analytical arguments.

Perhaps, the problem isn't that judges don't care for analytical arguments, but they just don't care for "we post-date" or "our evidence is more qualified" as under-developed, unjustified claims. This essay seeks to address this concern by defending the argument that debaters need fewer cards and more arguments. To accomplish this aim, this paper will provide some ways to think about the structure of arguments and then offer specific strategies of refutation that will allow for better refutation of those "African instability goes nuclear" claims, bad politics uniqueness cards, and so on.

## Thinking about Argument

Although there are several ways to think about the structure of argument, this essay will address a few conceptualizations: the Toulmin model of argument, Fisher's concept of narrative, and basic risk assessment. While these models may not necessarily translate entirely into debate jargon, understanding them will provide a host of tools for refuting the other team's arguments.

### The Toulmin model

One of the most basic models of argument developed comes from the work of Stephen Toulmin. According to Toulmin, an argument consists of more than a claim or position statement. An argument has six parts: the claim, grounds, warrant, backing, qualifier, and rebuttal. The claim is the conclusion being made or advocated. The grounds, also known as the data, are the evidence that support the claim. The warrant establishes the relationship between the grounds and the claim. While the warrant is very similar to the concept of the data, one significant difference lies in the fact that the warrant is usually left as an implicit assumption (Toulmin 1418). These constitute the three primary elements of Toulmin's model. So, let's look at the following example to get a better idea as to what each part looks like:

Claim: We should act to address the AIDS crisis in Africa.  
 Grounds: AIDS is widespread in Africa.  
 Warrant: AIDS can devastate society due to health and economic effects.

As the above demonstrates, the existence of the grounds alone is not sufficient to justify the claim. While experience and common knowledge enable us to fill-in the picture linking the grounds to the claim, imagine a world where we did not understand the consequences of AIDS. In that world, the warrant is essential in developing a relationship because it shows a need for help. Furthermore, we can develop an additional warrant that focuses on the ability of the "we" in the above claim to act.

Claim: We (the United States) should act to address the AIDS

crisis in Africa.

Grounds: AIDS is widespread in Africa.

Warrant: AIDS can devastate society due to health and economic effects.

Warrant: The United States has expertise in addressing health problems such as AIDS:

While it may seem that the argument is complete, Toulmin adds a secondary layer of elements. The backing is the evidence or proof that justifies the warrant and creates another claim, grounds, and warrant within the existing argument:

Claim: AIDS can devastate society due to economic effects.

Grounds: AIDS rates of X percent reduce the workforce by Y percent.

Warrant: A loss of Y percent of workers destroys economic independence.

Arguments also have qualifiers and rebuttals. Qualifiers assess the strength of the claim, and rebuttals identify exceptions to the validity of the claim. Qualifiers ask questions about the likelihood and significance of the claim. For example, in the above example we might be able to say that there is a duty or imperative to act as "should" describes a normative ought. "Should" is a stronger term than "could". The rebuttal expresses reservations that might require the claim to be ignored or deemed untrue:

Claim: We (the United States) should act to address the AIDS crisis in Africa.

Rebuttal: Unless such action renders the U.S. unable to address its own AIDS patients.

Although the qualifier and rebuttal are considered "secondary," they are extremely important to be able to identify because they stand as clear points where the conclusion of the argument can be attacked since they establish the limits of the arguments applicability (Toulmin 1419).

### Narrative Structure

Although not expressly working to develop a method for understanding "argument" per se, Walter Fisher's work on communication as narrative is extremely relevant for students of debate. Fisher argues that persuasion can be best understood through the metaphor of the story or drama. He argues that we are constantly talking to, and convincing, others by relying on stories for conceptualization and emphasis.

For Fisher there are a few criteria that determine whether or not we have a "good" story. The narrative must be built on "good reasons," which he defines as the existence of warrants (Fisher 57). In other words, the story must be rational. Fisher is not attempting to argue that the story must be rational in a traditional, scientific sort of way, but rather that the story must make sense. It must be believable and have value. This comes from the probability and fidelity of the narrative. Probability deals with the question of coherence (Fisher 64). Does the story hang together? Narrative fidelity asks whether or not the story makes sense to the audience given the stories that they already hold to be true (Fisher 64). Probability or coherence deals with the question of whether or not the entire story makes sense in a global way, while fidelity asks whether the individual parts of the story. Although these

elements can be related to one another, they may also stand apart. For example, a story may make sense within itself. If I told you a story about how I had to fight a bear one day as I went to school, the story might have coherence based on the details that emerge during the telling of the story. However, the story might not possess fidelity because there are aspects of it that just don't fit given your expectations of how the world operates. For example, add to the example that I went to school in New York City; the fidelity doesn't hold. It is with issues of fidelity that we find ourselves back at the point of good reasons.

Fisher takes the idea of good reasons to a place which is very different from those of Toulmin, and instead focuses on the role of values. He claims that questions asked by traditional deliberative models merely work to establish whether or not there are reasons to do "x," but Fisher's emphasis on values move us to discover whether or not there are "good" reasons for action. To assist with this matter, Fisher offers five questions that must be asked of any position:

1. What are the values within the message (both implicit and explicit)?
2. Are the values appropriate to the question at hand?
3. How does adhering to these values impact one's behavior and relationships generally?
4. Are the values being endorsed consistent with the values held by others?
5. Even if a *prima facie* case has been offered to justify change, do the new values serve as a basis for how human conduct should occur? (Fisher 108)

It is worth noting that Fisher does not view these as questions designed to replace the model offered by Toulmin but rather as complementary (111).

#### Risk Assessment

A third way to think about arguments is to think in terms of risk. Debate is not an activity of fact but is instead an activity of controversy and options. We don't debate whether or not "2 + 2 = 4" but instead deliberate over whether or not something should be done to change a situation. We debate about risk. Basic risk assessment relies on knowing two different things: probability and magnitude. To determine risk we take the probability and multiply it against the magnitude. If we had an argument that "x" would culminate in building burning down, to determine risk we would want to know that there was a five percent likelihood of occurrence with the consequences that five people could be killed:

$$\text{Risk} = .05 (\text{probability}) \times 5 (\text{magnitude})$$

$$\text{Risk} = .25$$

This means that there in any given occurrence 0.25 people would be killed. Of, course we know that more often than not no one dies because the odds of the fire occurring and generating harm is low. The true value of such an understanding of risk is two-fold. First, we can generate risk values for multiple options to better enable comparison of what to do. While the status quo may have a risk of .25 taking action "A" may have a risk level of .57 (due to a disadvantage being incurred), which means we should stick with the status quo. Second, this method of calculation shows us that risk declines as we multiply factors. Furthermore, the odds of there merely being two pieces to the puzzle are low. Consideration of general disadvantage structure makes this evident as there are at least four links in the chain, all of which must be multiplied against one another. So while the impact of an economic disadvantage may be global nuclear war that kills everyone, what must be weighed against this? The question of the link, the uniqueness of the link, and the internal links that get us from the link to the impact. When we walk through these calculations, we see that the risk value is not

extinction because of issues of probability.

## Strategies of Refutation

This section aims to provide specific ways for you to attack the arguments of your opponents. First, we'll take a look at how the above models can be employed to assist in the development of solid refutation skills. Second, we'll look at some other tactics you can employ to gain footing, particularly in those situations when you have no counter-evidence.

#### Model Utility

Once we have the above models to help us understand how arguments function, several observations become apparent. First, arguments are not absolute. It is common in debate to assume that risk is all or nothing but both the Toulmin and risk models make it clear that links and internal links have varying degrees of strength that can be debated and exposed. Second, all three approaches demonstrate the fact that arguments have layers of depth that work to generate overall meaning. The culmination of these first two observations, leads to the third: we can attack one aspect of an argument to create leverage against the risk that comes from the other parts of it. Take the following example: a team reads an economy disadvantage that says (a) the economy is in good shape now; (b) the plan undermines business confidence; and (c) economic collapse triggers war. What the models show is that while it may be true that economic collapse can cause war, economic collapse can (not will) cause war. Let's add further detail to the example by supposing that the negative disadvantage impact is the infamous "Bearden 2000" evidence, which says that global WMD exchange occurs as we reach the "final" economic collapse (online). To beat the disadvantage we can take out the uniqueness or link, disprove the relationship between depression and conflict, or prove that the plan does not trigger the final economic collapse. Toulmin teaches us to look for the conditions that must be achieved for the internal link to be true. Risk assessment teaches us that if the internal link risk can be functionally proven to be zero then the disadvantage falls apart because anything multiplied by zero is zero. While you may be able to read and then explain the "Reseller evidence" to defeat low probability disadvantages (Rescher 50), odds are you can accomplish the same thing without cards in a manner that is as word efficient, in fact, it is worth noting that countless "deontology good" debates are lost because debaters can't do more than read a piece of evidence on this question and judges are left to say, "You win that we should ignore low-probability, large-impact disadvantages but never show *why* this is a low-probability disadvantage."

The fourth significant point comes from the Toulmin model and that is the recognition that there are arguments within arguments. Disadvantage uniqueness is perhaps the clearest area where this claim is relevant. We regularly think of disadvantage uniqueness as being a debate over fact and the common tactic by either team in a uniqueness debate is to simply read more/newer cards. The mere presence of lots of contradictory pieces of evidence on such a point should serve as a signal that what is being dealt with is not fact. Imagine that we are in a politics debate and the negative team reads the following piece of evidence [note: this is an actual piece of evidence used in high school and college debate during the 2006-2007 season]:

Bush political capital is high - North Korea deal boosts capital  
 Global Research 2/17/0 [http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=CHA20070217&articleId=4835]

The international press is full of speculation about North Korea's willingness to hold up its side of the bargain. The real question is just how long it will be before the Bush administration manufactures a pretext to walk away from the agreement and

resume its menacing posture. If one goes by the record, it will be sooner rather than later.

The agreement has already provoked a barely concealed snarl from the most militarist elements of the Bush administration and among its extreme right-wing backers. Former US ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, who is due to be installed as US deputy secretary of state, immediately denounced the agreement as "a bad deal". "It contradicts fundamental premises of the president's policy he's been following for the past six years," he said. "And second, it makes the administration look very weak at a time in Iraq... when it needs to look strong."

The Wall Street Journal published an editorial on Wednesday deriding the agreement as "faith-based proliferation". After declaring that "perhaps Mr. Bush feels that this is best he can do in the waning days of his administration," the newspaper guardedly pointed to the actual purpose of the deal. "Or perhaps, in the most favourable interpretation, he wants to clear the decks of the issue in order to have more political capital to control Iran's nuclear ambitions," the editorial commented.

We usually think of uniqueness evidence as merely expressing a statement of fact that "Bush is popular" or "the economy is strong" or "Bush has political capital," but as the above makes clear it is not fact that Bush has lots of political capital. In fact, we can take the above example and translate into claim, grounds, and warrant, and then pick it apart:

Claim: The North Korea deal gives Bush lots of political capital.

Grounds: The North Korea deal gets the issue off the political table.

Warrant: Getting issues off the table frees up political capital for other endeavors.

Does the evidence say Bush now has lots of political capital? Does the evidence even defend the proposition that Bush has political capital as a result of the deal? What if the deal is perceived negatively (as the Bolton and Wall Street Journal commentary within the evidence suggests); does that impact the ability of the President to gain capital from the agreement? Does the agreement get the deal off the political table? Assuming the evidence says what it claims, why should we take the Wall Street Journal editorial as a credible source? As you can see, there are a host of questions that may be asked about the evidence that potentially undermine its authority to fulfill the claim it is being used for.

A fifth major insight that comes from the models is the idea of conditions of truth. Although an argument may be true, it is only true under certain conditions and these are determined by the qualifiers and rebuttals that are offered with it. Why is this important? This is important because it shows us that if we can disprove the conditions justifying the claim then we can ignore the claim. The above "Beardon" example is on-point on this issue. Furthermore, if we import the ideas gamed from Fisher and the risk assessment discussion, then we see the need to question the believability of the claim/conditions and can then more accurately assess the risk/strength of the arguments. If an argument is true independent of conditions and has no rebuttals then we might be able to identify additional weaknesses in the argument. Let's look at the following example. A team reads an aid trade-off disadvantage and the link evidence says that new foreign assistance causes a trade-off with aid to Iceland. The evidence to support the claim is from 1999 and according to the negative team it says that the lack of a domestic lobbying force makes aid to Iceland vulnerable when new spending priorities emerge. Again, we can model the above into the Toulmin format:

Claim: Assistance to Africa causes aid to Iceland to be reduced.

Grounds: New spending priorities squeeze out the ability to fund Iceland.

[Note: an entire argument can be placed in here to justify the grounds in terms of lobbying]

Warrant: Assistance to Africa is a new spending priority.

While the above may seem sufficient to prove the case, there are a few issues that are as of yet unspoken. Are there any conditions under which the above would be true or untrue? It would seem that above is only true when there is no available dollars for the African aid:

Rebuttal: When there are no discretionary funds available for the new programs.

The affirmative asks the negative if the link is true in a world where there are either (a) readily available funds or (b) more vulnerable programs that are currently funded. The negative responds by claiming that the link is true regardless (because the evidence says so). What does this demonstrate? It shows us that either Iceland will inevitably lose because it has no lobbying force and some form of new spending is inevitable, or it shows us that the argument really lacks any grounds/warrant to uphold the claim. The claim is too strong or too weak, and either scenario effectively kills the link as it relates to the plan.

The sixth major observation takes us back to the work of Fisher who argues that the reasons offered on the behalf of an argument speak to the values endeared by the position. This is something that is too often overlooked in debate, particularly as relates to the kritik. In terms of the pro-kritik position, kritikers are too ready to identify a word that is used in the 1 AC or some other speech and explain that the use of a word is a link to the criticism. Kritik debaters would be better served if they could identify the values a particular position endorses. Rather than note that the affirmative advantage speaks of "economic growth" as a link to a capitalism kritik, explain how the advantage endorses a logic of monopolistic and corporate capitalism because it says large oil companies, and those dependent on these firms, should be allowed to have unfettered access to energy. In terms of the anti-kritik position, think about the overall value system being advocated by the negative criticism and imagine how those values carry over to other aspects of life. What does the willingness to suspend judgment because there is no truth mean for day-to-day activity? The point of the story is to think about the questions offered by Fisher for assessing whether or not a reason is good.

The final important point worth noting at this moment about the various models is that they suggest an importance to cross-examination that many of us forget. The point of understanding the layers of an argument from Toulmin's perspective is derived from the fact that the surface level might not provide sufficient evidence to justify the claim which leads to questions. For Fisher, rationality and the existence of a good reason are based on what we as individuals can identify with and accept as reasonable/believable. While this final point does not necessarily offer itself a specific tip for a type of argument to be made, it shows the importance of using the cross-examination period to generate these sorts of objections. If the argument can't be clearly explained in the cross-examination, then the judge(s) will be increasingly reluctant to buy into the claim and it sets you up to make very powerful, although unevicenced, arguments in the following speeches.

#### **Additional strategies of refutation**

While the above should provide more than enough to think about in terms of how arguments are developed and can be brought down, there several other questions that can be asked of any argument to effectively respond to the opposition's claims. The section will outline some of those strategies.

The first thing to examine is the date of the evidence in question.

Although this is the one form of refutation that every debater seems to know, many don't effectively tap into this issue. The question is this: why does it matter if evidence is older or newer? Does it really matter if a politics uniqueness card is one day newer than another one? Not if the circumstances hasn't substantially changed overnight. One writer just happens to be writing a story one day and the other writer the next. What matters in this situation are the grounds/warrants supporting the claim of the uniqueness evidence. If we return to aid trade-off example, this might be a situation where the date of the evidence does matter. Is it possible that things have changed from 1999 to 2007 that could force re-evaluation of the above mentioned link evidence? Certainly (new President, different foreign policy goals, different budget situations, different Congresses...). If the affirmative reads a piece of evidence that says nuclear war outweighs everything else because of the possibility of global annihilation and the evidence was written in 1986, does the date matter? Again, the issue turns on what has changed since the evidence has written that may render the evidence obsolete.

The second major area of examination is source of the evidence. For this you should ask: is the author qualified, is the author respected, is the author qualified to speak on this particular issue, what sort of review the author had to go through to get published. Each one these questions can produce very different answers, and a bad answer to any one of them may work to undercut the use of that evidence. Again, it is worth noting that many debaters will say that their evidence is more qualified but rarely is there a substantial argument presented why this is true or why it matters. Why does it matter if your evidence comes from academic journals that are well-sourced with documentation and peer-reviewed, while the other team's evidence comes from a newspaper? What if your evidence comes from the journal and their's comes from a blog (even a blog written by an expert)? Within a piece of evidence there may also be sources cited, and it is important to ask similar questions as identified above. For example, politics uniqueness evidence regularly cites some political official who says that they think "x" piece of legislation will/won't be passed by the Congress. While many debaters might pick on the easy claim that such-and-such is a biased source, a better explanation of the argument may be to address whether that person has political motive to claim the bill will pass. For a disadvantage like politics, which is fundamentally based on notions of spin, this is a worthy line of attack. If Senator W is a sponsor of the bill, what motivation would they ever have to claim that the bill won't pass?

A third major line of attack is to focus on the argument being advanced and its consistency with common knowledge. Evaluating whether or not the other team's argument runs with, or against, what we already know to be true is a useful endeavor. As Fisher notes, an important component of public deliberation is the ability of an argument to ring true and make sense for the audience. If common knowledge suggests there might be a problem, then it should be worth pursuing. For example, does it make sense that an economic decline would trigger a nuclear conflict? Why or why not? Does it make sense that adopting program "x" can eliminate malaria in Africa? Now, one issue with debate is that your hunch may be overwhelmed by the presence of a piece of evidence. This brings us to an important follow-up question: is the evidence supporting the claim representative of how others in the field feel? This doesn't require all others to agree with the claim, but rather proof that enough support from others exists to suggest the claim is reasonable. The affirmative may read a piece of evidence that says instability in Africa leads to nuclear conflict, but does this make sense? Why not? But, they have a piece of evidence. What can we say about that evidence? Does it pass the tests established above, and if it does, is this representative of what experts say about war in Africa?

A fourth strategy is to inquire about the relevance of the arguments to the question at hand. Consider the following example which imagines a debate over an economy disadvantage. The affirmative team stands up and states that the plan does not link because business interests don't care about the plan. The negative then stands up and makes

the following arguments:

1. The economy is on the brink which makes it uniquely vulnerable to a downturn.
2. Businesses are very perceptive of changes in regulatory policy.
3. Loss of business confidence crushes the overall economy.
4. The US economy is key to the global economy.

Has the negative answered the no link argument? No. That said, is this strategy regularly employed in debates? Yes. It is quite common for a team that really doesn't have a specific answer to an objection to respond by throwing the kitchen sink at the other team. And, does this strategy work? Yes, because the affirmative is too busy worrying about all the arguments to realize that the new arguments really don't answer the initial argument.

Fifth, ask whether or not the argument is significant. As Toulmin has already told us, arguments have varying strengths behind them. When the affirmative offers their case advantages do they have any incentive to state that there are additional reasons for the persistence of drought in country "x"? No. Why not? Because these other reasons are not things that they can necessarily address through the plan action. If you can demonstrate the existence of these alternate causalities then you will have gone a long way to proving the affirmative case flawed and insufficient. There are two things you can do that will help with this. First, look in the unhighlighted portions of the other team's evidence for things their own authors admit as additional triggers for the harm. Second, recognize that the smaller the plan action, the more important the alternate causalities. Why do teams run smaller, "squirrel" affirmatives? Because they avoid disadvantage and kritik links. Why do they avoid links? Because they really don't do much to merit a lot of political attention; they leave a lot of the harm triggers unaddressed. In addition to thinking about alternate causalities, also think about alternate solvencies when attacking the affirmative plan. If the plan solvency is long-term then there is probably a greater likelihood that something else can and will be done to address the harms. On the flip-side, if you are affirmative you need to be prepared for such arguments by being able to claim your plan addresses the key harm or by developing some form of a "try or die" position.

Sixth, the last thing to think about is the use of fallacies to support arguments. A fallacy is an argument that appears convincing at first glance but really isn't (Freeley and Steinberg 172). These are arguments that are meant to create the impression that a tight case exists in support of a position when the case really isn't that tight. Here are a few common types to think about although there are countless forms of fallacies:

Correlation versus Causation (or a Post Hoc Fallacy): Assuming that because A and B exist, then A must have caused B.

Appeals to Tradition: This is the way it's been, so it's the way it should continue to be.

Appeals to Expertism: An expert backs up the argument so the argument has to be better.

Repeating an Assertion: Repeating the claim as the grounds to justify the claim, (for a more complete list see Freeley and Steinberg pages 174-183)

While these are a just a few of many types, hopefully they are enough to make you recognize the use of fallacies in debate. How many times has a kritik team established a link because the US government has taken imperialistic actions and does the plan? How many times has an affirmative responded to kritiks with claims that this just

isn't how the game is played? How many times has a team argued against an analytical by noting the lack of "evidence"? How many times has a team read a tag line and then a card that merely restated the tag? All of these things occur regularly and often go unnoticed. They are unnoticed because debaters get too caught up in the moment of the claim to think about the structure of the argument and ask questions about significance, relevance, and so forth.

## Conclusion

Are cards good for debate? Yes. Do we read too many cards in debate? Maybe. Do we let teams read too many cards and develop arguments without properly questioning the structure of the argument being presented? Yes.

As this essay has attempted to show, there are many ways to respond to arguments without relying on the card versus card strategy. It is too common in debates for teams to stand up and go through the motions of simply reading cards and then bank on favorable readings of the evidence from the judges. When debaters hear cards that they don't have evidence to respond with, a common reaction is one of shock and ignorance. A better approach is to learn how to use the cards, learn how the cards fit into the bigger picture of the argument and then find ways to develop and attack arguments by explaining the meaning of the cards.

Spend some time thinking about some of the suggestions identified above and applying them to the arguments you know teams will

make. Hopefully, you will be better prepared for cross-examination, to write better analytical arguments on blocks and flows, and to persuade judges by making using your analytical arsenal in your speeches.

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# TOPICALITY ANALYSIS

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*Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its public health assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa.*

## United States Federal Government

The actor in this year's resolution is the "United States federal government." There are two potential topicality arguments related to this term, neither of which is very good.

First, some teams may try to argue that the United States refers to another country, such as the United States of Brazil or to a "United States of Europe" (A5). Evidence (A6-A8), however, clearly establishes that when the term "United States" is used it refers to the "United States of America."

A second possible dispute will be whether or not the "United States federal government" includes only the head of our central government and its agents that operate out of Washington, D.C., or whether that actor also includes the state governments, as the state governments are part of the federal system. Some definitions point to the central authority in Washington (A9-10) and others (A13) include the state governments. Since this is a foreign policy topic, and foreign policy is the prerogative of the national government, at least on this year's resolution it makes the most sense to interpret "federal government" to mean the national government.

Upon consultation with a variety of dictionaries, it does not seem that the capitalization, or lack thereof, of the term has any significance, at least in terms of establishing what set of actors the term refers to. The framers chose not to capitalize the term "federal government" because there is no such thing as "the Federal Government" - it is not a proper noun.

## Should

The term "should" in the resolution is typically interpreted to mean "ought" - expressing "obligation, duty, propriety, or desirability" (A14-16), recommends a course of action (A17), or suggests that something

is desirable (A18). Generally, it really does not have any significance in most topicality debates. It exists primarily to provide a contextual basis for fiat the affirmative is arguing that the plan *should* be done, not necessarily, that it *would* be done.

It can also be argued that "should" is the past tense of "shall" (A23), essentially meaning that the federal government should have supported public health assistance to Africa in the past. Although that argument has won some debates, most definitions suggest that the past tense of shall refers to the present (A19) and that it should not be exclusively used in the past tense (A20).

Other definitions of "should" suggest a duty or obligation (A21) and others say it implies mandatory action (A22).

## Substantially

In the resolution, "substantially" is an adverb modifying the word "increasing." The "increases" the public health assistance provided must be "substantial."

It is difficult for the negative to use the word "substantial" to limit much affirmative action because there are no precise, generally agreed on, definitions of the term. Dr. Rich Edwards, the author of the yearly FOR.ENSICS QUARTERLY, explained two years ago that the "legal encyclopedia *Words and Phrases* presents more than 500 pages of fine-print definitions of this term." He explains the origin of such different definitions:

The context for these definitions should be understood: each one involves the judgment of a court in a particular case concerning what the word meant in the context of that case. It is natural that debaters will try to make use of these legal definitions, but it must always be done with a key question in mind: "Is the context for this court case similar to the way that the word 'substantially' is used in the debate resolution?" There is, for example, a major difference in the meaning of the word "substantially" in the phrase "substantially all" from the resolutional phrase of "substantially increase." Many of these definitions warn that the