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| **Policy Cases** | |
| By far the most popular of all claim interpretations at the moment is a claim of policy. This type of claim advocates change in the status quo. There are two main formats for this type of debate, and while neither is best, “comparative advantages” is used much more at the senior levels | |
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| **STOCK ISSUES** | **COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES** |
| The first format is usually referred to as “stock issues.” When looked at through this lens, the government team believes that its responsibility is to identify a significant problem, show how that problem is not going away, propose a plan, show how that plan solves the problem, and then also discuss additional added benefits of the plan. | The other format for policy cases is known as comparative advantages. It is most commonly used on the national level, and the standard in most senior level debates. The main difference is “harms” are not discussed; the case moves quickly into the plan. Also, advantages are tied to solvency and weighed more heavily than unique advantages in the stock issues format. |
| **Introduction** | |
| **Resolutional Analysis** | |
| **Criterion** | |
| **Harms** (also known as significance) - Discuss the problem that needs to be solved. The government team has the burden to solve any problem that they introduce in this section. It is wise to only have one large harm here. | **Background**: The government briefly discusses the current situation (“status quo”) It is similar to “harms” in the stock issues format. However, it can be more holistic and it not only discusses the problem but the surrounding events that are causing the situation to need some sort of plan. |
| **Inherency** - This discusses how the problem will not go away. It illustrates the cause for the harm, and why it is going to continue to exist in the status quo unless plan is enacted. |  |
| **Plan Text** - Brief section. Describes exactly what the plan will do in order to solve for the harm. | |
| **Agency** - This discusses the group of people who will enact the plan. | |
| **Mandate** - This is the exact thing that will be done. Sometimes teams include this first as a substitute for plan text, as they are very similar. Be sure to include when it will be passed as well as what the plan entails. | |
| **Enforcement** - This section discusses how the plan will be implemented. | |
| **Funding** - This section discusses how the plan will be paid for. Often times debaters will use the term “normal means,” for plans that are not particularly expensive, or that are usually covered in the general budgets allotted for their agency. | |
| **Solvency** - This provides analysis and examples that explain how the plan will actually solve for the problem. Did it work in another similar instance? Does it make intuitive sense that by implementing the plan the inherency will no longer exist therefore decreasing the harm? |  |
| **UNIQUE Advantages** - this section discusses the “bonuses” that will also come along with the plan. Will it set a precedent that will help other worthy causes? Will the revenue created by the plan fund something else? Here you are able to look down the road at all of the things that passing a plan will influence, directly or indirectly, and make arguments that show how the plan is good in many ways. There can be as many advantages as the government team has time for, however these are not the main concern of the plan, therefore, if the plan doesn’t solve, then these arguments don’t matter. | **Advantage 1**: (3-5 word title of advantage)   * **Status Quo**: Discuss a situation that currently exists that does not include the plan. * **Link**: Tie this situation to a feature that exists in the status quo, such as a law or attitude. * **Solvency:** Show how the plan changes the status quo either by removing some type of barrier or adding something new. Discuss how it fulfills the resolution. * **Impact**: Discuss in depth why this is important and why your judge should care. |
|  | While there are some similarities, the main differences are that the background is usually discussed for a shorter period of time than the harms, and advantages are presented in a way that is more closely tied to the solvency and it carries more weight. Debaters usually include roughly 3-5 advantages, although there is no set rule. |

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| **Sample Policy Cases** | |
| *(The following is an example of an outline that would be created in the 15-minutes of prep time for a policy resolution)* | |
| **STOCK ISSUES** | **COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES** |
| **Intro**- Marijuana brings in over 13 billion dollars per year to California’s economy which is untaxed, unregulated, and unsafe. | |
| **Support Resolution** - TH should legalize it. | |
| **TH** = State of California. | |
| **Should** = implies action | |
| **Legalize it** - pass legislation to make marijuana legal in the state of California. Details will be provided in the plan. | |
| **Harms** -   * CA economy is in very bad shape * State workers IOUs * Currently 21.3 billion dollar budget deficit * Approaching 10% unemployment | **Background: California economy is in very bad shape.**   * State workers IOUs * Currently 21.3 billion dollar budget deficit * Approaching 10% unemployment   This is mainly due to the lack of tax revenue coming in to the state government. We must find a way to increase this revenue, or else the state government could collapse as we know it. Therefore we propose the following plan. |
| **Inherency -** This budget will continue to be in debt as long as there is not enough money coming in. Marijuana is a significant potential source of income for the State of California, and it will be a great start to helping fix this monumental problem. |  |
| **Mandate**: The state government of California will legalize marijuana in all forms for individuals 21 years of age or older. | |
| **Enforcement**: Quality will be enforced by the FDA and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms will control distribution. | |
| **Timeframe**: Immediately. | |
| **Funding**: Through normal means, and will generate significant tax revenue. | |
| **Solvency**: Through the taxation of marijuana millions, and over time, billions of dollars of tax revenues will go directly to the government. Not only that, but the entire enterprise will generate movement in the economy which will lead to more overall consumption. The taxation on cigarettes produces over 15 billion dollars each year, and many analysts say that the tax on marijuana would create much more demand than cigarettes. |  |
| **UNIQUE Advantage 1: Education** | **Advantage 1: Education** |
| **Status Quo**: Currently, due to a massive budget shortfall, many teachers have been laid off. Over 25,000 have been laid off this year. | |
| **Link**: By passing plan, these jobs could be saved. | |
|  | **Solvency:** The legalization of marijuana would make a positive change by allowing these teachers to keep their jobs. |
| **Impact**: More teachers means higher quality education, both due to lower class sizes and better quality instruction. With better education we see less drop outs in high school, and eventually the high correlation between education and income will help California and the world increase the standard of living and quality of life. | |
| **UNIQUE Advantage 2: Organized Crime** | **Advantage 2: Organized Crime** |
| **Status Quo**: Currently, because marijuana is illegal, criminals are the ones who control the distribution. Because of this, violence over illegal drugs continues to kill innocent victims, as well as increased gang activities. | |
| **Link**: By passing plan, the criminals who control marijuana will no longer have their source of income from this illegal drug. | |
|  | **Solvency:** The legalization of marijuana will then make the streets safer and lower crime in many areas. |
| **Impact**: There are a variety of different situations that could arise out of this. One is that these criminals who are experts in the growth and selling of marijuana would be able to escape a life of crime and would be able to participate in the marijuana trade legally. Another impact that would come out of the plan passing is that gang violence could go down, which would lead to a lowering of rape, murder, and assault. | |
| **UNIQUE Advantage 3: Hemp** | **Advantage 3: Hemp** |
| **Status Quo**: Currently, since all forms of marijuana are illegal, hemp cannot be produced. Hemp is a form of marijuana that does not contain enough THC to get someone high, but it can be used for renewable energy as well as very strong rope. | |
| **Link**: By legalizing marijuana, all hemp products would be able to be grown in CA. | |
|  | **Solvency**: The legalization of marijuana will then make a positive change by providing a new source of renewable energy and rope. |
| **Impact**: This could offset some of our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, as well as add to the economy. Discuss how any reduction in foreign oil is good. | |
|  | So for all of these reasons we strongly believe that the California State government should legalize marijuana |

Differences Between the Two Formats

Notice that both cases are doing the same thing. (Duh.) They are both demonstrating that there is a problem that needs to be fixed with a plan. The comparative advantages format moves a little bit faster than the stock issues format. Some proponents of the stock issues format will provide multiple harms early on in the case and then multiple solvency points that demonstrate how the plan solves for each harm. One of the issues with this is that the government team places themselves at a disadvantage by providing multiple harms, since the burden of the government team is to solve for the harms. If they don’t solve for one out of their three harms, they may lose the debate. While using the similar arguments in the comparative advantages format, the government will only have to solve for the main issue discussed in the background, and if one of their advantages is defeated they can still win the debate. This is likely one of the main reasons that at the senior levels the comparative advantages format is much more popular than the stock issues format.