

# The Final Round<sup>1</sup>

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## Connecticut Debate Association

### Joel Barlow High School

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**Resolved: The US should significantly raise the minimum wage.**

## A Note about the Notes

I've reproduced my flow chart for the Final Round at Joel Barlow High School augmented by what I remember from the debate. The notes are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. I'm sure the debaters will read them and exclaim, "That's not what I said!" I apologize for any errors, but I hope debaters will appreciate this insight: what a judge hears may not be what they said or what they wish they had said.

There are two versions of the notes. The one below is chronological, reproducing each speech in the order in which the arguments were made. It shows how the debate was actually presented. The second is formatted to look more like my written flow chart, with each contention running across the page as the teams argued back and forth. It's close to the way I actually take notes during the debate.

## The Final Round

The Final Round was between the Amity team of Dan DiDomenico and Sarah Rippel on the Affirmative and the Pomperaug team of Erin Dorsey and Hannah Beilinson on the Negative. The debate was won by the Negative.

### 1) First Affirmative Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the Resolution
- c) Definitions
  - i) "significantly raise" means to 50-55% of the median wage over the next 4-5 years
- d) A1<sup>2</sup>: Resolution will promote growth and development
  - i) Consumer spending is 60-70% of the economy
  - ii) Raising the minimum wage will add \$5K to take-home pay
  - iii) This will lead to more consumption spending
  - iv) Seattle, Australia and France have a higher minimum wage ("MW") and lower unemployment rate—5.7%--than the US—6%
- e) A2: Resolution will lessen income inequality
  - i) Since 1990 most income increases have gone to the top 10%

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<sup>2</sup> "A1" indicates the Affirmative first contention, "N2" the Negative second contention and so forth.

- ii) Worker productivity increased during that period
- iii) MW did not increase with productivity—it would be \$21/hr today if it had
- iv) Wages have risen 23% while executive pay rose 300%
- f) A3: MW is currently too low to support a worker and family
  - i) Most workers have to support themselves on their wages
  - ii) Only 25% of teens have summer jobs
  - iii) CBO estimates that raising MW from \$7.25 to \$10.10 would lift 900K out of poverty
  - iv) Underemployment is a greater problem than unemployment

## 2) Cross-Ex of First Affirmative

- a) Are France and Australia comparable to the US? They are both developed economies
- b) Do they have the same economic diversity? I don't know. They have similar sectors.
- c) Did unemployment decline due to increases in the MW? There is no correlation between unemployment and the MW.
- d) Isn't business success the key to the economy? Not the only one. Consumer spending is 70% of economic activity.
- e) Aren't there other ways to help workers? Raising the MW is better.
- f) What is "underemployment"? Those not working or not making a living wage.
- g) Will raising the MW increase the number of jobs? More money will go to workers. It won't create jobs or stifle job creation.

## 3) First Negative Constructive

- a) Intro
- b) We accept the Aff definitions
- c) N1: The resolution will impede the creation of MW jobs
  - i) If the cost of labor goes up, the number of jobs offered will decrease
    - (1) We agree the increase will provide more money to those employed
    - (2) But no help will be provided to those unemployed
  - ii) To cover increased wages, firms will have to raise prices
    - (1) This will harm everyone
  - iii) Increased labor costs is an incentive to automate or outsource jobs
- d) N2: Raising the MW will not decrease poverty
  - i) 80% of MW workers are not poor
  - ii) Increasing the MW will not help 99% of the poor
  - iii) As noted in N1, increasing labor costs will decrease the number of jobs and raise prices
- e) N3: Increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit is a better alternative.
  - i) EITC provides money directly to poor families
  - ii) Subsidy declines as income increases, so no negative impact on businesses
  - iii) Can fund increase by taxing highest earners.
- f) A1: Clashes with N2
  - i) Business success is the key, and raising MW harms business
  - ii) Australia and France are more homogenous, the US more diverse
  - iii) Seattle is very affluent and workers highly skilled
- g) A2: We don't favor the 1%

- i) Raising the minimum wage won't change income inequality
- ii) Some workers will get more money, but the economy will suffer
- h) A3: We agree MW doesn't provide enough support
  - i) N3: EITC increase fixes this directly with no economic harm

**4) Cross-Ex of First Negative**

- a) Are you aware 50% don't pay taxes? No, but EITC provides funds
- b) EITC exists now. How will it help? We will increase payments.
- c) How do you know the money will be spent responsibly? These are poor people who need money to live.
- d) Do you know what Australia and France produce, in what proportions? No
- e) Grain? Don't know
- f) 80% of MW workers aren't poor? Yes
- g) But if you only earn MW aren't you poor? Yes, you need to earn more.
- h) 99% won't benefit? According to the packet they are not on the MW
- i) Didn't we show teens only 20% of MW workers? There are others who aren't poor
- j) Is automation here now? Yes
- k) Will raising the MW increase payments to workers? Yes
- l) Will it increase money in circulation? Yes, but this isn't always good.

**5) Second Affirmative Constructive**

- a) Intro
- b) Statement of the resolution
- c) Cover Neg then Aff
- d) N3: Recipients already abuse welfare payments
  - i) Suggest EITC funds will be abused
  - ii) We can also increase the MW and increase the MW
  - iii) The MW is only \$15K/year, which is not a living wage
- e) N2: MW is not equal to the poverty level
  - i) So 80% statistic does not apply
- f) A1: MW increases wages to will increase spending
  - i) This also means welfare payments will decline
    - (1) Lower gov't spending can benefit the deficit and other gov't needs
- g) A2: There is a large wage gap between executives and the homeless
  - i) Raising MW increases worker's income
- h) A3: MW is only \$15K per year, which is below the poverty level
  - i) That assumes full-time work, and most miss some time each year due to sickness, etc.

**6) Cross-Ex of Second Affirmative**

- a) Don't MW workers have jobs? Yes
- b) What about those who don't have jobs? Our focus is wages, not job creation.
- c) Is giving them more money good? Yes
- d) Is inflation good? No
- e) Won't increasing the money in circulation increase inflation? Not necessarily.
- f) Does raising the MW help the jobless? Not our focus
- g) Won't expanding aid help all poor? Raising the MW will reduce the need for aid.

**7) Second Negative Constructive**

- a) Intro
  - b) Statement of the resolution
  - c) N1: vs A1
    - i) More money in circulation means more inflation
    - ii) Ultimately no increase in spending
    - iii) No job creation
  - d) N2: You have to look beyond wages
    - i) Poverty is not due to unemployment at low wages
      - (1) Most poor not employed or not in MW jobs
      - ii) Raising MW will decrease job creation and increase prices, harming all
  - e) N3: EITC is not a welfare program, it's an improved tax program
  - f) A1: Raising MW decreases employment and increases automation
    - i) Seattle, France and Australia are all higher income than US
    - ii) Increasing \$ in circulation not always a good thing.
  - g) A2: Increased inequality is not the issue
    - i) The issue is poverty, and raising the MW doesn't solve this.
  - h) A3: We agree current MW does not provide sufficient support
    - i) We have presented a better solution
    - ii) Raising MW will increase prices and harm everyone
- 8) Cross-Ex of Second Negative**
- a) Is there any reason we can't increase the MW and the EITC? Raising MW will harm the economy
  - b) Won't the effects cancel? The harm is greater.
  - c) Why will companies need to lay anyone off? Raising MW increases labor costs so will decrease the number of jobs
  - d) Are unemployed and underemployed affected the same way? Both are harmed due to price increases resulting from raising the MW
  - e) How do tax breaks help the poor? They help more than the raising MW
  - f) Didn't it decrease poverty in California? Other statistics show worse effects.
  - g) Won't raising the MW decrease poverty? That's a question for an economist
  - h) How, exactly, will you reorganize the EITC? We will improve it.
  - i) Won't it cost a lot? Something, but we can fund it from the top tax bracket.
  - j) Less than \$10 billion? I don't know.
- 9) First Negative Rebuttal**
- a) Intro
  - b) A1: Increasing MW won't increase employment
    - i) Seattle, France and Australia are exceptions
    - ii) It's basic economics
      - (1) Increase prices, decrease activity
      - (2) Labor cost rise implies either prices rise or jobs decline
  - c) A2: The 6% unemployment figure excludes those who stopped looking for work
    - i) Raising the MW will increase layoffs and decrease job creation
    - ii) EITC gives money directly to the poor with no negative consequences
  - d) A3: We agree poverty is a problem, but the MW doesn't solve it
    - i) EITC goes only to the poor
    - ii) MW goes to many not poor, such as teens

- e) Both sides what to help the economy
  - i) Raising MW gives money to some, but prices rise and harm all
  - ii) EITC and increased MW can't coexist due to MW harms

#### **10) First Affirmative Rebuttal**

- a) Intro
- b) Russell's Teapot: The burden of proof is on the believer
  - i) Neg has no examples
- c) Increasing MW increases the demand for consumer goods
  - i) Hasn't increased prices in the US
  - ii) Automation is not here yet
- d) Poverty
  - i) It is necessary to increase the MW
  - ii) EITC affects students
  - iii) EITC won't help the 50% who don't pay taxes
  - iv) EITC won't affect income inequality

#### **11) Second Negative Rebuttal**

- a) Intro
- b) Solvency
  - i) Aff hasn't shown that raising MW solves poverty
    - (1) 99% of poor won't benefit
  - ii) Raising MW to the level Aff wants in unprecedented so examples are rare
    - (1) But we've referenced the 99% quote
    - (2) Basic economics says increasing labor costs will raise prices and reduce jobs and job creation
- c) Neg Solution: increase the EITC to give more to the poor
  - i) We can provide the poor with a living
  - ii) We do not burden business
  - iii) We can fund it by taxing the rich, who the Aff says can afford it
- d) 1AR was mostly emotion
- e) Neg analysis is based on logic and economics

#### **12) Second Affirmative Rebuttal**

- a) Intro
- b) Resolution
- c) EITC helps the poor; MW helps workers
  - i) 99% statistic is not relevant
  - ii) Raising MW helps workers gain a living wage
- d) Neg assumes the economy is always the same
  - i) Things have changed since the 1970's
  - ii) Raising MW won't have the same impacts
  - iii) Neg presents no statistics on inflation
- e) It is the US responsibility to implement the American Dream, the pursuit of happiness
  - i) Today's low MW doesn't do this
  - ii) Workers face long hours, low wages and no mobility, and this is unfair
  - iii) Neg plan only helps the poor