

8. United States Trade Policy Topic Paper:

Significance:

For a few decades free trade has been the norm for the United States, but since the 2006 election – with major victories by 'fair-trade' and protectionist democrats, the views on trade in the US are changing. It appears that Bush's free trade agenda is dying, evidenced by the killing of a US-Vietnam free trade agreement in congress as well as the Trade Promotion Authority – a key component of US trade policy – most likely coming to an end at the end of this year. Moreover, problems in the World Trade Organization continue, the Doha Round of trade talks (which aimed greatly increase free trade around the world) face a great deal of roadblocks, and many critics have considered US free trade policy as one of the root causes of global terrorism. All of these things make trade policy prime for great changes in the next few years.

Interesting, Challenging and Provocative:

For all the reasons above, plus the fact that the great majority of debaters seem to take for granted that “free trade is bad”, researching and debating all sides of trade policy will challenge debaters to question their own views on the world and its interactions. Moreover, trade policy is a hot issue in current events and therefore it offers debaters the real chance to see how their policies will interact with the political climate. Finally, trade – in the end – effects everything the US does, from military engagement and US foreign policy overall to US unemployment, wages and domestic subsidies. Therefore, trade policy offers a great gateway to many big issues.

Educational:

Debaters often just get one side of an issue until it becomes the main debate topic, and trade is no different. Economy disadvantages and trade issues always take the form of 'free trade bad', but to truly garner an education on any topic/issue one should learn about, and defend, both sides. Therefore, a trade policy topic offers up the best chance to understand how free trade may be good, how fair trade may be bad, and what effects trade in general really has on the US, instead of just a few pieces of evidence for one disadvantage. Moreover, learning about where trade policy is heading gives clear insight into where the US economy – domestically and internationally – is heading in the future, including what career paths are opening up and what someone needs to do to stay afloat in a fast changing world.

Sample Sources:

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