Education Focus:

Debate Committee Panel

Tuesday, June 4, 2019 and Friday, June 7, 2019

Hunt Chapel in Sullivan Hall

Anderson, SC

Policy Debate Resolution (Final Wording)

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its energy policy.

Background

Energy-related innovation and regulation have been core components of American history that balance domestic and foreign policy. Usable energy is the lifeblood of developed nations, causing them to compete for reliable sources of exploitable energy to feed innovation and infrastructure. Created in 1977, the Department of Energy oversees the security and innovation of energy resources such as coal, oil, solar, wind, water, and nuclear. Security oversight includes nuclear de-proliferation and the safe disposal of cold war era nuclear devices. Energy source oversight includes innovation, stability, renewability, and environmental protections. At the Department of Energy's disposal is a budget that was narrowly north of 30 billion in FY2017 and narrowly shy of 30 billion in FY2018.

Although the Department of Energy is the primary regulator of America's energy policy, many other agencies contribute as well. For example, the EPA is primarily responsible for most environmental conservation efforts that impact the collection of coal or oil resources. The Department of Defense provides security assistance and oversight for many aspects of the US nuclear program. The Department of State predominantly handles US relationships with energy exporters or foreign nuclear powers.

The scope of federal energy regulation has dipped significantly in previous years. Under President Trump's administration, methane emissions, the Paris Climate Accords, and the Clean Power Plan have all waned, and regulatory oversight has increasingly returned to the state level. As states re-embrace regulatory roles, questions have emerged about other areas where the Federal government may wish to re-engage regulations or reduce them even further.

Energy infrastructure is in desperate need of updates and maintenance. Several key projects (including the Keystone Pipeline) remained stalled as lawsuits and litigation rages. US regulations of offshore drilling seek to balance environmental protections and the efficiency needed to continue pushing the US to energy independence.

Meanwhile, energy's interplay with national security cannot be overstated. Every US president since Nixon has heavily advocated for energy independence from OPEC or other

energy suppliers, in an effort to break ties with regimes that could potentially damage the reputation or threaten the economic stability of the United States.

Strengths

This dynamic resolution features a broad range of policies and past domestic regulatory reforms. Competitors will explore the complex relationships between sustainable energy sources, energy independence, national security, and economic impacts. By understanding the importance of energy, the costs of harvesting that energy, and the implications of substituting alternative sources, competitors will be able to debunk many myths regarding energy policy.

Weaknesses

The broad nature of energy policy may prove challenging to novice debaters who focus too narrowly or become overwhelmed with the plethora of cases justified by the resolution. Competitors may become overly focused on environmental issues and overuse the global warming debate. In addition, many Affirmative cases will have limited arguments to refute them.

Affirmative Topics

Affirmative topics could include fracking, safe nuclear opportunities, oil exportation, climate change, environmental sustainability, renewable energy innovation and regulation, the security of domestic energy sources, and international engagement regarding energy trade and regulation.

Negative Topics

Negative teams can address environmental impacts, long-term sustainability, economic impacts, diplomacy with the international community, government waste, topicality, and solvency for reforms.

Sources

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