

**2021 Summer Global Leadership Seminar**  
***Global Governance, Citizen Activism, and Constitution Building***  
**July 12-16, 2021**

**Federalism Debate Outline and Resource Guide**

**Central Debate Question:**

*In order to effect positive social change, should activists prioritize state and local level action and advocacy over action at the federal level?*

In response to the above debate prompt, students will be divided and assigned to one of the following two teams. In preparation for the debate, students should take note of their assigned team and read through both the general background resources and all team-specific resources. Students should take notes on the resources provided and may do additional research if they choose in order to help strengthen their arguments during the debate.

- **Team Affirmative**

*“Based on our studies and research, **yes**, activists should prioritize state and local level action and advocacy over similar efforts at the federal level.”*

- **Team Opposed**

*“Based on our studies and research, **no**, activists should NOT prioritize state and local level action and advocacy over similar efforts at the federal level.”*

**Student Assignments**

Team Affirmative	Team Opposed
C. Bradstreet	K. Johnson
O. Gupta	S. Smallwood
A. Serieyssol	A. Cambridge
M. Garcia-Bartch	C. Masciantonio
O. Kaeli	G. Coller
S. Shoumer	R. Knab

S. Konar	T. Elliott
A. Shklar	E. Xu
S. Keeports	E. Kokorin
J. Handy	X. Gallon
E. Muskens	A. Bathurst
E. Bathurst	

## Resource Guide

### Tips for Preparing

We have provided a number of **general background resources**, as well as **team-specific resources** below. Please read and review these resources as preparation for the debate activity. **We recommend** that you come to the debate prepared with notes on these resources so you are ready to craft well-thought, detailed statements with your team members in the allotted time. It is also important to **consider the other team's potential arguments** and talking points as a means of strengthening your assigned team's arguments and talking points. **You may want to conduct additional research** outside of these resources, but we ask that you practice good digital literacy and **utilize vetted resources** from **reputable news or analysis organizations**.

**We suggest that students write a draft opening statement** for their assigned team's position on the central debate question, so you and your teammates can begin the debate with material to work off of and to save time in crafting your opening statement.

Finally, we suggest that students read the **Questions to Consider** prior to reading or viewing the resources and then write down their answers to the questions after they are finished with the resources.

\*Please note that some resources are opinion pieces or may be partisan, and were purposefully chosen as such in order to help strengthen students' understanding of each side of the central argument of this debate activity.

### Questions to Consider \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the United States' system of federalism? Summarize. What are the pros and cons of such a system especially when thinking of advocacy and activism?
2. Can you find specific examples in the provided resources below where your team's side (state and local governments or federal government) have proven to be more effective in taking action to solve key issues?

### General Topic Resources

*\*Note that some of these resources provide both team's arguments and are therefore critical for students on both teams to read.*

- [Constitution Hall Pass: Federalism](#)  
Video - ~10 minutes (National Constitution Center)
- [Congress can't do much about fixing local police – but it can tie strings to federal grants](#)  
Article - ~10 minute read (The Conversation)

→ [The Future of Federalism](#)

Article - ~15 minute read (Harvard Political Review)

→ [The arguments for and against more powerful local government](#)

Video - ~10 minutes (PBS NewsHour)

**Team Affirmative Resources** – “Based on our studies and research, **yes**, activists should prioritize state and local level action and advocacy over similar efforts at the federal level.”

→ [States are doing what big government won’t to stop climate change, and want stimulus funds to help](#)

Article - ~10 minute read (StateImpact Pennsylvania - NPR)

→ [Opinion: Prioritize Local Politics](#)

Article - ~10 minute read (The State Press)

**Team Opposing Resources** – “Based on our studies and research, **no**, activists should NOT prioritize state and local level action and advocacy over similar efforts at the federal level.”

→ [Biden Seeks to Use Procurement ‘Power’ to Close Racial Wealth Gap](#)

Article - ~5 minute read (Government Executive)

→ [Are States Really More Efficient Than the Federal Government?](#)

Article - ~5 minute read (The Atlantic)

### **Activity Agenda**

**10:15 - 10:25 a.m.**

**Introduction and Rules Presentation (Main Room)**

**10:25 – 10:45 a.m.**

**Teams Meet and Prepare Opening Statement (Breakout Rooms)**

Students work together in an assigned team to draft an opening statement defending their position. Students should take the last 5-10 minutes to synthesize their team’s opening remarks as a whole. Each team elects 1-2 representatives to present the entire team’s opening statement.

**Opening Statement:** *Introduce the topic in a way that supports your position. Provide supporting evidence. The last sentence of the introduction should be your “thesis” or main objective.*

**10:45 – 10:55 a.m.**

**Present Opening Statement - 5 min. each (Main Room)**

Each team’s elected representatives present their entire team’s opening statement to the at-large plenary. Fellow team members take notes on their opposing team’s arguments for use during the rebuttal period.

**Presentation Order:**

- 1) *Team Affirmative*
- 2) *Team Opposing*

**10:55 – 11:10 a.m.**

**Prepare Rebuttal (Breakout Rooms)**

Students representing the “Team Affirmative” finalize a rebuttal representing the team as a whole. Moreover, students representing the

“Team Opposing” finalize one rebuttal representing the team as a whole. Each team elects 1-2 new representatives to present their rebuttal.

**Rebuttal:** *Respond to and criticize the arguments presented by the opposing side. Prove that the other side’s logic and arguments do not make sense. Provide sound counter-arguments.*

**11:10 - 11:20 a.m.**

**Present Rebuttal - 5 min. each (Main Room)**

Each team’s newly elected representatives deliver a rebuttal to the at-large plenary. Once again, fellow team members take notes on their opposing team’s rebuttal for use during closing arguments.

**Presentation Order:**

- 1) *Team Affirmative*
- 2) *Team Opposing*

**11:20 - 11:30 a.m.**

**Prepare Closing Argument (Breakout Rooms)**

Students work in their teams to prepare a closing statement that reaffirms their position. Each team elects 1-2 new representatives to present their rebuttal.

**Closing Argument:** *Summarize your team’s main arguments. Emphasize the strongest points made throughout the debate. Make sure to include facts to support your position and address any counter arguments.*

**11:30 - 11:40 a.m.**

**Present Closing Argument - 5 min. each (Main Room)**

Each team’s newly elected representatives deliver a closing argument to the at-large plenary.

**Presentation Order:**

- 1) *Team Affirmative*
- 2) *Team Opposing*

**11:40 - 11:45 a.m.**

**Presentation of Winning Team and Student Awards (Main Room)**

Judges deliberate, select, and announce the winning team of the debate as well as confer awards for excellence in debate performance.