



NEWS RELEASE

NFHS Announces “Arctic” to be 2025-26 National High School Policy Debate Topic

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 10, 2025) — The NFHS has announced the selection of “Arctic” as the National High School Policy Debate Topic for the 2025-26 academic year.

“Arctic” was chosen over “Military Presence” by a 21-13 vote in the final balloting process, which saw participation from 30 state associations, the National Speech and Debate Association, the National Catholic Forensic League, the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues and the National Debate Coaches Association.

“We are thrilled to announce 'Arctic' as the 2025-26 National High School Policy Debate Topic,” said Dr. James Weaver, NFHS director of performing arts and sports. “This decision reflects the collective voice of our members and the commitment to providing students with timely, impactful issues to explore. Debate fosters critical thinking, and the topic of the Arctic offers a unique opportunity for students to delve into geopolitical, environmental and economic discussions that shape our world.”

The debate resolution will be as follows: “The United States federal government should significantly increase its exploration and/or development of the Arctic.”

Three stages of voting were used to determine the winning topic. The first was held during the NFHS Policy Debate Topic Selection Meeting August 1-4, 2024, where 61 attending delegates from 21 states and multiple national organizations compiled five potential choices. In addition to Arctic and Military Presence, other options included “India,” “Nation State Recognition” and “South Asia.”

Over the next two months, 34 organizations ranked the five options in order of their preference, with the two lowest aggregate totals then advancing to the final vote. The Arctic topic ranked highest in the voting of those final five topics. Use of the final ballot assures a majority of coaches across the nation favor the chosen topic area and resolution.

For more information about the 2025-26 National High School Policy Debate Topic, including a visual breakdown of how each organization voted on the final ballot, please visit:

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/arctic-selected-as-2025-2026-national-policy-debate-topic>

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches nearly 20,000 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; offers online education courses for coaches, administrators, students, officials, performing arts educators, parents and others; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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