



NEWS RELEASE

NFHS Announces “Health Insurance” to be 2026-27 National High School Policy Debate Topic

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 10, 2026) — The NFHS has announced the selection of “Health Insurance” as the National High School Policy Debate Topic for the 2026-27 academic year.

“Health Insurance” was chosen over “Nuclear Weapons” by a 23-8 vote in the final balloting process, which saw participation from 31 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 pleased to announce ‘Health Insurance’ as the 2026–27 National High School Policy Debate Topic,” said Chris Paulson, NFHS director of performing arts and sports. “Few issues are as timely or directly connected to the lives of students and their families as access to health care and insurance coverage. This topic invites high school debaters to examine complex domestic policy questions and engage in thoughtful analysis of a system that affects nearly every American. Through this debate, students will strengthen their research, advocacy and critical-thinking skills while exploring one of the most relevant public policy issues in our nation today.”

The debate resolution will be as follows: “The United States federal government should establish national health insurance in the United States.”

Three stages of voting were used to determine the winning topic. The first was held during the NFHS Policy Debate Topic Selection Meeting August 1-3, 2025, where 68 attendees from 21 states and

multiple national organizations compiled five potential choices. In addition to Health Insurance and Nuclear Weapons, other options included “Carbon Pricing,” “Corporate Control” and “Energy.”

Over the next two months, 35 organizations ranked the five options in order of their preference, with the two lowest aggregate totals then advancing to the final vote. The Health Insurance topic ranked highest in the voting of those final five topics. Use of the final ballot ensures a majority of coaches across the nation favor the chosen topic area and resolution.

For more information about the 2026-27 National High School Policy Debate Topic, including a visual breakdown of how each organization voted on the final ballot, please visit:

<https://nphs.org/stories/nphs-announces-health-insurance-to-be-2026-27-national-high-school-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 18 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 8.2 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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