**Making all teams qualify through districts and an award system recognizing a larger number then 16**

There is generally a positive response to this concept with interest in the regional benefits of improving the quality of district tournaments and honoring a larger number of teams at the NDT.

**Arbitrary FRALB Voting**

There is a belief that this amendment does not accomplish its goals in this regard. If the intention is to take control out of the hands of the subjective beliefs of the NDT committee members, then NDT seeding to determine who gets the top 20 awards, as well as the second stage at large bids, should not replicate the same process being criticized. The opinion was expressed that teams are primarily interested in the prestige that comes from receiving a first round award and so the system proposed by this amendment leaves the same incentive structure in place for chasing a top spot with all the attendant problems outlined within. There was disagreement with the claim that first round bid allocations are “high stakes” decisions that threaten qualification to the NDT as any team that is on the bubble of a FRALB that misses is absolutely going to make it through either districts or the second round at large process. It was deemed very unlikely that arbitrary FRALB voting makes a team miss the NDT.

There is support for an objective points based system similar to the Baker system used in high school. This system could be utilized in either the current form of the FRALB or in the seeding/awards system outlined in the amendment. There are a variety of options that can be considered for the configuration of this system to determine how many points are generated by different levels of success at different tournaments. For example, the “bad loss at a regional tournament” problem could be eliminated by not counting those regional tournaments towards a team’s average, or participation in regional tournaments could be encouraged by increasing the points given at regional tournaments.

**Regional debate vs Exclusive regionalism**

There is a high level of concern that this amendment is intended to support not just the promotion of regional debate, but to enable exclusive regionalism in which there is a third of the country that schools from other parts of the country never travel to. This level of excessive regional devolution is damaging to the debate community that the National Debate Tournament serves because there are massive disparities in resources and participation rates between different geographic areas and some level of support across regions will be necessary to ensure the health of debate across the country.

The language of the amendment lists this as an arbitrary and capricious consideration when in fact it is enshrined in the charter of the National Debate Tournament as the purpose of the National Debate Tournament.

“Article I: B

The purpose of the National Debate Tournament shall be to encourage the growth of programs of excellence in forensics education in institutions of higher education in the United States; to conduct a National Debate Tournament which shall be equally committed to encouraging the opportunity for quality debate for students of all institutions of higher education by maximizing the number and geographic representation of participating schools, encouraging the highest standards of debate excellence by maximizing the competitive quality of participating schools, and encouraging the highest standards of educational excellence by conducting a tournament consistent with the educational objectives of intercollegiate forensics competition.”

Including the health of debate across geographic regions in the decisions made by NDT committee members is an important means to achieve a primary purpose the NDT serves: maintaining a thriving and growing national debate community. This purpose can be clearly and easily distinguished from the politicized spillover claims made in the amendment. Whether we stick with committee member voting or adopt a points based system, teams should be awarded for venturing outside of their region to support debate in each third of the country, even if it’s just one time. The amendment, if it were to be adopted, should specifically consider and address concerns that it would over-regionalize debate, and include some provision to incentivize regional travel diversity.

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