Generic Affirmative: Quantification Responses

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***This applies to any resolution – save it and use it for any debate season***

Negative teams, when they don’t have anything better to argue, often whine about “Quantification.” Whatever evidence you read in your AFF case, Negatives will argue that you didn’t “quantify” the harms or the advantages or something else, and that this failure to quantify justifies a NEG ballot. This brief gives you a list of responses you can use to defeat the “quantification” arguments. Not all of the may apply to every case or every round, so be sure to consider carefully which ones to use in any situation. But I recommend you use more than one, so that whichever ones they drop (most likely in the 1NR but possibly in 2NR), you can claim victory on those and not waste time having to think up responses and spending time on it in 1AR or 2AR. It’s unlikely a NEG will be able to respond to 3 or 4 or 5 of these, so you can win on whichever ones they don’t contest.

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AFFIRMATIVE: Quantification Responses

RESPONSE 1. Advocacy proves significance

The fact that the experts we quoted say our plan is worth doing proves it is significant enough to warrant an AFF ballot. Experts don’t go into print putting their profession reputations on the line, and spending all those hours researching and writing published articles, for things that don’t matter. If our evidence sources themselves think this plan is worth doing without quantifying to the Negative’s satisfaction, that proves the Negative is wrong for demanding it. The experts disagree with them, and they’re more qualified than the Negative debaters to tell you what’s worth doing and what’s not worth doing. If they think the numbers don’t justify the plan, it’s now the Negative’s burden to prove it.

RESPONSE 2. Synonyms prove significance

Our evidence for our (harms / advantages / whatever) uses words like (\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_\_) to describe the (problem, harm, advantage, need, impact). Those words, even if they don’t contain exact numbers, are enough to prove the plan deals with a significant issue. Numbers are not the only way to prove something is significant or worth doing. There are lots of words in the English language that prove the same thing, and we have them. Negative needs to refute them, not just complain that they don’t like them.

RESPONSE 3. No Affirmative burden

When the Negative demands “quantification” as an absolute requirement for an Affirmative ballot, they are imposing an extra-topical and unjustifiable burden on the Affirmative team and we reject it. There is nothing in this resolution that says we have to quantify anything to win. And there was nothing in your Judge Orientation that told you to vote Affirmative only if we quantify everything to the Negative team’s satisfaction. We don’t have to quantify to win and there is no rule in team policy debate that says otherwise.

RESPONSE 4. Bad policymaking

Judge, you absolutely don’t want to live in a world where policy makers like Congress and the President demand every problem be quantified before we take any steps to solve it. And fortunately you don’t. We don’t know how many people would be killed in a nuclear war –it’s impossible to quantify. But it would be ridiculous to tell policy makers that we should take no steps to prevent nuclear war, since we can’t quantify it. We certainly wouldn’t wait until after a nuclear war, when all the dead bodies have been counted, and then conclude that now we have a significant problem and we should do something. Policy makers in the real world look at problems, and if they look significant enough, they take actions to solve them regardless of whether anyone quantifies the exact number of people or dollars that would be affected. You, Judge, are acting in the place of Congress or the President, and you should handle policymaking the same way.

RESPONSE 5. Negative doesn’t meet their own standard

Look at the Negative’s evidence on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. Their evidence doesn’t quantify anything either. If quantification is a voting issue in this round, then you certainly can’t cast a Negative ballot. And until Negative quantifies everything, they need to drop quantification as a voting issue, because they don’t meet their own standard.

RESPONSE 6. Nothing to lose [If there are no Disads or if you have beaten them all]

Since the Negative has no disadvantages that would create any problems if our Plan were enacted, regardless of the quantification of its benefits, you have nothing to lose by voting for it. If our plan produces any benefit, even if we can’t quantify it, then you are better off with an Affirmative ballot. You have nothing to lose.

RESPONSE 7. Reverse voting issue or RVI [if you have more quantification than NEG does]

Fine, if Negative insists that “lack of quantification” is sufficient to change the entire outcome of the round, we’ll accept that as long as they agree that it’s a Reverse Voter Issue if we win it. In other words, they win if we don’t quantify, and we win if we do or if we do it better than they do. Fair is fair, and if they want it to be a voting issue, it should cut both ways. If we quantify, then we win. If they don’t quantify, then we win. If we quantify better than they do, then we win. Let’s see if they still want it to be a “Voting Issue” if the entire round depends on it and we do it better than they do.