

Philosophy 101 — Homework #6

4/7/11 (due 4/21/11)

Reconstruct the arguments contained in the following two passages (*charitably!*). Explain which implicit premises you have added (and why). [You can also comment on how strong you think these arguments are.] See below for two *extra credit* reconstructions.

- (1) The argument has been made that to cut down on teenage drunk driving we should increase the federal excise tax on beer. Such a measure, however, would almost certainly fail to achieve its intended result. Teenagers are notoriously insensitive to cost. They gladly accept premium prices for the latest style in clothes or the most popular record albums. And then, those who drink and drive already risk arrest and loss of driving privileges. They would not think twice about paying a little more for a six-pack. Finally, the situation is not as bleak as it has been made to appear. The fatality rate for teenage drivers is lower today than it has been in years.

- (2) The state has a right to intervene on behalf of unborn children, and this right should be implemented immediately. While it may be true that a mere fetus has no rights, surely a born child does have rights, and these rights project backward to the time it was in the womb. This is true because what happens to the child in the womb can have an impact throughout the child's life. It is well known that alcohol and drug abuse by expectant mothers cause birth defects, and these defects are not correctable after birth. Granted, an expectant mother has the right to treat her own body as she chooses, but this right does not extend to her unborn child. Once a pregnant woman decides to give birth, she effectively transfers part of her rights over to her unborn child. Unfortunately, however, the unborn child is incapable of securing these rights for itself. Thus, the intervention of a higher power is justified.

Two Extra Credit Reconstructions

(EC1) Cigarette consumption could be easily reduced by simply outlawing tailor-made cigarettes. The manufacture of tailor-made cigarettes to American standards is a high-tech industry. It cannot be done in small illicit labs like the processing of PCP, cocaine or heroin. The availability of quality tobacco for hand-rolling would discourage the development of an illegal tailor-made market. Most people would not pay the premium prices demanded by an illicit market for a product of unknown quality. They could roll a highquality product for themselves. Truly addicted persons would continue to smoke no matter how inconvenient. But most would give it up as too much bother before it became a deeply ingrained habit.

(EC2) Boxing is the only sport whose main purpose is to render the opponent unconscious. Indeed it is the only sport in which each player is licensed to injure the other. It must then be the most dangerous of all sports. Various solutions to this problem have been proposed – such as the use of head-guards and changing the gloves – but none of these would solve the problem of the danger of serious injury. So boxing should be banned.