



2018

UNITED STATES SENATE

Background Guide

Director: Kelsey Braford

Chair: Paige Chickering

Assistant Director: Faraz Qureshi & Athena Ho

Director's Letter

Delegates,

I am delighted to welcome you to the United States Senate at KINGMUN 2018! When we meet April 27, the committee experience prepared for you will be the culmination of months of hard work of many people. It has been an honor to work closely with my Chair, the lovely Paige Chickering, and my two incredible Assistant Directors, Faraz Qureshi and Athena Ho. Cumulatively, we have delegated at thirty-one conferences, staffed six, and been on Secretariat seven times. With a plethora of diverse MUN experience, we promise to make your committee experience unique and memorable.

The themes we chose to guide our simulation are ones we view as highly important to American society today. Current events we, as students, view on television and read about in the news are now more than ever directly affecting us. We have seen high-school students especially take a stand following the horrific shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High-School. Students who attend have released waves of inspiration that have rocked the nation with their courageous outspokenness and passionate desire to see change. Following their lead, students across the country are empowered to stand up for what they believe in.

During this historical time period our country is in, we have the opportunity to debate such pressing issues, and simulate the Senate chamber of Congress that much of the country feels has failed at its duties of enacting law and protecting citizens. As the youth of America, we are our country's future. We must take our own prosperity seriously and personally and pay attention to the issues that will determine our future.

I look forward to our weekend together and encourage you to thoroughly prepare by researching your assigned Senator, writing legislation, and familiarizing yourself with the Rules of Procedure.

Warmly,
Kelsey Braford
Director of the United States Senate

~ TOPIC 1 ~

History

When the first settlers from Europe arrived in the Americas looking for a new place to call home, there was so much unsettled territory that there was no concept of conservation or environmental sustainability in mind. Instead, it was rather encouraged to buy and developed large pieces of land to reduce the thicket of nature that engrossed America at that time. In the colonial era, settlers used the concept of commons where access to natural resources were allocated by individual towns. The government was additionally limited in their overwatch powers as both business and people were content with the way events were headed. However, as industrialization occurred in America, technologies such as the dam, more efficient logging, and mass fishing got introduced. In 1864, George Perkins Marsh noticed the shift in the environment and published *Man and Nature*, warning that “man made earth” and could subsequently destroy it if they continued on their path. (George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature*).

Marsh’s book brought seeping awareness to the minds of many Americans who had attended to their daily lives without a thought for nature. This general awareness then brought forth the conservation movement from the 1890s - 1920s. Writers, photographers, and painters all brought pressure into Congress for a more conservationist approach, who then later, in 1876, established Yellowstone as the nation's first national park with many more to follow. Additionally, seeing the severe alterations of river streams due to dams and excavations near bodies of water, Congress instituted the first environmental law being the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 which prohibited any excavations, alteration or damming of any navigable stream or harbor. (The Federal Government and Water Power, 1901-1913: A Legislative Study in the Nascence of Regulation).

In 1901 Theodore Roosevelt got elected into office, and with him follows the progressive movement in which the “environmentalists” rally around. Roosevelt was worried about the mass hunting occurring all across America, pushing native animals to the brink of extinction in addition with the mass waste of resources due to the inefficiency of the government. Roosevelt placed conservatism high on the political agenda, looking to protect the nation's land. In 1902, Roosevelt encouraged the Newlands Reclamation Act which gave the power to establish dams to the government so to control where water would be directed in an environmentally friendly way. Roosevelt also established the United States Forest Service in addition to signing 5 new National Parks and signing the 1906 Antiquities act where 18 new U.S National monuments were made. Furthermore, Roosevelt established over 150 National Forests, setting aside a total amount of 230,000,000 acres of American soil under protection.

For the next couple of decades, the environment was the least of the concerns as the first world war consumed all the energy and time of all the nation's, leading to a relatively stable situation. However, after the dust bowl devastated the United States, Franklin Roosevelt established laws and regulations to mitigate the effects of the dust bowl by reducing harmful land use and developing resources in the west. Additionally, in order to revitalize the economy and get the American unemployed working again, Roosevelt passed the New Deal which established the Civilian Conservation Corps and sent 2 million young men to work primarily on conservation projects between 1933 to 1943.



Civilian Conservation Corps, Courtesy of the Cook County Historical Society

Post-World War II, events such as the crew of a Japanese fishing vessel getting radiation sickness near the site of a hydrogen bomb test at Bikini atoll to an ecologically catastrophic oil spill in California's Santa Barbara Channel all raised concerns over the future of the environment. Additionally, fueled by books such as “Silent Spring” or the “Population Bomb”, protesters took it to the US government on Earth day of 1970. Bending under the pressure from the public, the government established the Environmental Protection Agency, which was to do exactly as the name stated; to protect the environment from all external threats.

As the world enters the 2000s, the environmentalist ideology seemingly falters, industries boom, Carbon Dioxide emissions rise across America due to coal and other fuels being burnt and there are no further policies to curb the level of industrialization. Being one of the leaders in environmental sustainability around the world, the United States Senate must find a path to continue, whether it be an environmentally friendly or an environmentally hostile one.

Past UN Action

Throughout the years the United Nations has held conventions, passed treaties and made combined international efforts to increase environmental sustainability across the globe and to help mitigate the human effects on the environment. One of the most well-known UN organizations that focuses on environmental issues is the United Nations Environmental Programme. The UNEP was created in 1972 in the wake of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (commonly known as the Stockholm conference). The UNEP was one of the first major UN bodies to deal specifically with environmental issues which, at the time, were a relatively new and emerging category of international problems. The UNEP “host[s] the secretariats of many critical multilateral environmental agreements and research bodies” (UNEP website) such as the Basel (1989), Rotterdam (1998), and Stockholm (2001) Conventions, which together provide a comprehensive system for reducing and safely disposing of hazardous waste. Another convention that the UNEP upholds is the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985) which in 2009 became to first convention to be universally ratified. Another major accomplishment of the UN with respect to environmental sustainability was the creation of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Since its creations in 1988 the IPCC has worked to provide new and updated information on climate change by publishing peer reviewed journals and other research information on the status of climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is another international effort to combat climate change. Created in 1992, the

UNFCCC eventually led to the formation of the Kyoto protocol in 1997 which “legally binds developed country Parties to emission reduction targets” (UNFCCC website).

Although the US has shown support for many of these international movements toward environmental protection this support has been somewhat empty. The U.S. has signed the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions but has not entered any of them into force and the same can be said of the Kyoto protocol. So what steps has the U.S. taken in the past to combat the issue of environmental sustainability?

Past senate action:

Despite not unusual non-committal action from the U.S. in international environmental protection, the U.S. has passed a significant amount of legislation and created various agencies and committees to try and improve and preserve the state of the environment. In 1837, before environmental problems were even on anyone’s radar, the Senate created the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds which evolved into the Committee on Environment and Public Works after major reorganization of the committee in 1977. “In 1963, the responsibility for creating new laws to achieve air and water pollution control, rural and community economic development, and relief from natural disasters was given to the committee.”(Committee on Environment and Public Works website) To meet these goals the Committee helped to pass the Clean Air Act in 1970, and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act in 1972. Since then the Committees focus has shifted to be more specifically oriented towards endangered species and wildlife refuges. In 1970 the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law and created the Council on Environmental Quality which was designed to “advise the President on the environment and review federal agencies' Environmental Impact Statements, required for projects that would affect the environment” (EPA website). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was officially established later that year. In 1972 the U.S. took steps to limit oceanic pollution by enacting the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act, or Ocean Dumping Act. Then in 1973 the Senate passed the United Nations Environmental Program Participation Act to affirm its commitment to the international efforts of environmental protection and to financially support the United Nations Environment Fund. Moving ahead to 1982, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act was passed which detailed procedures for safe disposal and storage of radioactive waste. In 1990 the Pollution Prevention Act was passed which endeavored to prevent environmental damage before it occurred. The Energy Star Program was then created in 1992 and was designed to help the American public engage in energy efficient practices and had a considerable degree of success. In 2001 the U.S. signed the global treaty on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which again showed commitment to a healthy environment from the U.S. on an international level. More recently when the Obama administration came into office it implemented several policies such as the Climate Action Plan and the Clean Power Plan among others to help mitigate the effects of climate change. Moving forward it will be interesting to see how a new administration will impact U.S. environmental policies.

Current Situation

Trump’s disregard for the burgeoning issue of global warming has drastically altered US environmental policy. Numerous Obama-era rules and regulations governing the US approach to climate change and natural resources have been the subject of deregulation or removal by President Trump. Most notably, Trump announced plans to withdraw from the US commitment to the Paris Climate Accords on June 1, 2017. This process is predicted to be complete by 2020. The Paris Climate Accords, which were agreed on by nearly 200 countries in 2015, was previously largely supported by the United States and President Obama, as well as many world leaders. The Accords target goals are to lower carbon emissions and strengthen countries’ abilities to deal with the effects of climate change. This drastic change in policy generated backlash from both international and domestic officials. Governors throughout the United States resolved to keep to the commitments of the Climate Accord within their power.

Furthermore, the Environmental Protection Agency also has been irrevocably altered. Administrator Scott Pruitt has been advocating for deregulation and has recently met with numerous fossil fuel industry leaders. Additionally, the phrase “climate change” has been removed from many of the EPA’s plans, and very little further action has been taken in actively reducing it. Pruitt has been vocal about questioning the authority of the EPA to regulate climate change in the future. The EPA appears to be shifting more of the responsibility to regulate policy regarding environmental sustainability to individual states. Additionally, Trump has proposed a 30% budget cut for the agency and elimination of certain programs. Last October, plans were announced to repeal the Clean Power Plan. This plan requires states to meet carbon emission reduction standards based on their energy consumption and includes an incentive program. Throughout the duration of the Trump presidency, many policy changes have benefited large oil companies. In March, plans for the Keystone XL pipeline were approved by the administration, which had previously been opposed by Obama. The pipeline would run from Hardisty, Alberta, southeast to Steele City, Nebraska, and would connect with other pipelines in the system. Environmentalists predict that this project would release more greenhouse gases than standard oil extraction. The pipeline would cut across the Ogallala Aquifer, one of the world’s largest underground deposits of fresh water, which could mean contamination if any problems arose. Additionally, Native American groups argued that the pipeline would run across sovereign, sacred lands. Trump has also signed an executive order which approves offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and off the East Coast of the United States. Finally, the new Republican tax law allows oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which environmental and Native American groups oppose. Supporters believe the move will boost the Alaskan economy.



Bloc Positions

Republicans

The general view of the Republican Party on environmental issues is often one of skepticism and hesitation. Often, GOP Republicans do not believe in climate change, and therefore do not support initiatives that seek to combat it. Since they feel that much of the climate change debate is an overreaction to natural processes of the earth, they do not see the necessity to invest in renewable energy money that could be spent elsewhere, and in industries that do not jeopardize the livelihoods of American workers. Furthermore, Republicans tend to lean towards protecting fossil fuel industries. Capping emissions is seen as a way to limit economic growth of companies. GOP politicians have more Iron Triangle relationships with companies that produce oil and coal than Democratic politicians, both now and historically. Often, media will refer to this type of relationship as Republicans getting the “coal vote.” Overall, Republicans tend to favor ensuring the future of coal miners’ jobs and the continuation of American dependence on fossil fuels.

Democrats

Politicians who represent the Democratic Party tend to believe that climate change is both real and of incredible importance. Seeing no natural environmental explanation for the drastic changes earth has undergone in the past centuries, coupled with the exponential nature of such change, Democrats feel that if immediate action is not taken, humans will damage the earth beyond repair. Advocates of renewable energy, they support initiatives that seek to increase the range and scope of wind, hydro, and solar energy. Moving away from fossil fuels and towards energy sources that are sustainable is the goal of most Democrats. In addition, they feel that industries that are hazardous to the environment should be regulated, and real action should be taken to limit and control

pollution. Emissions caps and fines on factories, strict oil regulations, and protections for flora and fauna are some of the actions the Democratic Party would advocate.

Subtopics

Nuclear Waste

Nuclear waste has been a prevailing issue throughout the history of the United States of America since the idea of nuclear energy was conceived. From uranium deposits left from power plants to the deadly radiation that accompanies them, there has been no initiative taken to solve such problems. Neglecting this issue will only cause it to grow to a magnitude, the likes of which the world has never been seen before.

Radiation from these deposits of uranium and other such radioactive materials which are used in nuclear power plants are contaminating the nature around them and pose a high risk to any unsuspecting individual walking across their deposits. Currently, there are some 65,000 tons of nuclear waste now in temporary storage throughout the United States of America located at deposit sites that are monitored by a guarding force. However, even as these deposit sites are carefully monitored and guarded, there is an increasing amount of nuclear power plants that are being decommissioned yearly, increasing the amount of active uranium and other radioactive materials dumped into deposits. With an increasing amount of nuclear waste being exposed to nature, it is essential that the US Senate take this matter into their own hands and find a way to combat this issue.

Climate Change

Climate change used to be an issue regarded as something to deal with in the future, but that has changed as the nation has progressed with little comprehensive action to mitigate the progressions of climate change. Human caused climate change is a nearly uncontested fact among climate scientists but has drawn a considerable amount of debate within the political sphere. It is clear from scientific models and research that the extent and speed with which climate change is progressing cannot be explained by environmental factors alone. The greenhouse gas effect is one of the main mechanisms which contribute to global warming. It is caused by an excess of carbon dioxide, methane and other gases in earth's atmosphere which absorb energy and have a warming effect on the planet. This global warming has largely been spurred by human caused emissions of methane and carbon dioxide through the burning of fossil fuels. The impact of global warming also creates a positive feedback loop which perpetuates the problem. The effects of climate change can also account for extreme weather patterns and storms that have been seen extremely recently within the U.S. If allowed to continue with no efforts to prevent the change in climate that humans have created, climate change could have disastrous consequences on human life leading into the future. This is an issue that is in desperate need of addressing to ensure that the world as it is now known can survive.

Air Pollution

Despite improvement in air quality since 1970, air pollution in the United States continues to take a toll on American health and the environment. Major legislation regarding air pollution includes the Clean Air Act, which requires the EPA to work with state and local governments to reduce air pollution. Today, levels of air pollution in many areas of the United States exceed national air quality standards. The EPA has determined that emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that build up in the atmosphere endanger the health and welfare of current and future generations by causing climate change and ocean acidification. The risks to public health and the ecosystem from climate change are substantial and far-reaching. Many scientists warn that carbon pollution and climate change are expected to lead to more intense hurricanes and storms, heavier and more frequent flooding, increased drought, and more severe wildfires. All of these events are likely to cause deaths, injuries, and billions of dollars of damage to property and the nation's infrastructure.



Renewable Energy

The United States has been progressively increasing their renewable energy capability for decades now. With hydropower being by far the most dominant source, the U.S. has been expanding to solar and wind much more as of late. Solar is the most popular option available to consumers, as it tends to be the most affordable and produce the most cost-effective results. However, in 2015, less than ten percent of energy consumed in the United States was from renewable sources. This is far behind many countries around the world. For example, Sweden, Costa Rica, and Uruguay all obtain ninety-five percent or more of their energy from renewable sources. The pros of increasing dependence on renewable energy are that the United States becomes more independent of foreign nations by using less foreign oil, and the environment benefits, but the cons of investing huge amounts of capital and undermining coal jobs is hefty.

Guiding Questions

1. What are some of the most prominent disagreements we see between Democrats and Republicans, and why are they unable to come to a conclusion?
2. How might one go about finding a middle ground that both respects concern for the environment but acknowledges the current state of American society?
3. What are some solutions to the issues presented that your Senator would support?
4. Seeing as the United States recently withdrew from the Paris Climate Accords, what should we do in regard to the international community? Should we ignore other country's concerns, or should we take action?
5. When will some of these issues come to a peak and demand change, and how much time do we have to talk about them? What are the most urgent concerns facing the nation?

~ TOPIC 2 ~

History

In the early 1990's, Americans became increasingly concerned about the nation's security. This concern was fueled by World Trade center bombings in 1993, The Oklahoma bombing, and the discovery of a bomb at the Atlanta Olympics in 1994. Moreover, it became increasingly apparent that terrorism was getting more sophisticated and intelligent, expanding from individual shootings to bombings and coordinated attacks.

Hand in hand came the realization that the security of the world had shifted after the cold war. With vacuums created all over the world, there were massive reserves of weapons that individuals had access too, using them to establish extremist groups such as Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Hezbollah and countless others which had the power to cause mass destruction. Recognizing this threat, the American government passed some commissions in the late 1990's serving to protect varying American securities and peoples, such as the Hart - Rudman Commission, the Gilmore Commission, and the National Commission on terrorism. However, there were more than 40 federal agencies tasked with Homeland Defense with around 2,000 separate Congressional appropriations accounts, rendering the system mostly ineffective. (*Brief Documentary History of the Department of Homeland Security*).

On September 9th, 2001, two American Planes hijacked by terrorists linked to Al Qaeda crashed into the World Trade Twin Towers, killing 2,606 people consisting of civilians, police, and firemen. An additional 309 people are also killed in the other two planes that were hijacked by the terrorists, hitting the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania (Brad Plumer, Nine facts about terrorism in the United States since 9/11). These attacks were unprecedented in the amount of death and destruction caused. They had never before been witnessed by the American people and the government had no way of predicting them, preventing them or preparing for their eventuality.

In response to the reverberating shock felt throughout the United States and the world, President George Bush announced the creation of the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) in the White house and appointed Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge as the Director. Executive Order 13228, issued on October 8, 2001, outlined the tasks of the OHS being to develop and implement a national strategy to coordinate federal, state, and local counter-terrorism efforts to secure the country from and respond to terrorist threats or attacks. (*Brief Documentary History of the Department of Homeland Security*). However, Congress still thought that the OHS seemed to be similar in many ways with the commission and recommended to the executive branch that there should be a singular agency responsible for Homeland Defense. President Bush then submitted a proposal to Congress who then drafted the Homeland Security Act and passed it on November 19, 2002.

The Department of Homeland Security became operational on January 24, 2003 with Tom Ridge named secretary by Congress. The DHS's (Department of Homeland Security) original five directorates were: Border and Transportation Security, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection, Management, and Science and Technology. (*Creation of the Department of Homeland Security*). The initial 2 years were spent organizing the DHS with the directorates given and providing funding for the department. The proposed budget for 2004, allocated roughly around \$36.2 billion, accounting for one-tenth the size of the nation's military defense budget, resulting in a 7 percent jump in domestic defense spending. (*Raphael Perl, The Department of Homeland Security: Background and Challenges*).

On February 15, 2005 Michael Chertoff was sworn in as the new Secretary and immediately set to work reorganizing the Department of Homeland Security. His first course of action was to initiate a second stage review to evaluate the department's operations, policies, and structures. After thorough evaluation, on July 13, 2005, Secretary Chertoff announced a six-point agenda "to ensure that the Department's policies, operations and

structures are aligned in the best way to address potential threats”, reforming the DHS into what it is now. (*Department six-point Agenda*).

The DHS has also seen great success since its conception in 2002, foiling roughly around 50 terror plots. On May 2002, U.S. officials arrested Jose Padilla at Chicago’s O’Hare airport as he returned to the United States from Pakistan, where he met with 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and received al-Qaeda training and instructions. (*JOSE PADILLA, versus C. T. HANFT, U.S.N. Commander, Consolidated Naval Brig.*) Uzair Paracha, a Pakistani citizen with permanent residency status in the U.S., was arrested in March 2003 and charged with five counts of providing material and financial support to al-Qaeda. (*Pakistani on US al-Qaeda charge*) Najibullah Zazi, a 24-year-old Afghan, was arrested after purchasing large quantities of chemicals used to make a TATP bomb, the same type of weapon used in the 2005 bombing of the London Underground and the 2001 shoe-bomb plot. (*Charges Unsealed Against Five Alleged Members of Al-Qaeda Plot to Attack the United States and United Kingdom*).

The examples mentioned showcase how the intelligence and surveillance of the DHS has in fact prevented many terrorist, gun and chemical attacks on US soil, both homegrown and external. Additionally, the DHS has also made many advances on immigration as well. In the fiscal year 2017, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reported 310,531 apprehensions nationwide, 303,916 of which were along the Southwest border, underscoring the need for a southern wall. Additionally, in the fiscal year 2017, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Removal Operations (ERO) conducted 143,470 arrests and 226,119 removals. While the DHS has seen a level of success in the past, will they be able to uphold the same level of security in the future with key policy changes occurring?



Past UN Action

Security issues such as immigration/migration, cyber security, and terrorism have been major focal points of the UN. The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees was established by the General Assembly in 1950. Since then this organization has endeavored to assist refugees across the globe by creating registry systems and refugee camps, assisting with the relocation of resettlement of refugees and providing refugees with basic needs as well as educational services. In addition to the HCR and the many UN resolutions passed which focus on

migration, in 2006 the Global Migration Group was created. This group brought together a variety of UN bodies which deal with migratory issues to form a comprehensive body to deal exclusively with the topic of migration.

Because of the extremely fast rates of technological developments over the past few decades, the issue of cybersecurity and cybercrime are relatively new to the international community. The UN Group on Cybercrime and Cyber Security was created by the High-Level Committee on Programs in 2011. Under the leadership of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) the Group worked to develop cyber policies that were focused on the “external dimension of the issue, in particular on how the UN System mainstreamed cybercrime and cyber security issues into programs delivered to member states” (UN System website). In addition to this Group there are many different UN bodies that deal with aspects of cyber security and from 2001- 2010 roughly 5 UN resolutions were passed in the topic of cyber security relating to criminal misuse of information and international protection of information infrastructures. More recently, in 2016, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research held an event on Cybersecurity and the international implications of new technological developments.

After the September 11 terrorist attacks, the UN Security Council established the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) through resolution 1373. The CTC works to prevent attacks both within national borders and across regions. The CTC Executive Directorate carries out policy decisions and facilitates assistance of states in their efforts to prevent terrorist activities. The CTC has implemented a number of measures to try and prevent future terrorist attacks across the globe. Some of these include ensuring financial restrictions of assets of known or suspected terrorists and information/intelligence sharing across borders to try and prevent attacks.

The topic of gun control has been a polarizing issue within the nation throughout history. In some of the earliest legislation centered around guns, Georgia tried to ban handguns within the state in 1837 but this was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. These and other cases have created a long history of disagreement over how to balance gun laws with the second amendment. In 1871 the National Rifle Association was created and has become a well know gun advocate organization. In 1934 the Senate passes the National Firearms Act which regulated fully automatic weapons and put in place restriction (such as taxes) on production, sale, and transfer of these weapons. The Gun Control Act of 1968 was enacted with the intention of “keeping firearms out of the hands of those not legally entitled to possess them because of age, criminal background, or incompetence.” The Act tried to accomplish this by regulating imported guns, expanding record keeping requirements, and limiting handgun sales specifically. Then, in 1986, the Firearm Owners Protection Act relaxed some of the restrictions that were in place regarding gun and ammunition sales. Another step forward for gun control came in the form of the Brandy Law and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (which banned assault weapons) which were both passed in 1994. The Brandy law enforced background checks and established a 5-day waiting period for gun sales but was ruled unconstitutional in 1997. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System was implemented in 1998 and then an Improvement Act was passed in 2008 which allowed the checks to extend to the mentally ill as well as criminals. Many mass shootings have prompted Senate discussions and debates over gun control, however not much action on the topic has resulted from these mass shootings especially in recent years.

Cyber Security

As cyber security is a relatively new issue, there is a pretty short history of legislation that has been passed on the topic. One of the earliest laws to be established on cyber security was the Cyber Security Research and Development Act which was passed in 2001 and amended in 2002. The Act primarily allocated increased funding for research and programs centered around computer and network security (CNS). In 2014 the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act was passed and was designed to “facilitate and support the development of a voluntary, consensus-based, industry-led set of standards and procedures to cost-effectively reduce cyber risks to critical infrastructure” (Congress website). This Act also involved collaboration with the private sector on this issue.

Then the National Cybersecurity Protection Act of 2014 created a “national cybersecurity and communications integration center in the Department of Homeland Security” (Congress website). In 2015 the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act was passed and does exactly what it says, authorizes a high degree of information sharing through many levels of government.

Immigration

The Naturalization Act of 1790 first established rules for obtaining U.S. citizenship, since that law, much has changed on the issue of immigration in America. In 1891 the Bureau of Immigration was created to oversee and implement immigration laws. The Immigration and Nationality act was then passed in 1952. The Act was the culmination of other immigration legislation into one comprehensive system. It affirmed the quota system, which had been implemented in 1924 and was eventually abolished in 1965, prioritized relatives of citizens and skilled workers, and created stricter screening processes. In 1980 the Refugee act removed refugee status as preference category for citizenship. The Commission on Immigration Reform was created in 1990 to examine immigration policies and the Immigration Act passed in the same year updated many immigration policies to much more closely resemble the category system there is today. In 2002 Immigration enforcement was allocated to Homeland Security. Since then there has been multiple reforms of immigration policy but no entirely new laws passed. Recently Obama enacted the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program through executive order and legislation on the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act has been introduced but not passed.

Domestic Terrorism

Although extensive anti-terrorism legislation was passed after September 2001, there were laws passed on anti-terrorism before the attacks. The Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act was passed in 1989 and was designed to protect the U.S. from biological attacks through the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention. In 1996 the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act was passed, and it undertook the goals of deterring terrorism and providing assistance to victims it also reformed Habeas Corpus. Executive order 13224 was enacted by Bill Clinton in 2001 and made it possible to seize assets of known or suspected terrorists in an effort to prevent future attacks. The USA PATRIOT ACT was also passed in 2001 and is a comprehensive law to protect against terrorism which is designed to “enhance domestic security against terrorism, surveillance procedures, and immigration provisions” (Congress website) among other goals. In 2002 the Homeland Security Act “Established a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as an executive department of the United States” (Congress website) with the main goal of preventing terrorist attacks and other terrorist activities within the U.S.

Current Situation

Homeland security is defined as “the national effort to ensure a homeland that is safe, secure, and resilient against terrorism and other hazards where American interests, aspirations, and ways of life can thrive to the national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce the vulnerability of the U.S. to terrorism, and minimize the damage from attacks that do occur.” Thomas Homan, chief of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, has publicly stated that immigration enforcement has thrived under Trump’s leadership. The Trump administration has taken a very aggressive stance on immigration and immigration enforcement, but that is not the only thing that he has taken a hard stance on.

Overall, Trump appeals to citizens who are ready for stricter enforcement of laws, and a greater sense of national security. With his policies to erect a wall along the United States-Mexico border, he has eased the minds of many. Furthermore, since coming into office, Trump has thrown out Obama-era policies (and staff) in favor of a conservative agenda. One of his first actions as President was initiating an travel ban via Executive Order on certain countries. President Trump’s opinion on immigration has been made clear by both his actions and words.

Through speeches and social media, he has released statements that much of the public has deemed racist, but he maintains is not. His controversial policies on immigration aside, much change has happened since January 2017, particularly a huge jump in arrests of illegal immigrants who have not committed crimes other than immigration itself. While many support his efforts to eliminate undocumented people in the country and end DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), many vehemently oppose it, and are actively working against it. Sanctuary cities across the country refuse to adhere to federal law, posing a multitude of jurisdiction issues. However, aside from these highly-publicized actions that have been mostly sidelined due to funding or the courts, he has taken little real action to increase national security.

The current state of national security is questionable, following the media explosion of the investigation into Russian collusion with the Trump 2016 campaign. With the integrity of government being called into question, and the budget cuts to programs run by the Department of Homeland Security, Americans see increasingly on the news about domestic terrorism and less of Congressional action. However, with current administration planning to increase the military budget extensively, America's international front is looking stronger than ever.

Bloc Positions

Republicans

Republicans take a conservative stance towards issues, which means they seek to maintain current law and traditional customs rather than alter or expand law. With Trump's policies bringing in praises from the GOP, he has a solid base of support, consisting of citizens who oppose radical change and want protection for their rights. The GOP, aligned with the NRA (National Rifle Association), strongly oppose any legislation that threatens gun rights and gun ownership. Affirming their constitutional right to own guns, Americans who feel that the NRA and GOP represent their ideologies do not want drastic change to gun laws. Furthermore, they do not want to see change regarding most current laws. Being known for viewing liberal policies as threats to American society, they tend to disagree with loose enforcement of law. They are often characterized as defenders of the law, for they usually support traditional laws and do not feel it is fair for those who break the law to be exempted. For example, they are likely to feel that illegal immigrants are aware of their actions but choose to break the law by entering the United States, and so should be treated as criminals regardless of the circumstances. This is in direct opposition of Democratic opinion. In addition, Republicans tend to be hostile towards action that decreases the range of security and seek a balance between personal liberty and maximum national security.

Democrats

Taking a liberal stance on controversies facing the nation, Democrats tend to be okay with a more *liberal* interpretation of law. They see the current events and mass shootings and seek to take immediate action to end it, even if it compromises the second amendment. The Democratic Party has been known to align with the ideology that the Constitution cannot remain effective *and* remain unchanged. As the United States is thrust into the twenty-first century, certain actions must be taken to allow the foundational laws to adapt to the future. In addition, Democrats often feel that the greater good is more important than private citizens and may support actions that do not strip citizens of their rights but amend them in order to protect the nation as a whole. While recognizing potential threats posed by looser immigration laws, most Democrats feel there is a middle ground that balances background checks and vetting with allowing immigrants and refugees a home in the United States. Democrats try to see the pros of allowing more immigration and use that to justify the cons, for example the how a relatively inexpensive workforce can create economic growth, especially helping companies that are newer.

Overall, the Democratic Party is appalled by many of the actions of current administration but has voiced that it is interested in pursuing a bi-partisan agenda.

Subtopics

Cyber Security

It is said that today's society is a hyper connected one, with over 2 billion people connected online. With just about 30% of the world's population using the internet, it has unlocked vast amounts of resources and wealth, also bringing ease of communication. But with so many people and so much traffic on the internet, online crime becomes easy with thieves lurking in the hidden corners of the webs, waiting to strike. Cybercrime is where computers or networks are a tool, a target, or a place of criminal activity. Any use of a computer as an instrument to further illegal ends, such as committing fraud, stealing identities, and violating privacies.

While the cyberspace is safe for the most part, sensitive information is still gold for prying eyes and online terrorists. Therefore, companies and various organizations have developed ways to defend against the attacks of these individuals, and to protect valuable information. Every year there has roughly been around 16,856 cyber-attacks, targeting both American citizens and industrial grade companies including databases of the US government, storing high risk and classified information through high end encryption that only the most experienced personal can get through. Even though the government is mostly secure from any external attacks, regular citizens, who have all of their information stored online are at serious risk, proving to be a problem worth national attention.

The most common cyber-attack can range from identity theft to fraud of credit card through methods such as phishing and pharming which primarily depend on the user's fault. These methods can also be used to disrupt a company's production with methods previously mentioned including attacks which can freeze a company's website or such. When an attack on a corporate level occurs, as such has before with companies such as Snapchat and Uber, the security of the American cyberspace, and the enforcements around it are really brought to question.

Immigration

During the 100 days of the Trump administration, more than 41,000 illegal immigrants were arrested by the ICE. The ICE has taken a stance against sanctuary cities and has demanded all local officials in all jurisdictions cooperate with ICE requests to detain illegal immigrants who have been picked up by state and local



law enforcement for non-immigration- related crimes. According to Homan, the demand for criminal illegal immigrants in local jails has increased 80 percent. The federal government reports that arrests by deportation officers have soared during Donald Trump’s presidency, while Border Patrol arrests have plunged to a 45-year low. Despite this significant drop in arrests, arrests have increased every month since May, and are largely made up of families and unaccompanied children. During the most recent fiscal year, border authorities stopped people traveling as families 104,997 times on the Mexican border and unaccompanied children 48,681 times. Former Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly has rejected the Obama administration’s intentions to limit deportations to public safety threats, convicted criminals and recent border crossers, which renders anyone in the country illegally vulnerable.

Additionally, Trump has yet to obtain funding for his proposed border wall with Mexico and the government has recently struggled to fill vacancies at the ICE, while the CBP has faced allegations of excessive force. Recently, the Trump administration has proposed sharp cuts to programs that actively prevent domestic terrorism and prepare localities to respond; this has been widely criticized in the wake of a series of deadly mass shootings and homegrown extremism. President Donald Trump’s 2018 budget proposal included steep cuts to numerous grant programs run by the Department of Homeland Security. These programs work towards terrorism and violent extremism preparedness and prevention. More than \$300 million is planned to be cut from such programs. The administration has not shown the prevention of terrorism to be a priority. The grant programs Countering Violent Extremism and Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks would be eliminated entirely from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s budget under Trump’s proposed action. The administration has stated that the goals of these programs can be achieved through grants like the State Homeland Security Program, but these grants would also be slashed in Trump’s budget. Overall, the DHS grant program’s budgets cut by more than \$200 million, the State Homeland Security Program budget would be cut by \$117 million, and the Urban Area Security Initiative would be cut by \$150 million.

The Second Amendment

There are many controversies both with the sale and distribution of firearms, as well as the legislation regarding the people who can legally purchase guns. Currently, it is up to states to determine the laws surrounding gun use and ownership, which often leads to inconsistent laws across the United States. In most states, very deadly weapons are available for public purchase. This separates the U.S. from many countries around the world, where legal gun ownership is unusual and difficult to obtain. One critical issue with gun sales is the gun show loophole. Also known as the Brady bill loophole or private sale exemption, the term refers to the sale of firearms by private sellers, including those done at gun shows, or “secondary market.”

Another aspect of guns that sets the U.S. apart from other nations is the prevalence of mass shootings. Other countries, like Australia, where guns are heavily regulated, do not see nearly as much gun violence. Australia has not had another mass shooting for twenty-two years ago, when an incredibly deadly shooting pushed lawmakers to make changes. Days after the February 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, President Trump ordered the Justice Department and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to review bump fire stocks — devices that allow a semi-automatic rifle to be fired in fully-automatic mode. Trump has implied that he would support the banning of fully automatic assault weapons, as well as raising the minimum age for buying military-style weapons from 18 to 21.

Domestic Terrorism

The U.S. PATRIOT ACT defines domestic terrorism by stating that “domestic terrorism occurs primarily within U.S. territorial jurisdiction, and involves (A) ... acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended— (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping...” From another approach the FBI’s

simpler definition of a domestic terrorist is “Americans attacking Americans based on U.S.-based extremist ideologies.” Coming up with a comprehensive definition of domestic terrorism has clearly not been an easy task and it is an important part of effectively combating the issue. Domestic terrorists have been responsible for numerous attacks since the September 11 attacks, often utilize non-traditional tactics when carrying out attacks and have been assisted by the internet and rapid technology development. These factors are all important to consider when discussing the topic of domestic terrorism. With the immigration debate creating high tensions about terrorism in general, it is vital that the U.S. can prevent domestic terrorist attacks and ensure the safety of the American people, especially during this time of political polarization in which many extremist values emerge.

Guiding Questions

1. What themes emerge as you research this theme, and how do they correlate to both national and international security?
2. How does one balance citizens' rights with the protection of national security, where is the line drawn between the greater good and personal privacy?
3. Who are the culprits of security breaches, and how do we prosecute them? How do you target certain individuals committing crimes without generalizing a population?
4. To what extent does party loyalty play a role in issues that are more complex and divisive like those outlined here? How does your Senator feel about these issues?
5. What are ways we can cross the aisle and work across party lines to solve these pressing issues?