Second Speaker Debate Speech Example

Topic: Everyone under 18 should be subject to an 8:00 pm curfew

Affirmative captain:

Ladies and gentlemen, I am here to present the motion "Everyone under 18 should be subject to an 8:00 pm curfew". By "curfew" here, we mean a law stating that all those under 18 must be indoors at 8:00 pm. By this we intend a law passed in Hong Kong. The police would enforce it.

We all know that some young people have very serious problems. They buy drugs. They have sex and become pregnant when they are too young. They begin drinking even as young as 13. Many parents find it impossible to control the behaviour of their children late at night. Some teenagers stay out all night, and the parents can do nothing about it. They do not do their schoolwork. If the next generation is poorly educated, not only they themselves but their families and all of us will suffer.

We propose to solve this problem with a curfew. If young people know that the police will arrest them if they stay out late, they will go home willingly to their parents. Most drug deals and sexual activities take place at night, so these problems would be much reduced. They will have less opportunity to drink, because they are either at school or with their parents in the earlier part of the day.

We have suggested 8:00 pm as an appropriate time. This will leave enough time for them to study. Thank you.

Opposition captain:

Ladies and gentlemen, my team and I are firmly opposed to this motion for three reasons.

First, the problems this motion is supposed to address are not really serious. Young people in Hong Kong are generally well-behaved by global standards. The number of teenage pregnancies is quite small, and the rate of drunkenness and drug use among our young people is low. And yet our opponent wishes us to believe that this very strong measure is necessary.

Second, it is impractical. The Affirmative side seems to believe that the police have unlimited resources. They have a lot to do now chasing criminals and drug dealers. How can we expect them to spend their time chasing ordinary teenagers who just want to go to a movie?

Third, it would not achieve its goal. My opponent has already granted that it is impossible to drink and have sex in the daytime. We submit that all the activities that now take place at night would just happen in the daytime.

Fourth, and most importantly, it is a major violation of the rights of young people. The great majority of young people just want to go to a movie or to a dance, and have no intention of buying drugs or having sex. Even if they did have sex, we must ask whether this is a worse evil than the crime of limiting their freedom. We submit that the proposed measure is unjustified.

Affirmative 1st speaker:

Ladies and gentlemen, my opponent has just argued that drug use and teenage pregnancy are not serious problems. How is it possible to hold this position? Imagine a family living in a regular flat in Kowloon. There is a girl of fifteen in the family. She meets bad companions at school who encourage her to stop studying and instead waste her time chatting with them. She starts to stay out later and later. One night, coming out of a night club, they meet an acquaintance who sells them crack cocaine. Now, the problem with crack cocaine, ladies and gentlemen, is that it may feel good at first, but the user very quickly becomes addicted. The girl becomes addicted. When she doesn't get her drug, she starts to shake and vomit. Her personality changes and she becomes unreasonably angry and anxious. Naturally, in these circumstances, she will do what she must do to support her habit. She will first steal from her family, and then, she might well become a prostitute. All this could have been prevented if she had been made to stay home at night. My opponent has said that the "rate" of drug addiction is low in Hong Kong. How can we even think about the "rate" when there is someone in our society who suffers as this family suffers? I submit that my opponent is using statistics to keep the discussion cool, where this discussion should be hot. We should be angry that such things happen at all, and do what we must do to take care of it.

Opposition 1st speaker:

Ladies and gentlemen, my opponent has painted a very disturbing picture. Indeed, the family of the girl in the story has suffered. The problem is – it is just a story. My opponent has not used a real example, and has refused to admit that the numbers make a difference.

My opponent has not even shown that one Hong Kong family has the problems she describes. The United Nations publishes a list of 98 countries and territories in order of cocaine use. Hong Kong ranks 97th. While in the United States, 2.8 percent of the population uses cocaine in some form, the figure is 0.002 percent in Hong Kong. That is, out of 1000 people in the United States, 28 use cocaine. In Hong Kong, the figure is not even 1. In fact, out of 1,000,000 people in Hong Kong, the number of users would be around 20. In the total population of Hong Kong, there are only about 140 users, including men and women of all ages, and including those who use cocaine in less powerful forms. Is there even one family in the situation my opponent describes? If there is one, surely it is better to treat that one family as a special case, instead of putting a million young people effectively in prison.

This example also serves to show that the numbers make a difference. They make a difference because the balance of things is important.

Affirmative 2nd Speaker:

Ladies and gentlemen, it is true that crack cocaine is not our number one drug problem in Hong Kong. But we are getting away from our topic here. The issue is not whether crack cocaine is the top drug, but whether there is a drug problem.

In a study published last year, Poh C. Lai and Ann Mak concluded that heroin use in certain areas of Hong Kong had risen. The website WD (Wrongdiagnosis.com) estimates that there are 380,000 alcohol abusers in Hong Kong. And a report of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups suggests that 80% of those with alcohol problems begin drinking when they are still underage. In the face of this evidence, can our opponents really say that there is no problem? Just because certain drugs are rare, do they believe that there is no drug and alcohol problem? They cannot deny that alcoholism and other addictions destroy lives. Thank you.

Opposition 2nd speaker:

So, our opponents have changed their position. They now believe that statistics are very important. Yet it is equally important to take care how they are used. The same report by Lai and Mak about heroin reports an overall decline in heroin use across Hong Kong. If the problem is declining, why should we take measures that will curtail our young people's freedom? The website WD lists alcohol abuse rates with a warning: what they have done is taking the rate of alcohol abuse from the United States, and dividing it by the population of Hong Kong. It is very obvious that this is not at all valid. Do most alcohol abusers start drinking when they are underage? Certainly. No one would expect anything else. But our earlier point still stands unchallenged: is it not true that drinking would just happen in the daytime?

Our opponents keep insisting on the problem of drug and alcohol abuse, but they have failed to show that the problem is so serious as to merit this very strong solution. How can we justify denying well-behaved young people the right to go to movies in the evening just so that a social problem concentrated in a few areas of the city can – very questionably – be dealt with? We ask you to reject the motion.