

Debate Guide:

Supporters

Opponents

Defining the Issue: Is there a problem? Does action need to be taken?

Proponents of the resolution need to use evidence to demonstrate that there is a problem and that action should be taken.

Options for evidence include:

1. Presenting data about obesity levels—and/or other health issues—in your community.
2. Presenting data about the way that food item placement in grocery store checkout lanes can encourage people to make healthy, or unhealthy food choices.
3. Presenting data about the way that regular, unhealthy checkout lanes impact food choices.
4. Presenting case studies from communities that have successfully used healthy food checkout aisles.

Opponents of the resolution will argue that this resolution is unnecessary by challenging the relevance or truthfulness of the evidence of the problem. They also may argue that the problem does not exist.

Opponents might say

1. That obesity is not an important issue in the community.
2. That national or state data about obesity does not apply to your community, because data at those levels is too broad to be relevant.
3. That the way food is marketed does not have an impact on food choices.
4. That the kinds of food options lining grocery store checkout lanes do not play a role in customers making unhealthy food choices.

Designing the solution: Will this resolution effectively address the issue?

Proponents will try to demonstrate how the resolution can encourage an improvement of the community's health and not cause an unacceptably big loss of grocery store profits. They might argue, in fact, that the resolution may help increase profits.

Consider:

1. Presenting case studies from communities that have successfully used healthy food checkout aisles.
2. Discussing the influence that checkout lane foods have on grocery store customers' food choices. If customers often impulsively buy food from checkout lanes, then they might impulsively buy healthy food from those lanes, if they carried healthier options.

Opponents will argue that the resolution won't encourage community health to improve, and/or that it will cause participating grocery stores to drop too much.

It is useful to take into account:

1. The reality that grocery store owners are a vital part of the healthy food checkout lane resolution, and that their interests must be taken into account if the initiative is to be successful.
2. The fact that while there are some examples of the healthy food checkout lane being effective (see the Healthy Food Checkout Lane Fact Sheet) little research has been done on it before, so there is not a large amount of information about this policy.

Examining the consequences of the resolution: How will the resolution affect people's lives?

Proponents will argue that the positive outcomes of the resolution outweigh the negative consequences.

Consider:

1. How having healthy food options in checkout lanes could encourage customers to make healthier food choices.
2. That local government is meant to represent the community's interests, and that healthier food choices are part of those interests, so making suggestions for how grocery stores can create a healthier food environment can be part of the government's role.
3. That some grocery store owners might be convinced to implement healthy food checkout lanes because the lanes can have a positive influence on the community where their grocery store is located. Plus they might be intrigued by the lane's potential profit opportunities.

Opponents will argue that the negative consequences of the resolution outweigh the positive outcomes.

Consider

1. That some people may not think that the local government should encourage grocery stores to change the arrangement of their products, because they feel that that is not within the local government's proper role.
2. That some people may not think that checkout lanes should carry healthy foods. They might like the less healthy options that are commonly available.
3. That some grocery store owners may determine that a healthy food checkout lane will cause them to lose too much profit and not want to implement one.