Prosperity  
Affirmative Case by Shaylea Sawyers



This case tells the familiar story of a middle class that's dying at the hand of liberal economic policies. It takes its persuasive power from anecdotes that many judges can relate too. Your rhetoric doesn't need to be flashy; the narrative sells itself.

You're appealing to what the judge already knows. The downside of that is your opponent will sound a lot more novel in comparison. Bring every point back to your core story, and don't let the judge get distracted by your opponent.

Some negatives might attempt to overwhelm you with evidence. Only address what directly relates to your case. Your easiest mistake with this case is chasing rabbit trails. Resist the temptation.

With this matter of fact case, you can have a clear round and a clean win.

Affirmative Case: Prosperity

Shannon and her co-workers had gotten the news back in October: The factory was closing. Ball bearings would move to a new plant in Monterrey, Mexico. Roller bearings would go to McAllen, Tex. About 300 workers would lose their jobs.

The bosses called it “a business decision.” To Shannon, it felt like a backhand across the face. Her boyfriend tried to console her. “We’re survivors,” he told her. “We’ll get by.” Shannon’s daughter, Nicole Wynne, was not so sure. A high school senior, she had dreamed of being the first in her family to go to college. Figuring out how to pay for it kept her up at night. This news made her worry even more. And Shannon’s 23-year-old son, Kent Roberts Jr. — known as Bub — depended on Shannon to help support his disabled 4-year-old daughter, who had just barely survived a litany of major surgeries. “Oh my God Mom,” Nicole said. “What are you going to do?” Shannon had no idea. She wished the new factory in Mexico would burn to the ground. She cried that night. And the next night. And the next.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Shannon’s story, told by the New York Times in October of 2017, is one of many. Across the country, factory workers who have depended on their jobs for years are waking up to find those jobs being sold to the highest bidder overseas. It’s one of countless thorns that free trade has stuck in the side of the American middle class. It’s because I believe that this free trade is worthless when it creates unfairness, that I stand

**Resolved: When in conflict, governments should value fair trade above free trade.**

But let’s not get ahead of ourselves. We first need to define our terms.

# Definitions

According Collin's English Dictionary, free trade is:

international trade that is free of such government interference as import quotas, export subsidies, protective tariffs, etc.[[2]](#footnote-2)

And Cambridge Dictionary defines fair trade as:

a way of buying and selling products that makes certain that the people who produce the goods receive a fair price.[[3]](#footnote-3)

To show you want these terms mean in the context of this round, let's look at some

# Value: Prosperity

My value for this round will be prosperity. Merriam Webster defines prosperity as:

the condition of being successful or thriving; especially: economic well-being[[4]](#footnote-4)

Most people struggle to provide for themselves and their families. Good trade policies make that job easier, not harder. A government should never actively prevent its people from succeeding, which is why…

# Reason to Prefer: Protection of Citizens

When we value prosperity in trade, we ensure the best financial protection for citizens. International trade is complex and it's easy for a government to get distracted. With this value, we keep our eyes on the prize.

# Contention One: Free Trade Drains a Nation

Free trade is most commonly found in the form of free trade agreements. In these agreements, countries come together and collectively deregulate trade. If you're a fan of capitalism, this sounds like a good thing. We usually love it when the government gets out of the free market's way. Unfortunately, the reality of free trade fails to meet expectations. Take the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA for example.

## Application: NAFTA

Remember Shannon's story from the beginning of my speech? She was one of NAFTA's victims, and she's not alone. Jeff Faux, founder of the Economic Policy Institute, elaborates on NAFTA's ill effects.

By establishing the principle that U.S. corporations could relocate production elsewhere and sell back into the United States, NAFTA undercut the bargaining power of American workers, which had driven the expansion of the middle class since the end of World War II. The result has been 20 years of stagnant wages and the upward redistribution of income, wealth and political power.[[5]](#footnote-5)

He goes to explain how NAFTA caused 700,000 jobs to move to Mexico and made it easier for U.S. employers to strip workers of pay and benefits. While the free market is great most of the time, freedom taken to its extreme leaves people vulnerable to abuse. No people can prosper when their government has rendered them powerless. Free trade fails to protect citizens.

# Contention Two: Fair Trade Creates Prosperity

Don't get me wrong, free trade can be great, but it needs limits. Absolute freedom leads to anarchy. Our government must reserve the power to protect citizens from exploitation. That's where fair trade comes in. Fair trade stands for domestic production. It stops foreign companies from running small farmers and factory workers out of business. To get an idea of what fair trade looks like, let's turn to our President's recently imposed steel tariffs.

## Application: Steel tariffs

Stephen Moore, distinguished visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation, points out…

our global competitors generally charge tariffs that are two to three times higher than our own. They are taxing American goods and services out of the market.[[6]](#footnote-6)

This imbalance prevents Americans from prospering, so the President leveled the playing field. According to Forbes Magazine, Trump imposed a 25% tariff on steel that successfully protected U.S. Production.

AK Steel CEO Roger Newport praised Trump’s decision, saying he fully supports “the actions he plans to take to stem the tide of unfairly traded steel imports that threaten the national security of our country.”

Newport wasn’t alone. Drew Wilcox, vice president of steel giant Nucor, called the tariffs “a clear message to foreign competitors that dumping steel products into our market will no longer be tolerated.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

When governments value fair trade, they have the power to properly care for their people. MarketWatch reports, under our current polices, the U.S. Economy grew at its fastest rate in almost 4 years. We prospered when we decided that freedom, while important, should never come at the price of fairness.

Opposing This Case

The economic theory of this case has two flaws.

First, its evidence against free trade is extremely isolated. It's one thing to argue that NAFTA is a faulty policy. It's quite another to say that NAFTA's faults disprove the entire theory of free trade. It's like using a splinter in your finger to justify amputating your hand.

Restore the judge's faith in free trade by explaining its basis in free market principles. You could also present evidence of NAFTA being beneficial or of other free trade policies producing wealth. Paint a picture in which NAFTA is the exception, far from the norm.

The second hole is in its advocacy of fair trade. It says that others are going to hurt us so we should hurt them back. This is the mentality of elementary school bullies who get in fistfights on the playground. It only escalates the situation and increases strain on the economy.

Eventually, someone has to step back and be the adult. If our economy is under attack, it can't flourish. We're best off if the government steps back and lets the market run itself.

1. Farah Stockman. “Becoming a Steelworker Liberated Her. Then Her Job Moved to Mexico.” The New York Times. Oct 14, 2017. accessed July 23, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/14/us/union-jobs-mexico-rexnord.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Free Trade.” Collins Dictionary. Accessed July 29, 2018. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/free-trade> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Fair Trade.” Cambridge Dictionary. Accessed July 29, 2018. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/fair-trade> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “Prosperity.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Accessed July 29, 2018. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prosperity> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Jeff Faux. “NAFTA’s Impact on U.S. Workers.” Economic Policy Institute. December 9, 2013. Accessed July 7, 2018. <https://www.epi.org/blog/naftas-impact-workers/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Stephen Moore. “This is how Trump can win on trade.” The Hill. June 25, 2018. Accessed July 24, 2018. <http://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/393949-this-is-how-trump-can-win-on-trade> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Frank Holmes. “Are Trump's Steel And Aluminum Tariffs Good For America?” Forbes. Mar 5, 2018. Accessed July 28, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2018/03/05/are-trumps-steel-and-aluminum-tariffs-good-for-america/#179053931aba> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)