

From Angelique:

Let me walk through the mechanics first and then zoom out a bit.

If a student suspects their opponent is using AI or quoting directly from an AI-generated response, the reality is always going to be best handled in the round. Debate is an adversarial space. **When a team believes a rule has been violated, they raise it on the flow, articulate what the violation is, explain the standard, and tell the judge why it matters and why it should affect the ballot. That structure is not unique to AI. It is how we handle absolutely any argument in debate, whether it's basic stuff, advanced theory, disclosure disputes, etc.**

It is also important to be very clear about something specific to CHSSA. Our judges do not directly review evidence in the round, per our rules. So when we say this should be addressed in-round, we are absolutely never advocating that a judge should inspect a laptop, click links, or independently verify sources. Judges evaluate the arguments presented to them. If a team believes AI misuse occurred, they should persuade the judge through argumentation. The judge resolves the issue based on what is argued publicly, not by conducting their own investigation.

As to securing evidence, there is no mechanism (nor should there be one!), for adults to search a student's private device, demand browser history, or inspect personal files. That raises serious privacy and liability concerns-- and most importantly, ethically it is not at all appropriate. Even if such a system existed, it would be incredibly easy to circumvent. **AI outputs can be deleted, paraphrased, or generated elsewhere. The enforcement problem here is not just legal and ethical. It is practical.**

For that reason, the **primary arena for resolving these concerns is the round itself.**

**In almost all cases, this would not begin with a protest.** The expectation would be that the team raises the issue in the round and gives the judge the opportunity to resolve it. A post-round protest would only make sense if there were clear, independently verifiable evidence of a rule violation that could not reasonably have been addressed during the debate. **Suspicion, tone, or stylistic impressions would not meet that threshold.**

And yes, ultimately **the accusing team must convince the judge. Not to put too fine a point on things, but that is how debate functions. If they cannot persuade the judge that a violation occurred and that it should impact the ballot, it is unlikely**

**that a protest committee would reach a different conclusion absent new, objective information (which again, would be very hard for any group of adults to ethically source).**

I also want to add something that I think is even more important than enforcement mechanics.

One of **the strongest responses to suspected AI misuse is simply better debating.** If a team believes their opponent is relying on AI-generated material, **the most effective move is to interrogate the evidence. Ask for full citations. Ask about the author's credentials. Ask about methodology. Ask about publication context.** Ask follow-up questions that require actual subject matter understanding rather than surface level summary.

As a coach, **I do not see this as a new problem so much as a new version of an old one. For years, students have relied on prewritten briefs without ever opening the underlying studies. The solution was never surveillance.** It was better cross-examination. Ask about methodology. Ask about author qualifications. Ask about context. Students who genuinely understand their research can defend it. Students who do not, cannot. Debate exposes that naturally.

The same applies here. **AI frequently fabricates citations, mischaracterizes studies, and hallucinates details. A debater who truly understands their research should be able to defend it.** If they cannot, that becomes a credibility and weight argument in the round. Judges, even (and maybe especially?) lay ones, are absolutely capable of evaluating that based on what is argued in front of them.

In some ways, **this is a reminder that the core skills of debate still work. We may be in a more digitized world than we were ten years ago, but critical engagement, rigorous questioning, and persuasive argumentation remain our best tools. I really believe that rather than attempting to create invasive enforcement systems that compromise student privacy and expose leagues to liability, we can focus on education, clarity of expectations, and in-round accountability.**

Organizations like CHSSA and NSDA can adopt AI policies and enforce clear violations where reasonably possible. But we **also have to be honest about the limits of enforceability in a rapidly evolving technological landscape. Perfect policing is not realistic. Strong pedagogy, however, always is.**