Guide to Dueling Legislation

In the first half, debaters advocate for one of two competing bills. Instead of a traditional affirmative and negative, each side argues for its preferred legislation. The chamber must decide which proposal creates the better outcome.

It is not enough to show that your bill is good or that the other bill is bad. Explain how your proposal addresses the crisis, answer objections to it, and show why its results would be better than those produced by the competing bill.

Engage the other side's explanation of the problem and its proposed solution. When criticizing the opposing bill, explain why that criticism gives the chamber a reason to prefer yours.

Compare the consequences of both proposals. Consider magnitude (how many people are affected and how severely), probability (how likely the outcome is), timeframe (when it occurs), and duration (how long it lasts). Explain why the comparison you choose should decide the debate.

For example, if both bills improve public safety, compare how much protection they provide, how quickly they work, and what risks each creates. Acknowledge disadvantages to your bill and explain why its overall outcome remains preferable.