Reflection: Good-Bad-Ugly of Drug Testing for Welfare Recipients Legislative Simulation

Overall, a very good simulation. I was pleased. That said, there is much room for improvement. Please find below some thoughts of your classmates. Some of these I discussed yesterday and are general observations. Understand that everyone views success differently and these reflections represent those different viewpoints. Read through them and look fort themes. If two people bring up the same pint but one says it was goo and another says it was bad, then you can’t make much out of those comments. However, if everyone is pointing out the same concept in their good or bad, those need to be taken seriously. Please talk with me if you have any concerns.

The Good:

What I really liked was that they were using some real MT related statistics, some of the stakeholders nailed it, doing good with questions and using opposition to counter and strengthen their stance. Alexa asked some really good clarification questions so it looked great when a couple stakeholders took the questions and solidified their argument rather than allow any holes to be poked through it. Alexa did great at remaining neutral. Overall, I thought they all did pretty good compared to last time.

Stakeholders: Included statistics about MT, Brought up amendments, Quick with answers, Made good

emotional connections, Connected MT into, the presentation, Brought up alternate solutions, Brought up multiple SCOTUS cases, Spoke loud and clear, and Dressed up

Senators: Clear questions, Soft-spoken but harsh undertones, Made a clear choice instead of both, and Dressed up

The description of Act 200 was clear and easy to comprehend. Hadley’s proposal was also very well written with an easy understanding of the bill with great reasoning and benefits. I personally found Sarah’s arguments very compelling with other factors rather than the common obvious presented in almost all of the others. She was very clear on who would pay for testing, which seems like a significant factor that most ignored. She went in depth on how the bill is unconstitutional which I thought should be the sole argument of most as it was a legislative hearing and should be proven constitutional or not. However, she also touched on the social aspects and how drug testing would financially and even emotionally hurt the low-income Montanans as the bill would take away their right to survive. She also described how other positions in the government receive government funding and are not required to test, such as legislators. She seemed to cover all her basis. I also enjoyed listening to Krystan as well. Her comparison to drug testing students at a public school was very eye opening and gave a perspective that others did not. She described how those receiving welfare are subject to scrutiny as welfare is voluntary. Krystan was hammered during questioning on denying privacy to citizens, but she really stood her ground and was confident that the bill was constitutional.

I think the simulation was very well organized and a lot less stressful than last time due to the fact that we had way more time this time around compared to last time. It seems like people understood things a lot better this time as well. I think pretty much all of them put in good time and effort into their speeches and made some good arguments whether they were for or against the bill. The commission did better than last time (even though that isn’t saying much lol). I do think they did ask some good questions. They also actually came to an agreement as opposed to last time with us. As a whole, I think this one went a lot better than the last one. I hope ours tomorrow can go just as good if not better.

Each speaker had a clear direction during the simulation, The Senators asked a fare amount of questions, Senators addressed the bill clearly and gave a thorough motion to alter the policy to test welfare recipients though psychiatric questionnaires.

I think Sarah was the best speaker as she clearly outlined her stance and was confident and knowledgeable about her argument. The speakers in all were really good. I think some would be better but they were pretty nervous. I think the questions from Hadley and Alexa were good and it definitely shows that Alexa is a debater.

Each Stakeholder dressed professionally and Everyone seemed to have the understanding of their prepared speech

The Bad:

I would have liked to hear more from Hadley as the sponsor. No stakeholders sounded like they were very passionate about their stance. I was hoping someone would pull, or try pulling a filibuster on the committee, it was disappointing to not see that done.

Stakeholders: Timid and said um a lot, Spoke as a single person, not as a representative, National data, not state, Argued with questions, Weak on the cost of the program

Senators: Clarifying questions not hypotheticals, More questions from Alexa than Hadley, One question seemed very apples to oranges concerning job training and drugs, Spoke too fast during the

conclusion which made the fine details confusing

The verdict made absolutely no sense and I have no idea how they decided on the alteration. The two senators started well but seemed to lose me at the end. I was very confused with the physiological and psychological aspects in questioning and in the revision as these two were not a common factor in presentations or the original bill which confused half the room. I feel as though these factors specifically from Josie’s presentation which was just a poor choice because I think the questions had Josie so confused that she answered them with less confidence and with no understanding. The same exact question was asked to all who presented, and some had no information on who would pay as it did not fit their stakeholders.

I would say that some of the questions the senators asked were kinda weird. Particularly about who would pay for the drug testing or how it would work since it’s them who decides that. There were also some times where it seemed like they were unsure of things or seemed rather bored. It was still better than last time though. Also, even though I still thought the stakeholders did good with their speeches, I do think maybe some of them could have maybe done even better if they had talked to some people about it. Since it didn’t seem like some of them did that.

While the senators did ask questions I'm not sure they were truly the right ones. Some of the questions asked should have been answered by the senators rather than the stakeholders.  Questions like, “Who would pay for the drug tests?” and “Is it worth the money?” Some stakeholders did not fulfill their full time up at the podium which I think hurt their cause. They could have pushed and poked the Senators until their point was made.

I think some people fell apart when they started answering questions. Also, there was some dead time after the 5 stakeholders went and when the audience members would be able to speak.

Committee should have announced what they were doing after the last stakeholder spoke there was awkward silence and they seemed to look to Mr. Faulhaber for help

The Ugly:

It wasn’t fun to watch Alexa be able to corner stakeholders in questions until they felt compelled to agree, it was a bit aggressive. Some of the stakeholders seemed to have just written an essay, read it and not entirely understood what they had read by answering questions in ways that completely oppose their stakeholders’ beliefs.

There was a poor use of public resources and Some peoples speech ended up hurting them more then helping

Overall

Josie and Krystan did the best presenting, Senators did well with presenting even if it was a little fast, A lot better than the first one, Confused about DOT(Krystan) and fostercare(Brianna)

My favorite performance of the day came from Krystan who had an excellent use of precedent in her explanation to support the bill. The 4th amendment may protect you from urine tests etc but not from questionnaires as they are optional. I guess I find it strange that the 4th amendment protects people against unreasonable searches, even if it is federally funded. You would think the government would have full jurisdiction in the types of programs it makes.

Dorian spoke well and used good data to support his claims. He did well at answering questions in ways that benefitted his side

However, at times it was difficult to discern exactly what his organization would’ve wanted in real life versus what he argued. In real life I think they would’ve argued the family variables that play a part in this argument instead of the legal and economic side.

Sarah was very convincing. Her evidence and new perspective brought out the libertarian in me and I agreed with a lot of the points she made. She represented her organization's views and overall it was very well done.

Brianna used solid evidence but some of it contradicted evidence from other people. I don't know which one is correct but there's conflicting opinions about who in our society does more drugs. Other than that her sources were relevant to the argument and she used them well. I think it was confused during questioning that she wasn't proposing a bill, only suggesting what should be done with Hadley’s bill. They were asking questions based on “Brianna’s BIl” instead of suggested edits to Hadley’s

Josie’s speech was solid and was along the same lines as Sarah's where she talked about personal freedoms being violated. Like the others her facts were relevant to the conversation and furthered the argument forward. During questioning though, she seemed to falter her arguments and ended up with agreeing to statements that hurt her claims.

Krystan had probably the best speech. She brought a brand new perspective to the argument with her comparison to school students. Many of us im sure had not thought of the correlation in responsibility the govt has over both students and welfare recipients. Her point about higher scrutiny brings those two things together and says why the government has more of a right than usual to test people. Her questioning went well and she supported her organization accurately. I think she was the most convincing.

The senators did a good job with the bill and having a structure to it. With questioning i think sometimes the agenda got a little blurred (like with brianna) but overall they did well with scrutinizing the lobbyists’ claims.