The following topics are provided for use/distribution within your state. This suggested list is provided as a service. Feel free to add, delete, or alter items to suit your purposes – especially in light of day-to-day events. Please keep in mind that other states may closely regulate the distribution of these topics. Please refrain from any distribution of the topics outside your state or by means which may be accessed outside your state, including the Internet, during the month of January.

**NFHS EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING TOPICS**

# January 2013

***Domestic***

*Easier Topics*

1. Should the Obama administration enforce federal marijuana laws in states that have legalized the drug?
2. Is the cost of health care a serious deterrent to Americans getting treatment?
3. Is Grover Norquist’s influence over the Republican Party shrinking?
4. Is the Republican Party in danger of splitting?
5. Should entitlement programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, be reformed?
6. Is the value of American higher education in decline?
7. Should the power of parties to filibuster in the US Senate be curtailed?
8. Will the Newton, Connecticut school shootings change public views on gun control?
9. Should states pass legislation allowing teachers to carry firearms in schools?
10. Should the federal government take an active role in fighting obesity among its citizens?
11. Can Republicans politically afford to support tax increases?
12. Can Democrats politically afford to support major spending cuts?
13. Was Susan Rice treated unfairly by her critics in Congress?

*More Difficult Topics*

1. How will low water levels on the Mississippi River impact the US economy?
2. What portion of the federal budget can Congress most safely cut?
3. Why did Congress reject the UN disability treaty?
4. Is Google becoming too large?
5. How is the US Supreme Court likely to rule on challenges to the Defense of Marriage Act?
6. Is President Obama likely to be more or less interventionist in foreign affairs during his second term?
7. What should cities do to address the high cost of supporting public pensions?
8. How has the debate over averting the “fiscal cliff” impacted hopes for bipartisanship in Washington, DC?
9. How will America’s declining birth rate impact the future economy?
10. What is the significance of Michigan’s passage of a “Right to Work” law?
11. Will the recent report on the attack on the Benghazi consulate hurt the legacy of Hillary Clinton as she leaves the State Department?
12. Has the fight against tobacco smoking among youth inadvertently encouraged the use of marijuana?

## **International**

*Easier Topics*

1. Is Egypt making strides toward a true democracy?
2. Should the European Union create a banking union?
3. Will Xi Jinping succeed at combating corruption as China’s new leader?
4. Why has the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo been unsuccessful?
5. Will Catalan’s separatist parties unite to break from Spain?
6. Will recent efforts to bring the Taliban into talks with the Afghan government succeed?
7. Is Hamas overtaking Fatah in influence over the Palestinian people?
8. Can the international community prevent the Syrian government from using chemical weapons against its opponents?
9. Does a recent coup attempt in Sudan suggest that the government of Omar al-Bashir is in danger?
10. Will President Putin’s efforts to defeat corruption in Russia be successful?
11. Should Germany reform its parliamentary election system?
12. Will a left-leaning government emerge in Italy next year?
13. Should Britain leave the European Union?

*More Difficult Topics*

1. Is Israel safer today than it was ten years ago?
2. Can Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood be relied upon to honor the country’s peace treaty with Israel?
3. How will North Korea’s successful launch of a satellite change perceptions of the rogue nation’s threat?
4. Will government divided between two parties be the downfall of Georgia’s democracy?
5. What can the Pakistani government do to undermine the increasing power of the Pakistani Taliban?
6. How will the opening of the Northern Sea Route impact international trade?
7. Do developments in North Korea have a significant impact on South Korean

politics?

1. How will changes in China’s leadership impact the defense policies of its nervous neighbors?
2. What will be the impact of Israel’s planned new West Bank settlements?
3. Is Brazil’s Dilma Rousseff on track to reelection?
4. What changes will Enrique Pena Nieto bring as Mexico’s new president?
5. Should supporters of former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra give up their efforts to bring him home?