The Topic for the 17th All Japan National Debate Tournament

第17回 全国高校生英語ディベート大会 論題

(Tentative Wording and Definitions)

1 March 2022

HEnDA Chief Judge: Yoshiro Yano

# Debate Topic (Tentative wording)

|  |
| --- |
| Resolved: That the Japanese Government should abolish the mandatory retirement age systems.  日本政府は，定年制を廃止すべきである。是か非か。 |

# BACKGROUND OF THIS TOPIC

Ahead of any nations in the world, Japan is becoming a Super-aging society. Serious labor shortage is expected in the near future, and as a result, several welfare systems (especially, pension and health insurance) are at risk.

To cope with this unprecedented trend, the government has tried to legally alter the mandatory retirement age systems, both private and public, so that the workers can work until (at least) 65 years of age.

In 2021, the revised Elderly Persons Employment Stabilization Law高年齢者雇用安定法 was enacted, so that all employers of private enterprises and organizations must not set the mandatory retirement age below 65, and should try to amend (or abolish) the retirement age system so that their workers can work until 70 years of age (or beyond).

The same year, amendments for both the National Civil Service Law国家公務員法，the Local Public Service Act地方公務員法passed the Diet, so that the mandatory retirement age of public servants should be gradually raised to 65 years of age.

The HEnDA topic this year will debate whether the Japanese society should go furthermore: Whether it should abolish the mandatory retirement age systems altogether.

The debate will not be limited to the problems of labor shortage or welfare systems, but also will include important questions such as the right to work, meaning of work, age discriminations, generational divides, employers' freedom of business, human resource management, safety and health issues concerning the elderly, and more.

# Tentative Definitions

## 1. “The mandatory retirement age systems”:

Affirmative side (AFF) should support a position that abolishes the mandatory retirement age systems of both private (enterprises, organizations) and public (National and Local governments): Effectively allowing the workers to work beyond 65 years of age and more.

## 2. “Abolish”:

The debates should assume that the necessary law amendments will take place for this abolishment: Especially, the National Civil Service Law, Local Public Service Act, the Elderly Persons Employment Stabilization Law, and others if necessary. The sanctions against the violations will be kept as it is now (cf. especially, the Elderly Persons Employment Stabilization Law).

### 3. Exceptions:

The AFF may not propose to limit or make exceptions to the above abolishment of the mandatory retirement age systems. The AFF must not propose other reformations on the welfare systems (such as public pension or health insurance systems, etc.), as “plans”. However, both teams can argue (preferably with evidence) the future effects of the abolishment of the retirement age on these welfare systems, as Advantages or Disadvantages.

## 4. Negative side (NEG) position:

The NEG should support a policy that keeps the mandatory retirements systems as the current laws state (as of March 2022, including the laws that has passed the Diet already, and are waiting to be enacted). The above AFF and NEG positions will not change even if the actual Japanese Government should announce to amend the laws concerning the retirement age (before the National tournament).

# NB: The topic wording and definitions may be changed later.

Any suggestions for the debate topic wording or definitions are welcome.

Additions or changes to the tentative definitions, if necessary, will be supplied after some actual debates (the Spring tournaments, practice rounds). If you have any opinion on how we should change the wording, limit or define the topic, please send your opinions to the chief judge Yano (email: yano@tamacc.chuo-u.ac.jp).

※注意 論題の文言は修正される可能性があります。正式の論題のため，ご意見等どうかよろしくお願いします。春に行われるディベートの趨勢などを観て，また必要に応じて修正を発表することにします。論題での議論を絞る定義についてご意見がありましたら矢野まで(email: yano@tamacc.chuo-u.ac.jp)お願いします。

# HOW THIS TOPIC WAS CHOSEN 論題選定の経緯

The HEnDA committee selected four potential topic areas from around 20 or so suggestions in mid-February, and called for an opinion poll on whether to approve four potential topics.

(Thank you so much for your precious opinions and votes!)

The final result of the poll was:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Total 102 votes |
| AGING SOCIETY/LABOR - Resolved: That the Japanese Government should obligate all employers to abolish the mandatory retirement age. 日本政府は，全ての事業主に定年制の廃止を義務づけるべきである。 | 56 votes　（55%） |
| ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT - Resolved: That Japan should further construct new nuclear power plants. 日本は，原子力発電所を今後も新設すべきである。 | 35 votes　（34%） |
| FOREIGN AFFAIRS/HUMAN RIGHTS - Resolved: That the Japanese Government should significantly expand the acceptance of refugees. 日本政府は，難民の受け入れを大幅に拡大すべきである。 | 51 votes　（50%） |
| GENDER EQUALITY - Resolved: That Japan should adopt a gender quota system to increase female representation in the Diet. 日本国は，国会における女性の議員割合を増やすために，ジェンダー割当て制度を採用すべきである。 | 54 votes　（52%） |
| NONE OF THE ABOVE | 1 vote 　 (1%) |

As the approval rate difference between the “retirement age” topic and the “gender quota” topic was narrow, the committee had considered about which to go between these two.

The gender quota topic, though popular, actually drew several harsh serious questions from the judges and coaches, too; the AFF/NEG balance is AFF skewed (there is very limited room for the NEG other than discriminatory, misogynic rants), very difficult to frame in actual policy (to implement the quota, you practically have to change the whole electoral system), etc.

Thus, it is decided to go for the “retirement age” topic. The wording of the “retirement age” topic is altered from that used for the poll, to be more encompassing and simpler.