US Senate

United States Senate

COSMUN

President:

Gregorio Vélez

Vice President:

Sofia de Bedout

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1. Letters from the Chair

1.1. *Letter from President Veléz*

Dear representatives,

President de Bedout and I are honored to be able to welcome you to the COSMUN 2025 U.S Senate. We are honored to preside over such a prestigious and interesting committee. We expect you to uphold the rigor of this committee and this model United Nations but most of all to have fun and learn in the process.

During this event we will analyze complex topics which are of the utmost importance not just to the U.S but also to the entire international community. We encourage you to be creative, take risks, discuss, think critically and gain valuable leadership and diplomatic experiences from. Remember that COSMUN is not just about defending an assigned position the entire time, it is important to keep an open mind and work together to ideate useful and practical solutions in order to mitigate real world problems.

We look forward to seeing everything you bring to the table, and we trust you will all do a great job as U.S representatives.

1.2. *Letter from Vicepresident De Bedout*

Dear Senators,

I, Sofia De Bedout, as your vice president warmly welcome you to COSMUN. Thank you for choosing to join us on this committee. We are honored to chair The United States Senate committee in this year's model.

The chairing table expects you to bring out the best of yourselves during the debate. Always be confident in your abilities, as this will benefit you both in the debate and the future. Be smart, patient, respectful, empathic and above all good delegates, able to listen and propose ideas.

To the novice delegates, we would like to remind you that we have all been there. First of all, thank you for your courage to participate and for us to be your chair. Remember to speak slowly but with confidence and clarity. We believe in you and your abilities. Research well, and above all enjoy the Model UN. Model UN is not only about debates and final papers, but also about friendships, which are formed and, in many cases, become a reason to continue.

The issue under discussion is of utmost importance for The United States and the international community and its health and security future, as this is a much talked about topic at the moment, and recognizing the impacts this may have on the economic, social, and cultural sectors will give us a glimpse of what to expect, and we thank you for taking up this challenge. We hope that you prepare well in advance, as well as participate in providing alternative solutions for the national and international good. Always seek what is right and bring good to the world.

We look forward to welcoming you. Once again thank you.

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2. Introduction to the committee

2.1. *History*

The United States Senate is one of the two chambers of the United States Congress. It was established in 1787 by the makers of the Constitution. Its creation was a result of the Connecticut Compromise, which looked forward to balancing the interests of large and small states. 39 of the 55 delegates present at the ad hoc assembly signed the United States Constitution in 1787, leading to the establishment of the nation that would soon rise to become the greatest superpower in history. The Constitution was then ratified when nine of the thirteen states accepted its provisions, making its provisions instantly enforceable. At this point, it is crucial to remember that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, or the so-called "amendments," are two different documents. This is so because the Constitution establishes the three departments of government and their separate roles, while the Bill of Rights discusses individual rights. However, there was a considerable amount of controversy surrounding these texts.

This chamber was created with the purpose to have equal representation. Unlike the House of Representatives, where representation is based on population, the Senate provides equal representation for all states, with each state having two senators.

It also counts as a deliberative body: The Senate was designed to be a more deliberative body than the House, with longer terms for senators (six years) to insulate them from short-term political pressures (*U.S. Senate: About The Senate And The Constitution*, 2023).

The topic of the legislative body's elections was deliberated over upon its inception and was very controversial among the Union's states. Numerous states with more populous populations considered that the Senate had to be chosen in an equal proportion, much like the House of Representatives, meaning that the selection of senators for each state would be proportional to its population. Conversely, smaller states with lesser populations considered that states should have a proportionate number of senators, meaning that each state would have an equal number of senators representing it. In the end, a unanimous majority determined that each state would have two senators representing them. These senators would initially be chosen by the state legislature, but in 1913, the senators would be elected by popular vote. Thus, this is why we can see states such as Wyoming with two senators, but with only one representative, because of the population factors.
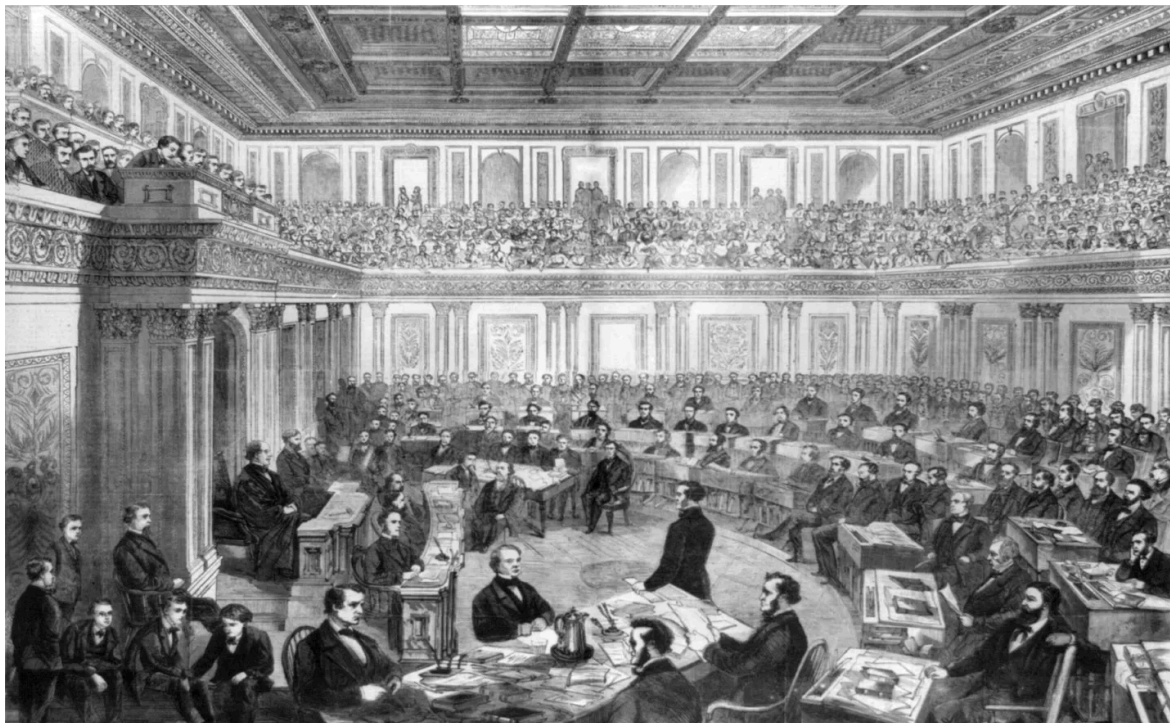

Image: ---. "United States Senate | Definition, History, and Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 31 Mar. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/Senate-United-States-government.

The Senate first convened in secret at Federal Hall in New York City, and for the first five years after its founding, there are hardly any records of its meetings. However, the Senate's norms loosened and its functioning was somewhat altered due to more progressive principles and events like the Civil War or both World Wars. Most famously, during the First World War, senators discovered a way around a provision in the Senate rules known as the "filibuster." To put it briefly, the phrase and practice originated when a tiny number of senators who opposed the concept of arming merchant ships during World War I realized that if they could continue to debate, votes on significant issues could be pushed back indefinitely. This is so that a group of 41 senators can argue for as long as they want without ever voting on anything that would normally require a usual 50+1 majority to pass. This is because a ⅗ majority of votes is required to end a debate and hold a vote. There has been much debate over this peculiar provision, with some arguing that it prevents the Senate from carrying out its regular duties in an efficient manner. (The committee won't apply this regulation.)

Back then, Sir Henry Maine, a well-respected judge, referred to the U.S. Senate as "the only thoroughly successful institution which has been established since the tide of modern democracy began to run." The Senate is an institution with authority unmatched by any other in the United States, if not the entire globe, despite some people doubting its effectiveness and legitimacy.

2.2. *Functions and objectives*

As previously mentioned, the bicameral legislative system, which is regarded as the first arm of government in the representation of the people, is established by the first article of the Constitution. The Senate has evolved throughout time into a unique and fascinating body that endures to this day. For example, the Vice President of the United States, in this case Kamala Harris, presides over the Senate in her absence. The Senate votes on a pro-tempore president (for the time being), who is currently Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), and is typically the senator with the most tenure. However, there is "leadership" within the Republican and Democratic groups in the Senate and the House, whereby A spokesperson and party manager is chosen by fellow senators in that parliamentary branch through an election process. In addition, the "whips" are a component of the leadership group that comes in second after the minority or majority leader. Currently, Chuck Schummer (D-New York) is the majority leader in the Senate, while Mitch Mc Conell (R-Kentucky) serves as the minority leader.

Senate Leadership
116th Congress

Sen. McConnell	Sen. Schumer	Sen. Thune	Sen. Durbin
Maj. Leader	Min. Leader	Maj. Whip	Min. Whip
R - Kentucky	D - New York	R - South Dakota	D - Illinois

Source: Novogradac & Company LLP

NOVOGRADAC & COMPANY LLP

Senators have the authority to vote and offer advice on presidential appointments, including those involving federal judges, members of the executive branch, and other high-ranking officials of the US government. In addition to voting to approve treaties with other nations, the Senate has the authority to declare war on other nations if it so chooses (in the case of the United States). Both the House and the Senate will be present during an impeachment trial. For example, the House will represent both the prosecution and the defense, and the Senate will act as a grand jury to find the impeachment guilty with a two-thirds majority vote if the impeachment motion is approved by the House with a simple majority.

Impeachment is a possibility in situations of grave offense to presidents or justices of the Supreme Court. The Senate has the authority to ask for witnesses in order to get relevant information and/or testimony during an investigation. The authority to propose and enact laws rests with the Senate and the House of Representatives. Because of this, a simple majority vote in each chamber is required to fully enact the same document. For instance, the proposed legislation is referred to as a "bill" and becomes a legally enforceable "act" after passing both chambers of the legislature. Similarly, the Senate has the power to vote to amend or repeal legislation.

Additionally, the Senate has the authority to amend the Constitution of the US. A two-thirds majority in both chambers is needed for this. Since the President's signature is required for a bill to become law, the President of the United States has the authority to veto any legislation enacted

by the Senate. However, the Senate can override the veto with a two-thirds majority. The Senate, which is divided into several committees that will be discussed later, is charged with supervising the executive branch as well as government agencies.

2.3. *Relevant Information*

As previously stated, the Senate is responsible for the executive branch and the federal government. However, I will concentrate on the oversight of federal agencies. There are 24 ad hoc committees in the Senate that oversee all federal functions. The Senators are chosen for each committee, usually are experts on the matter, and can better serve their home state while being on that committee. Each committee also has a Senator who acts as its chair (generally every committee has other sub-committees which are specialized in specific matters). The committees are the following:

- Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
- Appropriations
- Armed Services
- Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
- Budget
- Commerce, Science, and Transportation
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Environment and Public Works
- Finance
- Foreign Relations

- Health, Education, Labour, and Pensions

- Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

- Indian Affairs

- Joint Committee on Printing

- Joint Committee on Taxation

- Joint Committee on the Library

- Joint Economic Committee

- Judiciary

- Rules and Administration

- Select Committee on Ethics

- Select Committee on Intelligence

- Small Business and Entrepreneurship

- Special Committee on Aging

- Veterans' Affairs

With this in mind, aspects to be taken into account for the good development of the committee should be discussed as the following:

The Chair will call the roll to which present Senators can only answer in the form of "present" or "under protest." Moreover, regular motions will be voted in the verbal form of "yay" or "nay" and votes to pass bills or other pertinent matters will be passed by paper to the chair. Additionally, what is known as a "party to the dispute" will be brought in the form of a witness, and will be deposed by both the Republicans and Democrats.

3. Topic A: Reform of the U.S Healthcare System and drug epidemics

3.1. *Introduction to the topic*

It's crucial to acknowledge that The United States faces a much discussed crisis with a healthcare system with low accessibility for everyone, a devastating drug epidemic started by the so-called opioids and followed by the new synthetic drugs.

The opioid crisis, in particular, has its roots in the healthcare system. Overprescription of opioid painkillers in the 1990s led to widespread addiction and overdose deaths. Later on, in 2011 the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared the overdose caused by prescription opioids as an "epidemic". Since then this healthcare crisis has only widened and evolved at an extremely high pace and became increasingly driven by illicit trafficking (*The Opioid Epidemic: State Trends in Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths From 2000 to 2016*, 2018).

THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC BY THE NUMBERS

70,630 people died from drug overdose in 2019[2]

10.1 million people misused prescription opioids in the past year[1]

1.6 million people had an opioid use disorder in the past year[1]

2 million people used methamphetamine in the past year[1]

745,000 people used heroin in the past year[1]

50,000 people used heroin for the first time[1]

1.6 million people misused prescription pain relievers for the first time[1]

14,480 deaths attributed to overdosing on heroin (in 12-month period ending June 2020)[3]

48,006 deaths attributed to overdosing on synthetic opioids other than methadone (in 12-month period ending June 2020)[3]

SOURCES
1. 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2020.
2. NCHS Data Brief No. 394, December 2020.
3. NCHS, National Vital Statistics System. Provisional drug overdose death counts.

HHS.GOV/OPIOIDS

The healthcare system's role in addressing the drug epidemic is complex. On the one hand, it is a source of the problem through overprescribing. On the other hand, it is essential for

providing treatment and prevention services. However, barriers to access, such as high costs and lack of insurance coverage, hinder effective care for those struggling with addiction.

https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/statistics/index.html
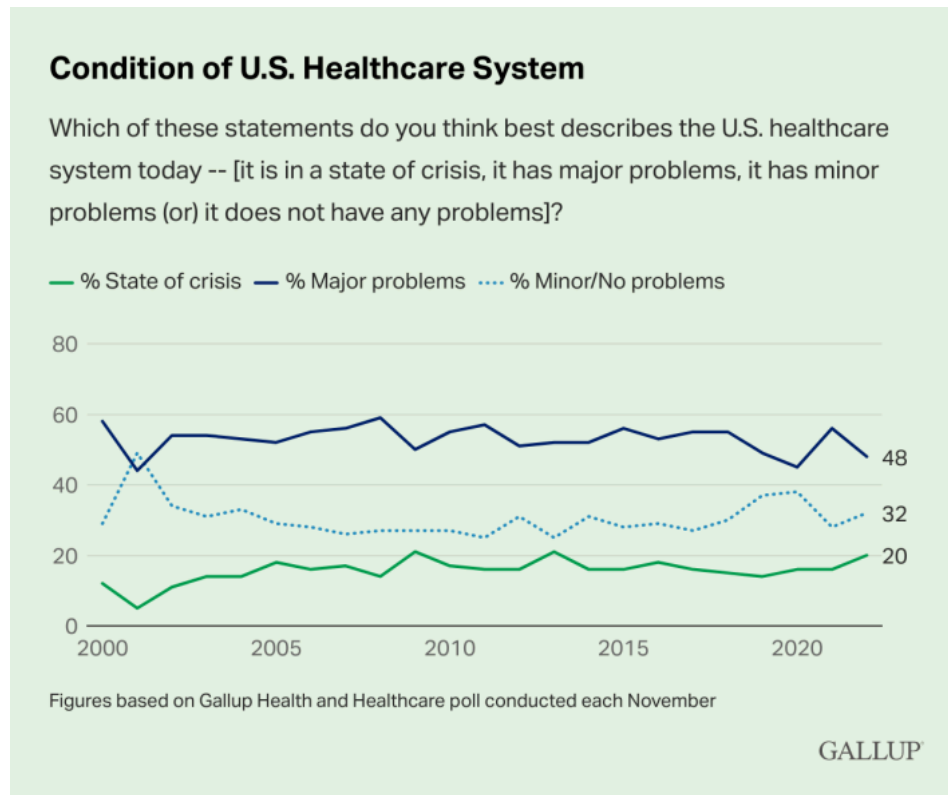
The above image only showcases the reality of the issue, most of the information on the table is from 2019 but it is expected that those numbers have significantly increased over the last years. It is shown that about 10 million citizens have misused these prescription opioids, while about 2 million have been using synthetic alternatives which only reflects the need of the nation to tackle this issue in a strong way.

Moreover, the U.S. healthcare system's divided nature and lack of emphasis on prevention contribute to the crisis. A system focused on treating illnesses rather than preventing them has created a ground for chronic diseases and substance abuse disorders to thrive.

Reforming the U.S. healthcare system is crucial to addressing the drug epidemic. This includes expanding access to affordable care, promoting prevention and early intervention, and integrating mental health and substance abuse treatment. Additionally, addressing social determinants of health, such as poverty and inequality, is essential for creating a healthier population (Conversable Economist, 2023).

Image: Conversable Economist. (2023, January 20). American Doubts about Health Care - Conversable Economist. *Conversable Economist - In Hume's spirit, I will attempt to serve as an ambassador from my world of economics, and help in "finding topics of conversation fit for the entertainment of rational creatures."* https://conversableeconomist.com/2023/01/21/american-doubts-about-health-care/

It is evident that the U.S. faces a significant challenge in reforming its healthcare system, it needs to be more accessible for everyone and has to turn their approach towards illnesses and addictions prevention and not only treatment. Also, it has to simultaneously combat the drug epidemic. A comprehensive approach that addresses both issues simultaneously is necessary to create a healthier future for all Americans.

3.2. *Origin*

Legally, speaking the U.S healthcare system does not have a legal date of establishment, rather it arose as a direct response to the medical needs of a nation at war, specifically the revolutionary and then the civil war. The U.S healthcare began from small privately owned

clinics and practices which were established throughout the continental U.S when 17th century settlers and later evolved into a more well established system of public hospitals and universities during the 18th and 19th centuries.

However, it was not until the early 20th century that the U.S healthcare system began to be publicly regulated by the federal government, during this time, primarily by Teddy Roosevelt and the progressive party, which used health insurance as part of its campaign, and even proposed and almost succeeded in the implementation of a bill which would require socialized health insurance for all, however this was never enacted due to the start of WWI. Shortly thereafter social security would be established in 1935, yet progress towards a unified public healthcare system would begin to stagnate due to political opposition when the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill was rejected. This progressive bill would aim to construct a publicly funded health insurance program, guaranteed maternity leave, death benefits, benefits for those with a disability, old age and survivor's insurance, however was opposed by the AMA (American Medical Association) and ultimately unable to be enacted.

1900s — — — **1930s** — — — **1940s** — — — **1950s** — — —

1900s	1930s	1940s	1950s
Social Insurance	Committee on Economic Security	Right to Adequate Medical Care	Joint Commission Accreditation of Hospitals
First model of state health insurance	Social Security Act (1935)	Social Security: Required Health Insurance	Forand Bill
Sheppard-Towner Act (1921)	National Health Survey (1935-36)	Hill-Burton Act (1946)	
Committee on Costs of Medicare	National Health Conference (1938)	National Health Assembly (1948)	

1980s — — — **1970s** — — — **1960s**

1980s	1970s	1960s
Medicaid Waivers	Social Security Amendments	Employer-Based Coverage Grows
Diagnosic Related Groups	Hawaii Prepaid Health Care Act (1972)	Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan
Emergency Medical Treatment and Active	Employee Retirement Income Security Act (1974)	Kerr-Mills Act (1960)
Labor Act (1986)	Health Planning Resources Development Act (1974)	WH Conference on Aging
	Health Care Financing Administration (1977)	Civil Rights Act (1964)
	National Medical Care Expenditure Survey	Medicare & Medicaid (1965)
		Neighborhood Health Centers

1990s — — — **2000s** — — — **2010s** — — — **2020s** — — →

1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s
Changing Medicaid Requirements	Breast & Cervical Cancer Treatment &	Patient Protection and Affordable Care	COVID-19 Pandemic
WH Task Force on Health Reform	Prevention Act (2000)	Act (March 2010)	Operation Warp Speed
Medicaid Waivers & Expansion	Health Center Growth Initiative	Marketplace Plans Added	Low Uninsured Population
Vaccines for Children Program (1993)	MMA Act (2005)	Access to HSAs	Underinsured Population Growing
HIPAA, Personal Responsiblity & Work Opportunity	Deficit Reduction Act (2005)	Decreased Surprise Billing	
Act, Mental Health Parity Acts (1996)	Mental Health Parity Act (2008)	Increase Price Transparency	
Balanced Budget Act (1997)	Office of Health Reform		
Ticket to Work Incentives Improvement Act (1999)	Children's Health Insurance Program		

"Health Policy and Reform in the United States." *PubMed Central*, National Institutes of Health, 2023, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10810293/.

Shortly thereafter began a trend in U.S healthcare, the rise of health insurance and medicaid, this ultimately contributed in large part to the drastic increase in U.S healthcare throughout the years. The rise of employer sponsored healthcare plans, as well as the introduction of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965 meant medical corporations and pharmaceutical companies could significantly upcharge their services, that is, charge amounts which are unreasonable to a patient but would later be renegotiated with governments and insurance companies through legal accords. A byproduct of this new era is the administrative costs, as well as prices for patients rose exponentially. This phenomenon would only be later exacerbated in the 70s and 80s with the rapid advancements in technology in the medical field. Expensive machinery such as MRI machines were on the cutting edge of medicine and helped save

countless lives, however this came at the cost of the consumer. Since specialized medical equipment requires maintenance as well as high salaried medical professional specialized and technological medicine, which eventually became the norm, this advent made costs once again increase, and led to the bureaucratization of the U.S healthcare system. This is in part responsible for its high administrative costs which ultimately make healthcare in the U.S a privilege more than a right. It was also during this time that due to advances in medicine many chronic illnesses could be detected such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, the treatment of which is often expensive and may last indefinitely, once again straining the healthcare system and contributing to higher costs.

It was also during the period of increase in cost of healthcare that one of the first modern drug epidemics took place, the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s. This epidemic, which primarily
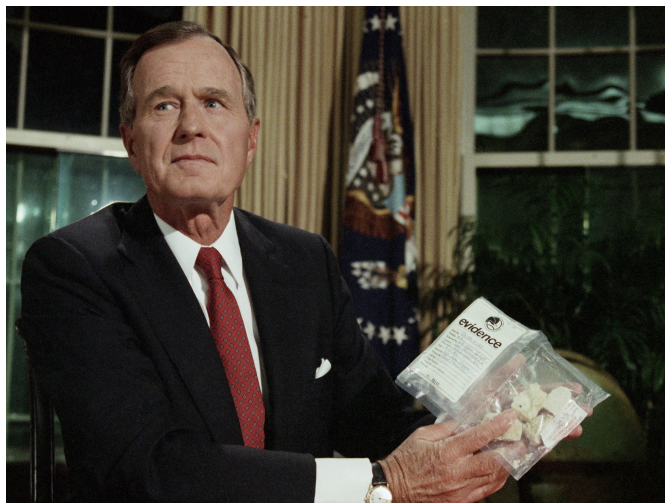
affected African American and individuals from lower economic strata resulted in thousands of overdoses burdened the healthcare system, as well as commencing the "War on Drugs".

Ramsey, Donovan X. "When Crack Was King." *NPR*, 13 July 2023.
https://www.npr.org/2023/07/13/1186778651/crack-cocaine-epidemic-when-crack-was-king-donovan-x-ramsey.

The War on Drugs has been a highly controversial measure against the consumption of illicit substances which has been ongoing since the Reagen administration. In total this war has cost the U.S government upwards of 1 trillion dollars, for this reason many claim it has hindered public health in the U.S and ultimately differed funding from other projects such as the Healthcare system. In terms of drug epidemics the Crack cocaine epidemic is significantly less impactful on patients in the U.S, as well as the healthcare system as was to be the opioid epidemic.

The opioid epidemic has ravaged the U.S healthcare system leading to hundreds of thousands, or even millions as per diverging sources overdoses, hundreds of thousands of which have resulted in death. This, paired with a healthcare system which is highly complex and borderline dysfunctional has led to the creation of a perfect storm which is up to the U.S Senate to mitigate

3.3. *Development*

The United States government has acknowledged the existing healthcare crisis and has been targeted due to its lack of law effectiveness. The principal issue of this may be the priority of punitive measures over public health. The government's emphasis is mostly centered towards policies and criminalizing drug use, rather than treatment and prevention. This emphasis has led to high amounts of mass incarceration that has disproportionately affected minorities and marginalized communities.

Figure 1. National Drug Overdose Deaths*, Number Among All Ages, by Sex, 1999-2022
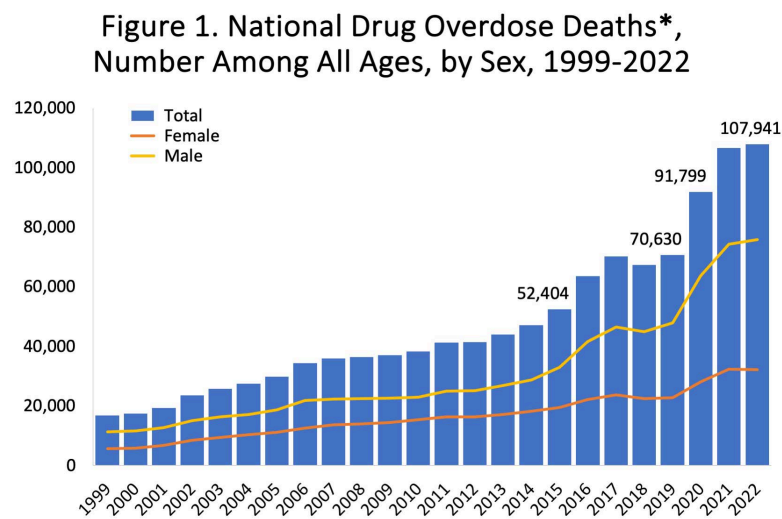
*Includes deaths with underlying causes of unintentional drug poisoning (X40–X44), suicide drug poisoning (X60–X64), homicide drug poisoning (X85), or drug poisoning of undetermined intent (Y10–Y14), as coded in the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2022 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 4/2024.

Image: *Drug overdose death rates | National Institute on Drug Abuse*. (2024, May 30). National Institute on Drug Abuse.

https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates

The image above illustrates the increasing number of deaths that the overdose has provoked. The most affected community by sex are males due to their large gap between females. However, this graph is shown to showcase the urgent need to reinforce policies and look for a solution for the sake of thousands of United States citizens (*Drug Overdose Death Rates | National Institute on Drug Abuse*, 2024).

To understand where all these consumers come from, mostly in a great part is from the overprescription of opioid painkillers. The insufficient regulation of the pharmaceutical industry has contributed to the deaths of thousands. Therefore, the need to take this into account for a future solution.

Another important aspect is the U.S. healthcare system, which nowadays has been characterized by high costs, and unequal access. The government has failed to implement a more inclusive health care system where all Americans can take part. In addition, the government must regulate the pharmaceutical industry, since it has led to extremely high drug prices and limited coverage for essential treatments. This has affected low-income individuals and communities of color, widening the gap of healthcare access.

> "The existing evidence on health disparities does reveal differential health outcomes across and within all of the aforementioned identity groups. Health disparities can stem

from health inequities—systematic differences in the health of groups and communities

occupying unequal positions in society that are avoidable and unjust. Additionally, the

lack of adequate funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment has hindered

prevention and recovery efforts " (Baciu et al., 2017).

Figure 1

Number of Measures for which Group Fared Better, the Same or Worse Compared to Whites
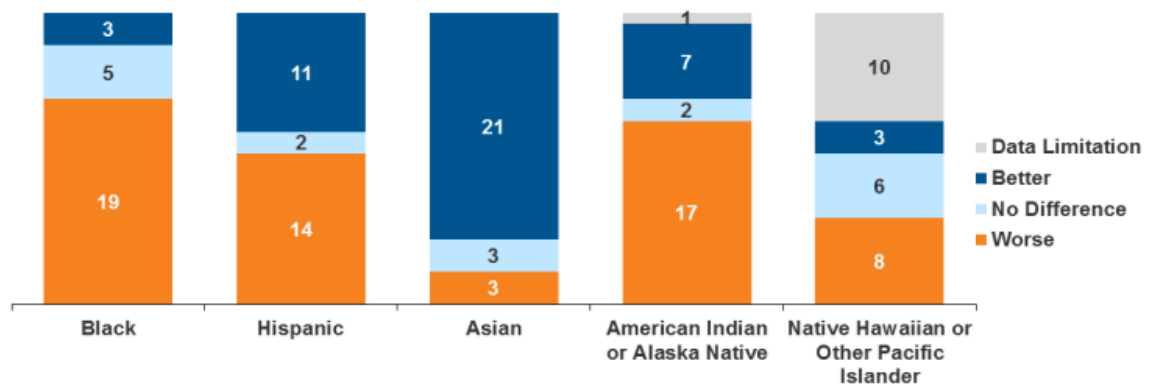
Note: Measures are for 2018 or the most recent year for which data are available. "Better" or "Worse" indicates a statistically significant difference from Whites at the p<0.05 level. No difference indicates no statistically significant difference. "Data limitation" indicates data are no separate data for a racial/ethnic group, insufficient data for a reliable estimate, or comparisons not possible due to overlapping samples. AIAN refers to American Indians and Alaska Natives. NHOPI refers to Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race but are categorized as Hispanic for this analysis; other groups are non-Hispanic.
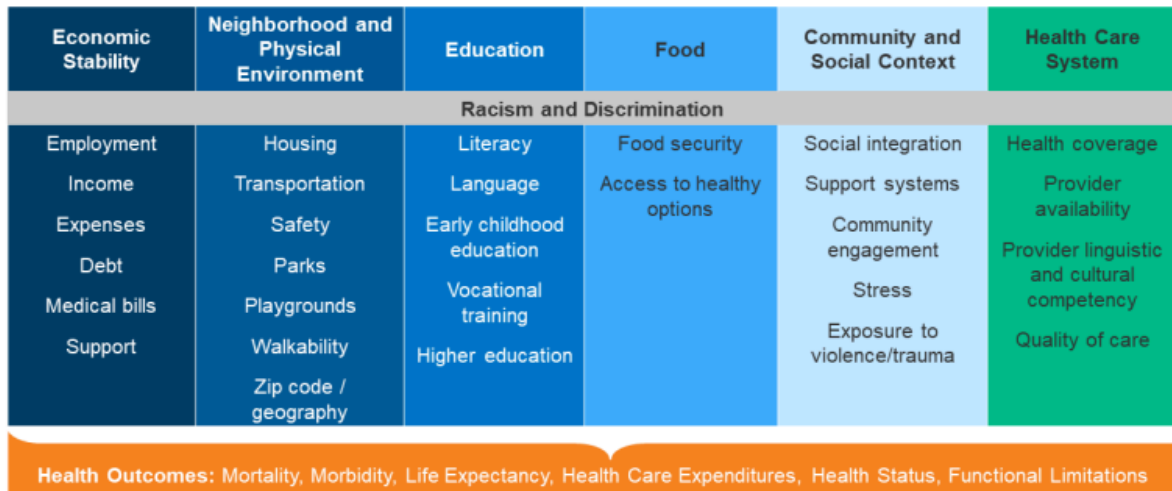
Image: Artiga, S. (2021, February 12). *Health Disparities are a Symptom of Broader Social and*

Economic Inequities | KFF. KFF.

https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/health-disparities-symptom-broader-social-economic-inequities/

The above graph includes different communities that have been asked if their healthcare access is

better, no difference or worse than the access that whites have. The majority of the responses

showed the existing gap, pointing out that the need to address a more inclusive system. The

question that senators should answer is if the disparities come only because of their ethnicity or

also because of the economic/job opportunities they have that affect their income.

Figure 2
Social and Economic Factors Drive Health Outcomes

Economic Stability	Neighborhood and Physical Environment	Education	Food	Community and Social Context	Health Care System
		Racism and Discrimination			
Employment	Housing	Literacy	Food security	Social integration	Health coverage
Income	Transportation	Language	Access to healthy options	Support systems	Provider availability
Expenses	Safety	Early childhood education		Community engagement	Provider linguistic and cultural competency
Debt	Parks	Vocational training		Stress	Quality of care
Medical bills	Playgrounds	Higher education		Exposure to violence/trauma	
Support	Walkability				
	Zip code / geography				

Health Outcomes: Mortality, Morbidity, Life Expectancy, Health Care Expenditures, Health Status, Functional Limitations

KFF
HENRY J KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION

COVID -19 is also an important factor to take into account when speaking about the health disparities. Data has shown that the majority of related deaths and complications have been from Black people compared to the total population. Similarly, Hispanics make up a higher number of confirmed cases of COVID. It is inferred that this is due to their economic situation that does not allow them to spare on health, but rather on basic needs like a house and food (Artiga, 2021).

Image: Artiga, S. (2021, February 12). *Health Disparities are a Symptom of Broader Social and Economic Inequities | KFF*. KFF.

https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/health-disparities-symptom-broader-social-economic-inequities/

Understanding disparities may serve as factors to tackle this health access crisis .

"Steps can be taken within the healthcare system that would help address health disparities. For example, actions to expand health coverage, such as adoption of the Medicaid expansion to low-income adults in the 14 states that have not yet expanded;

increasing accessibility to health care providers; increasing access to linguistically and culturally appropriate care; and diversifying the health care workforce could help reduce health disparities. However, efforts to address health disparities also require cross-sector approaches beyond health care to affect the broader social and economic factors driving health"(Artiga, 2021).

The government's lack of investment in safety nets, which include affordable housing, education, and job opportunities, has created conditions of poverty and despair that can increase the risk of not only substance abuse but lack of proper healthcare attention.

To come to a solution it is needed a well structured approach that includes reforming the healthcare system taking into account the aforementioned issues and disparities and implementing strategies to not only treat but prevent the drug use crisis.

Reforming the U.S. healthcare system could be extremely beneficial for Americans as these measures could expand access to care, reduce costs, and improve prevention efforts. Enhancing price transparency for medical services and drugs can empower consumers to make informed decisions and drive down costs. This may also improve preventative care, chronic disease management, and early detection of substance abuse issues.

Addressing the drug epidemic requires a combination of strategies focused on prevention, treatment, and harm reduction. Additionally, addressing the social determinants of health, such as poverty, unemployment, and education, is essential for preventing substance abuse and improving overall health outcomes.

3.4. *Previous Resolutions*

Throughout the years many branches of the U.S government have attempted to mitigate the opioid epidemic, and issues within the healthcare system, which have been largely inconsequential towards the eradication of the opioid epidemic. Over the years these include:

- **Creation of Medicare and Medicaid - 1965**

  - Implemented to expand subsidized healthcare coverage among those above 65, low income individuals, individuals with disabilities.

  - Later expanded by ACA to become one of the largest funders of treatment for addictions.

- **Drug Addiction Treatment Act (DATA) - 2000**

  - Made treatments for drug addictions more accessible as well as proliferating the use of anti drug medicine such as buprenorphine.

- **Affordable Care Act (ACA) - 2010**

  - Expanded the affordability of healthcare and expanded the requirements for medicare and medicaid to extend to 138% of the poverty line, a major improvement for low income individuals.

- **Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) - 2016**

  - The fist and one of the only federally funded laws which has the specific attempt of mitigating the ongoing opioid epidemic.

  - Significantly increased funding for drug treatment and increased the accessibility of naloxone, the most effective and widespread method of reversing opioid overdoses.

3.5. *Expectations for the debate*

As presidents of the Senate, we expect the debate to be smooth and of a good standard. These are very important issues in the United States at the moment and we hope that you will do a very good job of research. As a recommendation we would say that before talking about, for example, the health care system in the United States and its shortcomings, you should look at why this is happening and why the resolutions that are in place are not working and what is missing? Try to get into your senator and always be in his or her position. Speak clearly and always address other delegates with respect, speak from facts, statistics and knowledge. Finally enjoy it and we hope you enjoy this topic as there is a lot to talk about, we are always here for you, never forget it.

3.6 *Useful resources*

1. *The Opioid Crisis in the United States: A Brief History*
   https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12260
2. *Understanding the Epidemic*
   https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html
3. *Opioid Overdose Crisis*
   https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-opioid-use-disorder/opioid-overdose-crisis
4. *World Drug Report 2023*
   https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/wdr2023.html
5. *Fentanyl and the U.S. Opioid Epidemic*
   https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/fentanyl-and-us-opioid-epidemic

4. Topic B: USA's fight against terrorist organizations in the Middle East

4.1. *Introduction to the topic*

On September 11th 2001, Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes, crashing two of them into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and a third into the Pentagon in Virginia. The attacks resulted in more than 3000 deaths, and significantly affected U.S infrastructure and Economy. The U.S government rapidly identified Al-Qaeda, the group responsible for the gruesome act of terror. Since this moment the USA's involvement in the fight against terrorist organizations has been one of the defining characteristics of American foreign policy in the 21st century.

"Costs of War." *Brown University*, 1 Sep. 2021, https://www.brown.edu/news/2021-09-01/costsofwar.
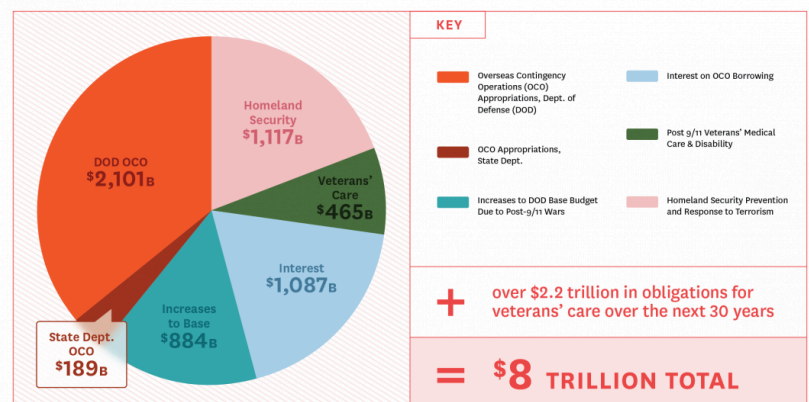
The cost of this counterterrorist movement has long surpassed the trillions of dollars in spending with some more liberal estimates such as the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs in Brown University claiming U.S "War on Terror" has resulted in a government expenditure of 8 trillion dollars.

Although less prevalent in previous years largely due to the U.S withdrawal of Afghanistan in 2021 the U.S is still highly involved in counterterrorist movements in the middle east, the U.S maintains a military presence in the countries of Iraq; in order to combat ISIS and ensure regional stability, Syria; in order to support the Syrian Democratic Forces, and in Jordan in order to gain intel and enhance security efforts to ensure the prevention of terrorism.

The U.S still plays a crucial role in middle eastern geopolitics and due to a major portion of the U.S government's spending being attributed to the industrial military complex, of which one of the main goals is counterterrorism and the fight against belligerent groups in the middle east and the multiple humanitarian and social crises which are occurring in the middle east. It is imperative for the U.S security council to decide upon the fate of millions of people living in the middle east, the millions of U.S taxpayers, and the tens of thousands of U.S soldiers who have been involved in the conflict over the years.

4.2. *Origin*

To understand the U.S. involvement in the Middle East it is needed to understand its historical roots. To start, the Cold War laid the ground for the conflict, the United States and the Soviet Union looked for influence on the Middle East involved supporting various factions, inadvertently contributing to regional instability.

An important moment arrived with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. While the Soviet Union intended to gain communist followers in the region, it led to the emergence of Islamic militant groups, many of whom would later become global threats. Among these groups was Al-Qaeda, founded by Osama bin Laden in the early 1990s. Al-Qaeda's ideology blended Islamic extremism with a virulent anti-Americanism (*Conflicts in the Middle East: Explanation & Causes | StudySmarter*, n.d.).

Image: Myers, M. (2023, October 31). 300 US troops headed to the Middle East amid the Israel-Hamas war. *Military Times*. https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2023/10/31/300-us-troops-headed-to-middle-east-amid-israel-hamas-war/

Later on, in the 1991 Gulf War, Kuwait was successfully liberated, leaving Iraq under the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein, a destabilizing factor in the region. This, combined with the growing threat of Al-Qaeda, set the ground for the events that followed. On September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States marked an inflection point in the global war. The unprecedented scale of the attacks destabilized the nation and prompted a decisive response. The US invaded Afghanistan in 2001 to dismantle Al-Qaeda and combat the Taliban regime.

The threat landscape continued to widen with the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the 2010s. This organization posed a new challenge, requiring a new level of counterterrorism strategies. As the nature of the threat has shifted, so too have the methods employed by the US, with a greater emphasis on drones, cyber warfare. (Hassan, 2019).

4.3. *Development*

Due to the controversial nature of this subject, and the long historical precedent which has prefaced this issue, it is quite polarizing among the U.S senate. The stances may be divided by political party and are usually as follows.

Democrat Stance:

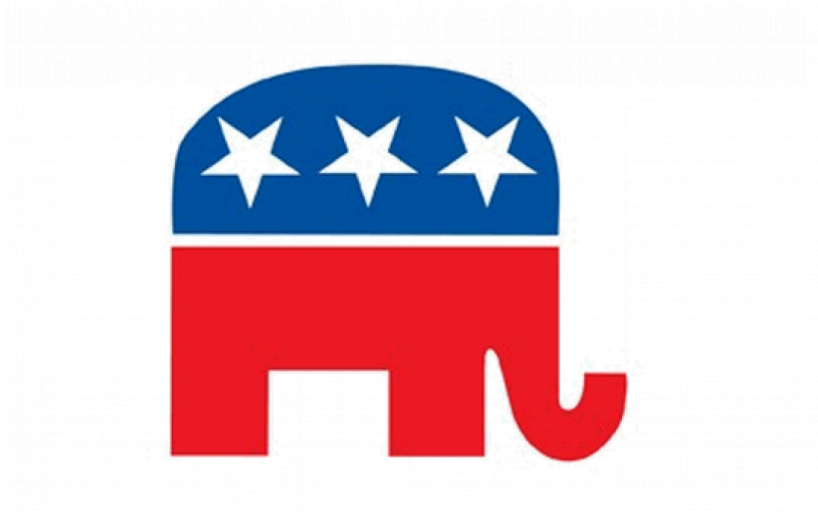Most sensors which belong to the democratic party have a stance which is often based on the demilitarization of the middle east, often critiquing what they perceive to be the overly rigid and oftentimes violent "War on terror" framework. Instead advocating for this large portion in the U.S budget to be more comprehensive for its own citizens, which means allocating the funds towards other social issues such as topic: A the opioid epidemic. Democratic senators often oppose the initial occupation of the middle east on behalf of the U.S government and support humanitarian and restoration efforts in the region in order to amend for the human suffering which has occured at the hands of the U.S. The democratic party vouches for multilateral diplomacy in order to further escalate the tensions in the middle east thereby reaching a more peaceful solution which is favorable to the citizens of all the afflicted and afflicting countries, this often includes the complete withdrawal of troops from countries

such as Syria, Iraq and Jordan. The main proponents of this movement within the democratic party include: Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren, Dick Durbin, and Bernie Sanders.

Republican Stance:

The republican stance on this topic is a stark contrast to that of the democratic party, were the democratic party is against military presence towards de escalation the route of choice towards de escalation of the republican party is the maintenance of a strong military presence within the region in order to mitigate terrorist movements and use force to deter threats and protect U.S Interest. The republican party is generally skeptical of diplomacy with adversaries as is the case with Iran as was the case with the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) during the Obama administration which sought to cooperate between the U.S and Iran but faced harsh criticism on behalf of the republican party. The republican party generally favors the promotion of stability through military power, an approach which is the exact opposite of that of the democratic party, which is why this issue has long been so controversial within the U.S Senate. The main proponents of these stances in the republican party include: Donald Trump, Lindsey Graham, Mitch Mconnell and Marco Rubio among others.

4.4. *Previous resolutions*

- **Authorization for Use of Military Force of 2001 (AUMF)**
  - It was passed shortly after the 9/11 attacks.
  - The AUMF authorized the use of military force against those responsible for the attacks and those who harbored them.
  - The senate has had previous discussions regarding its implications for U.S operations, so it has been called for its repeal or arguing for the authorization to be modified.

"Overkill: Reforming the Legal Basis for the U.S. War on Terror." *Crisis Group*, https://www.crisisgroup.org/united-states/005-overkill-reforming-legal-basis-us-war-terror.

- **The USA PATRIOT Act (October 26, 2001)**
  - Passed in 2001, in response to the 9/11 attacks in New York.
  - It significantly expanded the government's surveillance and investigative powers to combat terrorist attacks.
  - Helped for there to be a broader surveillance of suspected terrorists, including wiretapping, electronic surveillance, and the tracking of financial transactions.
  - Enhanced border security and immigration enforcement in the United States.
  - The USA PATRIOT Act seeks to strengthen law enforcement's investigative capacities and deter and punish terrorist activity both domestically and internationally.

"USA PATRIOT Act." Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, U.S. Department of the Treasury, https://www.fincen.gov/resources/statutes-regulations/usa-patriot-act. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

- **Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Strategy (2011)**

- Its goal is to address the underlying causes of violent extremism and terrorism by emphasizing community participation, prevention, and intervention.
- The CVE project includes funding for initiatives that advance social inclusion, economic opportunity, and education.
- Aimed to enhance the exchange of intelligence and best practices amongst authorities.
- Has drawn criticism for its efficacy as well as issues with civil liberties and profiling.

"Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism." U.S. Department of State, May 2016, https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/257913.pdf.

4.5. *Expectations for the Debate*

During the debate we expect representatives to be well organized in their thoughts, well read on the subject at hand, collaborate multilaterally and most of all actively participate in the discussion, all of this is done in order to enrich the conversation and uphold the rigorous standard of debate which COSMUN intends to uphold. We expect representatives to personify the senator and act as they would considering their beliefs and public appearances, staying true to their values while embarking on a search to find a solution which will be mutually beneficial to all those involved, considering all possible ramifications and consequences of this resolution.

4.6. *Useful resources*

- [Democrats' Sympathies in Middle East Shift to Palestinians](#)
- [Americans Divided Over U.S. Involvement in Middle East](#)
- [America Fueled the Fire in the Middle East](#)
- [U.S. officials are increasingly worried about a wider war in the Middle East](#)

- [All the tangled conflicts in the Middle East, explained](#)

5. QARMAS

5.1. Topic A

1. State the position of your senator, what wing does the senator support? What does he/she think about the health care and the drug crisis in the United States?

2. What are the primary goals of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and how has it impacted access to healthcare, costs, and insurance coverage in the United States?

3. What are the main criticisms of the ACA and what alternative healthcare reform proposals have been suggested?

4. What role do government subsidies and regulations play in the US healthcare market, and how do they affect healthcare costs and accessibility?

5. What are the primary factors contributing to the opioid epidemic in the United States, including overprescription, illegal drug trafficking, and socioeconomic conditions?

6. How effective have government policies and programs been in addressing the opioid crisis, and what strategies have shown the most promise?

5.2. *Topic B*

1. What does the senator think about the USA's fight against terrorist organizations in the Middle East

2. What were the primary factors that led to the increased US involvement in the Middle East following the September 11 attacks, and how did these events shape subsequent counterterrorism strategies?

3. How effective have military interventions, drone strikes, and special operations been in combating terrorism in the region, and what are the associated costs and unintended consequences?

4. What are the main challenges faced by the US in its counterterrorism efforts in the Middle East, such as the rise of new terrorist groups, the complexities of regional politics, and the spread of extremist ideologies?

5. How have human rights concerns and civilian casualties impacted public opinion and political support for US counterterrorism operations in the region?

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6.1. *Topic A*

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6.2. *Topic B*

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