Controversial Issues Research – Potential Topics 2017
* denotes new topics
Italics denotes local connection

Agriculture
aquaculture
buy local or slow food movement
food safety/import standards
genetically engineered foods - GMOs
labeling – country of origin, organic, calories
organic farming cost vs healthy food choices
Antibiotics and livestock
Farmers markets/urban farms in impoverished areas

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs
drinking age
drug testing at school/work
e-cigs
*Marijuana decriminalization/for profit

Animals
animal rights/experimentation
animals in urban settings (sanitation/safety)
as entertainment (circus?, rodeos, bullfights)
as organ donors
controlled hunting
reintroduction programs
zoos
pitbull or other banned breeds of dogs in communities

Crime
adult status for juvenile offenders
cyber crime
gangs
gun control/handgun regulation/concealed weapons
prison reform/prisoner’s rights
racial profiling
war against drugs success/failure
Date Rape
Offering college courses/education to prison inmates
militarization of police forces

Education
alternative education, home
schooling/vouchers/single sex education
blended classrooms/mainstreaming/inclusion
are books obsolete
bullying
censorship in schools
cheating
classical versus modern literature in schools
college costs/funding
Common Core standards
dress codes/uniforms in public schools
dual credit (hs/college) courses
for profit colleges
foreign language/at what age/what languages
foreign teachers teaching in U.S. schools
PARCC/ testing companies
Charter Schools/federal funded
Value of play/recess
urban suburban program
Homework
freedom of student press
intelligent design
No Child Left Behind/proficiency requirements for schools
online education
recruitment of minority teachers
SAT exams in college admissions
school financing/commercial sponsorship
school nutrition
security in schools & colleges
standardized testing – K-12
student debt
student performance international tests
suspensions – do they work? Saturday school
teacher evaluation/tenure
trucancy policies
value of art and music programs
violence in schools – how to avoid
vocational/technology education
work and academics
school start time
year around school
Value of common core standards
schools moments of silence/prayer services
Opt Out testing movement
College Alternatives
Full Day Kindergarten and curriculum
Federal and state sanctions based on school aid
*College Education- The Value
*Technology integration in education
**Elections**
campaign ethics
campaign financing
electoral college
lobbying
voter rights
Term Limits
House of Reps/Senate Redistricting
PACS
*Voter Fraud
*Standardized voting process

**Environment**
alternative fuels
bottled water
carbon trading
disposal of nuclear or chemical waste
disposal of toxic electronic device parts
endangered species
energy policy
fish farming
global warming greenhouse effect/ozone
hydrofracking
logging in national forests
national park tourism restrictions
deforestation / desertification
eco-tourism
Landfills - plastic-recycling
*Microbeads and legislation
Lead in water supply: Flint MI
Alternative transportation
*Environmental Racism

**Family and Marriage**
adoptions – adoptees’ rights/laws/international
adoptions of American children
child care funding availability
child custody
domestic partnership laws
domestic violence laws
foster care
same-sex marriages
surrogate mothers’ rights
Aging out of Foster Care
Gender Selection/pre-birth (Ethics)
Family Medical Leave
*Reproductive Rights/planned parenthood

**Global Issues**
agriculture policies tracking
AIDS in Africa
child labor
Chinese influence in Africa
education of girls/women
fair trade
immigration policies/Visa
just war
migrant labor/undocumented workers
population control
refugees
religious fundamentalism
religious or holy wars
terrorism
torture
U. N. effectiveness
water shortages – should people be permitted to build? Should we sell the Great Lakes?
Slavery
Poverty
Sanctions against other countries-who suffers
Malaria
Virtual currencies
Net Neutrality
Zika Virus
Keystone Pipeline
Syrian Refugees
*Border Security
* Rise of Racism and Hate Crimes

**Government US**
bailout
Columbus Day an appropriate national holiday?
immigration – services/criteria
legalized gambling
Native American rights (casinos, sovereignty)
privacy vs. security
privatizing government services
social security -- privatizing/age limit
gas economy
term limits (Supreme Court & legislators)
Western aid/relief/help efforts do more harm than good
Lesser Developed Countries (LDC) designation
Tax Equity
*Gag orders on Federal Agencies – transparency
*Should the arts be federally funded
NEA/PBS/NPR, etc.

**Health**
alternative medicines
body image – beauty pageants/cosmetic surgery
DNA databases
eating disorder treatment
fad diets
financing medical research
genetic testing
health care reform/patient rights/access to care
medical marijuana, legalization of
medical tourism
obesity / fast food / bariatric surgery / treatment
organ donations/pay for organs
over prescription of drugs - Prescription drug Abuse
reproductive issues – cost/insurance/in-vitro
toy safety – imports, lead
treatment of depression/teens/children
vaccinations – to attend school/availability
Regulation and monitoring prescription drug abuse
Narcon Heroin antidote/funding?
*Affordable Care Act/funding

**Human Ethics**
biomedical ethics
cloning
human genetic engineering
human life span extension
physician assisted suicide
stem cells
Cancer research organizations/profit
DNA Testing for predisposition of illnesses

**Legal**
affirmative action
alien detainees treatment/legality
book banning
capital punishment
curfews
dog owners responsibility (e.g. pit bulls)
driving age – young/old
FDA approvals
eminent domain
gambling – not for profit/lotteries/native
American casinos
insanity pleas
Internet filters on public access computers
medical litigation
outlawing foods or transfat law
Patriot Act/Homeland Security powers
sentencing in white collar crime
student rights
“three strikes” laws and zero tolerance laws
victims’ rights
Prostitution
Black Lives Matter Movement
College Campus racial incidents and protests
dash cam/traffic signal cams
*Protests-Civil Disobedience
*Red Light Cameras in communities
*Gentrification of Neighborhoods

**Mass Media**
advertising – to children/prescription drugs
children’s television shows
citizen journalism
commercialized toys (e.g. Coke Barbie)
freedom of the press
media violence (music, video games, TV, movies)
terrorism threats to free speech
Portrayal of women in advertising
Spread of pop culture harm society
Internet/Mobile personalized advertising
Bias in political media coverage
Cable TV vs Streaming vs Antenna – economics and equity
Diversity in the Academy Awards/Film industry
*Fake News and the state of Journalism

**Military**
age to serve
biological / chemical warfare
civilians doing formerly military tasks
compulsory service/draft
cyber warfare
drones
recruiting in schools
military doctors treating civilians who are not causalities of battle
military robots
sexual harassment
women in combat
Draft
Military Spending
Elimination of Military
Global responsibility to intervene in states
committing genocide
Robotic soldiers in 21st century warfare
Guantanamo Bay
Religion
religious cults
religious wars
religious symbols in public/school
tax exemptions
Extremists

Sexuality Issues
genetic basis for homosexuality
sexual harassment
sex in advertising
sexual assault in the military
sexual assault on college campuses
Transgender Laws
*LGBTQ Legislation

Sports
academic eligibility for athletes
accommodations for disabled athletes
athletic scholarships / pay college athletes
concussions
controversial sports mascots
extreme sports
funding inequalities HS/college sports
injuries – youth/professional/long term
pro sports draft policies
performance enhancing substances
sports records – alter records or note drug use
sports salaries
violence fan/sport
Domestic Violence and Prof Sports
Concussions
*PED’S in the Olympics

Technology
big data
cybercrime
DNA databases
electronic piracy/MP3
government surveillance
NASA should space program continue
online privacy
privately funded space exploration
reproductive technology
smart cars
social networking - privacy
technology export controls
net neutrality as a human right
drones/privacy

Women
genital mutilation
rights during pregnancy
science careers
stalking
treatment of women globally
living wages
reproductive rights/restrictions

Work
child care in the workplace / school
hours a minor can work
job safety
mandatory retirement
migrant labor/undocumented workers
Social Security
Minimum wage
Family medical leave act
*Gender Wage Gap