

Box 1.1

What Are Some Public Issues?

CURRENT ISSUES

ENDURING ISSUES

Ways and Means Issues

Should everyone pay taxes? In what proportion to their income?

Should free trade be limited?

How much business profit can be sacrificed to keep the environment clean and safe?

Should scholarships and fellowships be taxed?

How can we reduce our dependence on foreign oil?

How should we finance health care?

Is the national debt too high, and if so, what should be done about it?

From what sources should a government obtain money, and how should it spend it?

Quality of Life Issues

Should more resources be directed to protecting the environment?

Are inner cities or rural areas better places to live?

How can we improve the quality of life for children and senior citizens?

What effect will global climate change have on our lives?

What is a minimum quality of life, and how do we achieve it?

Personal Rights versus Social Rights Issues

Should individuals, the government, or private business be responsible for the unemployed? Health care? Day care? The homeless? Senior citizens? Drug addicts? People with AIDS? Race problems? Minority problems? Dealing with criminals? Worker safety? Deciding who should buy guns?

Can individuals be responsible for their own destinies, or should social institutions be responsible?

Can individuals be trusted to do what is best for society?

War and Peace Issues

How much should the government spend on the military?

Should the United States remain prepared for a major world war?

Should you, your friends, or your family be required to register for the draft?

To what extent should a government pursue negotiation as an alternative to war?

Is war ever justified, and should countries stay prepared for war?

Self-Development Issues

What opportunities for education and training should be available to everyone?

How well are job-training programs helping people get off welfare and find employment?

Should undocumented workers be allowed the same opportunities to participate in society as citizens?

What opportunities for self-development should societies make available to individuals?

Human Life Issues

Should abortions be permitted?

Should capital punishment be permitted?

Is mercy killing ever justifiable?

Should stem cell research be allowed?

Should human life be protected under any conditions?

What or who will define the limits of a person's control of their own life? And what or who limits a government's interest or control?

Foreign Affairs Issues

Which is wiser, to support an American economy or a global economy?

How much foreign aid should we provide, and to which countries?

Should college graduates be encouraged to participate in some type of foreign service like the Peace Corps?

Should the United States defend foreign countries from aggressors?

In world politics, how do we balance the rights of smaller countries and different ethnic groups against the needs of larger countries and international organizations?

Law and Order Issues

Is the judicial system effective?

Does the punishment always fit the crime?

How serious a problem is racial profiling?

How can global terrorism be eradicated?

To what degree have we sacrificed our privacy for national security?

What is an appropriate balance between the welfare and protection of society as a whole and the rights of the individual?