**We affirm.**

**Contention one is that independence deescalates current tensions.**

Nafees Hamid of the Atlantic writes that Catalonia’s modern push for independence began in 2010, when Spanish courts struck down key protections on Catalan autonomy. He continues that this drive culminated in a referendum on October 1st, where 92 percent of Catalans voted for independence. In turn, the Spanish government responded with violence, injecting life into the movement.

**Right now, we are at an important crossroads.**

CNN finds that Spain’s crackdown empowered radical independence politicians to take control of the Catalan parliament. Richard Gonzalez of the Foreign Policy Institute furthers that Mariano Rajoy, the prime minister of Spain, has become unwilling to negotiate due to pressure from the far right. Looking forward, Perez Bel of Al Jazeera projects that Spain will remove Catalan culture from major institutions like education, seize Catalan media, and require that all legislation passed by the Catalan parliament receive approval from the Spanish government, eliminating any semblance of political self-determination and “reducing their [parliament and] autonomy to something symbolic, at best.” Gonzalez furthers that “the most likely scenario for the foreseeable future is an entrenched conflict.” With peace and unity mutually exclusive, Jaroslav Tir of the University of Colorado Boulder explains why affirming is the best option, concluding that “peaceful secessions” lead to “peaceful relations.”

**Contention two is that independence leads to a better future.**

Teresa Forcades of the Guardian finds that independence is an unprecedented opportunity to redesign the Catalan political system under a more progressive mindset. Specifically, Catalan independence will lead to two new policies.

**First is reducing emissions.**

According to Kyle Brown of the University of Missouri, the story goes like this: Since Catalonia has very limited administrative power in the energy sector, the conservative Spanish government’s position against reducing emissions has prevented them from making significant legislation. For example, in 2015, Spain blocked a Catalan law to tax emissions by airline companies. However, if granted independence, Catalonia would pass policies to improve energy efficiency. Specifically, the Catalan government has a model to reduce emissions by ninety percent by 2050 through a carbon tax but hasn’t been able to implement it because of the Spanish government.

**The impact is saving lives.**

Nino Künzli of the Catalan Institute of Advanced Studies finds that slashing carbon emissions saves lives by reducing air pollution. He quantifies that reducing emissions in Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, by just sixty percent would result in three-thousand five-hundred fewer deaths annually.

**Second is harboring refugees.**

Alan Kurdi is three feet tall. He lies face down on a Turkish beach. His family paid six thousand dollars to smuggle him onto a lifeboat bound for the European coast, but because no country was willing to accept him, he drowned before his arrival. Due to countless others like Alan Kurdi, Leonie Wieners of the University of Twente explains that the refugee crisis is “the most important political issue [currently] facing the EU.” Unfortunately, Bruce Loudon of the Australian explains that due to Spain’s violent past with Muslims, they have been unwilling to accept Islamic refugees. Accordingly, Deutsche Welle explains that despite planning to take in seventeen thousand refugees from 2015 to 2017, Spain only accepted one thousand. Fortunately, Catalonia has a more open mindset. Ishaan Tharoor of the Washington Post finds that, if independent, “Catalonia would take a more progressive view toward refugees… [accepting] proposals that have so far been refused by” Spain’s government. Indeed, Mason Hoffman of Vice explains that Catalonia already has the necessary infrastructure to house thousands of refugees but hasn’t been able to use it because of the Spanish government.

**The impact is saving lives.**

Catalan Newsexplains that, in the event of independence, the government would be able to immediately offer relief to five thousand refugees and even more in the long term. The European Council for Refugees and Exiles explains that taking in refugees “saves lives [because] it prevents deaths at sea.” This is important, for the Institute for Peace furthers “refugees are...the poorest of the poor, the most vulnerable, and the most exploited” in society.

**Thus, we affirm.**