

## What to Do in a Friday Forum

Friday Forums are student discussions on key political issues. They are designed to bring you into an ongoing, democratic decision-making process. This week's Friday Forum will explore questions related to the debate on repealing Michigan's concealed weapons law.

### Should Michigan's

### concealed weapons

### law be repealed?

As you prepare for this Forum, keep in mind that it is NOT a debate. No one will win any points by cleverly outwitting someone or by brashly bowling over those who disagree with them. Rather, a Friday Forum is a process of shared inquiry. We talk in order to test our ideas and find ways to make them stronger. We listen in order to learn from others and to show respect for their points of view. It is OK to change your mind!

#### A. Things to Do During a Friday Forum

- 1. State your views and give reasons for your choices.**
- 2. Listen to the views of others with an open heart.**  
Understand that they have reasons for their choices as well. Accept that there are costs to your solutions, just as there are to theirs.
- 3. Ask questions to clarify what is being said.** Make sure people state their views clearly and that everyone agrees on what key words mean.
- 4. Be inclusive.** Try to keep as many people involved in the conversation as possible.
- 5. Work to keep the discussion on track.** Don't let it jump wildly from topic to topic.

## **B. Things Not to Do During a Friday Forum**

1. **Don't fail to listen.** Pay attention. Be open and flexible.
2. **Don't monopolize the conversation.** "Monopoly" is a board game and, in a forum, it's a boring game. We want to have a discussion, not a speech.
3. **When challenged, don't just keep repeating your position.** Give reasons for your beliefs. Give examples to show why you feel the way you do.
4. **Don't make personal attacks.** You can strongly disagree with a person's ideas without putting him or her down.
5. **Don't worry about "winning the argument."** Working with others to understand an issue and make the best possible decisions are the goals of a Friday Forum. That's how a democracy works!