

## **Round 2**

### **I. Economic Fragmentation (Prosperity) (Subsection Topics)**

#### **D. Geographic divisions/locations of all types in economic fragmentation**

Since the passage of the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, air travel in the United States has undergone major transformations. The deregulation of fares, routes, and market entry fostered competition but also led to significant industry consolidation. In the mid-2000s, several large carriers merged, most notably the 2008 merger between Delta Airlines and Northwest Airlines, which relocated a thriving Minneapolis-based headquarters to Atlanta in an effort to reduce operating costs. While the long-term effects of this merger on the Minneapolis area have been largely positive, many other mid-sized cities have not fared as well. Across the country, smaller regional hubs have experienced reduced air service, job losses, and diminished local economic activity as airlines have concentrated operations in major metropolitan centers.

You are a lobbying firm specializing in infrastructure and economic reform. A coalition of mid-sized cities has hired your firm to represent their interests before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Transportation, and Technology. These cities are concerned about the economic and geographic inequities that have emerged since airline deregulation, particularly as corporate power and airline operations have consolidated in a few large cities. Your objective is to propose a regulatory overhaul that restores service parity and prevents further geographic concentration of the airline industry's economic benefits. First, compile a list of negative economic impacts that airline deregulation and consolidation have had on mid-sized cities. Next, prepare counterarguments addressing potential claims by Senators that deregulation has benefited consumers, reduced fares, or increased efficiency. Finally, draft a mission statement to serve as your opening statement before the Senate committee, advocating for policies that promote a more geographically balanced national economy.