



Fifty Shades of Gray:
Extreme Torture Edition
class of 2019

Cover Design: Savanna Hamed

ISSUES MAGAZINE CLASS OF 2019 (FEB. 2018)

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Goodbye Cursive?

Is cursive writing becoming a language of the past?

By Savanna Hamed



Due to recent technological advancements, many school boards have replaced the old art of cursive writing with a new skill; typing. As keyboards are becoming more popular, pencils, pens, and papers are being pushed aside, along with the beneficial effects of cursive writing. Not only should written script be implemented into the nationwide education system, but it should be a skill every individual possesses.

While cursive writing was intended to look pretty, the ornate loops and squiggles are meant to be brisk and efficient. A study by College Board found that students who wrote in cursive on the essay portion of their SAT scored slightly higher than their regular-printed peers. The use of cursive allowed students to focus on the content of their essay, claimed Suzanne Baruch Asherson, writer for the New York Times, in April of 2013. The use of handwritten cursive helps writers to slow down thinking, allowing them to produce deeper and fuller thoughts. A high school boy from the Pacific Northwest told CSMonitor in November of 2013 that he found "it hard to think creatively when [he's] typing. Along with tests results, there are many reports that those with neat penmanship often performed

better in spelling and composition categories.

Many view cursive writing as unnecessary to teach, as it is no longer apart of the Common Core State Standards. In Finland, children are taught regular print, then spend the rest of their time working with a keyboard. Correlating with Finland, many American schools have already transitioned to a more digital friendly way of learning, such as computer games. These games allow students to acquire technology skills needed to excel on standardized tests. Alongside of classrooms, standardized tests are also becoming more tech savvy.

Cambridge University allows students to type their exams rather than write them. It is said that examiners are having a difficult time decoding the actual script, leading to a biased grading system. An article published in December 2014, from the Wisconsin Public Radio (coincided with NPR), reports of an interview with Virginia Berninger, a psychology teacher at the University of Washington. Although handwriting can be messy, Berninger believes handwriting and educational development are correlated.

"Because we now have computers, people seem to think we can use keyboards and we don't need traditional handwriting. It's just that we've left handwriting behind without carefully looking at not only research, but kids' learning." The act of writing in cursive utilizes both sides of the brain, and much research shows that kids who learn cursive tend to excel in the language department. While it may seem unnecessary to teach cursive due to the utilization of computers in the classroom workspace, the learning experience and brain development behind cursive should influence decision when deciding if they (schools) should or should not teach it. In the same article by the Wisconsin Public Radio, author Scottie Lee Meyer states that "cursive writing could be

an effective tool against Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and other conditions associated with motor-control difficulties in forming letters”. Cursive advocates also emphasize recent brain science that indicates the easy-flowing motion of script enhances hand-eye coordination, further developing motor-control skills. Ultimately, if cursive writing has so many educational benefits, why remove it from teachers lesson plans?

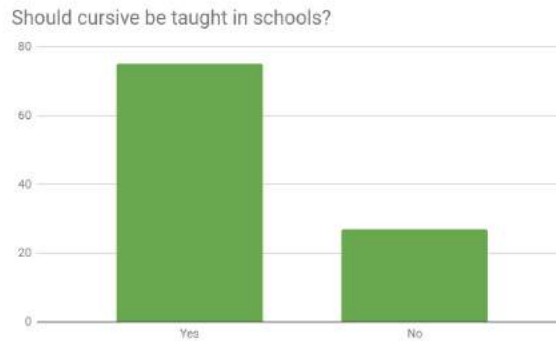
Another concern with terminating the teaching of cursive writing is the history aspect of it. In America, all of the written documents, including the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, were written in cursive. Many are afraid that as the younger generation ages, they will lose the knowledge behind the documents that bind us as a nation. Sure, there could be translations of the cursive documents into regular print, but chances of a distorted result is also likely. Being able to read cursive should be a skill that every human has. In order to save the art of cursive, Illinois recently passed a bill making it

mandatory for elementary schools to teach cursive to their students. This bill will be applied in the 2018-2019 school year, as it was passed in December 2017. Initially, the bill was vetoed by Governor Bruce Rauner, as he declared it an “unfunded mandate”. His veto was then countered by the House and the Senate. An article from the Chicago Tribune, written in December 2017 quotes senator Kimberly Lightford, as she claimed “cursive writing is a skill children will need throughout their lives”. She argued that Without cursive, it would be impossible to write a check, sign a legal document, or even form an autograph. The bill, sponsored by Representative Chris

Welch, claimed that teachings of cursive must be implemented into the curriculum in any way possible, even if it's just a lesson on the Declaration of Independence. As long as written script was taught to students, they'd be able to write it, and then read it. The goal was to preserve the language of cursive as much as possible; the earlier students learned cursive, the easier it would be for them to process it later on the in the future. When fighting for the bill to be passed, it was stated that cursive is a basic life long skill. A signature is almost like a fingerprint; it is specific to an individual, and it represents individuality. While Illinois was the most recent state to fight for cursive, there are 14 other states who mandate teachings of the language. Even the newest change of the No Child Left Behind Act mentions cursive in a positive manner.

In the end, there is no harm in teaching another skill that could be useful throughout an individual's whole life. Cursive writing is the root of our past, and without learning it there would be a

disconnect from our future generations to the past generations. Once cursive is forgotten, who is to say that our history isn't next?



*The bar graph above reflects a Twitter poll asking if cursive should be taught in schools. In total, there were 102 votes.

Books: Harmful or Beneficial?

Is the banning of books doing more harm than good?

By: Isabel Cerda



In one classroom, a teacher has moved all the desks into a giant circle. Sitting behind the desks are eager students waiting to debate their recently assigned book for English. Within the next twenty minutes, kids are swinging their hands up in the air hoping to get called on and learning about the different opinions and themes classmates had taken from the book. In another classroom, students are sitting in rows, about to take notes on another one dimensional book. Although there had been character development, problem and solution, and plot, there was nothing worth discussing within it. Nothing in the book made the readers think or question what was happening; they just accepted the text and moved on with their lives. Between the two scenarios, the first is clearly the more favorable one. Without books that force audiences to think for themselves, reading will never be as fun as it should be. Banning books would do more harm than good, and it shouldn't be done anymore.

From the age of thirteen, students have been taught about serious subjects such as the Holocaust and 9/11. People who are at the age of an “easily influenced” mind are taught about wars and the different types of ways that others have been tortured and killed. Yet books such as *Eleanor and Park* and *Taming the Star Runner* have been taken off shelves simply for their “offensive language.” According to a list from ala.org, John Steinbeck’s novel *Of Mice and Men* was challenged by parents for its “...offensive language, racism, and violence.” Like most of the books on that list, the events in Steinbeck’s story were not true. It was not based on a personal experience and it was not someone’s life story. The things discussed in history classes have gone far worse, yet no one seems to argue with the curriculum. The reason no one minds when racism during wars or every day civilian life is talked about is because it is something that people need to learn about. In a way, the English classes that allow these books to be read can aid alongside the history ones. It’s been a proven fact that the human brain absorbs information much easier by receiving it in a story format; so while the characters in *A Tale of Two Cities* may not have been real, the lives they lived were.

Nowadays, controversial subjects are the highlight of news channels nearly every day. There is absolutely no way to shield students from the dangers and realities of the world. Reading-even if made up-can be an excellent place to learn more about the world and what to expect from it. According to raisingkids.net, there are many kids who

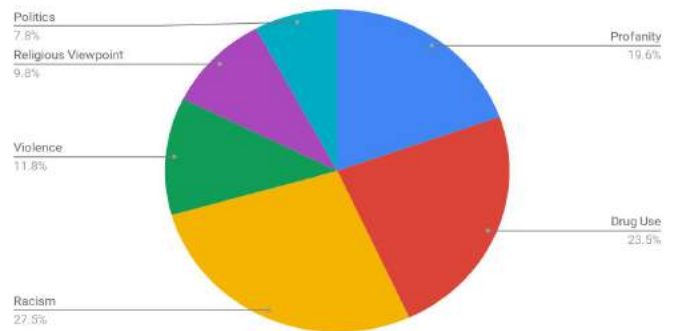
don't feel comfortable talking to family members about sensitive topics, and the only way they get their information is through reading about it. Taking that away from them would just lead to a generation filled with young adults who only have a vague idea of what the real world involves.

Adults-especially parents-argue that minors are too young to start thinking about issues such as racism, politics and death. In a quick interview, one parent emphasized her concern for some books scaring her children of the real world. The trouble with that statement is that a book wouldn't be considered a story if there was no obstacle to overcome. No matter how wild a book may be, authors base their dilemmas on real-life situations. Johnathan Rand, who was most known for his *American Chillers* series, was the Stephen King for elementary kids. His stories could terrify young children to the point where they'd be upset to go outside, yet there has never been a case where the series was challenged and voted to be banned from school libraries.

America has always given the illusion of creating free and independent thinkers, however banned books are proscribed because of the themes within them. They make people think and question what was being said. Thinking for oneself is a highly important skill to have, and by taking away the books that allow you to form your own opinions would be like giving everyone a calculator that could solve any math problem in the world. Sure it'd make life much easier, but having the knowledge to know how to find the answers yourself is superb.

After some personal research, a pie chart was made to show the biggest reasons why a list of over twenty books were banned in the year of 2015. The two most noticeable arguments against most books were because of the description of racism and drug abuse. These subjects, however upsetting they may be, need to be read by growing teenagers. There are people in the world who use drugs and discriminate others based on how they look or speak.

Why Books Were Banned in 2015



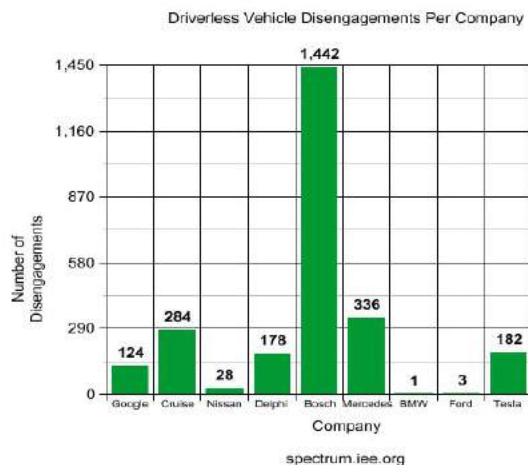
If parents really didn't agree with the required reading for school or what was put out in public libraries, then certain books that aren't considered age appropriate should have ratings on them. Movies that are rated above PG-13 expect all viewers to be old enough to watch the film, and if not then a parent should give consent to the viewing. The same thing could be done with books, although some parents would want things to be kept from their children, others would be fine with their kids reading about a fictional character's struggles. Instead of making the decision to outright ban any book that deals with uncomfortable topics for some, teenagers should at least have the right to have a say in what they read and when they read it.



No Drivers, No Morals, No Safety
 Are Driverless Vehicles Really The Way
 Towards A Safer Future?
 By Lauren Hirschfield

You are the first American to own a brand new driverless car! All of your friends and relatives observe in simultaneous envy and anxiety as your snazzy car carries you out of your driveway. You wonder why they all refused your offers to join you on your first ride. The salesman told you there was nothing to worry about, so what were they so afraid of? After a while, you become enveloped in a heavy traffic jam, the tailgater behind you is barely two feet away from your bumper. Suddenly, you notice a toddler dash in front of your car and instinctively reach your foot towards the break, only realizing too late that there is none. Your car has not been programmed to deal with this situation and mows down the little girl instead of choosing to break because of the close tailgater behind you. It only saw the pedestrian as a small obstacle in the way of keeping overall safety on the road and did not possess the morality or quick decision making required to save the child while also protecting the tailgater and the other vehicles behind it as well. Driverless vehicles threaten future road safety through programming mistakes, their lack of individual reasoning and morality, cyber hacking, and their high prices.

It is much easier to correct human error than it is to correct human error programmed into a machine. All sorts of mistakes can be made during production, and any one of those errors could prove to be fatal when ingrained into a self driving vehicle. As stated by author James Hoffa from his article "Drivers Wanted," "Those who advocate for self-driving cars often cite the fact that human error is largely responsible for most traffic deaths. But that doesn't mean self-driving cars and trucks will be able to avoid those errors. An automated vehicle in Pittsburgh recently drove the wrong way up a one-way road. Last year in Florida a man using Tesla's Autopilot feature was killed when the system failed to recognize a tractor-trailer in front of the car. These are not doomsday scenarios; these are legitimate concerns." Additionally, Mark Harris, the author of the article "The 2,578 Problems With Self Driving Cars," provided a table that listed the total autonomous vehicle disengagements per company within the year 2016. That information has been recorded in the graph below.



Those in support of driverless cars would say that as technology progresses, the errors put into these vehicles will decrease.

However, when an error is made by a human, he or she can learn from and eventually correct his or her mistake. If not, they may be punished in some way depending on the nature of their actions. But when an error is programmed into a machine, especially one as dangerous as an autonomous vehicle, the effects could be disastrous. These issues could force companies to recall their vehicles in order to reprogram them, which would leave many people without transportation and would cost millions of dollars in repairs. No matter how advanced technology will become, errors will always be made. Another part of the vehicles' programming that could be affected by human error is their decision making.

An important part of driving is the ability to make quick decisions. The scary part of doing so is that any wrong decision could be deadly for anyone on or even off the road.

Self-driving vehicles would be incapable of making those life saving decisions on their own because any reasoning or morality that they would possess would belong to their programmers. The manufacturers of autonomous vehicles would not just be creating independent transporters, but they would also be in charge of the decision making capabilities and moral views used by those vehicles in certain situations on the road. They would have to take into account "the trolley problem." According to Wikipedia, "The general form of the problem is this: There is a runaway trolley barreling down the railway tracks. Ahead, on the tracks, there are five people tied up and unable to move. The trolley is headed straight for them. You are standing some distance off in the train

yard, next to a lever. If you pull this lever, the trolley will switch to a different set of tracks. However, you notice that there is one person tied up on the side track. You have two options: 1. Do nothing, and the trolley kills the five people on the main track. 2. Pull the lever, diverting the trolley onto the side track where it will kill one person." The trolley problem is an example of a specific situation that cannot be predicted, therefore programmers would be unable to tell the self-driving vehicle what to do if it were in a similar problem. It would be the job of the car's maker to choose its "moral code" and how it would react to or solve problems on the road. What if the car made a decision, according to its programming,

that the passengers disagreed with? They most likely would not be able to change the car's "mind" in any way. No one would feel safe knowing that their vehicle would be in charge of making important decisions without their input.



Why should anyone put their life in the "hands" of an autonomous vehicle without the moral compass or quick, uncontrolled reasoning of a human? It is much safer and easier to trust human drivers to use their own common sense and intelligence while driving their own vehicle than to allow the manufacturers of driverless vehicles to take away that freedom from drivers. Manufacturers also need to take into account the vulnerability of driverless vehicles against hackers.

The digital components of automated vehicles present the all too real possibility of being hacked. Today, with so much technology becoming hacked for various reasons through various ways, it is

impossible for hackers to not figure out a way to control driverless vehicles in the future. Hackers and even terrorists could take control of driverless vehicles and use them to hurt others. According to Washington Post reporter Robert J. Samuelson in his article, "Hackers Behind the Wheel," "Almost any digitally connected device in a car could become an entry point to the vehicle's central communications network, opening a door for hackers to potentially take control by, for instance, disabling the engine or brakes. The Wall Street Journal story focuses exclusively on cybercrime - for example, locking a car remotely and refusing to open it until a ransom is paid. If millions of vehicles were shut down simultaneously, the ransom paid by car companies could be staggering. But the real threat is not ordinary crime. It's cyber warfare, attacks by terrorist groups or hostile nations intent on sowing panic and social disorder. Imagine the chaos if some adversary immobilized 10 percent of the light-vehicle fleet, leaving about 25 million cars and trucks sprawled randomly along roads from Maine to California. The more we depend on digital technology for everyday business and pleasure, the more we become vulnerable to potentially catastrophic disruptions." A supporter of driverless vehicles would argue that the technologically advanced cars driven today already pose the threat of being hacked in some way, and the fact that no one has hacked it as of yet nullifies the possibility of that threat. Nevertheless, hacking technology can advance enough to overcome current technology and become strong enough to do the same further in the future.

Due to the amount of technology built into autonomous vehicles, the price of them for both the manufacturers and the consumers would be outrageous. As written

by Robert J. Samuelson, the author of the article "Hackers Behind the Wheel," "potential customers may be deterred by the high costs of all the needed sensors, cameras, computer chips and software. With present technology, this could add \$10,000 to the cost of new vehicles, although that is expected to decline with time." To give a further estimation, the article "Will You Ever Be Able To Afford A Self-Driving Car?" explained that, "According to a recent study, "Emerging Technologies: Autonomous Cars—Not If, But When," IHS Automotive forecasts that the price for the self-driving technology will add between \$7,000 and \$10,000 to a car's sticker price in 2025, a figure that will drop to around \$5,000 in 2030 and about \$3,000 in 2035, the year when the report says most self-driving vehicles will be operated completely independent from a human occupant's control." If the safety hazards do not drive anyone away from this death trap, than the cost definitely will. As this price is similar to the affordability of high class cars such as Rolls Royce and Lamborghini, mainly the wealthy would be the only people able to afford a self-driving car. Thanks to this, the amount of these cars actually on the road would be exceedingly limited.

Driverless vehicles are dangerous and should not become mainstream on the roads. Not only are they hazardous because of their unpredictability due to mistakes written into their programming, but their lack of individual thought and vulnerability to hacking also threatens future passengers. Their high unaffordability also limits them to the wealthiest, which will thankfully make them a rare occurrence on the road. But no matter how many autonomous vehicles there may be in the future, each one is a step closer to the heartbreaking, aforementioned scenario. Don't let anyone pay that price.

DUI Has a Sneaky Twin

Spoiler Alert, it's Texting and Driving

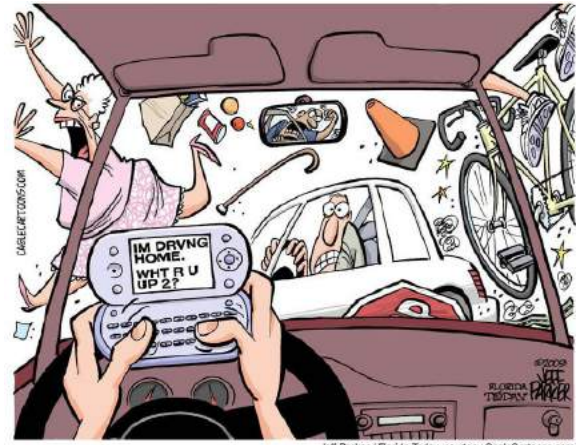
By: Hannah Hamade

Drunk driving. You've probably heard the countless warnings and horror stories which most likely convinced you to never try it. So why would you participate in something just as dangerous? The truth is, using a phone while driving has proven to be just as deadly as driving under the influence, yet so many don't believe it's that bad. Texting and driving is lethal and should be avoided at all costs.

Every day the effects of phone use while driving can be seen. As recorded by the Department of Motor Vehicles, at least nine people are killed, daily, due to a distracted driving crash. Their statistics have even shown that the risk of accident while texting and driving is on-par with that of drinking and driving. Millions of stories are published, as well, about normal law abiding citizens turning into murderers of innocent people in just a matter of seconds, all because of texting and driving.

What makes the act so dangerous is that it not only takes one's attention away from the road but it takes their eyes off it, as well. Even though, most texts only take a few seconds to type and send, those few seconds can be detrimental. According to the Michigan Driving Skills Study Guide, a car going 60 mph travels 88ft per second, that means a car travels more than the span of a football field in just 2 seconds, which is the average amount of time taken to type a short message. However, the fact that the

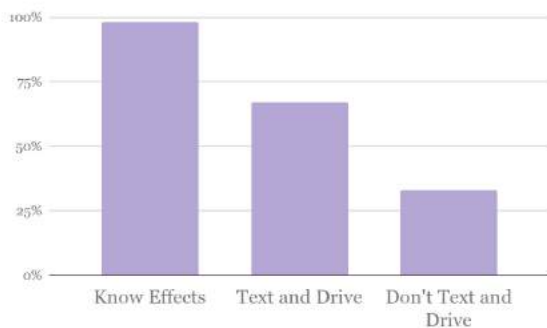
driver's attention is shifted adds to the danger. This inattention means that the driver's reaction time is significantly decreased and any sudden action from another driver, like a lane change or braking, could lead to a fatal, high speed accident.



An example of the deadliness of texting and driving was shown by the death of 13 people who were on their way back from a church retreat in a mini-bus. The accident occurred in a rural Texas town and was retold by Jody Kuchler to the Chicago Tribune. Kuchler saw the accident happen and even called the police when he saw the truck in front of him swerving. Jack Dillon Young, the driver that hit the bus, was reportedly swerving for 15 minutes into oncoming traffic and back into his lane, despite honking from both Kuchler and those on the other side of the road. Immediately after the crash both Kuchler and Young got out of their cars to check on those in the bus, only to find 12 dead and one severely injured. Young began to apologize profusely and explain that he'd been texting and driving. Unfortunately for Jack Young, no amount of apologizing could return the lives he took, all because of

wanting to carry-on a text conversation, which was undoubtedly less important the lives of thirteen innocent people.

The worst part is that people have seen and heard stories like Young's yet they still continue to text and drive. There's also many major organizations that fight to combat the distracted driving epidemic and it's a requirement that all driving schools teach about the negative effects of texting and driving. According to CBS News, 98% of drivers who text regularly say that they know the dangers of texting and driving yet over 67% of the drivers admit to participating in the action.



So, what's their reasoning for doing something which they know is wrong? A majority of people say it's due to not wanting to miss out on important information. However, nearly everybody who has been a culprit of texting and driving states that they've never received a notification that ended up being more important than another person's life. And, as seen in the case of Jack Young, he immediately regretted his actions, even before he found the 13 passengers dead.

Another prominent justification is that people don't want to anger or upset the person they're texting by not responding.

Fortunately most people are understanding when they find your reason for a late response is due to driving. A report from the National Highway Safety Committee even showed that a majority of people do not mind a delay in text response if the reason is because of driving. You can also avoid the whole situation by informing those you're texting that you're about to drive, before you get behind the wheel.

CBS News has also found that 25% of people don't believe texting affects their ability to drive. Unfortunately, the facts and statistics are not in their favor. The DMV lists texting and driving as the leading cause of death for teens and states that 26% of all accidents in 2014 were do to the action. Time Magazine has also published articles based on the effects of texting and driving and has had doctors prove that the action leads to decreased concentration. Therefore proving that texting and driving leads to a decrease in performance in all situations.

In the end, there is no reason to injure or kill an innocent person, so don't take the chance by texting and driving. It's been proven to be fatal and affect the brain's ability to concentrate on what it needs to. Statistics have even shown risk levels to be the same as that of drinking and driving. No matter the circumstances, texting and driving is deadly and should never be attempted. You wouldn't drink and drive, or attempt to drive the length of a football field blind, so don't do something just as reckless and use your phone while operating a vehicle.

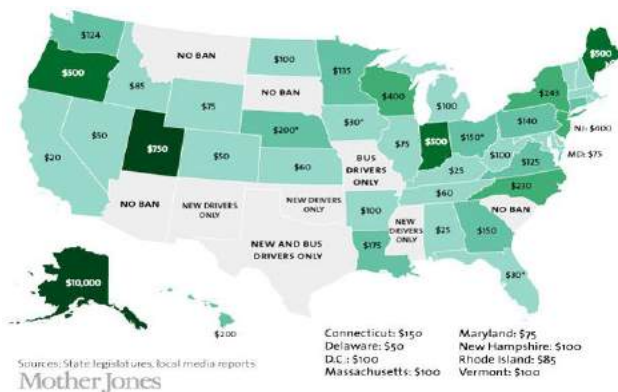
The Overlooked Killer

Stricter laws and fines are needed to stop the growing problem of distracted driving caused by cell phones.

By: Michael Mackiewicz

Every day the vast majority of the entire population puts their lives at risk. This is from either getting behind the wheel and driving, or just being a passenger. Car accidents can be devastating, and what makes the matter worse is the lack of care drivers have on the road. When people think of reasons a fatal accident was committed, their minds go right to drinking and driving. But, what people overlook is the fact that driving while impaired by cell phones is just as bad as drinking and driving. So to solve this issue of driving while distracted, states have to up the restriction and add more laws and higher tickets.

In Michigan, the punishment for distracted driving is next to nothing. From MI.Gov, first time offenders will receive a fine for \$100, then every offense after will be charged with a \$200 fine. Michigan falls somewhere in the middle when comparing distracted driving charges to the other states.



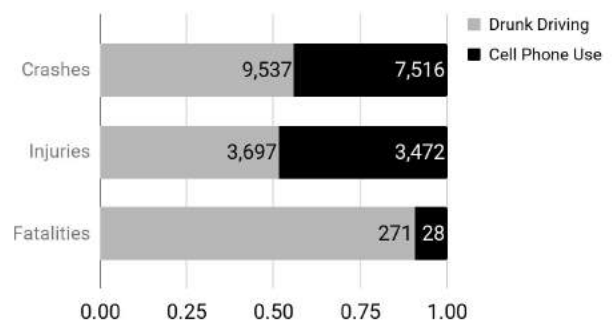
Looking at the chart above by Mother Jones, some states are extremely strict when it comes to distracted driving, like Alaska. But for almost every other state, it does not take

a genius to see that the fines are just a joke. California fining someone \$20, is just ridiculous. You would think that the laws would be stricter when it comes to distracted driving. This action does not just put the harm of the driver in danger it also put the lives of innocent people in danger. When a crash occurs, it almost always involves at least one innocent person who was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. It is sickening to see how little protection there is for innocent lives.

When comparing these charges to the ones a person would receive from drinking and driving is nowhere near being equivalent. From drivinglaws.org, in Michigan, first offense of drinking and driving will result in up to 93 days in jail, a \$100-\$500 fine, and up to six month suspension on their license. Then, for the second time offense, up to one year in jail, 30-90 days of community service, a \$200-\$1,000 fine, and a minimum of one year suspension on their license. When comparing the two punishments, anyone can see that the government is far more concerned with is issue of drinking and driving over distracted driving.

Just like the government, many people do not care to see the growing issue with distracted driving. People are mistaken when they say that distracted driving is not a bad concern. The disgusting fact is the cell phone is causing just as many accidents as there is from drunk driving. All the evidence and statistics that point they are dangerously similar in nature, but people still do not see the importance.

2015 Statistics



Just a quick glance at the statistics from the Michigan State Police's 2015 Drunk Driving Audit and 2015 Annual Crash Audit, will show that the two are pretty close in numbers. But sadly, people do not believe the significance and are blind to the issue. The only overwhelming difference between the two are the fatalities that originated. These statistics vibrantly show that the issue of distracted driving is much more severe than many people think and change is needed. The answer to this controversy is staring us in the face.

The solution to solving this crisis is to raise the fines and looking at statistics of drinking and driving the higher fines make a difference. The National Center for Health Statistics has stated some key facts. They said that after 2013, when the punishment for drinking and driving was increased, there was a decrease in young driver's death by 10%. They also stated that, in the United States, the states with the highest fines have the lowest rates of death. These statistics blatantly show that the higher the punishment is, the less likely people are to commit that offense.

The state of Arizona has one of the lowest numbers for accidents committed by drinking and driving and surprisingly, they have one of the highest punishments for the crime. From the DMV Arizona, the first offense is ten days in jail, a fine of \$1,250, taking an alcohol treatment program, an ignition interlock program in every car that person drives, and community service.

But looking back at the map picture by Mother Jones, that shows texting and driving fines, Arizona has nothing there at all for any sort of punishment. It is just sad to see how some issues are bright in the people's eyes and are needed to be fixed immediately. Then, another issue very

similar to that issue is completely hidden away from the eyes and no precautions are put forward at all. This just shows the unaware danger that is going on within every state, or how people are turning a blind eye to the issue. It is good that these laws are as strict as they are. The research done shows that these tactics work and better results come from it. So, the question is, why is the government not doing more to fix this problem when it comes to texting and driving?

People might look at the two and say that there is just about a 2,000 crash difference between the two. But, even though there is a decent gap, there is still a much greater risk to the young adult population when it comes to distracted driving. Pew Research Center ran a study to see the percentage of teen who use their cell phones while driving. The numbers came out to be 26% of teens have used their cell phones to text while driving, and then 43% of teens have used their cell phones to talk on the phone while driving. So, even though the numbers might not be exactly 1:1 even, young lives are much more at risk when it comes to distracted driving. So in the world we live in with extreme concern to the wellbeing and safety of the youth, these numbers should be raising red flags yelling for change to be made.

Being distracted by texting while driving is far more dangerous than many people may have thought. The problem of texting and driving can be solved with some work. The fines and punishment for breaking the law are nowhere near what it needs to be to make a difference and save more lives. Everyone in this country should take a second a think about what they are doing when they drive. Is sending that text really worth killing an innocent life and taking that life out of the hands of a family?

A Pocket-Sized Distraction

Should cellphones be allowed on school property?

By: Ethan Cooper

In 1973, the first cellular phone was invented for convenient mobile calling on the go. This was only the spark of innovation that created the wildfire today with these unique mobile devices. 45 years later, these pocket-sized computers are more popular than ever. With the creation of texting, applications, and social media, an average person is on their cell phone for about five hours every single day. According to The Washington Post, teens and young adults have become the leaders of social media distracting themselves by spending nearly nine hours each day scrolling through applications such as Twitter and Snapchat. This is causing an uprising in the education system, bringing up one simple solution: cell phones should not be allowed on school premises for the sake of education.

While teachers have spent countless hours over the years, scribbling on the board, going over reviews, handing out homework, and trying to increase the knowledge of each student that entered their room, these students have become increasingly more distracted by their cellular device. Time Magazine studied the change in grades from schools in

their area and uncovered that grades have dropped nearly 12% since smartphones first made their appearance. Some schools have banned cell phones at school completely and have seen a 6% increase in grades and overall learning ability. Banning cell phone usage in school will ultimately increase the attention span in teens which will translate into better testing scores and better grades.

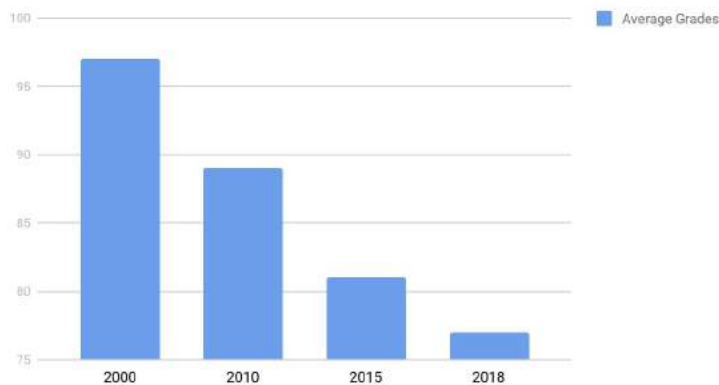


Another strategy to reduce the amount of cellphone usage in school is one that Apple has invented. “This update that is currently under its construction,” said Frank Harris in his article, *Nothing Smart About Phones*, “but when it finished, it will end the dance of distraction students have on their phones.” Apple is implicating a digital lock on smartphones to help fight the addictive nature to cellular devices. This investment may cost Apple some cash, but education is extremely more important to be able to go into a

careers and maybe even be the next entrepreneur to innovate the world.

While others see the smartphone as a vile device, capable of destroying

Changes In Grades



children's and young adult's education, others have perceived it to be a useful source in the classroom. "It is powerful technology," Mitchell High School's principal, Joe Childs said, "and is always on a student's mind whether it be for educational purposes or simply chatting in class." In the article, *Cellphone Serves 'Lot of Purpose' in Mitchell High school*, it explains how using cellular devices on the schools premise could help expand a student's resources and capability to learn. They have even implemented programs such as 1-to-1 technology, on order to expand the minds and education of students through the use of the cell phone. "They're checking up on news, they're looking up on the weather for their golf meet, they're taking notes, they're chatting with friends, making

phone calls," said Childs, "It serves a lot of purposes."

Although things seem to run smoothly at Mitchell High School with their use of smartphones, some researchers believe that won't be the case for much longer. Since the Apple Iphone was released on June 29, 2007, recent studies show that average grades in students have drastically decreased, nearly 20%. Some could still argue that it may not be cell phones causing this disruption in grades, but it is certainly the greatest suspect there is with loads of evidence stacked against it. While others try to see a brighter side to the use of smartphones in school, these clear studies show little to no evidence supporting the fact that cellphones expand students more than just distract them.

Restricting cell phones in school may be the key to ending the crime of falling grades and increasing the capacity of students to give their full attention to the teacher. Distractions happen in life and we try to avoid them the best we can, but we now carry around a constant one in our very own pockets every single day. Learning to control it is only a step in the right direction to fight this addiction, but getting rid of them may be the best solutions schools have to win the war on phone usage.

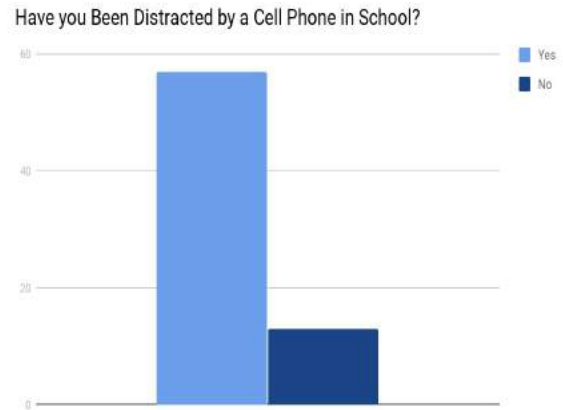
Cell Phones and their Effect on Students

How much do you really know about your device? The effects may be surprising.

By: Emily Cartier

Everyone loves to play the most popular game or be on the latest social media site. Being in on the latest trends and following all your friends on Twitter is so much more important than grades right? Yeah, no. While you may think that you're so cool, your grades are so not. Your phone prevents you from learning valuable information that you need. Cell phones and social media sites do more harm than good. The cellular device is a blessing to almost every teenager; however, it takes away from the learning environment and prevents students from paying attention in classes. Cell phones are detrimental to teenagers because they lead to less socialization, decreased productivity in school, and health problems.

Teenagers would rather spend hours a day texting their friends instead of talking to them face to face. Staring at a glowing screen is more important to students than social interaction. Instead of engaging in a intelligent conversation with their peers, they stare at a screen that has no benefit. Sherry Turkle, a woman who studies technological advances for twenty years, stated that "if you put a cell phone into a social interaction, it does two things: First, it decreases the quality of what you talk about and secondly, it decreases the empathic connection that people feel toward each other". Intelligent students fail to create conversation with authority figures because cell phones program the mind to believe that the only way to communicate is through technology. The advanced students of this era of technology cannot participate in social interaction. Cell phones are great for building communication skills; however, these skills do not transfer into a place of business. The future of communication should not lie in the hands of iPhones and Androids.



Seventy students were asked if they have been distracted by a cell phone in school. Fifty seven of these young people said yes and thirteen said no. The graph above shows that the majority of students have taken their mind off of class to text a friend or play a game. This is evidence that cell phones distract adolescents from studying or doing necessary classwork.

While most Americans are addicted to this handheld device, it does more harm than good. As a witness and a victim to cell phone addiction, students cannot put their cell phones down long enough to pay attention in an hour long class period. They check their phones constantly or they never put them down to begin with. According to *GuardChild.com*, twenty two percent of teenage students log on to their favorite social media site more than ten times a day. Instead of paying attention in school, they stare at a glowing screen that is preventing them from learning valuable information. This diverts their minds away from learning and to their phones. No one can learn when they cannot take their nose out of a cell phone.

Some teenagers may suffer from depression. While these have always been illnesses, cell phones accelerate the amount of victims of these medical problem. Research suggests that young people who spend more than two hours per day on social media are more likely to report poor mental health, including psychological distress. According to *NPR.org*, "a study published in *Clinical Psychological Science* finds that

increased time spent with cell phones or tablets have contributed to an uptick in symptoms of depression and suicidal thoughts over the last several years". This study states that the rates of depression in young people has risen seventy percent in the last couple of decades. The cause of this is unknown; however, most researchers believe it is due to peer pressure and cyberbullying. Cell phones affect the brain psychologically and cause serious damage.

Some students get an anxious feeling when they aren't allowed to go on their phones. These teenagers are fixated to their phones and the thought of putting it down is like withdrawal to a gambling addict. The constant need to have their device in their hand is similar to a gambler who cannot walk away from a slot machine, except this is a mobile addiction. According to *CBSPittsburg.com*, "more and more kids are suffering from severe and debilitating anxiety because of it". More teenagers are suffering from anxiety than ever before because of cell phones. Cell phone use can make you feel uneasy and irritable if you cannot have your phone with you, you may lose interest in activities and you can feel alone when you cannot have access to this device. These are some signs of cell phone addiction.

Adolescents need to receive eight to ten hours of sleep of night; however, the average amount of sleep for a teenager is six and a half to eight. Numerous studies show that increased social media use has a significant association with poor sleep quality in young people. Teenagers cannot put their phones down long enough to get a decent amount of sleep. According to *AspenEducation.com*, "only twenty percent of adolescents get the recommended nine hours of sleep on school nights, and forty-five percent sleep less than eight hours on school nights".



Cell phones affect your sleep by suppressing melatonin and keeping your brain awake and alert. The blue light on a phone screen prevent the brain from winding down at night. It tricks the brain into believing it is still daytime or that it needs to stay awake. By going on an electronic device before going to sleep disturbs our circadian rhythm, pushing back sleep up to three hours. This is why doctors recommend shutting off your phones and any other electronics an hour before going to sleep.

As a high school student, I love to communicate with my friends through Snapchat and other apps. If I have some free time before bed, there is nothing wrong with going on my phone to kill some time. I could not have been more wrong. The affect a cell phone has on the brain is

unbelievable and it can cause medical problems. They are distracting in a learning environment and they encourage students to engage in social media over studying for a text. The amount of cell phone use increased and quality of work and productivity in classrooms continues to decrease. While Google Classroom and Quizlet may be beneficial for some, cell phones should not be used to text a friend during class or Google the answers to your homework.

Average phone use jumped from three hours and forty minutes in 2016 to four hours and twenty-six minutes in 2017. The cell phones that students love provide them with access to the internet and social network sites, but to the detriment of their social skills, intelligence and overall health. Do you still think that using your cell phone so much is a good idea?

Taking the Easy Way Out

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing

By: Izaak Pope

Mandatory Sentencing states that offenders are required to serve a predefined term for their crime, with complete disregard for the specifics of the offender's case. Mandatory sentencing should not be used in courtrooms to lock offenders away due to the topic of their case, but should instead be tried by a court based on the specific details of their case and given a sentence that is equal to the crime that they have committed.

The first instance of unfair mandatory sentencing was enacted in the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. This act mandated that an individual caught with 5 grams of crack cocaine or 500 grams of powder cocaine was to get a minimum sentence of 5 years without parole. This meant that even if someone had no prior convictions and was a law abiding citizen before the point of them being convicted of this crime, they would still get the mandatory 5 years that was enacted by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. This act has a profound effect on not only the first time offenders that it puts away, but also the prison system itself.

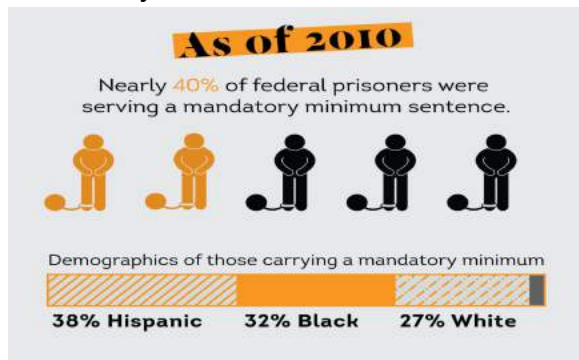
The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 failed the American people by instituting that 5 grams of crack cocaine was apparently equal to 500 grams of powder cocaine. At the time of this act's passage, the Reagan administration was deeply rooted in the 'War on Drugs'. The area that this 'war' was focused in on was the urban, inner city area that was mostly occupied by low-income minorities. The drug that was sweeping across these streets was

crack cocaine, a free base form of cocaine that can be smoked and is usually cheaper than powder cocaine. Powder cocaine, however, was used by wealthy Americans. This means that when a low income American is charged with possession of 5 grams of crack cocaine, they will get exactly the same time as an individual charged with possession of 500 grams of powder cocaine (likely a distributor). This is not fair at all. There is no reason as to why crack cocaine can be viewed as more powerful than powder cocaine. This is why many people also have the argument that the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 has racial discrimination rooted in it. Since crack cocaine was predominantly found in poor, inner city neighborhoods that had minorities living there, the crack cocaine possession charge was spiked up so that more low income minorities would be given prison time.

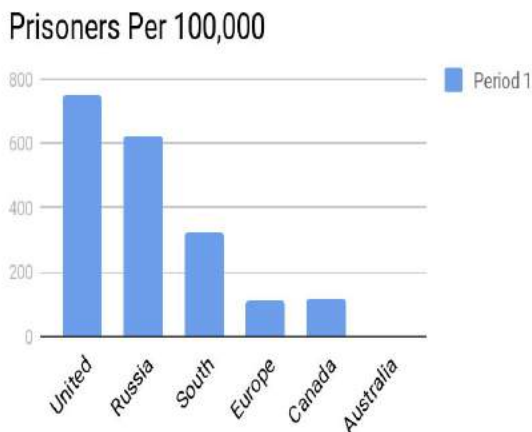
Mandatory federal sentence for first-time offender		
Amount (grams)	Powder cocaine	Crack cocaine
5	Probation	5 years
50	1 year	10 years
500	5 years	11 years
5,000	10 years	17.5 years

Another problem that arises from mandatory minimum sentencing is overcrowding within the United States prison system. This cost of \$74 billion affects the US economy in a very negative way and this is due to prisons throughout the US being stuffed to the brim with inmates that were given mandatory minimum sentences for common drug charges.

I myself believe that minimum mandatory sentences are unfair and



should not be used in the Federal court system. The fact that individuals can be given the same amount of time with complete disregard for their case specifics is outrageous to say the least. One of the rights that we have as Americans is to be tried by a judge and jury and be given a fair trial. How is it fair that a first time offender can be given the same time as a career criminal simply because they both have committed the same crime. The individual who has committed their first



offense, should get much more leeway than the other offender. Minimum sentencing may have seemed like a good idea during Reagan's 'War on Drugs', but now we can see the long term consequences of these laws on the Federal prison system. According to the

United States Sentencing Commission, the United States represents about 4.4% of the world's population, it houses around 22% of the world's prisoners. This statistic is not flattering at all and conveys the failures of the Federal sentencing system.

Some might say that for certain crimes (ex: kidnapping, child pornography) mandatory sentencing is the right way to go because it gives a broadly accepted term to what offenders of these heinous crimes should be given. In response to this, I believe that like all other cases people should be convicted according to the specifics of their case, rather than be given a sentence that is set in stone for the certain offense. I believe it should be like this because people are ultimately going to be given a correctly justified sentence for whatever crime that they have committed.

According to Casey Tolan of Slate, Iowa recently approved a reform bill that would eliminate minimum mandatory sentences for some drug felonies, make more drug offenders eligible for parole, reduce the disparity between crack and powder cocaine sentences, and give judges the discretion in abandoning minimum mandatory sentences. This is one small step towards the eradication of these terrible laws. If we really want mandatory sentences to be gone we will need to do much more than what is presently occurring.

Mandatory minimum sentences should not be used in the Federal court system because they are unfair and do not take into account the specifics of an individual's case. There needs to be reform in this area and mandatory sentences need to be abolished.

The Insanity Defense
Do They Deserve to Rot in Jail or Be
Restored in Hospitalization?
By: Alley Mykolaitis



Only four percent of violent acts in the United States are uniquely attributable to serious mental illness. In fact, studies have shown that those who suffer from mental illnesses are actually less likely to be violent than the general population. The mentally ill are a group of people that are incredibly stigmatized and misunderstood in terms of how dangerous they really are. In today's society, the four percent of mentally ill who do commit acts of violence are sent to rot in jail instead of getting the treatment and support they need. All around the country, mentally handicapped people are going into their trials, incompetent of understanding their actions, and are facing prison time when they should be receiving help through the insanity plea. The insanity defense has been apart of the American judicial system from its founding and the U.S Supreme Court has ruled it is unconstitutional to try a person who fails to grasp the consequences of the proceedings against him and is unable to participate in his own defense. Though the insanity plea has been in the American judicial system for decades, untreated mentally ill people are still being carted off to jail, where their illnesses go unaddressed,

increasing the odds that they will again commit crimes after their release. This has become a serious problem around the country and it needs to be addressed because the mentally disabled deserve to be helped, not tortured. In this society, any decrease in the number of mentally ill patients is significant because the world is seeing more and more cases of forensic patients everyday. By allowing the mentally ill to get the help that the judicial system made for them, it can not only better the forensic patients, but the community around them. It is unconstitutional to completely take away a person's rights, even if they commit a crime. The insanity defense needs to be respected and followed, when necessary, because it was created to help forensic patients receive treatment for their mental health problems and hopefully restore them back to sanity.

In order to help mentally ill people who have become criminals, the insanity defense allows them to receive psychiatric help through mental institutions instead of facing jail time. According to Joe Palazzolo, an author in the Wall Street Journal, Chief U.S District Judge Marsha J. Pechman explained, "jails are not hospitals, they are not designed as therapeutic environments, and they are not equipped to manage mental illness." Jails are meant for choleric criminals who have no remorse and who know the consequences of their crimes while they are committing. Whereas, mental institutions are places where the mentally disabled go to seek help and advisement through their hard times. Even though some mentally challenged people commit crimes, it does not mean they deserve the same punishment as normal-functioning criminals. When a mentally ill person commits an act of violence, according to Chris Slobogin, director of the criminal-justice program at Vanderbilt University Law School, "it

doesn't mean they're going to do it again, especially because their encounter with the forensic psychiatric system means they've received treatment." People who are found N.G.R.I, or not guilty by reason on insanity, tend to go back out into the community and do really well. It is proven that if you provide treatment of illnesses and provide the support they need, they do not usually reoffend because they have restored some type of sanity. The N.G.R.I plea is for the benefit of the patient and the patient's community. Instead of rotting in jail, it gives the defendant the opportunity to restart his/her life, in a sense, and helps figure out how to improve their mental illness.

In most cases, the public looks at the N.G.R.I plea as a "get out of jail free card." They believe that just because the defendant does not understand the crimes he/she committed, that they will not have to face the consequences of their action, but that is not entirely true. When an N.G.R.I defense does succeed, it tends to resemble a conviction more than an acquittal because patients can wind up with longer, not shorter, periods of incarceration and they are pulled into a mental health system that can be harder to leave than prison. This means that a defendant who faces a two year prison sentence can have up to a five year hospitalization sentence if they plead insanity. Many citizens believe that once a criminal is deemed insane they are tenderly cared for and that they are not punished for their crimes because they are in a more medical atmosphere compared to a jail environment. Yet, they fail to notice the fact that some mental institutions are worse than jail and that the patients are treated much like prisoners. In a mental ward, the patients are constantly being watched, searched, and screamed at, much like they would be if they were in a prison. Although they are in a less intense environment and do not have live the

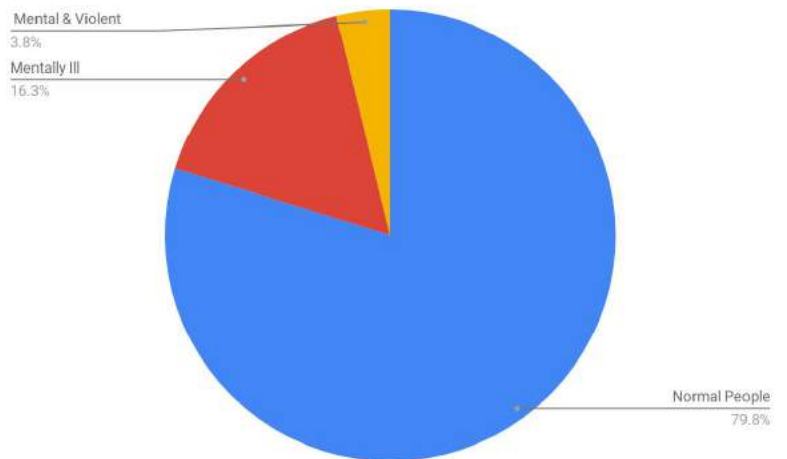
exact same lifestyle as prisoners do, they are still criminals and are still faced with their consequences daily. Patients have to mentally and psychically face their disabilities and restore sanity back into themselves, which can be more mentally disturbing than facing life in prison. The criminals who are granted the insanity plea are not free; they are held and bound like every other prisoner. The only difference between prison and the mental institution is the fact that they are placed in an environment made to suit their disabilities.

Although people believe the insanity defense is a trick used to get out of prison, the general public fails to recognize just how hard it is for a prisoner to successfully plead insane. Michael Bien, a lawyer who helped bring a successful lawsuit against the California prison system on behalf of prisoners with psychiatric illnesses, concurs that, "under constitutional law, they're supposed to be incarcerated only if they're getting treatment, and only if the treatment is likely to restore sanity." Therefore, not any prisoner can plead insane and get out of jail. A forensic patient must be both mentally ill and dangerous in order to be hospitalized against his will. Since you can not punish someone for having mental illnesses, the constitutional law allows them to receive help, but only if it is necessary. For instance, mental illness is not exculpatory in itself because a defendant may be found mentally ill and still competent enough to stand trial. In order to be eligible for the insanity plea, the defendant must be mentally ill and not competent enough or intellectually capable of understanding their crimes and able to defend himself/herself in court. Once the defendant's attorney proves their client is not comprehending his/her actions, the defendant will be granted insanity and will be hospitalized until they are no longer a

threat to themselves or the general public. Acceptance to the insanity defense is rare and there is a long process to it, including: consistent psychiatric evaluations, medical diagnosis, brain scans, and behavioral tests. The insanity defense was not made to help every prisoner avoid their consequences, it was made to help restore sanity into those who never grew up with it.

The insanity plea does not only help the mentally ill, but it also helps the communities that live around them. According to Jim Randall, former president of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Council, explained, “clearly, if someone with a mental illness demonstrates they are capable of murder, they need to be removed from society for the public good until they are no longer a danger.” These people need to be in a hospital, but to hold them morally accountable for their actions, as though delusions and hearing voices would not impair their basic judgment, defies fairness and common sense. Once they are hospitalized and restored to sanity, they are no longer a threat to society. This makes the community a safer place to live in and helps the patients see the reality behind their actions. If deemed sane, they are released back in the community and in most cases, they go on to live normal, healthy lives and do not reoffend. In other cases, they are either sent to prison or remain in hospitalization until deemed safe enough to return to the general population. The insanity defense benefits everyone, including the forensic patients. It places them in a safe environment, made for the restoration process, and decreases the chance of them committing other crimes. It betters the community as a whole and allows the defenders, in some sense, to restart their lives.

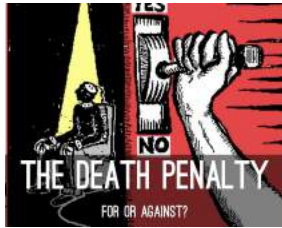
Of America’s population, the mentally disabled make up 20% of the population, 4% of that 20% tend to commit acts of violence or other crimes. The “not guilty by reason of insanity”, or N.G.R.I plea, was created for those people included in that 4%. Those who are eligible for the N.G.R.I plea are severely mentally ill and it is declared by the constitution that it is unjust if the courts allow them to stand trial. The goal of the restoration process is to bring their mental state to a point where they can be taught about the legal system and their rights, so they eventually can be tried. They are still guilty for their charges, but they deserve to get the help they need and the ability to understand what they have done. The insanity defense was not made to eliminate the consequences of the crimes committed and, if anything it increases them. It was made to better the mentally ill and the communities they live in. The insanity defense is rare and only used when necessary, but if the time comes when it is necessary, it should be honored without protest. The defendants might be criminals, but they are also human beings like everyone else and they deserve to have rights the U.S. Supreme Court made for them.



The Death Penalty

Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

By: Diego Sanabria



Multiple innocent bodies littered the floor of a highschool, each have something sadly similar. Bullets holes can be found on each one of these students bodies with life draining from them because of a cruel human being. A student twenty minutes earlier took out a gun from his backpack. Each kid he killed, he did with no regret. Yet this villainous act will not be revenged for. Multiple states and countries do not have the death penalty since it is inhuman, unright, and unjust. However, capital punishment is the most effective way to go, to make wicked people pay for their crimes. It provides justice for the innocent, many people are for it no matter the religion, and lethal injections are not that expensive.

Throughout history monsters have risen up from society multiple times. Each have various characteristics in common from cruelty, to no remorse for what they have done. Jeffrey Dahmer, Charles Manson, and others shocked the world with their actions. Each did inhuman things to people and as repayment they were put in jail and not sentenced to lethal injection. According to George Bush he says "I support the death penalty because I believe, if administered swiftly and justly, capital punishment is a deterrent against future

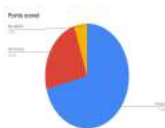
violence and will save other innocent lives." People that are monsters like these horrific human beings should be brought to justice and the way to do that is a life for a life. These prisoners do not deserve to live. However, some prisoners who have killed someone in a robbery, shootout, altercations do not deserve the death penalty. Everyone makes mistakes, some far greater than others. People who have killed someone can regret it instantly. There is multiple accounts of people instantly regretting the events that led them to being arrested. If a person is not some serial killer without remorse they should not be listed on the death penalty. Because of this a problem occurs, many people will view it wrong that some killers will live and some will die, people who oppose the death penalty believe that everyone should be locked up for their doings. They believe that it is unrighteous to take someone else's life.

If capital punishment is legal everywhere it can be a impactful part of today's society. Although murderers do not care for people's lives they may care for their life and how it ends. If the government has capital punishment they cant get away with mass killings without dying, which may be enough to prevent these acts. In today's system mass murderers can live peacefully in jail without suffering any hardships minus living their life in prison, which is a small problem in their chaotic life. Yet, if it is a guarantee of death than murderers will be more cautious with their actions. With pro death backed judicial systems it can strike fear into people's souls that lack one. One problem of the death

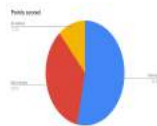
penalty people say is it is not enough to pay for the deeds rapist, murders, and convicts have done throughout their life. What justifies the deaths are letting the convicts suffer in jail. According to "The Death Penalty: Morally Defensible?". Casey Carmical "There is no redeeming value to carrying out the former punishment". Multiple people, religious or not view death penalty as a morally wrong doing and whoever views the penalty as good they are just as bad as the people who have killed and raped.

As the paragraph above informs readers of the fact that religious and non religious people think it is morally wrong. According to a 2004 Gallup Poll for Texas they surveyed Protestants and non-religious on if the death penalty was supported by people.

Protestant



Non-Religious



People can take the information from these graphs and see that pro-death penalty has a higher percentage than the others. Both religious and non-religious people view rapists and murders should be dead, these people could live their lives in a prison but that does not do justices. Without the person dying justices is not served. People who kill have social problems or psychos, which means multiple are used to being a loner and not talking with people. As a result, if the

government puts them in prison they will not care it is just another home for them where they can think crazily and cherish their horrible deeds.

Injections are an alternative to lifetime in prison According to Huffington post " A year ago, it cost the Texas Department of Criminal Justice approximately \$83 to execute an inmate by lethal injection, the American-Statesman reported last month. That price has risen to nearly \$1,300". Although the price has increased it does not matter. A one time injection can save a lifetime fortune to keep someone locked up. As well, than the government does not have to put as much money towards the cells and lives of death-row prisoners and focus on other parts of life outside of criminal activities. Anti-death activists on the other hand believe that a person should not die from an injection but of natural causes while doing life in prison. Since it is unhuman they find killing someone just as bad as the killer killing the innocent.

The death penalty should be enforced to ensure justice to the affected families and communities. Without the death penalty nothing will change in today's society. People are against it since its unright and cruel however it has benefits such as a fearing mechanism to future criminals as a warning to prove to them that they cannot get away with wrong doings. It is not as expensive as it seems, which allows justice to be served without the disgusting price and many civilians want it to prove that anyone who tries to destroy the good in this world can be destroyed.

There's a Tear in My Beer, 'Cuz I'm Cryin' For Ya Dear

Into These Last Nine beers, I Have Shed a
Million Tears, You Are On My Lonely Mind

By: Felix Smith

Imagine walking into a hospital room of a loved one, one you saw just days ago, speaking and conscious, only to find them now in a coma, the nurse ready to pull the plug. She injects the morphine and lets the machine go as your relative struggles to breathe, gasps filling the room. Sobs fill the room for the next hours, until they finally let out. Another loud gasp. Their heart starts again and so do the sickening cries of your family for another hour.



The first time I saw my grandfather cry was at the death of uncle, Mitchell, who drank himself into a coma. The whole family gathered around his bed, unable to contain themselves. It was one of the hardest things to go through, and I'll never forget the last thing I heard him say, "Quit f-cking around

and let's go home already." It's frightening that this very same scenario can occur in any family, anywhere. The grip alcohol has on its victims' minds is almost unbearable, and it needs to be acknowledged as a disease to be treated, not a lack of will to stop.

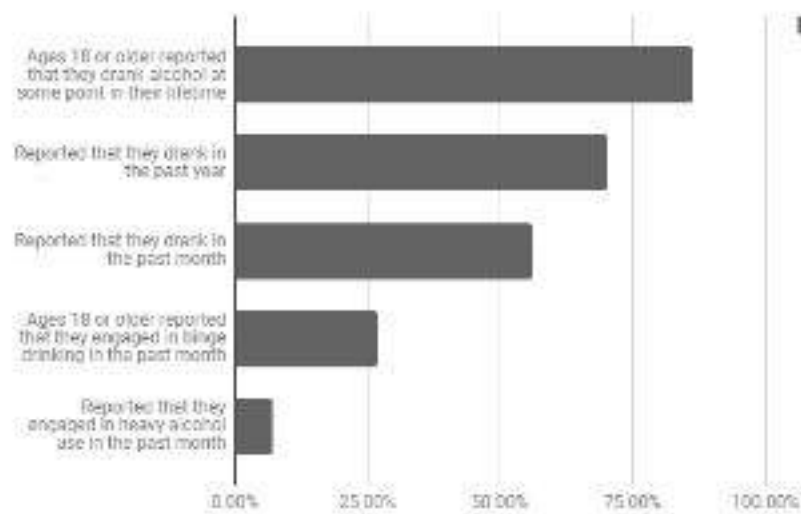
Everyone can relate to addiction at different levels. Your tongue tingles at the thought of your favourite daily beverage or snack, and you can't help but want it more than anything, even if you aren't thirsty or hungry. Then why is it so hard to believe others go through this same situation with alcohol? Many look down on those with an alcoholic dependence, but, according to the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) it is listed as an actual disorder: Alcohol use disorder. This includes those with a dependency and those who abuse alcohol, when they previously were treated as separate conditions. Shockingly, about 16 million people suffer from alcohol use disorder, and less than 10% receive treatment for it, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). While my uncle was a severe case, drinking hard alcohol and killing his stomach flora and bleeding to death, there are cases that range from mild to the severe and negatively affect each victim.

Cravings, blackouts, memory loss, tolerance, and withdrawal are only some of the affects of AUD. Many of those with a dependence suffer from other mental health problems which may have first driven them to drink, which are only amplified by the bottle. Depression and anxiety are the biggest contributors mental wise to alcoholism. This can occur when someone has one of the aforementioned ailments and social drinks and drinks to relax, eventually drinking too much as creating an issue.

A physical cause lies within the genomes. Scientists have found a gene, the KALRN gene, linked the impulsiveness and drug vulnerability. Though it is not certain a descendant of a family of alcoholics will also have a vulnerability to alcohol, their risk highly elevated, to no fault of their own. Just as people can be genetically predisposed for depression or attention deficit disorder (which is also linked to the KLARN gene), they can be predisposed for addiction, specifically for alcohol.

Once a brain is wired for something, the odds of overcoming it are low, especially going alone. Majority of the population is familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, whether they have heard of it, been to it, or had a relative who went. A lesser known option is harm reduction, where alcoholics cut down their drinking to a safer amount, but still are able to ingest alcohol. In the fight against addiction, some believe harm reduction is the easiest option to changing their lifestyle from a detrimental one to a manageable one. The biggest issue with the former is that most with AUD have tried to cut down their consumption, and failed, and those with more severe cases cannot get the help they need because they won't ask for it, being too far gone and settled on what their life has become. Harm reduction has been reported by users to help, but it's a less common variety of addiction management. With low popularity, the clinics are far and few, reducing its effectiveness before the program even starts, and the abuser may not be able to keep track of their drinking, slowly drinking more and more and relapsing. The most helpful option for those with AUD is for the family or friends to encourage them to seek help, as they cannot do it alone.

Marc Lewis, neuroscientist and author of



The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease, performed an addiction based experiment on rats. He supplied rats with the option of morphine or water, and the rat continually chose the morphine over the water, obviously. However, when a rat was introduced into a larger, open habitat with non-addict rats, the addict would then choose water and gave up the morphine completely. What Lewis gained from that was the idea that addicts, such as alcoholics, can overcome their vice through willpower. What it truly highlights is the strength of support and a healthy environment. If humans acted as the rats, surrounding the alcoholic and engaging them in activities, they would no longer feel they needed alcohol to be happy and reduce their drinking or stop.

Alcoholism is a disease of the body and mind and should be regarded as so. These victims cannot find help themselves and need a support unit to see them through and help them overcome their mental, physical, and perhaps psychological conditions.

Death With Dignity Because We Have Always Been Fighting For It.

By Carly LaLonde

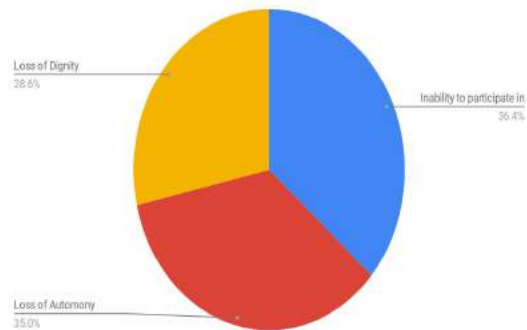


Brittany Maynard learned on News Year Day of 2014 that she had brain cancer. She had been married to her husband Dan for a little over a year, and were trying for a family when she was diagnosed. She did not want her family watching her deteriorate as the cancer ate away at her brain. Brittany and her family collectively agreed that death with dignity was the way to go. It is an end-of-life option for mentally competent, terminally ill patients with a prognosis of six months or less to live. The patient could request and receive a prescription from a physician for medication that could be self-ingested to end the dying process if it becomes unbearable. It is only legal in five states because people believe the practice is morally wrong. Despite this physician assisted suicide is a humane way to end suffering for someone who is terminally ill.

To start, the purpose of all end of life care is to alleviate pain and promote comfort. In the state of Oregon's 2015 survey, they asked the terminally ill who were participating in medical aid in dying, what their biggest end-of-life concerns were: 96.2 percent of those people mentioned the loss of the ability to participate in activities that once made them enjoy life, 92.4 percent mentioned the loss of autonomy, or their independence of their own thoughts or

actions, and 75.4 percent stated loss of their dignity" (Oregon Death With Dignity Act).

Top 3 End-Of-Life Concerns

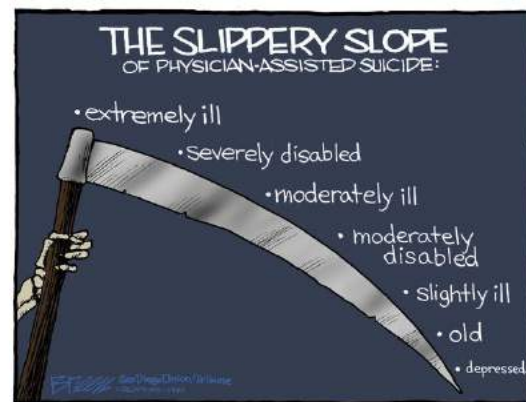


These people did not want the physical and emotional pain that came with a terminal illness. They knew the end was coming and knew that fighting it would be useless, so they decided to take action about it before they're body was so far deteriorated that their brain wasn't functioning properly. This is also why all the laws implemented in the five states where physician assisted suicide is legal make sure to have a claim that regards mental stability. Including places like California and District of Columbia who require "...submit two oral requests, a minimum of 15 days apart, and a written request to his or her attending physician." (CNN). As well as places like Vermont and Washington allowing, "only a doctor of medicine or osteopathy licensed to practice medicine in Washington may write this prescription...A physician, nurse, pharmacist, or other person shall not be under any duty, by law or contract, to participate in the provision of a lethal dose of medication to a patient."(CNN). While Oregon, the first state to implement the law, requires that, "the physician must be a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) or Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.) licensed to practice medicine by the Board of Medical Examiners for the State of Oregon. The physician must also be willing to participate in the Act." There are precautions set in

place to prevent from people dying at the hands of incompetent doctors praying on the mentally vulnerable.

In addition, every living, mentally stable patient has the right to choose whether they want to continue to live. The court case *ACLU Amicus Brief in Vacco v. Quill* has a public decision towards physician assisted suicide as, "The right of a competent, terminally ill person to avoid excruciating pain and embrace a timely and dignified death bears the sanction of history and is implicit in the concept of ordered liberty. The exercise of this right is as central to personal autonomy and bodily integrity as rights safeguarded by this Court's decisions relating to marriage, family relationships, procreation, contraception, child rearing and the refusal or termination of life-saving medical treatment." It's verdict determined that the right to die is parallel to choices of others like marriage, procreation, family relations, etc because it falls under the category of a "Protected Liberty Interest" which is our humans natural rights like *life*, liberty, and property. These are the rights we are born with, that can never be taken away by someone higher up because it's our right to choose. Another form of our right to die is exercised through living wills. Living wills are, "a written statement detailing a person's desires regarding their medical treatment in circumstances in which they are no longer able to express informed consent, especially an advance directive." Living wills can be used to refuse extraordinary, life-prolonging care and are proactive in providing clear and convincing evidence that may be necessary under state statutes to refuse care after one becomes terminally ill. A recent Pennsylvania case shows the power a living will can have. In that case, a Bucks County man was not given a feeding tube, even though his wife requested he receive one,

because his living will, executed seven years prior, clearly stated that he did 'not want tube feeding or any other artificial invasive form of nutrition'... The only reason this man got his wishes is because he was mentally competent at the time his living will was written, seven years prior, before he was sick and unable to make decisions for himself. Usually the spouse has sole power over decisions in the incapables health, but since he had a living will already signed and notarized nobody had any say in his health decisions because his mind had been made up for seven years.



Moreover, majorities of people use the hypothesis that terminally ill people requesting physician assisted suicide would be falling down a term coined as the "slippery slope". Which shows the diminishing reasons needed for physician assisted suicide. R.G. Frey, a philosophy professor at Bowling Green State University is quoted as saying, "We need the evidence that shows that horrible slope consequences are likely to occur. The mere possibility that such consequences might occur, as noted earlier, does not count as such evidence." It must be recognized that assisted suicide and euthanasia will be practiced through the hierarchy of social inequality and prejudice that characterizes the delivery of services in all segments of society, including health

care. Those who will be most vulnerable to abuse, error, or indifference are the poor, minorities, and those who are least educated and least empowered. This risk does not reflect a judgment that physicians are more prejudiced or influenced by race and class than the rest of society. Most will talk of the laws in the Netherlands, where euthanasia is legal, how palliative care is scarce if none at all. As one Dutch doctor is reported to have said, "Why should I worry about palliation when I have euthanasia?" (ProCon.org) this is the foundation of many's fears regarding physician assisted suicide, as once doctors begin to use the act as a cure-all, that there will be more cases just glanced over and not actually processed. This also is why in every state where physician assisted suicide is legal, there are strict rules to abide by (as mentioned before). The problem with the slippery slope is that too many assume, and then claim it as evidence when in reality, nothing is proved.

Multiple people of every kind will use religion and "breaking god's law" as an excuse on why physician assisted suicide is a no-go for a choice. While there are many arguments throughout the bible that are against assisted suicide, there is one passage that embraces it, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (OpenBible.info). This passage tells us as humans in order for us to feel God's power that we must embrace our weaknesses, hardships and such in strive. Many may disagree with that and turn the statement against assisted suicide. What must be kept in mind that the bible is not set

in stone, and open to anyone's own interpretation.

While many argue that physician assisted suicide is targeted toward certain groups like women, poor, and mainly elderly. A study done in the state where death with dignity was popularized, Oregon, showed that, "Oregon residents who died between January 1998 and December 2002, those who died by physician-assisted suicide were more likely to be college graduates, more likely to be Asian, somewhat younger, more likely to be divorced, and more likely to have cancer or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis" (Ganzini "The Oregon Experience") So that disproves the socio normal stereotypes and tells that everyone who makes the decision has some understanding of the situation at hand and what it may hold.

In the end, Brittany Maynard got her wish. She died November 1, 2014 comforted by the knowledge that her horrid experience was soon to be over and that her family did not have to experience the trauma of watching her waste away anymore. She died on her own terms, painless and still in her right mind. Assisting death in no way precludes giving the best palliative care possible but rather integrates compassionate care and respect for the patient's autonomy and ultimately makes death with dignity a real option.

Assisted Suicide

Why the best end of life care may be to end a life.

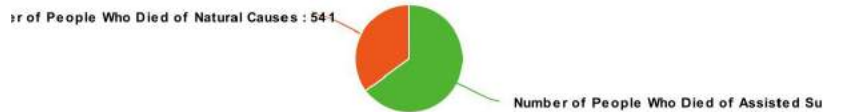


By: Caleb Bonno

An old man sits suffering through needless pain. He has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, and has less than 6 months to live. He is not getting better, and there isn't a sliver of hope that he could. He is going to die. It will be a long, painful process, for both him and any loved ones he has. But it doesn't have to be this way. With physician assisted suicide, this pain could be stopped early, and the man could be allowed to die with dignity, while still himself, and not a weakened shell on his deathbed for months. Physician assisted suicide should be made legal across the United States because it shortens the painful suffering that end of life can cause and allows people to die on their own terms.

Understandably, doctors are hesitant to agree to take someone's life. Under the Hippocratic and Osteopathic Oaths, doctors swear to never harm, and only help patients placed into their care. While these oaths are not legally binding, many doctors follow them to the word. After all, who would go into the medical profession with the intent of taking lives instead of saving them? Not only is this true, but there is reasonable and deep seeded concern that those who wish to commit assisted suicide may be pressured into it by family or friends, or not be

People Given the Option to Use Assisted Suicide
Haider Javed Warraich



■ Number of People Who Died of Assisted Suicide
■ Number of People Who Died of Natural Causes

meta-chart.com

mentally sound enough to make a decision as large as this one. Regardless, assisted suicide is becoming more common, and legal, in several places, and with the right procedures in place, should be an option for those who are dying.

Haider Javed Warraich writes that “In Oregon, of the exceedingly few patients who have requested a lethal prescription — 1,545 in 18 years — about 35 percent never uses it; for them, it is merely a means to self-affirmation, a reassuring option.” This statistic shows that even though people do ask for the option of assisted suicide, it isn't always used. In fact, it typically provides reassurance, and the people it is prescribed to know they have the option of ending their life. Furthermore, the fact that so few people have requested access to assisted suicide over such a great period of time is proof that it will not be abused.

Doctors must further consider the fact that no matter what, if people want to die, they can. And there are much more painful ways out there for a patient to kill themselves than with the drugs prescribed to do the same thing. The last thing a doctor would want is for a patient to go through more pain than they already must. The

outcome will always be death in these situation. Is it really helping the patient only to force them to look to other ways to possibly end their lives?

Doctors against helping patients end their own lives may also point out the fact that people who are depressed, or have other mental health issues, may seek to use this as their means of suicide. Regardless of the truth behind this or not, this can be easily prevented. Doctors must only be allowed to prescribe assisted suicide to those who want it and whose lives would end naturally within a certain period of time. Without any restrictions, their hesitation to fulfill this or similar tasks is easily understandable, as it could entirely change what it would mean to be a doctor. However, it is shortsighted to view this in that light, as that is not what doctors would be expected to do in this situation, and not everyone should be eligible for physician assisted suicide. Those who truly consider it should be forced to go through a mental health check in addition to having less than a certain amount of time, such as 6 months, left to live.

Perhaps the only piece of even possibly damning evidence against assisted suicide is the fear that people will be pressured into doing it against their will, as they are afraid of being a burden to their family as their lives go on, and taking care of them becomes a more and more intimate process. There isn't a logical counter to this. However, that's because this isn't logical. This concern is valid, and for some people, legitimate. But how many people are out there who would willingly send a family member to their death? There will always be sick, twisted people that would do anything for a small gain in the world. But it is a vast misservice to humanity to claim that a majority of people would willingly have someone they know and love killed simply

for their own financial benefit or personal motives.

When enacted correctly, assisted suicide allows the dying to die with dignity and save them from unnecessary and suffering. With few exceptions, it has been proven to be effective in providing this, and serves as a failsafe for many people with limited time left on this Earth. The cases lying outside of this should provide the rules for assisted suicide. As such, assisted suicide should be legalized nationally in the United States, but only with extensive mental health checks for those interested, and heavy background checks for those close to them. The question ultimately comes down to this, for many people. Is someone willing to sit by and watch as the suffering and elderly are forced to go through more pain than necessary? The answer should be no. People who try to argue the opposite, claiming morality is on their side, are wrong and politicizing a topic that should not be that difficult. As the ACLU stated in the court case *Vacco v. Quill*, "The right of a competent, terminally ill person to avoid excruciating pain and embrace a timely and dignified death bears the sanction of history and is implicit in the concept of ordered liberty. The exercise of this right is as central to personal autonomy and bodily integrity as rights safeguarded by this Court's decisions relating to marriage, family relationships, procreation, contraception, child rearing and the refusal or termination of life-saving medical treatment."

Assisted suicide will never be forced upon someone. But for those who are already dying, and in great pain, assisted suicide provides an end to the most painful of means.

Putting Down the Euthanasia Debate

When the argument is too sick to still be “alive”.

By Ethan Wilson



Sometimes people are too sick to press on and actually live a happy life. Debilitating diseases are recurring throughout the history of humanity. Where in early portions of humanity, there was no solution to humans whose suffering would continue until they drew their last breath, in more recent years, there now is. That solution to unstoppable pain caused by sickness, or a plethora of other reasons, is known as Euthanasia. Euthanasia is humane, and helps sick people's suffering come to an end a bit earlier than it should. Many would argue it is against their religion or what is morally okay, however many Christians and other religious people say it does not violate any jurisdiction predetermined by their religions. Euthanasia is overall a helpful and healthy cause that subjectively saves a patient from feeling pain and suffering.

Euthanasia is an entirely humane way of essentially ending someone, or your own life. It is offered in many countries, such as

Switzerland, Germany, Japan, and even in US states such as Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Vermont, Montana, Washington DC, and California. It ends the suffering of people who no longer wish to feel the pain that they endure day to day. Many families put their dying dogs down when it is suffering and unable to continue in life. Some people go through so much physical pain on a day to day basis it isn't truly a life worth living. An essay published by a professor, named Kelly Crocker, from Florida State University states, "On the basis that voluntary euthanasia is completely at the request of the patient because of intractable pain they are experiencing, if we can show animals mercy, then why can't we show fellow humans mercy?" It truly is a matter of mercy. It would be more cruel to force and subject someone to constant suffering rather than show mercy and help them end the traumas.

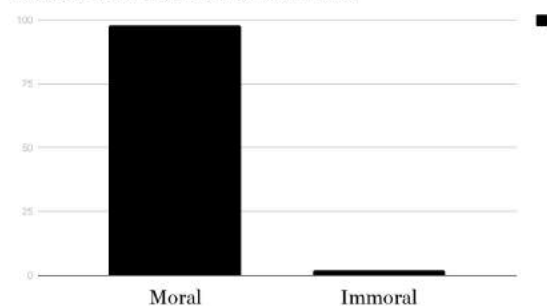
Euthanasia isn't something you can just walk into a doctors office and receive. It is a treatment that has a series of regulations and prerequisites before the euthanasia chemical that takes the patient's life is administered. Maria Chang writes about some regulations that one country has in an article, "Belgium requires that people seeking euthanasia for psychiatric reasons get an independent consultation from at least two other doctors. The doctors don't have to agree; the law only says that the objective assessments must be sought." This requires two trips to visit a health professional before receiving the treatment.

Many would argue against Euthanasia saying it violates terms of their religion or is simply morally wrong. That being said, many Christians back the idea, and stand by the fact that it is an acceptable way to end the suffering of a patient. Geoffery Williams, a Christians for Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia spokesman states, "voluntary euthanasia was ethically consistent with a wide range of Christian views." A Christian man greatly advocates the idea. According to him there is no conflict with his religion and this objectively moral way of treatment for suffering.

Some children that have mental disabilities live their life in neglect and constant hellish turmoil. Euthanasia has been brought up multiple times in the discussion of the mentally ill's option for treatment. In the Netherlands it is allowed, with permission from the patient and their treating physician to have euthanasia administered under the conditions that it is "voluntary and well-considered". This being said there is a review committee within the Netherlands that checks over each individual case to see if the reasoning for the treatment is moral and under the criteria of the laws that patients are subject to. Rarely, they find an issue with the case. In an article titled "Where Death is a Cure for Autism" written by Charles Lane, he states, "...the Dutch- language website of Holland's Regional Euthanasia Review Committees, which review mercy killing in the Netherlands - but almost never find fault. Of 5,306 euthanasias listed in the

committees' 2014 annual report, the vast majority based on physical illness, regulators found a lack of "due care" in four, or 0.08 percent." That number, being so subliminal proves that on the most rare occasion the Euthanasia case is not acceptable. There is a higher chance of being mauled to death by a bear than there is of having a morally incorrect account of Euthanasia. This pie chart exemplifies just how minimal the chance of the review from the committee will come up as morally and legally incorrect and thus, "wrong". The red represents the 99.92% chance that the committee will deem the case as reasonable and correct. That unseen sliver of .08% represents the near impossibility of a team of people reviewing it as wrong.

Cases Reviewed by Euthanasia Committee



There are a plethora of reasons euthanasia is an acceptable treatment, and should be legalized. Some people suffer so much that death truly is the only cure. It is morally acceptable for almost all cases, it prevents further trauma of the mentally disabled, and those that argue against euthanasia on terms of religious rulings do not realize that this is merely another method of treatment for unpreventable agony that patients who receive the serum experience. Overall euthanasia is a cause worth fighting for.

Dr. Bitcoin

Or: How I Learned to Stop Loving and Fear the Cryptocurrency

By: Benjamin Jodway

What do most people think when they hear “Bitcoin” or “Ethereum”? Is it illegal activities? The rich? Perhaps even a treasure cove? Well, virtual currency isn’t usually like that. It’s a treasure cove - but it’s waiting to burst. People should be wary of virtual currencies as they suffer from deregulation and potential to become an extreme loss.

Virtual currency are not as safe as they may seem. People, including governments, have been able to track those using Bitcoin as well as hack into their computers by using a currency they have created. According to the Wall Street Journal, North Korea hijacked computers with their cryptocurrency called Monero. The possibility of this instance makes cryptocurrency a dangerous system. It might be easy to just avoid them, but with the limitations of mining for bitcoins, some people may look to different currencies to make a bigger buck. Moneros tended to be more profitable than bitcoins, which made more users switch over. As a result, the virus was installed on their computer. It doesn’t always have to be a virus in order for a virtual currency to leave a paper trail. If you have bitcoins, and you buy something illegal and use the bitcoins to go and buy something legal (while giving your information), you form a paper trail with your Bitcoin address, which is your ID of your personal “bank”. This means that your currency is no longer anonymous and you can be tracked. The revelation was not found out until recently, and criminals have started to get arrested because of it.

A way for the government to make sure that a company has been truthful would be by

examining paperwork. According to Telegraph, the papers they must release are quite transparent and offer an easy insight into the company’s thinking.

Cryptocurrency companies (such as those for wallets) lack that transparency. Through loopholes in the law, it’s hard for regulators to make sure that large firms are telling the truth. What if a firm has been lying for years and has generated a large consumer-base? Problems will most certainly arise. As a result of this lack of transparency, regulators, such as those in the European Union, are unable to reimburse anyone for their losses. If you start using cryptocurrency, prepare to lose it.



Bitcoin has burst before and is likely to occur again. There are other virtual currencies besides Bitcoin, but it’s by far the most popular. According to PC Gamer, previous bubbles have burst in 2011 and 2014, and it’s likely that it could happen again. Usually the mining craze only lasts for about two months, but it has been going on longer. Either the bubble won’t burst, or it will be severe. If it’s severe, it has the potential to destabilize the currency’s market. Only time can tell, but it’s important for miners to recognize that the money they earn may be lost and be more staggering than ever before.

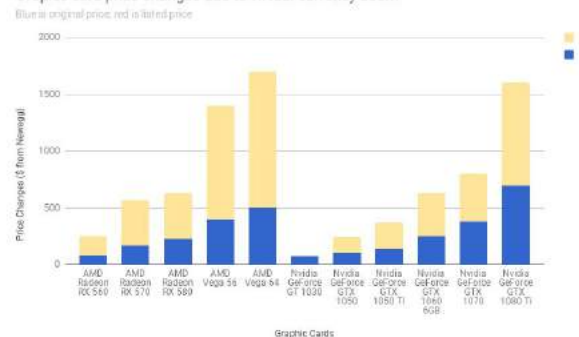
Cryptocurrency can enter problems with political relations. Nations, such as Russia and China have been using it to get around economic sanctions place on them, according to Roll Call. This could affect global politics in a negative way. Countries' economies can be severely affected by consumers going around economic barriers to acquire what they desire. If they don't catch up with cryptocurrency quick enough, their policies can be bypassed. A currency that has become more globally available and enacts trade between all nations. What's the problem with that? The issue is that there's not only a single virtual currency. There's Bitcoin, Ethereum, and lots more. It could be valued more in different places. As a result, we will return to the way currency is treated globally now. It doesn't help that banks, such as Goldman Sachs, are trying to make their own virtual currencies to hop aboard the fad. Even then, some banks are loath to do so, such as Chase which called Bitcoin a "fraud." It further bloats the market in a market that is extremely bloated. The less currencies there are, the better; but until regulation happens, that's unlikely.

Mining costs energy. A lot of energy. Bitcoin miners every week use the average energy to power a house - and that's just mining. As a result, companies are solving ways to use less energy yet produce the same output. This might change over time, but it still presents a current problem. "You're putting between you and the attacker a barrier. The barrier is a massive amount of electricity. If I need to spend \$100 million in electricity to try to alter a bitcoin transaction worth \$1 million, then I have no incentive to do so," says Christian Catalini, a founder of MIT's new cryptoeconomics lab. With energy costs rising so high, your return would have to account for that energy, unless you're

willing to invest a lot of your own money into energy bills. It's inefficient right now. Future cryptocurrencies want to avoid that, but none of them may have the same allure as the famous ones.

Cryptocurrency mining has been rising prices in other markets due to unexpected demand. On Newegg and Micro Center, graphic cards have risen above market price to a staggering high. GPUs that previously cost \$150 have doubled their price. This puts a burden on consumers that aren't even going into mining. People who want to build new computers are having to go through hoops in order to get prices closer to MSRP, such as buying other computer parts that they may not even need. Mining affecting other markets can pose a problem in the future with staggering prices. Until supply meets demand, consumers are out of luck.

Graphics card price changes due to virtual currency boom



Tom's Hardware

Bitcoin, Ethereum, Monero: the virtual currencies that will make or break future users. Bitcoin is set for a crash, Monero installs a virus, and Ethereum follows Bitcoin's footsteps. Virtual currencies carry a host of problems that are not worth the output - especially at the risk of losing it all. The future may be filled with cryptocurrency, but we are not ready for it now. The lack of regulation makes it too

risky. Time will tell what will happen, but the foreshadowing is already there.

Alternative Energy Sources

Saving our planet while we still have a chance

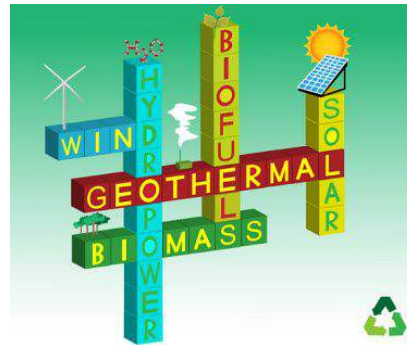
By: Catrina Laughlin

Our planet that sustains our daily life is being destroyed- and we are the ones doing the damage. With every car ride to work, every grocery shopping trip to bring home plastic bags full of food for the week, and every light we turn on while the curtains close over the sunlight is a gunshot to mother nature. If that leaves no effect on your opinion because you are only one person and could not do that much damage alone, think of the strain on your wallet. Now it seems more personal, right?

While the planet may be dying, we are not helpless to the cause. Changes such as reusable grocery bags, eco-friendly light bulbs, and recycling makes a magnificent impact, especially if millions participate. However, the most success can be found by changing from fossil fuels as a primary source to alternative energy sources. These “green” sources include solar, wind, geothermal, tidal, and biomass energy. Solar and wind power are the most frequently known sources with the latter three being newer discoveries. Our technology is constantly evolving so there is a considerable probability that, once the current renewable energy sources are further utilized, even better technology will be available. Switching over to green energy sources can provide tax breaks for citizens, reduced costs for companies (as wind, sunlight, etc. are essentially free to access), and fewer carbon emissions into our air that harm both us and the plant life we need to fuel us.

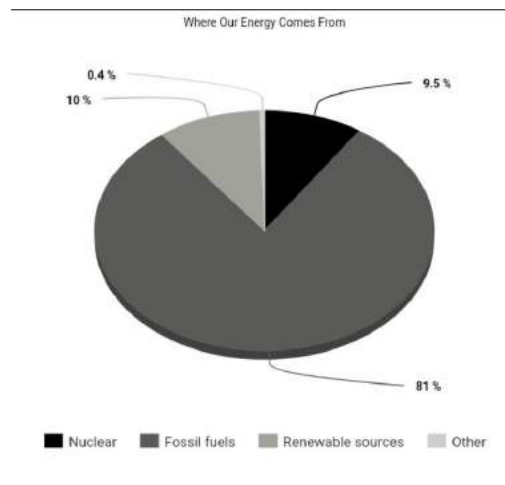
The most common argued about form of natural energy is wind power- the use of

turbines. According to the online site *Alternative Energy Sources*, the idea of new energy resources is particularly popular due to high costs, pollution, global warming, and an increasing lack in fossil fuels such as coal. Globally, residents are turning to wind power generators for cleaner energy sources- all it needs is air and doesn't produce harsh chemicals that damage the air we breathe.



One of the highest concerns with renewable energy sources is the cost to begin manufacturing. As of right now, Energysage claims that solar panel installation costs roughly \$2-\$4 per watt of energy which comes to around ten grand after tax credits. That's right. You can earn tax credits for going green which saves you about \$8,000 after you write it off. So while it is true that manufacturing fossil fuels is currently cheaper than the widespread installment of energy sources such as solar panels would be, that is only due to the fact that we have already discovered what works and what does not with coal and other materials. This helps to produce the most with current technology at the lowest expense possible- well, financial cost. This cost does not take into effect the pollution and threat of resource shortage that is occurring globally. According to the article “Shifting to Renewable Energy Can Save U.S. Consumers Money,” U.S citizens alone

could save tens of billions of dollars each year by going green. The authors, Joshua Ryor and Letha Tawney, defend this with the facts that adding eight gigawatts of only wind power would, within four years, save 1.3 billion dollars in power plant operations every single year. So, while the original cost to begin manufacturing would be greater than the current cost of production, it would save money for all citizens and businesses in the long run- which would improve the economy while improving the planet. Now who would not want that?



The majority of Energy we currently use to maintain businesses, power schools, and everything else in the United States comes from fossil fuels. This being primarily coal. In fact, Globalization101 states that 81% of the energy we use comes from fossil fuels, meaning oil, natural gas, and, primarily, coal- and those are all limited. So limited that it is predicted, according to Siddharth Singh of the Business Standard, that we will run out of oil in 53 years, natural gas in 54, and coal in 110 years. Meaning that by 2072, if we haven't made the switch, we'll be relying mainly on coal- making that 110 go down tremendously. While this seems like a far away concern, this is truly an issue for our generation because we can fix it before it escalates. If more of our energy dependence relied on renewable sources, we

would not be living in fear for a future that takes us back to the dark ages as we are currently hurtling towards. The second most used energy source is nuclear energy, ranking at 10% of our energy being nuclear. However, the National Academies of Science believes that the amount of nuclear energy generated will reduce by 30% by the year 2035 unless existing plants have been updated. And finally, the smallest accountable energy source, is the combined group of all natural resources. Solar, wind, geothermal, tidal, and biomass energy are all lumped together to supply 9.5% of the energy we use in America. It is not as if that is the most it can give, do not let the numbers confuse you. These sources have more power than they are currently being used for while we allow the others to control nearly everything.

The final reason that most countries have made the switch is because of the environmental advantages. It is a well known fact that our planet is not at its best state and many countries are doing their part to improve that. America is far behind in this revolution and so far is not leading in green energy, unless you count solar panels in homes- which is mostly found in California. Other technological research is going into the discovery of vehicles that rely on cleaner means of running. This is due to the fact that 75% of carbon monoxide emissions into the air are caused by automobiles. So people can go vegan all they want and blame global warming on the cows, but if they're still driving to work instead of making their commute a morning jog then they are part of the problem.

Clean air is really the goal for all of this work we have put into advancing technology. The more we reduce our

environmental damage, the less we reduce
our health and bank accounts.

It's Getting Hot Out There

But how hot will it get before we see significant change happen?

By: Brandon Burdick

In the past 1,300 years, the earth has not experienced such a warming trend as we are having now (NASA, 2016). In fact, the World Meteorological Organization has stated that the global temperature is 1.2C above pre-industrial levels and for three years in a row, it has been the hottest year on record. Though the scientific evidence seems overwhelming in favor of global warming, there are those, for various reasons, who believe that global warming is a hoax or not empirically verified. This is disappointing, as the future of our planet is at stake, and the last thing we should do in this critical time is argue whether or not our world is being destroyed. In order to enlighten those who believe global warming is not currently happening, I will present evidence that will show that global warming is real due to sea levels rising, global temperatures rising, warming oceans, shrinking ice sheets, declining Arctic sea ice, glacial retreat, extreme temperature events, ocean acidification, and decreased snow cover. In turn, I will also discuss counterarguments.

The world over, sea levels are rising at an unprecedented rate. Two reasons why sea levels are rising is because of the warming of sea water, water expands when it warms, and the melting of land-based ice, such as glaciers and ice sheets. According to scientists John Church and Neil White, the global sea level rose 17 centimeters (6.7

inches) in the last century. Furthermore, the rate in this last decade has been nearly double compared to the last century. So, if we compare the sea levels from this century to the last, it is obvious that sea levels are taking an unexpected turn and the global rise in temperature has much to do with this. A global rise in temperature has been obvious for some years now. T.C. Peterson et.al., in their analysis for the Special Supplement to the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, found most of the warming happened in the past 35 years, with 15 of the 16 warmest years on record occurring from 2001. In addition, 2015 was the first time the global average temperatures were 1 degree Celsius or more above the 1880-1899 average. This clearly demonstrates that global warming is a recent phenomenon, and should be considered especially dangerous if it continues at its current rate.



Like sea levels rising from warming, the oceans are also shown to be warming. According to geophysical research by Levitus, et. al., the oceans have absorbed the increasing global heat, with the topmost 700 meters (about 2,300 feet) of oceans demonstrating a warming of 0.302 degrees

Fahrenheit since 1969. Even on the surface of oceans, something that is easy to record scientifically, global warming is more than noticeable.

Another happening that is also easy to detect is the shrinking of ice sheets. Specifically, the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets are decreasing in mass at an accelerated rate. Information from NASA's Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment point to Greenland, which lost 150 to 250 cubic kilometers (36 to 60 cubic miles) of ice per year between 2002 and 2006, and to Antarctica, which lost about 152 cubic kilometers (36 cubic miles) of ice between 2002 and 2005. This is not normal by any means, and shows there is an uncertain future for animals that inhabit those ice sheets and for us as a species, as higher ocean water levels means certain masses of land will be covered by water.



Along with ice sheets, Arctic sea ice is declining rapidly. The National Ice & Snow Data Center show that the extent and thickness of Arctic sea ice has dissipated quickly over the past several decades. This is a telltale sign that global warming is at work.

Glaciers are also being attacked by global warming, like other frozen bodies of water. The National Ice & Snow Data Center presents evidence that glaciers are retreating globally. This includes areas such as the Alps, the Himalayas, the Andes, the Rockies, Alaska, and Africa. It is not a rarity or a strange, local phenomenon: it is a global catastrophe that needs to be addressed.

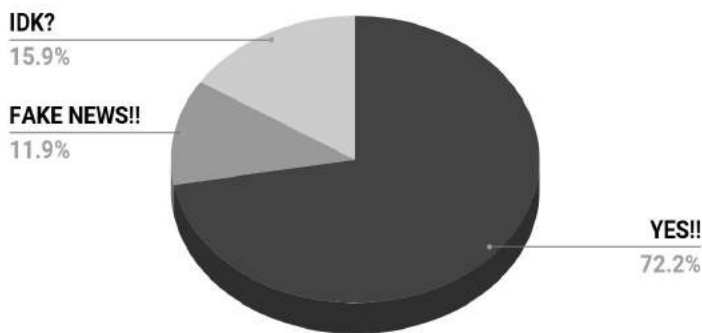
Extreme events come hand in hand with catastrophes. According to the National Centers for Environmental Information, the amount of record-high temperature events in the United States has been increasing, while the amount of record-low temperature events has been decreasing, since 1950. In addition, the U.S. has seen increasing amounts of intense rainfall events (Gleason, 2016). There is no doubt we still have cold winters, but the extreme high temperatures we continue to experience worldwide are becoming more and more harsh, which can kill more people and ravish crop lands.

Another dangerous result of global warming that is present is ocean acidification. The PMEL Carbon Group states that since the start of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has grown by approximately 30 percent. To put this conundrum into greater perspective, C. L. Sabine, in his article, "The Oceanic Sink for Anthropogenic CO₂," noted that the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the upper layer of the oceans is growing by near to 2 billion tons per year. This leaves coral reefs and many other species living in the oceans vulnerable to adverse effects and points to our own demise as a species in the near future.

Now let us rise to the mountains from the oceans. Spring snow, that beautiful sight we have while driving through the mountains, is

in danger. Gleaned from the research done by the National Snow and Ice Data Center, we get to know that satellite observations demonstrate that the amount of spring snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere has decreased over the past five decades. In addition, the snow is melting earlier than usual. Not only does this mean less of a chance to do winter sports, but it also endangers the habitats that these mountains maintain. In a poll of over 150 people, 72% of people believed global warming to be a real issue.

Is global warming a real issue in the world today?



Despite all these factors involved and the evidence shown from highly-credible sources (mostly governmental), there are critics of global warming as a scientific fact. One such criticism is that there is no real consensus that it is real, and that it is something up for discussion. However, the fact is that according to the authors of seven major climate consensus studies, about 97% of climate scientists believe in global warming (Skeptical Science, 2016). The critics who try to debase these results point to minor studies funded by far-right politicians and lobbyists.

Another significant criticism of global warming as a true phenomenon is that what is happening now is a part of Earth's geophysical processes. Every 1500 years, approximately, the heat distribution of Earth switches between hemispheres, though total heat globally remains the same. However, this is a much different happening than human-produced global warming, which has been created by emissions of CO₂ in the atmosphere within the last 200 years. Unlike natural heat variations, the present temperature increase made by CO₂ is being recorded globally—on the ground, in the air, and in the oceans (Skeptical Science, 2016). So, it is not a natural heat distribution issue that happens precisely at the same time (the 1500 year hemisphere seesaw), but rather an issue of global heat increase that has been happening since the Industrial Revolution.

Though this was only a glimpse at the mountains of evidence pointing to the fact of global warming, it is difficult to dismiss. From frozen bodies of water melting more rapidly, to water levels rising and having more acidity, to global temperatures rising to increasingly-common events of extreme heat, global warming is showing its signs in a variety of ways. However, there are those that are against global warming as a fact, citing counter arguments, though most of them are illogical when faced with the growing mounds of empirical evidence that demonstrate global warming as a real phenomenon and the strong consensus in favor of it being a fact within the scientific community. And if you still do not believe in global warming after reading this essay and after seeing the data proving it, you have to admit that emitting CO₂ in the atmosphere cannot be healthy for Earth in the long run, and that we should do whatever we can to change the way we treat our planet and ultimately ourselves.

The Peacekeepers of the Modern World

Does World Need the United Nations?

By: Steven Nichols

Over Seventy years ago, world war two became the largest and deadliest conflict the world has ever seen and since its end, the countries of the world vowed to prevent anything like it from ever happening again. In October 1945, fifty one countries banded together to form the United Nations with the goal of ending and preventing all future wars. Since it was created, over one hundred and forty two countries have joined and the intergovernmental organization has had many successes as well as failures but it still lacks the necessary power to effectively achieve its goals. This raises the question, does the world truly need the United Nations? With the world getting smaller by the day due to globalization, The United Nations is needed to encourage cooperation among its members in solving cultural, social, human rights, and economic problems and to serve as a forum for international disputes and peacekeeping operations.

The United Nations main objective in the modern world to promote peace and rationalize discussion between two foreign nations in the event of a disputed issue. In the past countries settled their problems with force and warfare but with modern technology making the cost of human life in armed conflicts increasingly high, the world needs the UN to mediate world problems and prevent such conflicts from ever happening. The largest threat the UN battles regularly is the threat of Nuclear War. As stated In a *TIME magazine* article by Julia Zorthian, "The U.N. was founded with goals of promoting non-violence by means of nuclear weapons. The resolutions of

disarmament proposed in U.N. General Assemblies and discussed by the five permanent members of the Security Council played an instrumental role in the lead-up to the 1968 Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. While this agreement says that countries are not allowed to use nuclear weapons in warfare, but due to their nature, it is imperative that the UN continues to push for peace between the countries that signed it because the agreement could be broken at any time. This, however is unlikely because the UN's diplomacy is extremely effective in preventing conflicts between countries. On the United Nations website, it reports that "Since the 1990s, many conflicts have been brought to an end

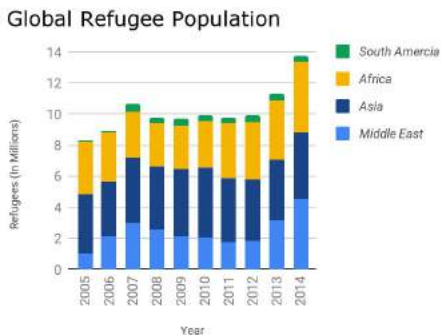
either through UN mediation or the action of third parties acting with UN support. Recent examples include Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, the north-south conflict in the Sudan and Nepal. Research credits UN

peacemaking, peacekeeping and conflict prevention activities as a major factor behind a 40-per cent decline in conflict around the world since the 1990s." UN preventive diplomacy and other forms of preventive action have defused many potential conflicts. In addition, 11 UN peace missions in the field address post-conflict situations and carry out peacebuilding measures. It is because of the UN that the world can live without the fear of a third world war.

While the United Nations mainly deals with disputes between foreign nations, it also works towards improving and solving social, economic problems and helping those in need around the world such as refugees fleeing war torn countries. While the organization tries its best to prevent conflict



among its most prevalent members and world superpowers, smaller nations tend to have trouble avoiding internal conflict due to extremist groups and civil unrest. These conflicts result in millions of people fleeing these areas as refugees and the UN steps in to help those



people. The United Nations send help to people in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and parts of South America. Individual countries also use the UN as a means of organizing funding to send doctors, medicine, and food in order to help refugees in need. The UN is also used to organize where displaced refugees will go. The United Nations have also made strides in ending world hunger. According to the *United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation*, the number of hungry people in the world has dropped to 795 million. 216 million fewer than in 1990-1992 or around one person out of every nine, according to the latest edition of the annual UN hunger report. In the developing regions, the prevalence of undernourishment - which measures the proportion of people who are unable to consume enough food for an active and healthy life – has declined to 12.9 percent of the population, down from 23.3 percent a quarter of a century ago. Without the UN's involvement, one of the world's most prevalent problems has decreased exponentially since before its conception. Humanitarian efforts by the UN vastly

improve the lives of millions of refugees and around the world and are crucial in the effort to end world hunger make them very important to the world.

It can be argued that the United Nations has little actual power on its own when it comes to influencing policies in foreign countries and has had many failures because of this, however the UN was never intended to have control over countries political power but was instead intended to be a means through which power could be channeled through in the pursuit of peace. While the UN has had failures it has also had many successes due to its ability to work together with powerful countries to promote peace and make the world a better place. The United Nations has a list of proclamations that declare specific actions to be considered war crimes against humanity. According to *The Telegraph*, two countries, Liberia and Serbia had leaders who were terrible dictators to its people and in response, the UN apprehended the two dictators by force using the military strength of the UN Security Council and sentenced them to prison for their crimes against humanity. It actions like these by the UN that give merit to its continued existence.

Over the years the world has seen numerous wars and countless innocent lives lost to unnecessary conflict and horrible human atrocities. In a modern world we're even the smallest of weapons can do inconceivable damage, warfare is something that the countries of the world want to prevent and so United Nations continues to strive towards peace. The world needs the United Nations to encourage cooperation between nations to promote peace and improve economic, cultural, and human rights problems. The World truly does need the United Nations.

Let the Games Not Begin

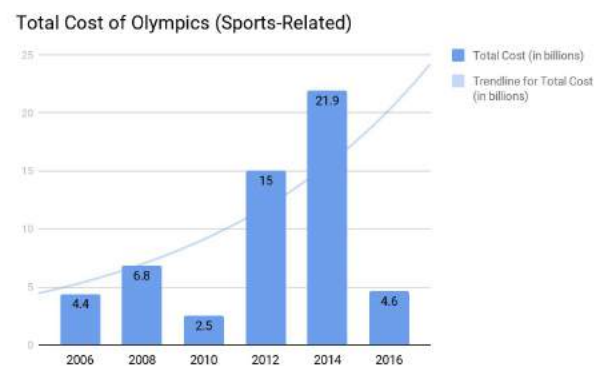
Why Every Country Should Shield Their Eyes From the Olympic Flame

By: Eva Muller

The well-known logo of five colored rings is omnipresent throughout the Olympics, symbolizing the unity and peace between all countries as they compete side by side. The world watches the athletes of all races and origins in awe as they perform on the world's largest stage. However, once the Olympic flame is put out and the athletes return home, the host country is left in the dark to face the uglier aftermath. The year of 1896 marked the beginning of the Modern Olympic Games, which has evolved into an international extravaganza in the celebration of sports. The Olympics draws the attention of millions of people all around the world, making it a popular event to host. In order to host the Olympics, a country must bid for a certain year and prove themselves worthy of the task. It takes years of preparation and planning before the actual event in order to present their country in the most pleasing and impressive way. Traditionally, numerous countries hoped to hold the games in their cities. Changes in the opportunity costs dealing with the event and the increasing expenses give way to a new trend of a decreasing amount of bids. Despite all of the recognition a country receives from hosting the Olympics, the economic consequences, waste, and conspiracy that follow the temporary attention make bidding not worth the effort.

Those who support the hosting of the Olympics claim that the event provides

profit for the country and promotes economic growth. The host receives funds from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in order to prepare them for the event and can make money off of the commercials. As Ben Bergman stated on KPCC, "For the 1984 Games, the L.A. Olympic committee signed a \$225 million TV contract with ABC, worth more than every previous Olympic broadcast deal combined." The Olympics are also supposed to generate more jobs and provide an excellent tourism opportunity. Summed up, the project should inject money into the economy and, thus, stimulate it. Though, this isn't the case. Those supporters fail to realize the reality of the situation-that hosting the Olympics is a major economic gamble. In the 1976 Summer Olympics of Montreal, "The projected cost of \$124 million was billions below the actual cost, largely due to construction delays and cost overruns for a new stadium, saddling the city's taxpayers with some \$1.5 billion in debt that took nearly three decades to pay off," according to the Council on Foreign Relations website. Although the IOC does



Data from Howmuch.net

fund part of the Olympics, their support is negligible compared to the exponentially increasing costs. This is because their funding is based on the projected cost, while the final cost is much higher. Most of the money comes from public funds and the government has to cut spending in other areas. What Bergman failed to take into account is the changes in the host's control over revenue. The host city used to make sizable revenue off of commercials and ads, but the IOC has been claiming larger percentages in that area since the 1984 Games. In addition, L.A. already had the necessary infrastructure built, making those Olympics an outlier when it comes to profit. In addition, while jobs are created for building infrastructure and working the event, the jobs are only temporary and put locals out of work after the games are finished. The insufficient funding, weak revenue, and negligence of locals' financial needs lead a host city to economic decay instead of growth, as those costs result in debt.

Another claimed benefit of hosting the Olympics is that the necessary development of infrastructure helps the locals in the long run by providing state-of-the-art facilities. However, this claim overlooks the fact that the infrastructure built has specialized nature and size that provides limited post-Olympic use. The IOC requires the host city to create highly-specialized sports facilities, the Olympic Village and a venue for the ceremonies. These expensive facilities, called "white elephants", require a lot of money to maintain while they sit unused.

According to the Council on Foreign Relations website, "Gangwon, the South Korean regional government responsible for most of the 2018 games' infrastructure, is expected to incur an \$8.5 million annual deficit due to upkeep of unused facilities."



Olympic Aquatics Stadium, which was used for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Taken by Pilar Olivares.

Either local taxpayers' dollars are spent on unused facilities or the buildings are left to decay into an eyesore. Even general infrastructure, like transportation and housing, serve little purpose after the tourists are gone. Worse, the mandated infrastructure can force the government to demolish nature and build roads through houses. Mount Gariwang was used for the 2018 Winter Olympics and had long been a protected park with "500-year-old trees," states the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Nevertheless, "the view has been dramatically interrupted by three ski runs incongruously cut into the side of the mountain." Destruction of wildlife, along with insufficient compensation for houses and disruption in transport systems, results in local discontent and tension with government actions. The mandatory infrastructure built for the Olympics requires land to be cleared and falls into decay after the event, providing no usefulness in the long-run and wasting money.

Finally, a significant amount of countries bid to host the Olympics to boost national pride and recognition. The strong spirit of the Olympics helps the host country create a glorified image of their economy and sports programs. Eventually, though, the media turns to the darker and more interesting side of the story, exploiting faults of the host country and causing irreversible damage to a country's reputation. By agreeing to the task of hosting the Olympics, a country unknowingly exposes themselves to be judged by the rest of the world, where one incident can leave a lasting impact. The History Channel stated, "In Atlanta, Georgia, the XXVI Summer Olympiad was disrupted by the explosion of a nail-laden pipe bomb in Centennial Olympic Park." This bomb injured many people and struck fear into the Olympics. The event was later called "The Atlanta Bombing" and gave Georgia a bad reputation afterward. More recently, in South Korea, the big story of the Winter Olympics was the tension between North and South Korea. Evolved in politics, the games were infested with questions of security. The Olympics also gave the world a glimpse at the neighboring North Korean regime. The more gruesome image of both North and South Korea was revealed and sparked more interest in that topic. Hosting the Olympics is a risky business because a country automatically exposes their faults and the chance to be deemed infamous by an incident.

More countries should realize that bidding and hosting for the Olympics leads to debt,

decay, and a tarnished reputation, despite the claimed advantages. While there have been a few cases of successful Olympics for the host, those numbers were limited and occurred before the major changes to costs and revenue. While the host used to rely on ticket sales and ads, the IOC has claimed more of that amount, leaving the cost of preparing the event much higher. As larger amounts of people compete and attend the Olympics, more infrastructure is needed, which can go unused and wasted afterward. The government eventually relies on taxes to pay back the debt. The Olympics, while showing the developed side of the host, uncovers the life outside of the games and can be negatively associated with an incident or scandal during the event. Though some TV viewers may only see the extravaganza, the host country has to watch the aftermath. As other countries are noticing this, less are willing to bid for future Olympics. This is not the end of the world-renown event, though. The IOC can make changes to the system of bidding and hosting, making it easier for the host and taking the public into consideration. There have also been suggestions for making a few permanent locations for the games to reduce cost and waste. The IOC will just have to Olym-pick out these problems moving forward.

If You Respect the Free, *Don't You Dare Take a Knee.*

By Celina Boey

Despite what our football superheroes may believe, the National Anthem-a symbol of American unity and respect-is *not* a free platform to showcase your frustrations with the Government.

In seemingly a flash, the point of football seemed to change. Instead of just watching a few men in colorful uniforms smashing into each other in search of a brown ball, Americans were watching the sparks of division ignite. In the recent NFL season, a new trend has taken center stage for the protests against alleged racial injustice in the United States: kneel down on one knee during the entirety of the National Anthem and/or Pledge. The problem is not that a few dozen football players feel they don't want to stand for the Anthem. The problem is the effect it is having on the next generation of America, as well as the anger it is hindering from those who sacrificed so much for that flag to even be raised. Furthermore, those perpetrators as well as those in support of such a display fail to provide logical reasoning and justification for their extreme actions. In a nutshell, the NFL players who chose to begin the disrespectful trend of kneeling for the National Anthem are immoral in doing so due to how such is a show of pure disrespect for the American flag, Military, and country. In addition, their supposed protests only ignited the harrowing spark of division brewing in the United States.

According to Colin Kaepernick (the unofficial founder of this "movement") the reasoning for his refusal (and everyone

else's too apparently because so few have even given an explanation-no matter how ignorant) is "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color" (NFL news). In the 1960s, when there were actual laws set in place to ensure the unfair treatment-and oppression-of any person of color. Account for the Jim Crow Laws in the South that prohibited even drinking fountains to be shared with people of color. Those who stood against such unfair treatment are now rightfully hailed as heroes. However, this is *not* the 1960s. The injustices in that era were legally ended with *Brown v. Board* (Library of Congress) as well as the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*. If such horrid injustice against the black population has existed in the United States, as Kaepernick described-with his repulsively vague reasoning-then why hasn't anyone made such a stink about it in the fifty years from 1960 to 2017? What makes Colin Kaepernick, this random football player, the special snowflake who has the special duty to reanimate in old fight won five decades ago? This stale attempt at 'wokeness' is a weak whisper compared to the once mighty roar of courage.

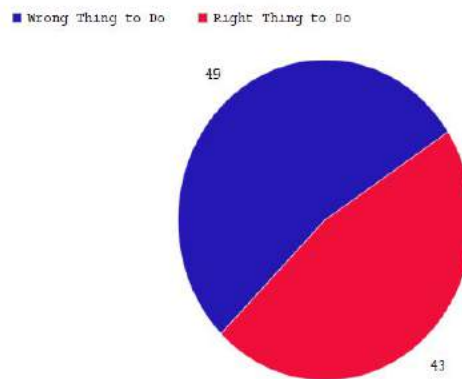
In addition, Colin Kaepernick's reasoning is as erroneous as it is frail. By his own wording, America is a country that "oppresses black people" and many other protesters (including former teammate Eric Reed, as proven by his essay in the New York Times) allude to the alleged manifestation of police brutality-the proposal that American police have this unfair bias towards black people (or anyone of color) and treat them far worse than they do white people. Yet the factual statistics beg to differ. According to the National Review, "...the available data suggest that only 0.08 percent of black men are injured

by the police each year, approximately the same rate as for white men” and continues to say a “black man is about 44 times as likely to suffer a traffic-related injury”(Phillipe Lemoine-National Review). The identical reality that both black and white people are injured by the police proves that racial discrimination in the police force just is not an everyday thing. Moreover, the much higher likelihood for a black man to be hurt in a traffic accident dissolves the claims that alleged police brutality is such a massive problem in America. If the issue is so minor, then it is no excuse for all the horrific disrespect from these protests.

The American flag is more than any old piece of material with a few colors painted on it. The flag-and the Anthem which pairs with it-are symbols of a nation, it’s people, and those who gave it all to defend it. On cold hard battlefields, American soldiers would trek through with such flag a symbol of hope and victory. Although they were enduring hell and beyond in the face of the enemy, soldiers held onto the hope that one day they would come back home to the country they loved-the country they sacrificed so much for. Imagine their shock when they arrived back only to see Americans everywhere not even bothering to stand for the National Anthem. With his poignant words, Retired Marine Colonel Jeffrey Powers sums up this unbearable side effect. “... Now I watch multi-millionaire athletes who never did anything in their lives but play a game disrespect what brave Americans fought and died for.” It is understandable when soldiers take it personal when these football players set an example of such disrespect for the country they sacrificed so much for. Insufficient gratitude and respect is only salt to the wound of this pathetic form of protest.

Furthermore, it is unconscionable to protest in this manner and thereby widen the large gap already formed in the presently divided United States. As seen in the chart below, Americans are nearly split regarding whether it is acceptable for the NFL players to kneel for the Anthem as a form of protest. The majority considers such protests inappropriate (49%) while the minority

American Opinion on Taking a Knee (by percent)



(43%) believe such crude actions appropriate. With any serious debate, such controversy is to be expected. Though the protests themselves may have a message as paper thin and weak as a blade of grass, the issue surrounding them is rooted in with the divide that followed may have concerning effects.

The last thing these kids growing up in such a turbulent time need is to see their football superheroes setting the crooked example that it’s perfectly okay to disrespect the United States Anthem and Pledge. The issue is exemplified when teachers-adults who hold the critical responsibility of the wellbeing and intellectual development of the children in their care-bring the ignorant protest to the classroom. According to an article in the Texas Tribune, exactly what a

science teacher did. The effect was just as you could expect from kids: to follow in the teacher's footsteps and copy the teacher. Children are impressionable and fragile beings, and care must be taken around them to prevent installing an easily misconceptualized belief onto them. Every child deserves to develop their own opinions about any instance, as such a crime it would be to monetize the United States into one mold. Children look up to their teachers and athletes alike, so when they see them refusing to stand for the Anthem, they are likely to mimic them. Even if they do not understand why this "protest" was initiated (not many adults even do), it doesn't matter. They are likely to be infected by the disease of blind following. No, you're not "woke" for disrespecting the American Flag. It isn't "trendy" fall for every movement you see without even knowing what it is your protesting.

Rather than provide a justified, purposeful resistance, Colin Kaepernick and his fellow foolish NFL players are utterly immoral in their refusal to stand for the National Anthem. Those in favor would surely relish they have attracted such media attention, but this is a selfish and illogical perspective. There is no issue worthy of such hostility and division at the expense of a country; certainly not a weak and disrespectful issue like this. The United States is a country which carries the honor of all heroic soldiers who sacrificed so much for it, and the responsibility of a new generation of wide-eyed and innocent children. Perhaps there is no legal punishment to persecute those who choose not to stand for the National Anthem, but it is a crime in and of itself to negate all that others have sacrificed so that ballad could be sung also to manipulate youths into thoughtless following. To take something so cherished

like the National Anthem and use it as a forum for the seeds of division is a selfish, unethical decision which has, rather than solve any social dilemmas, created plights of their own. It is foolish for any blessed human being who calls themselves an American to join in these corrupted protests. Though fiery conflict may have sparked in America, we are the essential fuel which keeps it going. Much like a fire cannot survive without its necessary Oxygen, these foolish protests cannot thrive without American support. As Americans, we hold the power to quench this savage attempt of dissension.



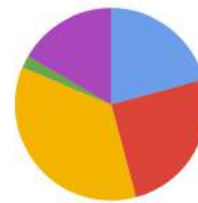
results, they become obsessed. This creates a different problem, because everytime they make a little mistake or fail a test they don't know what to do. People put so much focus on the numbers instead of the students themselves. Students are already stressed by trying to do well in school, but if you add the stresses of having get to a certain level in order to be considered successful they feel inadequate when they can't reach those levels. These everyday constant stresses are what causes students to become depressed, but then they have no output, they are constantly wrapped up in the stresses of having to do well in school and do things that will aid them when getting into college.

Another reason for teenage depression is largely due to the stresses students put on their bodies. Many students stay up late into the night completing homework and studying for tests. They are then forced to get up early in the morning in order to get ready and get to school on time. This causes a lot of sleep deprivation over time, which is not good for teenagers who are still growing, maturing, and developing their minds. According to the national sleep foundation, teens need eight to ten hours of sleep a night in order to function to their highest potential, which is nearly impossible when you factor in how much homework students have and all of the after school activities they take part in. Stress is a snowball effect, so when you add all of these stresses together it causes high amounts of teenage depression. Patti Neighmond from the National Public Radio talks about the effects of chronic stress on teens and how after a while their minds can't handle it anymore. They're constantly in a state of panic, which is a very unhealthy way to live. Plus they are just kids she says, they shouldn't have to experience this level

of stress everyday. Kids have hours of homework everyday and after school activities, plus teens get up around 6am in order to get ready for school. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, if teens get out of school at 2, then they go home and get ready for their after school activities at 4, they go to their activities until 8, they go home and eat dinner until 9. Students are

How Students Spend the Hours of Their Day

● Sleep ● Homework ● School ● Other
● After School Activities



then having to start their homework at the time they should be going to bed. This repeated stress on the body cause kids to have many health problems such as, sleep deprivation, headaches, depression and much more. If you then factor in that teens have no time for themselves, there is no question about why they become depressed. They never get a break or a chance to relax they just bounce from one thing to the next and their body physically can't handle it. Teens need a release, and the only way for them to do that is if they cut back on activities or just don't do their homework. These are both frowned upon, because they end with bad grades and lower chances of getting into college. Teens push themselves until they can physically do no more and that is not a healthy way to live.

One of the major arguments about teenage depression is that it is not real. Many people believe that teenage depressions is just "teens being teens" and they are overreacting. They think the problem is

teenagers are unable to work hard and are just lacking the determination to do anything. Parents think kids are unable to put in the effort and if they worked harder than they would be successful. This argument is part of the reason depression goes unrecognized and has become such a big problem in society. People don't take depression seriously. It is simply disregarded as kids overreacting and just being dramatic. If a kid said something about being physically injured, you don't automatically disregard it, you assess the situation, find out what happened, and they decide if they need medical help. Why don't we do this when people talk about being depressed? It is no different. Mental illnesses are very important, they are often worse than physical traumas because of the effect they have on the brain. Depression often leads to other mental illnesses, and in too many cases, suicide. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, mental health problems affect 1 in 5 young people and depression in teens has become as high as 1 in 8. This is largely caused by the stresses teens endure due to school. Everyday they are under constant pressure and it has an impact on a person's emotional and mental state. Depression is not something teens just make up, it is a real thing and often times requires real medical attention.

The other side of the story is we are too afraid to talk about mental health and we make kids afraid as well. Michael Friedman, a clinical psychologist, says we make mental illnesses seem like a bad thing, which creates a fear in teens that if they admit they need help then people will think they are crazy. Society always talks about people who commit crimes as mentally ill which makes us not want to be like them.

Having a mental illness isn't a bad thing, but society needs to ensure kids are getting the help they need and deserve. Teenage depression is such a considerable issue and often leads to a leading cause of death in teens, suicide. Stereotyping mental illnesses causes more problems because people are afraid to ask for help. As a society we should be encouraging those who need help to get it. Mental illnesses like depression become dangerous when people don't get help and just try to continue through life and deal with it themselves. Students now are so overwhelmed and have so much going on and they don't take any time for themselves. They never have the time to relax and take a step back; they are constantly thinking about everything that must be done. No one is able to deal with the pressure of a mental illness all on their own, especially not kids who have no time to care for themselves.

Depression in students has become a growing issue and it must be solved. Students are under massive amounts of stress that take a toll on their bodies. Teenagers are more stressed out than ever and it is due to our education system. We need to stop putting so much pressure on kids. They are working themselves to insanity. Teenage depression is an important issue. We can't treat it as this made up illness kids use when they don't feel like doing something. As a community, we can't sit back and ignore it any longer. We need to stop shaming kids when they do poorly on something and we need to start encouraging them to spend time on themselves. Society needs to stop acting like mental illnesses are something to hide and not talk about, they need to be acknowledged and dealt with now.

Suicide Glamorization
Raising Awareness Or Increasing Suicide Rates
By Camila Villalobos



Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. That is insane to think about, and in other countries the rank is even higher. The ranking of 10th is due to the constant glamorization of suicide in the media. The glamorization and constant reporting of suicide can lead to copycat suicide cases.

One example of glamorized suicide in the Netflix show *13 Reasons Why*, people were obsessed with this when it was first released in March of 2017. The series had about 11 million tweets within the first four weeks of availability. Because of the serious subject matter of the show, dealing with sexual assault, suicide, bullying and teen violence, many people have been on the fence about deciding if this show did a satisfactory job with the topic of Hannah Baker's (the main character) suicide .

On one hand, *13 Reasons Why* can be looked at as a giant leap, opening up the conversation and raising awareness about the issues Hannah Baker and her "friends" deal with and how to prevent them. On the other hand, viewers may be taking inspiration from the show the data suggests. According to a study conducted by John W. Ayers of San Diego State University last year, Google searches for "how to commit suicide" rose by 26 percent following the show's release. There was another study conducted by JAMA Internal Medicine, using Google Trends that monitored search terms regarding the subject of suicide, like "how to commit suicide," "suicide hotline number," and "teen suicide." Some viewers actually took their lives.

In April of 2017, 15 year old Bella Herndon died from asphyxiation by hanging. Herndon's family said that she watch *13 Reasons Why*, merely days before her death. Bella Herndon's father, John Herndon believes that the show acted as a "trigger" for Bella, who sought counseling for depression after being

bullied in middle school. At the time of her death, Bella was thriving in high school, according to her dad, who called Bella's suicide a "shock". Bella Herndon's was tragic and caught so many people off guard but, unfortunately, Herndon was not the only person to act this way after watching the show.

I will admit, I did watch the show when everyone was talking about it, and could relate to the characters. I (and many other viewers) continued thinking that this could never happen, not to me or any of *my* friends. But after watching the last episode, People (including myself) were "shook". My mind went blank and I felt numb, I think that the finale of the show had such a big effect on me because there were times when I felt like I was alone in the world and I started asking questions like "What's the point?", and "Why am I doing this?", having periods of depression and even at one point in my life thought of suicide.

People did not know the intensity of the seriousness when they first started watching the show. I heard everyone talking about it and thought that I should check it out. After Hannah Baker's death there were multiple assemblies and memorials for her. Fans might want to copy Baker's suicide simply to get attention and finally get recognized, or because Baker's way of making tapes for the reasons why she took her life "sound like fun", an example of copycat suicide.

Sadly, increases in suicide are linked to celebrity suicide. People around the world were shocked when they discovered that Robin Williams committed suicide in August of 2014. Williams was renown for his work in stand up comedy, acting, and voice acting. Williams played lovable roles such as the "Genie" from the Disney animated classic, *Aladdin*, and the lead in the film *Mrs. Doubtfire*. Because of his incredible amount of talent and hard work, Williams had numerous awards such as the 1997 Academy Award for Best supporting Actor for his performance as psychologist Sean Maguire in *Good Will Hunting*, two emmy awards, seven golden globe awards, two screen actors guild awards, and four grammy awards.

According to an article published by the Public Library of Science, After Williams' unfortunate death there was a 10% increase in suicides, about 2,000 additional deaths, in the US within the four months after William's death. This increase is called the "celebrity-suicide effect", in which copycat

suicides follow someone famous. "This is the first study to examine the consequences of a celebrity suicide in the digital era," said David S. Fink, lead author of the new study and a post-doctoral researcher in epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. "The researchers also found a greater-than-expected number of suffocation suicides -- which includes hanging -- in the months after Williams' death: a 32% increase in the method used by the comedian himself. By comparison, other methods of suicide rose by just 3%.

Media reports -- some of which described how Williams hanged himself -- might have provided the "capability necessary for a high-risk segment of the US population, middle-aged men in despair, to move from suicidal ideation to attempt," Fink said.

On June 20, 2017, celebrity Chester Bennington committed suicide by hanging. Bennington was the lead singer in the band Linkin Park. Condolences and stories of how Bennington's music changed people's lives filled the comments sections of videos all over YouTube. But others were more shaken by Bennington's death. "Unfortunately, a direct copycat suicide is now being reported by Cronica in Argentina."

The tragic episode occurred in the town of Mendoza Godoy Cruz. A child under 15 committed suicide at home. Researchers discovered Linkin Park music on the boy's cell phone near his body, and believe there was a "mimetic reaction." The child was "in the room hung from a belt of a roof hook" according to Mendoza Online. Chester Bennington also hung himself with a belt, while his friend Chris Cornell hung himself in May with an exercise band. Minutes after the discovery of the boy's body, Coordinated Emergency Service staff confirmed his death and immediately reported it to the Fiscal Office 17 of the police station 40. The parents, according to court records, related the death of their son with the recent suicide of Chester Bennington."

Bennington's death was a shock to people around the world, Bennington and his bandmate Mike Shinoda were guests on the popular YouTube show Good Mythical Morning in May 2017. The episode went along swimmingly, with the perfect amount of classic Good Mythical Morning humor and great music performed by Bennington and Shinoda. Throughout the episode Bennington looked like he was genuinely having fun with the theme of the episode and singing

great as always, who knew that 40 days later he would commit suicide.

There was a huge controversy when Youtube vlogger, Logan Paul released a vlog where he was in Aokigahara, Japan, in informally known as Japan's "suicide forest". According to police statistics from The Japan Times, Aokigahara is a place where over 247 people attempted to take their own lives in 2010 alone. While hiking only a couple hundred yards into the forest, Paul encountered a suicide victim's body hanging from a tree. Instead of turning the camera off, Paul continues to film and have up close videos and pictures of the victim's body with their face blurred. Also just after witnessing the body, Paul went on to make multiple jokes about the victim all while wearing a fluffy green alien hat.

It is clear why Paul had such an enormous wave of backlash after releasing this vlog, but to make matters worse, along with his just under 17 million subscribers and a massing 209,854,500 views for February of 2018, Paul's age demographics largely consist of viewers from the ages ten to nineteen. With Paul's fan base continually growing and gaining more popularity, they (the fans) have named themselves "the Logang" and again this fanbase does consist of mostly *children*. Within 24 hours of the release, this vlog gained 6.5 million views and was ultimately deleted by Paul even though the content of the video violated YouTube's community standards.

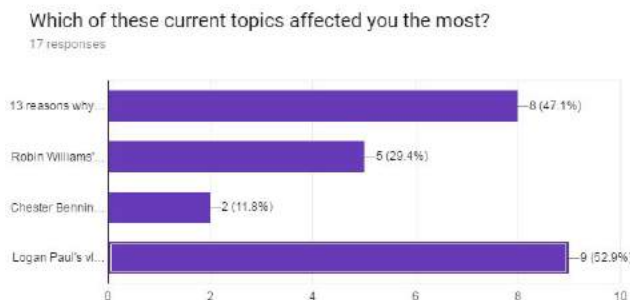
With technology becoming a larger and more prominent part of daily life people now have access to more information at their fingertips than previous generations. Unfortunately, with Youtube there is no age limit or restrictions on what people can watch. Nowadays you can see kids and toddlers even, with their tablets watching YouTube. *Anyone* could have accessed and viewed Paul's video, 6.5 million people did, regardless of their age, I even recall around the time that this video was released it was trending on YouTube.

Logan Paul also received backlash for using "clickbait" when he uploaded the video. Clickbait is when a creator releases content that entices people to click on it, because the title or the thumbnail looks interesting even though sometimes the title and/or thumbnail is misleading and a majority of the time does not depict the image the viewer assumes the video will be about. And yes, Paul did use "clickbait" and exploited a man's suicide for his

own(Paul’s) financial and social gain. People might think that YouTube creators, such as Paul, can not make a living simply publishing videos to such a simple site such as, YouTube. Surprisingly, Logan Paul has estimated yearly earnings from \$624.6K - \$10M. And even after the release and controversy of this video Paul is still gaining more and more subscribers.

It is terrifying to think of these young fans yearning to get the attention of their favorite youtubers, like Logan Paul. Some of Logan Paul’s fans may go as far to call themselves “stans” or “stalker fans”, little thirteen and fourteen year old kids standing outside his mansion screaming and waiting for him to comeout and say hi to them. If they are dedicated to waiting outside his mansion they might try to replicate what happened in Aokigahara. Fans may think “Hey, that guy in Japan who killed himself got attention from Logan Paul and was in one of his videos, maybe I go do the same thing as that guy in Japan, and then Logan Paul will notice me” a stunt for attention.

An example of fan stunt is when a member of One Direction, Zayn Malik, left the band in 2015. Twitter was trending the hashtag “cut for Zayn”.. Fans of One Direction, “directioners”, were so broken hearted that Zayn Malik left, the band that they started “cutting” or self harming. This trend, tragically, resulted in the suicide of 6 individuals. Like Logan Paul, One Direction’s fan base consisted of people ages 12 to 20. Celebrities do not know how their fans will react to the decisions that they make, but suicide cases can be prevented if videos and other media forms like Logan Paul’s trip to the “suicide forest” were never published.



Some people may believe that reporting or having books, movies, or music touch on the topic of suicide should stop. Their reasoning may be that *any* coverage on suicide may result in more suicide cases,

copycat cases or in general. Other people may believe that suicide should be a bigger idea in school teachings/health classes. While both of these viewpoints are reasonable, they might not be the best fit for everyone. Some people who are harming themselves and/or considering suicide might need news or other media coverage to retell how the death of person who commits suicide affects so many people. If a person is having suicidal thoughts they may not consider how much their life means to the people around them, that person’s parents, family, friends, teachers and coworkers. If the coverage of the suicide is not glamorized then the person who is considering suicide of how much of a financial and emotional burden their suicide would be on the people who care about them.

For some schools, for example Franklin, there is already a mental health unit that is taught in a required health class, that includes the topic of suicide. Making the topic of suicide a main idea for this course may seem like a good idea but the students taking this class will have a wide range of emotions when dealing with a topic as serious and as real as suicide. Some students might start diagnosing themselves when they are given examples of symptoms or reasons why people have committed suicide in the past. When talking about suicide in the classroom, the students may also become depressed when dealing with such a weighty subject like suicide, this may become worse if this section of the mental health unit is dragged out. The last thing we want is to take away resources to help prevent suicide. But if these resources are glamorized it may make students consider suicide as not such a bad thing.

The topic of suicide is often not discussed because it is social taboo, and when it is discussed it is glamorized. In order to help lower the current suicide rate, the media must stop glamorizing suicide because it can lead to replications. If you are someone you know is considering suicide or having suicidal thoughts or action, please get help by calling 1-800-273-8255 for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

The Mysterious and Cryptic Death of Kurt Cobain

The controversy surrounding the alleged suicide of beloved Nirvana singer and guitarist

By Sophia Elvy

April 5th, 1994 will be remembered in history as a great loss. The day marked the end of a remarkable band, and the fall of great man, who led one of the most influential moments in music over the last century. Kurt Cobain's death was not just a cataclysm to those who were close to him, but also to the millions of people across the world that loved his music. Dave Grohl, the co-founder and drummer to Nirvana, says about Kurt's death in an interview with *Rolling Stone Magazine*, "I didn't want to spend the rest of my life looking in a rearview mirror and thinking about what could have happened or what should have happened, or how tragic the end of the band was." Kurt Cobain remains an influence on the whole of current pop culture, spawning many people to continue to uphold his memory. A few, however, feel that the only



The founding members of Nirvana, Kurt Cobain pictured center.

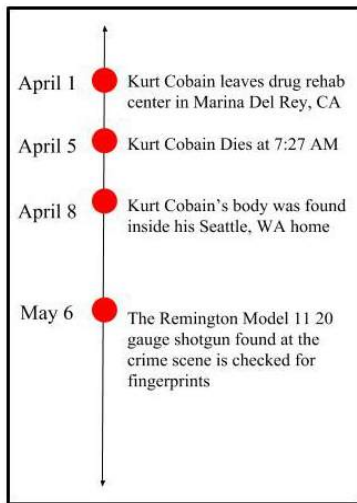
way to truly service Kurt's life is to uncover and explore the mysterious circumstances surrounding his death. The greatest theory surrounding Kurt's early end is that, although reported as a suicide by the LAPD, his death was caused by foul play. The inconsistencies and happenings leading up to and following Mr. Cobain's death are strange and confusing, and have fueled

many to speculate a great crime has been committed. Therefore, I believe that Kurt Cobain's death not a suicide, but a cold-blooded murder.

I will be acquiring most of my information from the research and findings of Tom Grant. Mr. Grant worked as a detective for the LAPD previous to the official investigation into Kurt's death. He had coincidentally been hired as a private investigator by Courtney Love, Kurt Cobain's wife, to hunt down Kurt after he fled from a drug rehab center in California, just two days before his death. This event involved Tom in Kurt's life. His book *The Mysterious Death of Kurt Cobain* and the movie "Soaked in Bleach", released in 2015, examine the case from Grant's perspective. These two pieces of media are the biggest supporters of the claim that suicide was a cover-up for the lynching of Kurt Cobain. Grant is the closest person to an expert on the final days of Kurt Cobain.

The official report of Kurt's death released to the public by the Seattle Police Department states, "Kurt Cobain was found with a shotgun across his body, had a visible head wound and there was a suicide note discovered nearby." Kurt Cobain had an unfortunate history of bipolar disorder and drug-addiction, from long before he reached fame, prompting the SPD to see the suicide as probable. The note left near his body also seemed to be conclusive proof. The King County Medical Examiner that autopsied Cobain after his death reported that both his left and right arms showed puncture wounds left by a syringe. From the report released by the SPD, and from the accounts of those in personal contact with Cobain, suicide seemed to be the only explanation. But, with a few key points of evidence, foul play may be the truth:

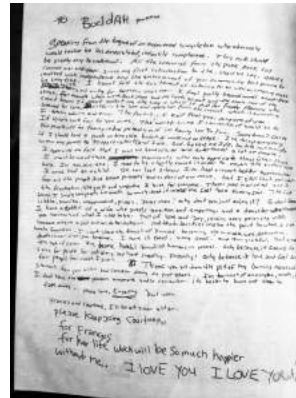
The gun involved in the death of Kurt Cobain was taken by the SPD for evidence after his body was found. The gun remained in evidence for an entire month before it was tested for fingerprints. The time between collecting the gun and putting it into forensic testing is very suspicious. At this point and for the entirety of the investigation, there was no definite evidence that Kurt Cobain committed a self-inflicted, fatal gunshot wound.



Timeline of Events (1994)

The biggest piece of evidence contributing to the claim that Kurt Cobain did not use the shotgun on himself, is tied to the alleged amount of heroin in his system. The previously mentioned puncture wounds in his arms were concluded to be from injecting the drug into his system. Kurt had been in and out of many rehabilitation centers for his use of drugs, and the fact that he had been using close to the time of his death was not surprising. In Tom Grant's personal investigation, he petitions that Kurt had been injected with 225 mgs of heroin, three times the fatal dose, by another person(s) as to incapacitate him before he was brutally killed with a shotgun to the

head. But Grant has no factual support for these claims, as according to *The Privacy Act of 1974*, it is against federal law to release the toxicology reports of an individual without express consent from the family, which was not given.



The suicide note (left) left by Kurt Cobain is extremely controversial in relation to his death. The note consists of about 35 lines illustrating Kurt's dissatisfaction with the music world and Seattle, and his

desire to leave both, but nothing about ending his own life. What finds most casual investigators and experts alike scratching their heads, is the final four final lines of the note. Although a few handwriting experts claim the entire letter was in Kurt's hand, most agree that the final lines were inconclusive, if not suspicious. Because the note written by Kurt did not express the desire or intention to die, could it be that his killers wrote in the final lines to further cover up their crime?

There are just as many unanswered questions surrounding Kurt Cobain's death as there are people left to grieve. Was Kurt Cobain the victim of a horrible crime? Or the victim of horrible mental illness and drug abuse? Those unconvinced that Kurt's death was a suicide probably won't ever find the answers their looking for, and his death will continue to be shrouded in controversy and mystery. This strife in his final moments will only be recognized as a small part of his substantial legacy, as the focus should be on the prominent musician Kurt Cobain was.

Is Cardio Taking Away from Your Gains?

Too much cardio could burn away your muscles instead of those pesky fat reserves.

By Jake Penny

For those of you that are struggling to put on muscle, make gains, and enhance their physique, the answer to your prayers could be Quitting Cardio. Performing cardio too frequently, too intensely, or for too long can certainly prevent you from gaining muscle from your strength training workouts.

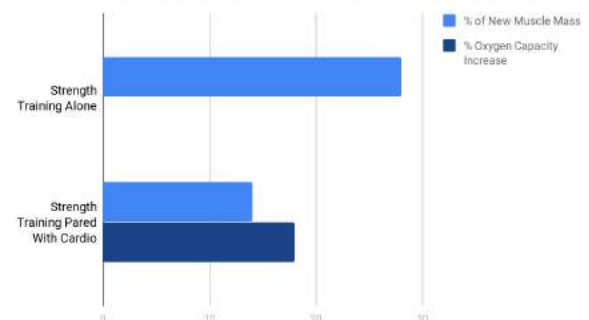
Anybody who knows anything about anything in bodybuilding knows that you are either in a bulking phase, or a cutting phase. Bulking being adding calories to your diet and attempting to gain muscle mass. A cutting phase consists of removing calories in order to reach a caloric deficit and burn body fat to become shredded. Many people find it hard to cut because they try to incorporate too much cardio or high intensity interval training into their workout. This causes them to lose body fat but also burn a lot of that precious muscle mass that they had built in the bulk.

Consider all the necessary resources required by your body to build and retain muscle. You need good nutrition to provide protein for muscle growth, and carbohydrates and fats to fuel and enhance recovery from your intense workouts. You also need rest and recovery time between workouts to allow your body to rebuild and increase your muscle mass. You don't grow muscle during your workout, but rather between workouts. Now imagine all of these resources as a bucket of water. The more often the bucket is full, the

faster your ability to make gains in muscle mass. The emptier the bucket becomes, the harder it is to build more muscle.

Of course, for every gut-busting strength training workout you perform, you take a scoop of water out of the bucket. And the harder you train, the bigger the scoop of water you take from the bucket. As you replenish your muscle-building and energy supplies by resting and eating effectively, you assure that you have all the necessary resources necessary to build muscle. In other words, you refill the bucket. Performing cardio too often can cause this bucket to never be refilled, especially while trying to cut down to a low body fat percentage. Men's Health Magazine says that doing too much cardio can negatively impact hypertrophy in the muscles.

Increase in Muscle Mass when Paired With and Without Cardio



The problem with doing any random form of cardio is that you draw on the same resources that you have available to build muscle. In other words, you take more scoops out of your bucket. That

not only means fewer resources that are available for building muscle, but because your recovery is also compromised, it becomes even harder to refill the bucket.

That doesn't mean you can't do any cardio during a muscle building phase. It just means that you need to perform cardio that minimally impacts the resources necessary to build muscle. Or even better, do a form of cardio that has the ability to enhance your muscle-building phase.

The concerns about cardio interfering with strength and muscle growth are not unwarranted. Doing aerobic and strength training at the same time, also known as "concurrent" training, has been studied by exercise scientists since the 1980s — and, of course, it's not good. When too much aerobic work is added on top of a strength or hypertrophy program, there is an interference effect. Once the cardio duration, frequency and or intensity cross a certain threshold, muscular power, strength and size can all be



compromised — in that order.

There is also a risk when choosing what type of cardio you do. Running, one of the most popular forms of cardio, causes a lot of muscle damage when compared to other exercises. A study done by the American College of Sports Medicine showed that lower impact exercises, like cycling, can help you retain more muscle when paired with hypertrophy training than running on a treadmill. So even if you do choose to do cardio everyday, lower impact exercises are going to be your best friend.

Cardio can do good things for your body too, such as boosting metabolism, speeding up fat loss, improving heart health and increasing cardiovascular fitness. It would be nice to take advantage of those benefits and reap the rewards of resistance training for strength and muscle at the same time. The good news is, you can. The key is finding the right balance.

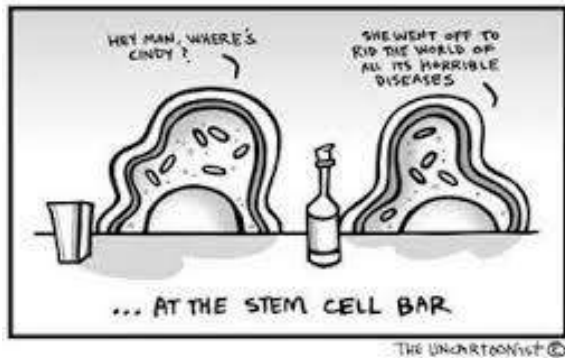
At least four different studies on concurrent training came to one shared conclusion: If the cardio (i.e. aerobic or endurance training) does not go beyond 20 to 50 minutes depending on the intensity and doesn't exceed three days a week, there is little or no interference effect. As cardio training goes beyond these levels, the risk of compromising strength and muscle increases.

Cardio isn't a bad, there are many reasons why cardio is good. But there is such thing as too much of a good thing. Many people are discouraged when cutting a because they see their muscle size and strength dwindling, but it could all be avoided by a little education and a lot less cardio.

Stem Cell Research

Can Something so Small Lead Us to Something so Big?

By: Hannah Strasser



Ever wonder if someone who suffers from paralyzation, would ever one day, be able to regain the ability to walk? Or how about if there will ever be a cure for cancer? It is questions like these where stem cell research has become a major point of discussion throughout the world. Stem cells are cells that have not specialized to a specific part of the body and where differentiation has not occurred yet. This means that these cells have the potential to turn into many different cell types, like for a specific organ, throughout the body. Laboratory studies allow scientists to distinguish the differences between stem cells and specialized cells, and eventually, can use them to cure those who suffer from a disease such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's or even cancer. Although, the ethical issues of how to acquire stem cells stands, and whether the knowledge gained through research will be used improperly, these pluripotent cells can help the world reach unbelievable scientific discoveries in the medical field and it is widely believed that they can save millions of people's lives. Stem cell research can help the human race understand more about our genetic build, cure diseases, and even give people a second

chance at life, as long it is given continuous funding and support.

In broad terms, there are two types of ways for scientists to study stem cells. According to *Stem Cells What Are They and What Do They Do* by the Mayo Clinic Staff, stem cells are obtained through embryonic cells, or through adult cells. The latter, are the stem cells that are used for research that come from that of an embryo, which is obtained by a donor through an abortion. They are unspecialized cells which divide and make more unspecialized cells, which then can be used to try and create any cell type of the human body, thus the possibility of creating a new organ or even cell transplants. The adult cells as well, can renew themselves and can differentiate to yield some or all of the major specialized cell types of the tissue or organ. They are originally found in more specific parts of the body such as the brain, bone marrow, peripheral blood, blood vessels, skeletal muscle, skin, teeth, heart, gut, liver, ovarian epithelium, and the testis. They are found in areas called a stem cells niche around these organs and tissues. The primary roles of adult stem cells in a living organism are to maintain and repair the tissue in which they are found. The only downside to adult cells is that once they are removed from a cite their capacity to divide is generally limited. Both of these cells play a huge role in allowing scientists to understand the development of new treatments and medications, and even new cell therapy treatments.

However, embryonic stem cells, often the cells that doctors and scientist wish to further research and develop, are still a hot controversy. Many pro-life protesters find it hard to get behind the idea of using embryonic cells, that could have been a

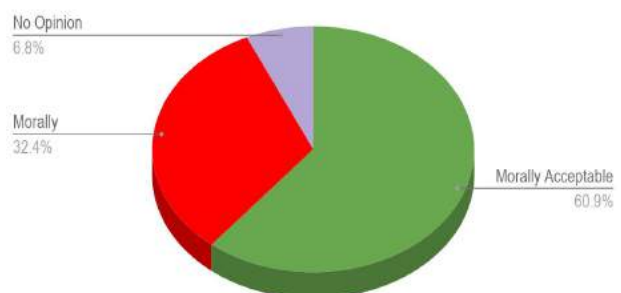
child, for research as they are derived from a very early stage of an embryo, a blastocyst. Most people say they are against the use of human lives being donated towards research, which resulted in stem cell research being frowned upon. This is not quite the case, according to medical students from University of Michigan's stem cell research program. They say "stem cells are derived from blastocysts that have only developed for about five days after fertilization. The blastocysts used for this research develop entirely in laboratory dishes in fertility clinics and are never implanted in a woman's uterus. These early stage embryos consist of about 100 cells and are the size of the period at the end of a sentence. At this stage, the cells have no nervous system, no heart, no limbs, and no specialized human tissues." There is potential for human life, but there is no life itself being "destroyed" or given away towards research. Not to mention, according to the IFSC, embryonic stem cells are donated to research foundations since they would have been thrown away as medical waste from the start. Regardless, if there was stem cell research around or not, these women still have their right to have an abortion, and at least now these stem cells are being used for a purpose, and a good one at that. By using the stem cells from embryos of a non-existing life, scientists and doctors could be using them to save an already existing life.

Many people believe that embryonic stem cell research is the primary way to obtain stem cells, but after the recent discovery of adult cells being able to revert back to unspecialized cells, scientists have used this method of acquiring stem cells over embryonic stem cells. In *The Stem Cell Debate* by Johnson T.A., Doctors John B. Gurdon and Shinya Yamanaka, discovered that adult cells can be reprogrammed into

their embryonic phase and further into new cell types; these adult cells are called induced pluripotent stem cells (IPS). This means that a cell replacement process is obtainable and that they also have the capability to create a new organ or even whole new organism for that matter.

One of the many problems with the advancements of stem cells and IPS cells, is the controversy of the ethical boundaries of science. Unregulated science in the clinic could lead to the recreation of a synthetic human. Using IPS cells, it is possible, in theory, for a sperm cell and an egg cell to be created. This means it is possible to create another human being from a clone of a human embryonic cell. This is where people's morals seem to come in conflict with the development of scientific research. What is misunderstood with this discovery is that, the purpose of creating a human embryo, and altering its genetic code was for the sole purpose of hoping that scientists could change the fate of someone who would have been born with a disease, to a someone who is born perfectly healthy. The intentions of stem cell research is to ultimately cure disease, and help those who have a failing heart or pancreas, or any organ in a detrimental state. Cloning of a specific organ, can save people's lives, and not to mention cure people of what is still now an incurable disease. Stem cell research is being done to keep people alive not change a person altogether, or for that matter kill them.

Social Media Poll on Stem Cell Research



This graph indicates the general feelings of the public on social media towards stem cell research. Out of almost 200 responses, the general public would agree that stem cell research is morally acceptable, which directly correlates to the opinions of the public on a larger scale. Not to mention, most people regardless of their religious backgrounds and moral beliefs, understand stem cell research to be a scientific advancement that will benefit all in the long run.

The hope for the future is that stem cell research will be able to provide an explanation for diseases such as cancer, where there is abnormal cell division, and also give medical scientists an incentive on the process of curing such diseases. Embryonic stem cells are used more for the reason that scientists need to understand how the genes in these cells turn on and off, and how specialization occurs, not to mention being used along with IPS cells to create new medications and cell-based therapies- treatment in which stem cells are induced to differentiate into the specific cell types required to repair damaged or destroyed cells or tissues. For example, One of the earliest known uses for stem cell research surrounds the debilitating disease of leukemia. Leukemia is a malignant disease, or cancer of blood-forming tissues, such as bone marrow. According to the award winning documentary, *Stem Cell Revolutions*, directed by Amy Hardie, scientists started working to find a cure for radiation sickness after the United States bombed Hiroshima, Japan in World War II. People were dying of diseases that stopped the production of red blood cells, which led to hemorrhages and other horrific injuries that were difficult to cure. Doctors and scientists knew that blood was created in bone marrow, and that led them to bone

marrow transplants in mice. Then, as time progressed and technology improved, and knowledge on the subject was gained, they began bone marrow transplants in people to help end the suffering in Japan. According to the Cancer Treatment Centers of America, after a rigorous preparative regimen, patients suffering from leukemia are infused with healthy red blood-forming stem cells into the body intravenously. That way, they can have a healthy amount of red blood cells in their bone marrow. Patients typically return once a year to have a new dose of stem cells entered into their bone marrow. There is no limit to the amount of diseases that can be treated or cured with stem cell research. Cancer, diabetes, and Parkinson's Disease, are just a few of the many sicknesses that have used stem cells as treatment. But with further funding and information, scientists hope to discover cures for illnesses otherwise thought to be terminal.

Stem cell research is a necessity in today's world. With the continued effort in discovering how cells work, human research could go far beyond words and help so many suffering individuals. There are a lot of opinions out there that are not pleased with stem cell research, but imagine how many people could benefit if scientists were able to develop stable curative treatments for the incurable diseases that so many lose their lives to today. The start of stem cell research was a turning point for the world, and whether it be to cure blindness, regenerate skin for burn victims, treat those diagnosed with leukemia, or to reap the benefits of scientific advancements, scientists are encouraged to continue their studies in between the morals of the people and the government to create a safer, healthier world.

Stem Cells

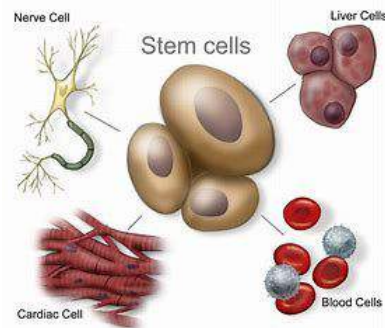
The Medical Breakthrough That Could Dismiss Disease

By Ethan Smith

The fountain of youth is a well known story. Anyone who drinks from its waters will be restored their youth and health to perfect condition. This is a great metaphor for stem cells, while stem cells do not directly work the same as the fountain, the medical breakthroughs they can provide are vast. With an increase in stem cell research many medical barriers can be easily surpassed, and disease will begin to be dismissed to little importance. Overall stem cells will increase our quality of life and allow humans to achieve new feats that we did not think were possible before.

Stem cells make impossible task seem mild in difficulty. An example of this is with heart transplants. Heart transplants represent one of the most difficult tasks that can be performed on the human body. There are various reasons for this, one is just the difficulty to arrange such an operation, as hearts begin to die within minutes without function. Another obstacle is the body's immune system reaction, as it aggressively attacks the new heart, and this presents many issues. However these issues can be easily solved by stem cells. Scientist and doctors have been working on developing tiny heart patches that can function on their own, this allows the patches to be inserted whenever they are needed, it is also more effective in suppressing the immune system's reaction, as the stem cells would already be heart tissue. This is just one operation that can be aided by stem cells out of many hundreds of different operations. An argument against stem cells being used is the cost. Many people believe that stem cells are expensive or the research involved in them is expensive. However it is quite the contrary. According to David Cox, it cost the National health society \$70,000 to

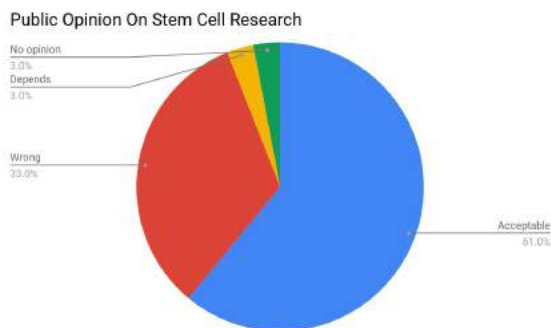
perform a stem cell heart transplant, while it cost \$500,000 to perform a normal heart transplant. This difference is great and shows, stem cells are more effective in almost every category then different treatments.



Another great help stem cells can provide is through disease. Many diseases that are considered incurable, such as AIDS, Parkinsons, and Alzheimers can be solved through the use of stem cells. With stem cell research being advanced in the years to come many diseases will become no different then a simple cold. The argument that still persist, however is that to gain stem cells you need to take from another life. In contrast this argument is weak because most sources of stem cells are from dead organisms. As stated by Nathalia Holt, in her article on fetal stem cell research, “no matter if these stem cells were extracted or not this useful tissue would be discarded”. This can be used for various arguments on stem cells not just fetal stem cell research.

One more benefit stem cells provided is they are effective in times of need. Stem cells can be used whenever and wherever. Stem cells can be engineered to transform into the type of cell that is needed, they can also be harvested and saved for later use. This is ten fold more effective than receiving a live organ donation or graph, because those are circumstantial and not always around. A story by Ariana Eunjung Cha shows how effective these stem cells

can be. A boy came into the ER with 60% of his skin gone with almost complete epidermal loss, and the doctors were able to experiment with a new treatment where they grew the patient's skin with stem cells, and replaced all the child's skin. Another astonishing fact about this story was the child's skin condition that caused him to lose almost 60% of his skin, was able to be cured from his newly created skin, as the doctor was able to genetically modify the child's new skin cells, and eliminate the disease. This story is truly amazing, as this seven year old boy was given another chance at life through this experimental treatment a doctor was able to test through the use of stem cells. There is no argument that the use of stem cells here was wrong or should not have been allowed, as this child used his own body to heal himself through experimental treatment, when if he did not he may have died.



The graph above illustrates the public's view on stem cell research being used, the graphs evidence was derived from Gallup and taken nationwide, so there was no direct influence. As it can be observed the public overwhelmingly believes that stem cell research is acceptable. This is great as a major argument limiting and blocking stem cell research was public approval. Many people believe it to be wrong due to ethics, but as previously mentioned a lot of stem cells can either be taken directly from the person with disease who needs to be treated, or taken from tissue that would be

going to waste otherwise. Another argument that always seems to persist is religion, and how this is seen as sacrificing a life for another. The problem with the religion argument goes back again to how many stem cells are taken from a live body or deceased bodies that are not going to be used. It can also be concluded from the nationwide graph shown that an overwhelming majority of people agree with stem cell research anyways. This dismiss the arguments that many do not agree with research due to moral obligations, or ethics.

Overwhelmingly the benefit of stem cells can be seen all around. Healing people who are near death and have no other options to go to, and even increasing their quality of life after the procedures. Not to mention it allows treatment to take place in emergencies or to prepare for the times it is needed. Stem cells are also heavily approved by public opinion, close to a sixty thirty split. This is an overwhelming majority. This allows research to go on and be approved. Also this allows failures to not be so drastic, and it will mainstream success. Another benefit of stem cells is eliminating diseases from our list of world problems. No one will deal with AIDS, Parkinsons, or Alzheimers, these will be easily curable, and present no issues. These conditions that were present before stem cells will be eliminated and will seem nothing more than daily occurrences, after stem cell research has been completed. Finally stem cells are much cheaper then other alternatives used, for example the comparison of a \$70,000 stem cell heart transplant vs a \$500,000 normal heart transplant. No more will stories be told about the fountain of youth, but we will be able to create our own fountains of youth, and achieve many medical breakthroughs.

Preventing Bullets over Broadway A closer look at the necessity of gun control

By: Grace Seidel

The month is February of 2018. This past Valentine's Day has marked the 18th school shooting in America of just this year. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting of Parkland, Florida is ranked as the ninth deadliest shooting in modern day U.S. history (Willingham and Levenson CNN.com). Littleton, Colorado - on April 20, 1999 - was the site of one of the most infamous shootings in U.S. history, leaving thirteen dead. Today, the Columbine High School massacre no longer ranks in even the top ten deadliest mass shootings in America. The United States makes up 5% of the world's population, but holds 31% of the world's mass shooters. Other countries have taken action in well-received attempts to diminish the gun violence. Australia, for example, had four mass shooting between 1987 and 1996, after which Parliament passed stricter gun laws. There hasn't been a single mass shooting in Australia since then (Fox CNN.com). While other countries have decided to implement stricter gun laws, America has responded to every victim and survivor of a school shooting in the country with suggestions on how to make schools "safer" with even more guns, as well as a format for learning facilities that is far too similar to that of prisons. We don't need to arm teachers as if they are guards, or teach children how to adequately barricade themselves in their own classrooms with



their desks and chairs. What we *do* need are stricter gun control laws.

Better gun control laws would reduce gun-related deaths. A study from the *American Journal of Public Health* stated that "the legal purchase of

a handgun appears to be associated with a long-lasting increased risk of violent death". While it wouldn't be wise to ban firearms altogether, strict background checks should be implemented upon anyone who wishes to own or operate one. A study from *Lancet* estimated that federal background checks could reduce firearm deaths by 56.9%, and background checks for purchases of ammunition could reduce gun-related deaths by 80.7%. Background checks that are implemented before the process of purchasing ammunition would also cover those who illegally possess firearms and those who might slip through the cracks of the system. Any activity involving firearms should be closely monitored - buying these weapons should not be easy, and in fact should be as difficult as possible. The people who should be trusted to carry and operate these weapons shouldn't have a problem going through a more thorough process to obtain them.

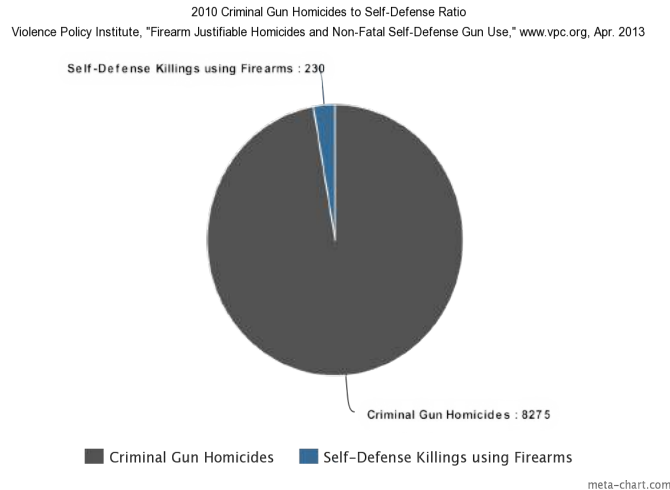
Civilians should not have access to military-grade weapons. The constitution was made to evolve with the times - the

Second Amendment was written before grenade launchers, silencers, and was most certainly written before the existence of assault rifles and machine weaponry. Military-grade weapons are made for mass casualties, such as the recent Parkland shooting, in which an AR-15 military rifle was used to kill 17 innocent people at Marjory

Stoneman Douglas High School. When the weapons have changed so drastically, is it so outrageous to think the laws surrounding them should change as well?

A common stance seems to be that instead of restricting gun ownership to ensure safety, there should instead be a plethora of it. It seems to be of popular opinion among the anti-gun control population that more armed civilians would be the solution in times of crisis - for example, arming teachers with guns of their own, at all times, incase there happens to be a shooting inside the facility. This is, to put it simply, not a good idea. Every teacher can't even be trusted not to engage in *inappropriate sexual behavior* with their own students, but sure - give them all guns and see how well it plays out in the end. Aside from the fact that not every teacher is to be trusted, there is also the fact that armed civilians tend to make dangerous situations worse rather than stopping them. Teachers, and most other gun owners (save for law enforcement) aren't trained in the handling of life-threatening

situations, and increasing the amount of deadly weapons in said situations makes them more dangerous (Voccola Chronicle.com).



Stricter gun control laws wouldn't necessarily infringe upon anyone's right to protect themselves either, as guns are rarely used in cases on self-defense in the first place. According to the Violence Policy Institute, in 2010, there were 8,275 criminal gun homicides, and there

were just 230 "justifiable" homicides compared to that, in which a gun was used to kill a felon. Between the years 2007 and 2011, only .79% of the victims of all 29,618,300 violent crimes committed protected themselves using a gun (Planty and Truman BJS.gov).

Advocates for gun control don't want guns to be outlawed completely. Many gun control laws that people want implemented are just common sense. It's better not to think of gun control as a desire to strip Americans of their (outdated) Second Amendment rights, but to strip potential criminals of their chance to slaughter hundreds of innocent people in record time. To some, it seems strange that the Columbine High School shooting is no longer one of the top ten deadliest mass shootings in U.S. history, but if you ask the people of a generation who are constantly subjected to active shooter drills in school, who live in fear of their school realistically becoming the next major headline, it just seems strange that there's even a list at all.

People Kill People, With Guns

Guns are dangerous, and should have higher regulations to protect the public.

By: Jake Gates

Whether you're speaking about the Miami club shooting of 2017, the Vegas shooting of 2017, or the Parkland school shooting of 2018, it is impossible to deny that guns played a major role. However, the heated debate over gun control is one that has existed since the late 20th century, and is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. This argument stems from the 2nd amendment and the formation of the National Rifle Association (NRA), a political action group that insists the problems with mass shootings isn't the guns, but the people using them. Catastrophes, like the ones mentioned above, always spark the debate over background checks to keep those mentally unstable from getting guns, and it should. In all, there needs to be higher regulations of guns in this country in order to try and stop these events from happening.

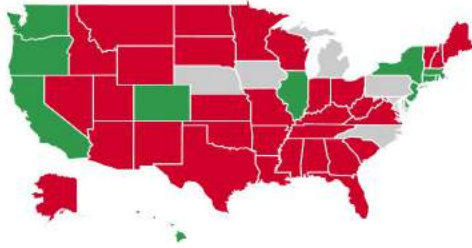
The first step in adding to gun regulations is decreasing the control the NRA has over Congress, and there are many ways to do so. The first way of doing so, and perhaps the easiest, is creating a force against them; by this I am referring to the sheer lack of number in the NRA themselves. As comically pointed out by John Oliver, a multiple Emmy and Peabody award winning comedian, the membership of the NRA is less than half of Planet Fitness. The only reason the NRA continues to control this issue is Americans only seemed concerned about guns during times of crisis, and in the months in between a big shooting, the NRA continues to work on building pro-gun legislation. It is in this time that the American public falls behind, as a Congressman, or woman, won't spend their full attention on an issue if their constituents only show interest every few months. The argument becomes less of an issue of the NRA feeding into the pockets of politicians,

and more of an issue of Americans not caring enough. In order to push legislation to fix gun control laws, we as Americans must push for change not just a few weeks of the year, but whenever we possibly can, that is the only way change will happen.

The second problem when attempting legislation to fix gun control is beating out previously established bills. The biggest of these deterrents is the Dickey Amendment, was bill sponsored by Americans Rep. Jay Dickey in 1996. The bill lays out a rule that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) cannot spend funds to research gun violence and turn around to use that evidence to advocate for better gun control laws. Since the enactment of this bill, CDC spending on gun violence research has dropped 96 percent, meaning their ability to collect information has greatly decreased beyond their will. This bill was funded by the NRA and despite many attempts to repeal it, again because of lack of public backing, it remains in place. Perhaps the most interesting fact about this bill is the article from the Huffington Post's Sam Stein from 2015 after an interview with Jay Dickey himself. Mr. Dickey was cited as being against his bill and also being highly apologetic for enacting this bill in the first place. If such an important bill and one that is up for consistent debate is also regretted by its author, it should not remain in existence.

After we, as the American populous, have tackled the problem of how to enact stricter gun laws, the reason as to why should be fairly easy. No matter how you chose to describe it, shootings across the country can only happen if the shooter has a firearm, and these shooters could have easily been prevented from getting firearm through proper background checks. Yet, this no brainer idea should be easily controlled yet it is not, as anyone can go to a gun show and purchase a gun without a background check in the states seen below.

■ Not required
■ Required for handgun sales
■ Required for all purchases



SOURCE: Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence

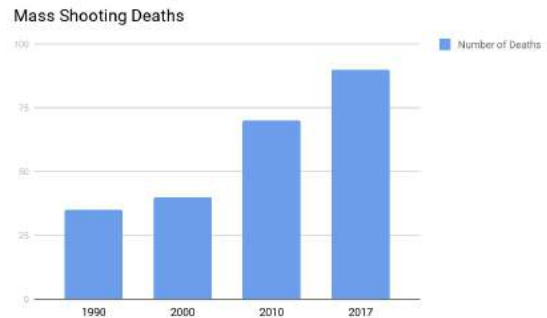
The fact that 33 states allow for no background checks should be a startling number to many Americans. Perhaps most inappropriately ironic, Florida, the state of the two most brutal shootings in the past year, does not require a background check at gun shows. The Parkland school shooting, and the Miami club shooting combined had a mortality of 66 citizens and children as reported by CNN's Eric Liveness. This explains explicitly the problem at hand that without proper background checks dangerous individuals can obtain a firearm that could be used to hurt others.

In a perplexing countering statement, Dana Loesch, the NRA spokesperson, stated in a town hall session with CNN that it was the states' fault, for the student being able to obtain a weapon, as they did not submit his mental health records to NRA or the Federal government. This argument seemingly holds no grounds as whether or not his information was withheld from the government his ability to obtain a gun from a show would not have been hindered. While sure, he would not have been able to obtain the firearm through a store, the minor inconvenience of waiting for gun show to come to his state can be seen as marginal. In truth in order to help fix the gun problem background checks must be enabled at all levels of purchasing not just certain areas. It seems silly to not have a background check at every option for buying a gun, much how you need an ID in order to purchase alcohol from any type of location.

The other issue with mass shootings is the advancements in firearm technology. When the second amendment was originally

adopted in 1791, the arms the founders were referring to muskets that could fire one shot per reload. They were not thinking of an easily portable firearm like the AR-15, the gun used in the Stoneman Douglas shooting, that can fire 600 rounds per minute as noted by CBS' Ed Leefeldt. This is a weapon that should be used for military purposes only and not be able to be purchased by American citizens. However, the argument is commonly made that the removal of certain guns will only lead to the popularity of other fast firing weapons. This can be overcome by capping the firing speed of legal public weapons to that far below police and other law enforcements, to give them the upper hand in situations where shootouts may occur in an attempt to terminate violent shooters.

Advancements in firearm technology in recent years can be seen to be directly related to an increase in the mortality rate of mass shootings. Due to this, it is important



that we initiate new laws to prevent these new advancements from getting to the public. It should come as common sense to not give the public more powerful weapons than our law enforcement agents.

In short, the battle for tighter gun regulations will not be an easy fight. It will first take an understanding of how to legally beat groups like the NRA. The understanding as to why we should create more regulation should come as common sense as the public should not have more powerful weapons than police and there should be better background checks at all levels of purchase.

Source to above chart: Mother Jones

Guns, Glory, and Children Gory

The lives of our children are being sacrificed for political gain.

By: Ryan Snyder

There sits a child at her desk, surrounded by her group of friends. She is hard at work, trying to complete that paper that is due by the end of class. She exchanges a few innocent laughs with her fellow table partners; she has always enjoyed the time she has spent in school and has not a single concern of anything except getting that assignment done. Suddenly, shouts of students explode from down the hall, followed by a crowd scrambling toward the closest exit. What was the big commotion? Surely nothing could ever go wrong at school. Something down the hall sounded like a violent video game—the one her brother used to play—and nobody, not even the teacher, could bring themselves to believe that it meant danger. In a disorganized panic to flee death, the teacher frantically led her students out the nearest doors she could find, where they might find some safety. Not all were as lucky. The rest of that dreadful day was spent trying to wash the blood-stained eyes of those children, but no shower could ever cleanse their suffering. There was no towel that could dry the tears, the tears for their old table partners. Children cried out for their old youthful friends. A place of creativity and joy, where life was to be cultivated into the loving humans of today's end, had become a bloodbath of child corpses. It would be a long time—perhaps never—before any hope could be restored. The television echoed the walls of America's homes of action and inaction. Some news show was on, interviewing some guy who was apparently a member of the “NRA,” whatever that was

supposed to be. One could not make out what he said more—for it had all become a blur—“Thoughts and prayers to all of the families who were harmed in this recent tragedy,” or “Protect the second amendment!” The children would later learn of the origin of this group: to protect the right to keep and bear firearms, which is a euphemistic way of saying that they think that anyone—if they are a citizen of the United States—should be allowed to purchase semi-automatic machines of murder. To protect what they call their pride and joy, the NRA allocates funds to the campaigns of politicians, so that they vote and push an agenda in favor of the second amendment. These monsters—one cannot think them to be human anymore—have made the job of death much easier by buying politicians. Consequently, incumbents have taken every action they can to address the present problem except, of course, proposing gun control legislation. The only way that the children of America will not have to continue to mourn for their childhood friends and live in constant fear is the imposition of stricter gun laws so that the future of America can just focus on their times tables, instead of wondering if they will be shot today.

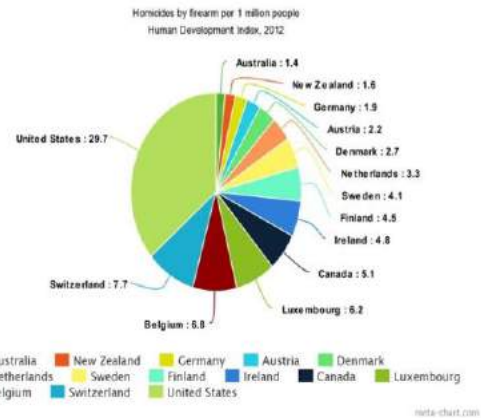
Stricter gun laws prevent mentally unstable humans from acquiring such weaponry. According to NBC News article, entitled “Trump Signs Bill Revoking Obama-Era Gun Checks for People With Mental Illnesses,” in February of 2017, President Donald Trump signed a bill into law that rolled back an Obama-era regulation that made it harder for people with mental illnesses to purchase firearms. Although some claim that Obama's attempts to control gun transactions did not evidently accomplish anything in terms of homicide rates, it has been confirmed by a study conducted in

October of 2017 by Scientific American, entitled “More Guns Do Not Stop More Crimes, Evidence Shows,” that anything that makes it easier to obtain a gun will likely worsen gun violence. Yes, not all mentally disabled humans are violent lunatics; but, it only takes one human who has been pushed too far to cause the blood of children to spill out onto American soil. Any action that can be taken to limit future mass shootings must be taken. And as many cases of school shootings—such as in Florida—have been a matter of mental illness, one thing is needed to ensure the safety of the children of America: stricter gun regulation.



More guns in the circulation result in more violent crime. According to the Human Development Index, in 2012, the United States had the highest number of homicides per one million people. It is not a mere coincidence that the other nations present in the data have enacted stricter gun policy than the United States. One evident truth can be derived from this data: that the quantity of guns circulating the United States is proportional to homicide rates. The implementation of stricter gun laws will lessen homicide rates, as it has shown to do so in the past. According to Dale Hansen of

WFAA News in a broadcast, recorded February of 2018, entitled “Extra point: Dale Hansen on school shootings,” Australia—having four mass shootings between 1987 and 1996—has not had a single mass shooting since they imposed stricter gun laws following said tragedies. Australia is living evidence that gun control does decrease violent crime rates. The lives of the children of America may be spared should Congress act and pass adequate gun control legislation.



Legally owned guns are often stolen by criminals. In an article by The Guardian, entitled “Gun inequality: US study charts rise of hardcore super owners,” a survey is revealed by researchers at Harvard and Northeastern Universities which stated that between three hundred thousand and six hundred thousand privately owned firearms are stolen in America every year. According to The Guardian, in another article, entitled “Up to 600,000 guns are stolen every year in the US,” that number is more than one thousand six hundred guns stolen per day, and more than one gun stolen per minute. In a 2012 report, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives said lost and stolen guns posed a “substantial threat” to public safety and to law enforcement; a great portion of crime is committed with stolen legally purchased weapons. Gun control placed on certain groups alone will not be substantial in

lowering homicide rates. It is necessary that it be more difficult for everyone to purchase firearms to ensure the welfare of the children.

Grave darkness has prevailed, and it appears that America is for sale. On that grave in which America rests there is inscribed the name "Mrs. Jackson" of the fourth grade. Some might call it a funeral, but today it is just more "digging." The lucky child looked at mother, and uttered the words, "I wish I could teach the world like Mrs. Jackson did." Mother had not a response unless you count the tears. America had lost. There is no winner in murder; not even death himself enjoys killing teachers. A man strolled up behind them in a casual, authoritative manner that boasted of false chivalry. There on his suit coat lie a button painted in blood red. It read—or much more shouted—in letters louder than capitals, "NRA!" He looked first to mother, and then to the child. He never looked at the digging site, for he never liked to get his hands dirty. The man looked at mother again, and then back at himself in internal reflection. "Had I been there, I would have run in and fought that bastard myself." "I really would have," he repeated as he began to light a cigar. "My thoughts and prayers to the family—do you know them?" He muttered that line as if he had said it a thousand times before, perhaps even in a past life. It was as if he knew exactly where and how to emphasize certain words and syllables to generate the greatest effect. As his insides groaned from showing even the most minute of sympathy, he blew the illustrious smoke from his King of Denmark into the already reddened eyes of Mother. Without apology—nor even mere recognition of what he had just done—the man began to weep. Mother was startled at a first glance, for it was not normal for a businessman of his stature to demonstrate any form of emotion other than a face of

stone. It had been raining for what seemed like a century, and it appeared the man's forged face had come to melt, which was followed by the dropping of his shoulders from their original upright state to a rather bad posture. "My designer brand running shoes are ruined!" He said, drying the tears from his hardened face. It was a rather odd thing—wearing running shoes to a funeral—though he seemed to think that it was normal. Businessmen of his stature must always be ready to run; running is key to successful business. From that grave, there arose a unifying darkness that roused the crowd more than any known physical force. The darkness drew their eyes to the businessman, who stood there, trying to wipe the mud off his blood red running shoes. As the darkness spread, the cries of the man subsided into one feeling of fear. Their eyes were all cast upon the man like a cat staring at a stranger. He no longer felt that he was shielded from the truth; his suit was drenched in water and looked of peasant fashion. They continued to stare until their eyes had become irritated to a blood red. United they stood, with the weight of the country on their backs. It is imperative that the United States remain united as these people were. Politicians must break the walls of the tomb in which the political system lies and take the action their country so desperately needs. And, should those incumbents remain silent, the voice of the public must prevail and stand for the dead children and teachers. So far, this year, there have been eighteen school shootings, and it is only February. It is necessary that congressmen put aside their self-interests to save America from itself. Otherwise, the children of America will continue to perish until there is no longer a generation of tomorrow.

Life or Death? You Choose.

Change must happen now and justice must be served.

By: Brittany Nguyen

Two thousand, two hundred, and twenty-six. That is the amount of lives taken in 2018 caused by an armed weapon. The United States has a much higher homicide rate than just about any other highly developed country, and it also has much more civilian gun ownership. Too many innocent lives are being taken from a senseless act of an artillery weapon and there must be justice acted upon it. A gun reform must be placed upon the United States in order to protect the lives of civilians, have stricter laws of owning a firearm or firearm accessories, and to reduce the number of gun related deaths.



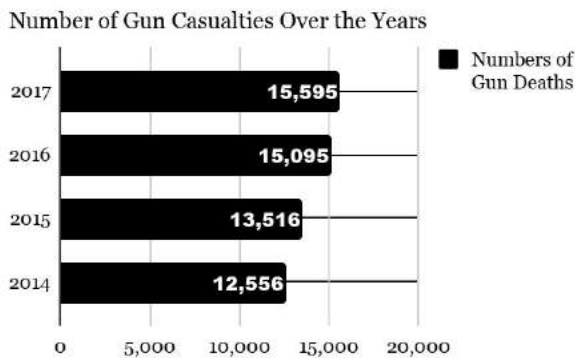
The safety of the kids and adolescents are the most important in this country's current state. On February 14, 2018, a mass shooting occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Nineteen year old, Nikolas Cruz killed seventeen people and fourteen people were taken to a hospital making it one of the world's deadliest school massacres. What was the sole purpose of this act? Why did this psychotic person commit this crime? This marked the eighteenth mass shooting in 2018, happening all within about two months of the new year. There should not be this many shootings happening in America. To put in perspective, over the years, 1,007

innocent lives taken by a gun, 176 were children and teenagers in school shootings, according to Bonnie Berkowitz, Denise Lu and Chris Alcantara in The Washington Post. In addition, thousands of survivors were left with devastating injuries, shattered families, and psychological scars. Mass shootings are happening so frequently that it is becoming the new norm. Students should not have to live in fear and be scared to go to school. School is the environment of getting an education and learning something new everyday. Kids and young adults should not have to worry about getting harmed in any way possible especially by a firearm. It is not acceptable that innocent lives are being taken so rapidly. A gun reform must be considered to protect the lives of the future generation.

The history of mass shootings date back to Columbine, where an AR-15 was used to commit these shootings. According to The Washington Post, AR stands for the Armalite rifle, named after the company that developed the weapon. In December 2012, former President Barack Obama signed executive orders calling for mandatory criminal background checks on gun-buyers and several other measures that were unpopular in Congress including a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. According to Fortune News, President Donald Trump repealed the Obama Rule that added mentally ill people to gun check register, thus making it easier for mentally ill to purchase an artillery weapon. If President Trump kept the executive orders from the Obama-era none of this gun violence would ever happen. A gun reform must be taken in action to have stricter requirements to obtain a military-grade firearm. No person or citizen should have the ability to access a firearm like an AR-15. There is no purpose of owning an AR-15. If a nineteen year old can

not consume alcohol than they should not have the ability to obtain a military firearm. Enforcing stricter legislation to possess a weapon needs to be established. Having a gun reform will reduce the numbers of gun related casualties, and also keeping young kids and adolescents out of harm's way.

Every year the rate of gun violence is rapidly increasing. According to Gun Violence Archive, there are currently 2,226 deaths relating to gun violence. In the graph below this is the past summary ledgers of casualties caused by a firearm. According to Gun Violence Archive, in 2014, there were



12,556 deaths that were caused by a gun, in 2015, the number increased to 13,516, later that year in 2016, it increased to 15,095, and the most recent year, 2017, it reached to 15,595. There should not be this many casualties. To see that there is no action being applied to this situation is upsetting towards the citizens and the victims. As time passes those numbers will increase. If change does not happen now it will lead to downfall on the human race. No one should have to die because of a gun. One small trigger could end someone's life in an instant. A gun reform needs to be applied to the United States to decrease the casualties of innocent people.

Although some may say gun control laws give too much power to the government and may result in government tyranny, or the government taking away all

guns from citizens, which is violating the Second Amendment, according to Gun Control at ProCon.com. These accusations are utterly misinterpreted. The whole purpose of having a stricter gun reform is to increase background checks on any individual obtaining some sort of gun and to have higher requirements on obtaining a firearm as well. The reform will make it harder for a person to purchase a gun, to ensure that the armed weapon is going into the right hands of an owner. This reform will not take away an individual's weapon at any circumstance, but this reform is trying to increase the safety and protection of future generations and decrease innocent casualties. If an individual decides to purchase a gun for the intent of harming others then that person may not under any circumstance get the permission of owning a firearm. The proper use of a firearm is for protection and not to harm an individual at any given moment.

With the multiple events that happened these past few months have taught us is that there is definitely an issue that needs to be discussed and change must be apart of that issue. What happened in Parkland, Florida should be a wakeup call; enough is enough. There are innocent children dying because of pointless firearms. The survivors will remember that moment for the rest of their lives and they are constantly reminded of that catastrophe. These victims will remind people that they died for no reason. A gun reform needs to be considered by Congressmen and they must protect lives of the American people. Creating rigid regulations for gun ownership will prevent tragedies from occurring, and will decrease losses of people. Mass shootings should not be look passed. It needs to be brought into the light and action must come out of it.

Guns in Every Classroom

Should our teachers be allowed to conceal carry in our schools?

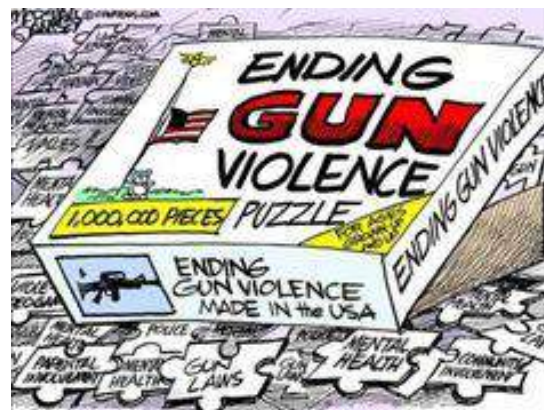
By: Sunshine Weber

Out the door, through the bookroom, and out the window. These are the 3 potential exits from my classroom. Have each child grab books, staplers, or anything that can distract someone as they enter my room. Keep a bat, a can of wasp spray, mace, or other items that can be used against an assailant with a weapon typically used in war. Buy time...as much as I, as we, can for well-trained officers to have time to react and help us. None of these are great options. Gun control, not complete removal, must be enacted in order to keep Americans safe, not just in schools, but in places of worship, movie theaters, and any other public gathering place.

The news has repeated a similar cycle for over the past three decades, if not longer. Horrific event, thoughts and prayers, and then very little done by our elected leaders. Other than a fairly superficial assault weapons ban law that was enacted from 1994-2004, our laws have largely remained the same in relation to our ability to own firepower for the past 200+ years. Even while our technology has improved our weaponry, our laws remain stagnant. With new weaponry, new laws become necessary to protect our safety.

With the latest mass shooting happening within the past few weeks, the typical arguments have again resurfaced. One popular suggestion with gun rights activists is to put more guns in schools. The solution, however, is not to have even more people armed but instead to control the weaponry

that people have access to own. While a highly trained response is necessary, this should be left to the experts. Michigan's Senate bills 584-586 allows concealed carry in the typically "gun-free" zones with just 8 extra hours of training. Teachers, administrators, and other school personnel should not be required to add armed security guard to their job description with so little additional training. The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research fact sheet for November 2017, based on studies of states with liberal guns laws that allow people to carry concealed firearms, found that of 111 mass killings, in which six or more people had been killed per incident, there was no case of an armed civilian stopping a shooting in progress. The one most cited occurrence of a good guy with a gun was with the Texas massacre, where a neighbor grabbed his rifle and wounded the gunman as he exited the church. Other popular cited cases involved officers or military veterans, not a teacher with fewer than 20 hours of specialized training.

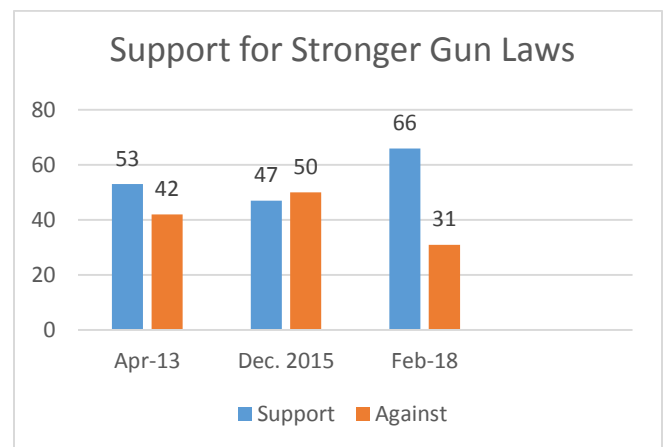


Soft targets, or ones that do not have armed security, are often highlighted as the target of these mass attacks. Some believe that more weaponry in schools and homes will make them less desirable as targets. Gun Owners of America's Fact Sheet from Eric Pratt titled, "Anti-gunners Misfire Again

Trying to Debunk the Benefits of Guns in Self-Defense” discusses the idea that people need to be able to protect themselves from intruders in their homes and communities. However, even with the Parkland shooting last week, there was a trained officer and then additional backup that did not enter and engage the shooter. While that is their job requirement, as a culture, we put them in a difficult position when we allow our people to be better armed than our police force. Tom Post, in a February 2018 article entitled “Police are trained to attack active shooters, but Parkland officer didn’t. Would armed teachers help?” from the Washington Post, suggested that, “Facing a gunman with a high-powered weapon is a life-altering call, and officers don’t always charge in, despite their training.” He cited evidence from both Parkland and the Las Vegas shooting where officers waited during the crucial minutes to enter the school or engage the shooter. It is human instinct to want to protect your own life over actively engaging an armed gunman. When that gunman has an assault weapon in comparison to a handgun, the odds are weighed heavily against anyone who comes up against that force.

The most comprehensive solution comes in the form of restricting access to weapons that were not meant for public use. However, the idea that there is only one solution to the problems that we face as a modern society is inane. No truly difficult problem has only one solution. We need comprehensive background checks, a ban on the availability for citizens of weapons of war, or a more comprehensive approach. When assault weapons were banned in the years 1994-2004, mass shootings went down. In a 2016 book, *Rampage Nation*, Louis Klarevas, stated, “...the results [were] ‘staggering.’ Compared with the 10-

year period before the ban, the number of gun massacres during the ban period fell by 37 percent, and the number of people dying from gun massacres fell by 43 percent. But after the ban lapsed in 2004, the numbers shot up again — an astonishing 183 percent increase in massacres and a 239 percent increase in massacre deaths.” There is no other problem in the U.S. that we choose to ignore because the problem is too large. Starting with a ban is at least a movement in the right direction.



Data taken from Quinnipiac University Polling Institute

Columbine, Sandy Hook, Sutherland Springs, Aurora, Charleston, Virginia Tech, Pulse, Las Vegas, Parkland. These are just a few of the many names of places where mass shootings have taken place. These are not all schools. Arming teachers does not solve the overall problem. There are no good options when a society is ok with easy access to weapons of war. Having firefights, much like those in war zones, do not belong in our schools or our communities. No matter how many weapons are located in these places, they are no true match for the power of these modern weapons. America should be better than that. Enforcing more stringent gun laws would help move towards the goal of a safe America for all. No matter what, keep my students and myself safe.

Gun Control is the Answer

Why stricter gun laws are needed for public safety.

By. Russell Rusnell

Throughout the United States, millions of students attend primary and secondary schools. These students should be safe at school and not be at risk of being harmed. However, according to the Washington Post, since the Columbine High School massacre over 150,000 students in more than 170 primary and secondary schools have experienced a shooting while at school. This is an alarming number of students whose lives will never be the same after experience a traumatizing event. To protect students and the citizens of the United States, stricter gun laws and regulations must be enacted.

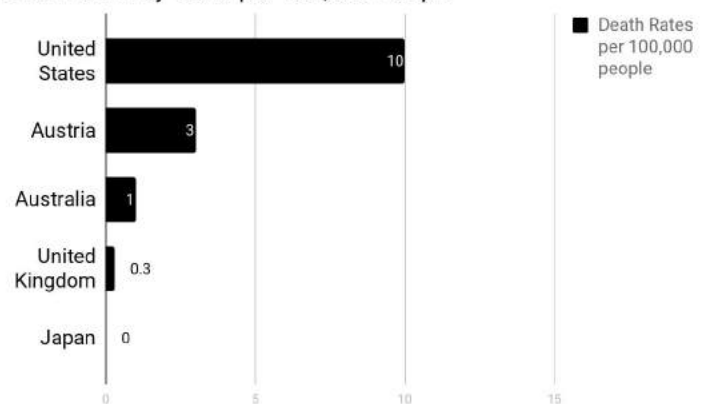


In other countries, strict gun laws have been proven to reduce gun violence and homicides by firearms. Japan, who has almost zero-tolerance when it comes to gun ownership, only had six reported gun-related deaths, according to The Guardian. This is disturbing when compared to the United States who, according to the Center for Disease Control, had over 33,000 gun related deaths in 2014. Japan has had amazing success in reducing the gun violence in their country by enacting strict gun laws, but the United States continues to risk the lives of their citizens by keeping loose gun regulations. Australia is another

country who has benefited from stricter gun laws. According to The Guardian, in the 20 years since they enacted stricter gun control laws after the Port Arthur shooting, there have been zero mass shootings; in the 20 years prior to the National Firearms Agreement, there had been 13 mass shootings. Through the use of strict gun control, Australia has been able to reduce their mass shootings by 100 percent. The United Kingdom also has enacted strict gun laws after they experienced a horrific school shooting, and was able to reduce their gun-related events from 25 thousand to less than 4 thousand. These countries took action after experiencing horrific mass shootings, events which have become too common in the US; however, the United States government has yet to follow suit and take action.

Many people argue that the United States only has more gun deaths than other countries because we have a larger population, however, this is not true. When we look at a graph of firearm-related deaths per 100,000 people we see that the United States has a much higher rate of gun violence than other countries with tight gun regulations such as Australia, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

Death Rates by Guns per 100,000 People



Information from the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS)

A proposed solution to end gun violence in schools is to arm teachers. This may seem like a good idea on paper, but the reality of it is that it would cause problems instead of fixing them. Students should feel safe in school and the presence of an armed teacher could cause more stress to students on a day-to-day basis. Teachers also are not trained professionals and their job is to teach, not be armed security guards. According to the New York Times, only 22 percent of National Education Association members were in favor of arming teachers. The vast majority of teachers do not agree with the idea of arming teachers, they went into education, not law enforcement, whose officials also disagree with the idea. Arming teachers could also cause more casualties in the event of a school shooting. According to the Violence Policy Center, trained police officers only have a 20 percent hit ratio, and sometimes make mistakes when deciding what situations need deadly force. This problem that occurs with trained professionals would only be amplified by untrained teachers. During a school shooting, a teacher could take the life of an innocent student who was mistaken for a shooter. Gunfights would cause more bullets to fly and would cause a higher risk to students to get caught in the crossfire. Arming teachers would cause more casualties and put students at a greater risk than keeping teachers unarmed.

Assault rifles are unnecessary for the public to own and operate. As of 2004, the Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Act, which banned assault rifles, was lifted and since then assault rifles have been legal to own. These assault weapons have been used in school shootings, such as Columbine High School, Sandy Hook Elementary School, and Parkland High School, and have produced a much larger number of casualties

than concealed weapons would have caused. Many gun owners argue that the second amendment protects their right to own these dangerous and powerful weapons; however, the second amendment was written in the 1700s, way before assault rifles were made. The founding fathers had way different firearms than we have today, they had single shot muskets and pistols that had to be reloaded in a very time-consuming manner after every shot; today we have weapons that, according to the Washington Post, have 30-round magazines that allow for rapid-firing. These weapons allow shooters to cause large amounts of damage in a very short amount of time, and enable shooters to inflict damage to more students than they could with a pistol. The National Rifle Association is the main reason these weapons are still legal, through their political influence. Government officials are not acting on calls for gun control out of fear of losing the backing of the NRA, which means that kids lives are being put in danger out of political funding which is outrageous and must be stopped.

Although tighter gun regulations and bans on certain types of assault weapons would not completely end gun violence in the United States it would be a huge stepping stone for public safety. Strict gun laws have been proven to work in other countries and would work in the United States, as well as a ban on assault weapons which can cause large amounts of destruction in short periods of time. In wake of a large number of school shootings in the United States recently, we as a people need to come together and demand our government to enact stricter gun laws. Stricter gun laws will save the lives of thousands of high school students and will keep thousands of families from grieving over loved ones.

For the Sake of the Kids

What sensible actions should be taken to prevent school shootings

By Eli Gooding

On the 14th of February 2018, a former student of Stoneman Douglas High School entered the school,

pulled the fire alarm, and proceeded to gun down seventeen individuals, fourteen of whom were children. In response to this terrible tragedy, countless

suggestions to prevent future school shootings have been proposed, some of which are vague, calling for seemingly logical steps, like “common sense gun control”, but don’t lay out any specifics, some that aim to remove all guns in the hopes that no guns will result in no gun violence, and others that suggest no change at all in the belief that school shootings are inevitable. These differing stances create a sharp divide in our country. There is a clear and rather simple way to move towards a solution to this problem. To prevent school shootings, it must be made harder for people who shouldn’t get guns to acquire them, both through legal and illegal transactions, and school security must be drastically increased.



The first point is an obvious one, no person in the United States that should not be lawfully able to obtain a gun should be able to do so. The solution to this is not more thorough background checks, because the current background checks are already quite thorough. The issue lies in the data submissions to the NICS (National Instant Criminal Background Check System).

Ideally, states submit felonies to the NICS and those records would come up when a gun salesman does a background check, resulting in the customer, if they are found ineligible, being turned away.

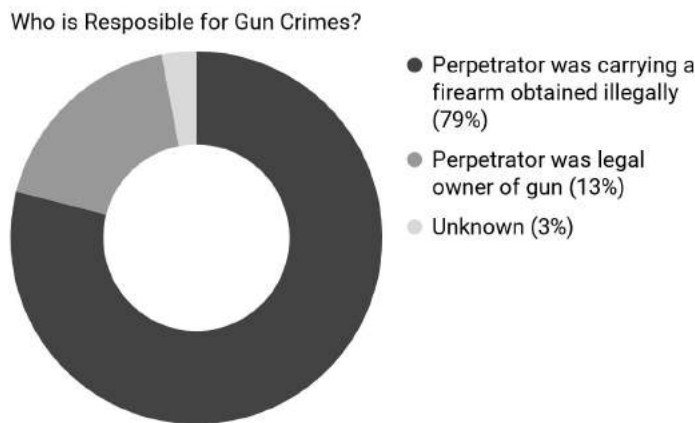
Unfortunately, according to a report by the National

Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, over the 25 percent of felony convictions are not available. That is seven million missing records. That despicable individual, who took those seventeen innocent lives, should not have, according to a provision in the state’s constitution, been legally able to obtain the weapon he used to carry out this heinous act. This has to change. As it stands, there is no punishment for states that fail to submit a sufficient amount of records, so, in order to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people, there must be some law that is passed that requires states to do so or else face some sort of funding reduction or holding, whatever it takes to get them to comply. Be it that this action is taken, it will be near impossible for someone unfit to own a gun to purchase it

legally, but finding a way to purchase one illegally is not so difficult.

The vast majority of gun crimes in the United States are carried out with guns obtained illegally. In an interview with PBS, ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms) agent Jay Wachtel laid out the most common ways one buys a gun illegally. The most common way, is simply walking into a gun store with someone who can buy the gun legally, point out what you want, and have them buy it for you, which is called straw purchasing. Another large source of guns used in crimes are unlicensed

the Michigan State Police homepage, an individual who knowingly sells a gun to someone who is legally forbidden from purchasing one can get away with a \$500 fine. To really clamp down on the sale of illegal firearms, we must make the punishment so harsh that violation becomes too big a risk. I think, given the extreme consequences that could come about from these types of sales, fines should be taken off the table or jacked up to an inordinate amount. Why should someone selling firearms to a dangerous individual, a potential school shooter, only have to kick out a couple bucks?



Source: Fabio et. al., 2016

street dealers who either get their guns through illegal transactions with licensed dealers, straw purchases, or from gun thefts. Wachtel admitted in the interview, "Let's be honest. If someone wants a gun, it's obvious the person will not have difficulty buying a gun, either legally or through the extensive United States black market." The punishments for selling firearms illegally varies from state to state, but one commonality is that they are far too lenient. Here in Michigan, for example, according to

These two steps should hamper criminal gun activity, but I am focusing on school shootings specifically, so the final action that must be taken is, on a large scale, to increase the security in our schools. When I go to school every morning, I have the option of coming in seven or eight different doors until about 7:30 AM, when they lock the doors,

but from around 6:30 AM until then, anyone can enter the school. After giving it some thought, I realize how easy it would be for someone to shoot up my school up. It would take a few minutes for police to arrive, but that's all the time a shooter needs. The Parkland shooting took about six minutes. We have security guards, but all they have are walkie talkies, which I imagine won't do a whole lot to stop a shooter. So, preventative measures must be taken at the schools. It has been argued that upping

security would “militarize our schools”, well, Nicholas Jacob Cruz militarized our schools when he brought an AR-15 into one of them and mowed down seventeen people. Schools need to start having metal detectors because as is the current state of our schools, there is no way of knowing if someone is carrying a glock in their backpack. Student ID’s should be have to be shown to gain entry. Additionally, a great deterrent of violence is to have armed personnel inside the schools. Now, there has been great dispute over the armament of teachers and other school staff, and I do see potential for problems, but I believe that the security guards already present in many schools would be able to better protect their students if they were armed. It is argued that little help will be provided by providing school security guards with handguns, because after all, how can a handgun compare to an assault weapon? According to Daniel Brown, a marine vet writing for Business Insider, an AR-15 can fire at three times the speed of a typical glock, but at 160 feet, the time difference only comes out to a little under half a second. Additionally, the alternative in this case is the security guard's fist, which, in all probability, stands less a chance at stopping a shooter than a handgun.

Many look to the means with which the Parkland shooter carried out this atrocity, the AR-15, as the problem. In fact, according to a Monthly Harvard-Harris Poll from February 16 of this year, 61 percent of respondents said that they supported the banning of the AR-15. There are a few problems with this. The biggest of which is

that the banning won’t stop with the AR-15. The strongest push behind the banning is its history of use in past school shootings, like Sandy Hook, and its incredible firepower, but so long as there are guns, there will be those who misuse them. At Columbine, a shooting that killed almost as many people, the shooters used handguns. So, to make it legally impossible to obtain a gun and use it to shoot up a school, a ban on the majority of guns, or a full repeal of the second amendment, though the second of which highly improbable, would need to be passed (if you want to see gun violence, try enforcing this in Texas). Even if this happened, the problem would be nowhere near solved. There are currently, according to the Pew Research Center, somewhere between 270-310 million guns in the United States, so there would be somewhere between 270-310 million different ways for school shooter to acquire a gun. This is why I do not suggest gun bans, but rather the more practical options I have just laid out.

The United State’s most valuable resource, what the nation depends on to survive in the future, its children, are currently poorly protected from the evils like those shown in Florida. Therefore, the government must do all it can to ensure that guns are only allowed possession to those who merit it and make purchasing one illegally impossible as well as securing its schools. It is necessary that we as a country actually take action to prevent anything like this from ever happening again, rather than fight about who is more outraged by guns, allowing it to fade away into the past.

Abortion
Is it Really a Bad Thing?
By Daven King

The removal of a zygote or a fetus from its mother is called an abortion. Forms of abortion have been dated back to the 19th century, since then they have been extremely controversial to everyone. Now, there are many ways that people look at this in and ideas that people hold about them as to when they are acceptable or just “terrible” if you will. Some people say that it's murder, some prefer the word slaughter. These people are obviously against the practice and believe that no matter the circumstances the future life needs to be preserved. There is also the side that looks at it in the other light. These people see that there is nothing wrong with abortion, and even if there were there's no stopping it, for some families it is really the best option for all of its members, and that the abortion process is not any sort of murder at all.

As stated, no matter who looks at it, who wishes it would stop, or who tries to stop it abortions will still take place. The procedure of removing to-be children has been occurring since or even before the 1800's. This gives the act roughly two centuries if not far more to be created, changed, and perfected. According to the NAF, or the National Abortion Federation, “in the mid-to-late 1800s states began passing laws that made abortion illegal”. This statement here shows both sides of the argument if you look at it in a broader spectrum. This shows that one side is very against the practice, so against it that they would go and make it illegal. The other side of this is seen by looking at the timeline the year is now 2018 and the practice is still occurring in a somewhat large scale. Not every family is getting them but they do occur often and in many countries around

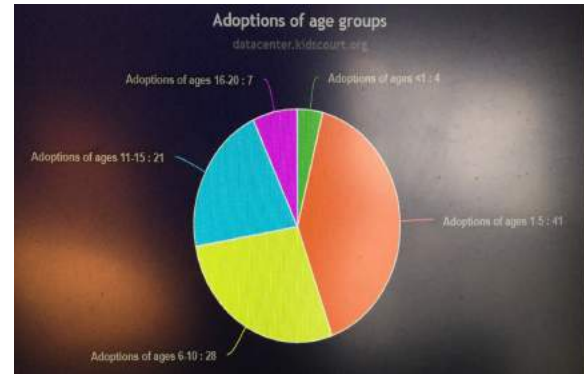
the world. Looking at how long groups have been for and against them it is almost obvious that they will not stop simply because they are not entirely liked and supported. This may be one of the cases where the habit could become fully illegal but it would not stop the ongoing use of it. This could become much like the new and powerful argument for the total illegalization of owning guns. If the procedure is made illegal there are people out there who will perform the surgery illegally. There have been hundreds of protests against them and hundreds to show the upsides of it.



This picture is obviously of a protest for and against the practice. This picture was taken in 2013, just five years ago, four and a half if you want to consider the date. This picture truly illustrates the distance people will go to further or stop the procedure. The blue signs are in full support of keeping them around while the red ones are against it. Having both opinions at the same rally proves the point that some are for it and some are against it, but no matter what the opinions of some in the public are the practice and use of it will continue as long as people are around who believe that it is the right decision for them.

Whether or not the performing of this practice is widely accepted and liked is a different matter in the cases of families around the globe who cannot have a child and give it a good life. Most of the time if an

abortion occurs due to it needing to happen it is for the sake of the family. As sad as it is to think about the truth in some situations is the family is poor and cannot afford to take care of an infant and raise it to adulthood. Anti-abortion activists would say that the child could be placed into an orphanage and would then be given to another family who wants to adopt. This is a good thought until the cost of the child is given to the orphanage along with the costs of feeding clothing and keeping up of utilities for all of the other children. The cost of adoption is very high, according to family.findlaw.com “Generally speaking, most families are only responsible for court filing fees and the new birth certificates, which is approximately \$200”. This is just the costs of getting the child which is honestly quite low, other costs they don't want to tell you about immediately include: the costs of hiring an adoption attorney, inspection costs and the normal costs of child care. These numbers could still be affordable for a large number of people around the world especially middle class American citizens. This makes the idea of just giving them up for adoption seem all well and good, until you see that not all of them will be adopted during their infancy. The costs continue rising as the child grows, to cut to the chase if a family were to adopt a teenager the costs of adopting one from an agency would be on average \$39,966 and independently would be \$34,093. These are the percentages taken from the total registered adoptions in the year 2015. The information was collected by Kidscount.org. This shows that only 4% of the children who were adopted were infants.



Now going back to abortions, with all of this information it seems that spending from \$300 to \$800 for an abortion seems much better for all. Going in another direction of needing an abortion there is the laws of when abortions can happen, if one is to occur within the third trimester of pregnancy it is only available when the doctor deems birthing or just continuing the pregnancy so dangerous that the mother will inevitably die. This is when without a doubt an abortion needs to occur no matter what the beliefs of the parents and those around them are. The stages of life are on most accounts considered to start at infancy or as soon as a child is born. The legal definition for murder is “ the killing of a human being by a sane person” by law.com’s personal legal dictionary. For the sake of being technical if murder is a sane person ending the life of another, but life is not started until one’s birth then the performing of an abortion is in no possible way a murder. Some people will still say that the process of abortion is wrong although it is not a murder, this is based solely on opinion and cannot be changed. By law abortions are legal in America and many other modern countries around the world, along with that by definition they cannot be considered murder. These two facts combined show that the idea and procedure of having an abortion are legal and should be accepted by more who refuse to look at the process in the eyes of others.

My Body. My Choice.

The right to an abortion is the choice of a woman based on her circumstances.

By: Riley Courter

Sex. It is a natural part of life. It is something that mostly everyone deals with their life, but consent to having sex DOES NOT mean giving consent to a pregnancy which is why the right to having an abortion is so important, especially in this day and age. Since the U.S Supreme Court declared abortion a fundamental right in the court case, Roe v. Wade, in 1973, arguments have divided the nation based on the moral aspects of what abortion does. But the pro-choice argument is simple. By keeping abortion legal, it allows women to a right of choosing what they do with their bodies and regarding reproductive health.

In a survey I conducted, I asked 28 people to give me their opinion on whether or not it was morally ethical to keep abortion legal. Out of the responses received, 89.3% (25/28 of those surveyed) agreed that keeping abortion legal gave women the right to choose what they do with their bodies, which empowers them. When a woman feels empowered because she knows she has a right to an abortion, it allows them to feel a sense of control over their own bodies and their reproductive health. In Danielle Campoamor's article, "What a Pro-Choice Woman Really Looks Like," published on Huffingtonpost.com, she explains who exactly supports the pro-choice argument. She states that "A pro-choice woman is passionate about her

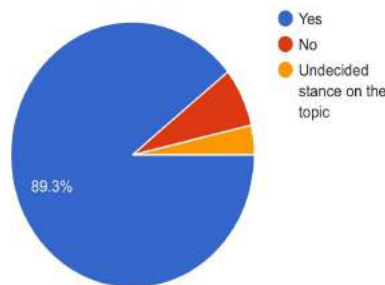
health and determined to take care of her body." What is so wrong with wanting to protect your reproductive health? By allowing a woman the right to have an abortion, she then feels more empowered because she has control over what she happens to do with her body especially when dealing with cases of unwanted pregnancies.

The right to have an abortion not only gives women a sense of empowerment, but it gives an option to those who are not even close to being financially ready to bring a child into the world. So by giving women a choice, they will be given a chance to support themselves before having to support and pay extra expenses for a baby. Having a child is a such a HUGE financial undertaking! If someone were to pay for all the expenses of

having a pregnancy, the costs would come down to \$445 being paid each of the nine months a woman is pregnant as noted by smartaboutmoney.org. There are also doctor visits and of course, delivery! Elizabeth Fernandez at the University of California San Francisco that women having a child in hospital cost them from \$3,296 to \$37,227 for an uncomplicated vaginal delivery, depending on which hospital they visited. If a woman were living a low income life, those expenses would be brutal. So by keeping abortion legal, it gives women who are struggling financially a choice to help support themselves so that one day, when they are not struggling anymore, they can

Do you believe that by keeping abortion legal, it gives women the right to choose what they do with their own bodies

28 responses



have the child and give them all the love and spend money for their future.

When abortion was made a fundamental right in 1973 because of the Roe v. Wade case, it protected the choice of women who are mentally unstable and unable to support a child due to their state. Just like financial issues, having a child is a HUGE undertaking when it comes to mental health. Unwanted pregnancies and mental health issues are, realistically speaking, not a good mix. Womenshealth.gov stated that “depression is a common problem during and after pregnancy. When you are pregnant or after

you have a baby, you may be depressed and not know it.”

For example, if a

woman who was already dealing with depression became pregnant, she could risk an extreme worsening of her mental health and that could potentially be detrimental to the woman postpartum. So because the right to an abortion is legal, women who are mentally unprepared are allowed to make the choice for themselves to prepare for when they are actually ready to bring a child into the world.

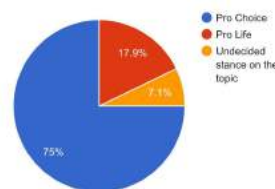
Some who claim to side with the pro-life stance on the subject, as stated by christianet.com, tend to argue that killing an unborn child is murder and that health risks will arise for the mother. However, having an in-clinic abortion or taking a pill is totally safe for anyone. Planned Parenthood, a non-profit organization which specializes in reproductive health, performs in-clinic



abortions and explains on their website that they are safe and simple procedures performed by experienced doctors. They also note that these serious problems that the pro-life movement insists are actually very rare which makes it immensely unlikely to make a huge impact on the physical health of the mother. Pro-life arguments also tend to make claims that the only correct way around unwanted pregnancies is abstinence, but that is not the case at all! As said previously, having sex is a natural part of life! Trying to stray away from it, in adult years, can be a difficult task as it is so prominent in culture today. Yet still, the decision to have sex and/or an abortion is based solely on the woman involved would like to do regarding her situation at hand.

Although the argument about the right to abortion will continue for many years to come, there is hope that people will see the moral and ethics behind abortion and how it supports women. Even in other conducted surveys, like in mine where 75% sided with the pro-choice argument, the majority sees the morality and ethics behind having this coveted fundamental right. By giving woman a right to an abortion, she acquires a possible

Do you take the Pro Choice Stance or the Pro Life stance on Abortion rights
28 responses



course of action in regards to doing whatever the hell she wants with her body, no matter the

circumstances. So when a woman has sex, she knows that she will have options open to help in case of an unwanted pregnancy because, after all, it is her body which makes it her choice.

Planned Funding for Planned Parenthood
Why Planned Parenthood Should Be Continually
Funded

By Sydney Pace

Imagine this, your daughter has a serious and chronic blood disorder. The medicine that your daughter uses daily to control her symptoms is a form of birth control. When you go to refill her prescription, the pharmacist's eyes go wide. She asks if you're sure you're ready to pay on hand. You don't think much of it, in fact the copay has only been a few dollars, but when the charge comes up on the screen, it shocks you, the price has come to \$456.98. That is about 57 times your designated price. You can't afford the medication, but your daughter cannot go without it. This is actually a common occurrence for the young women in America who depend on these types of hormone supplements. Since the Trump administration cut funding for Planned Parenthood, the price for necessary appointments and medications, that are intended for families in need, have skyrocketed. Planned Parenthood does not only provide services for the disadvantaged, but has an important impact on women's right and our healthcare system. Planned Parenthood should be funded for because it provides important services to the deprived, it teaches and supports healthy lifestyles, and continually acts as an advocate for civil rights.

The average developing woman will see her gynecologist once a year. During these checkups various test and screenings must be done. All in all, the annual visits cost roughly two hundred dollars without copay. However, what about the families with out great health insurance? Or the families who will need multiple appointments? Planned Parenthood has dealt

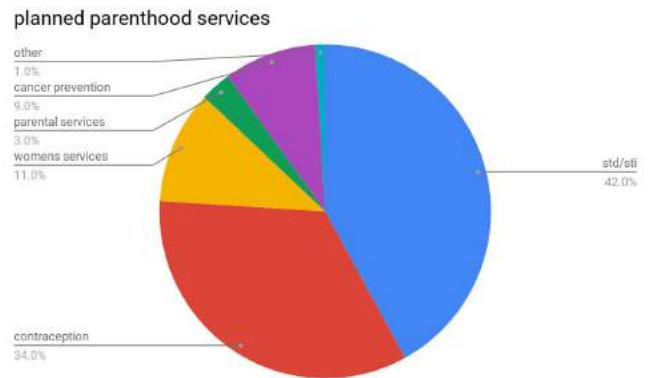
with every situation. In fact, Planned Parenthood offers ninety three percent more services to inner-city residents with little to no health insurance. In an interview about the current president's agenda against Planned Parenthood in the Huffington post, p.p. Advocate, Tiffany spoke on her own personal experience on being an unprivileged worker using planned parenthood, "When I was in my 20s and 30s. I was self-employed and I had no health benefits — only catastrophic coverage. Even the most routine doctor visits were outside my financial reach — I pretty much had to be dragging a broken leg behind me to go to the doctor. The only reason I was able to have regular OB-GYN visits for years was because Planned Parenthood made it affordable. Without them, I would have risked my health, because I simply couldn't afford to see a doctor". Many men and women who need the benefits of a supportive health care plan cannot get them. Planned Parenthood clinics makes necessary treatments and appointments more affordable. Planned Parenthood provides for those who need services but cannot afford them, therefore Planned Parenthood should continue to be funded in order to help provide for those who cannot meet standard health care needs.

The main opposition against Planned Parenthood comes from conservatives who are pro-life. This argument is usually targeting one of the services available at Planned Parenthood clinics, abortion. However, their arguments are overlooking Roe versus Wade, in which the Supreme Court legalized abortion and gave women the right to choose what's best for their own bodies in 1973. Also Planned Parenthood doesn't intend to harm anyone. They have set guidelines about when and how abortions can be planed. The regulations, as found on

the Planned Parenthood website, state that there are limits on every aspect of abortion. For each state, there are different rules surrounding the ability to get abortions. These rules are in order to protect the mom and the fetus, making the process as painless and humane as possible. In Michigan, even though the laws may differ from other states, the State Legislation has stated, “ Michigan's Informed Consent for Abortion law was created by Public Act 133 of 1993. This law requires that certain information be made available to a woman who is seeking an abortion at least 24 hours prior to the abortion procedure. The information is designed to provide a woman with accurate and unbiased information on the procedure she is about to undertake”. Through this Planned Parenthood protects the fetus’ right and makes other parental options available such as adoption. These laws made through Planned Parenthood help prevent girls from having illegal abortions and hurting themselves and the baby. Therefore the conservative’s arguments based on the fact that abortion is cruel is completely biased and untrue.

While that specific scenario may have occurred, it is not the majority of the cases on hand. Planned Parenthood provides services to men and women of all ages in order to provide a better and healthier lifestyle. In 2018, birth control and abortion services are not the only thing free clinics offer. Planned Parenthood provides contraception, std screenings, cancer screenings and prevention, and many more important gynecological services. In a recent study of Planned Parenthood, 42 percent of the services provided aided in std and sti prevention or treatments, 34 percent was used toward contraception and classes involving birth control, women's services accounted for 9 percent, cancer screenings at 11 percent and parental services at only

three percent. Without planned parenthood, many of these health related privileges would only be able to apply to the people



with the best health care, no just people who need them, so the majority of under privileged people would not understand a healthy sexual lifestyle, or have any prevention against sexually transmitted diseases. Amongst all of the services and care, Planned parenthood has open health classes in inner cities, where schools may not be able to provide them. Through this, they are promoting healthy lifestyles and building a generation of educated adults for the future. Because planned parenthood supports and promotes lifestyles that revolve around whole wellness, planned parenthood should continue to be funded in order to continue helping teens grow up being safe and smart.

Planned Parenthood has been operating since 1921, and nationally since it first got its federal grants in 1970. Since their opening, planned parenthood has been fighting for women’s rights . In accordance with the rulings of Roe vs Wade, planned parenthood has contributed greatly to the women’s rights movement. It has given women a new found voice in what control they have over their bodies, and what they choose to do with them. Because of supreme court rulings, efficiently protecting oneself from pregnancy is a right, and with planned

parenthood, the rights of young women are provided, and fought for. Senator Bernie Sanders, has often spoke on this specific topic, recently commenting about the potential defunding in his webpage stating “We are not going back to the days when women did not have full access to birth control. Incredibly, almost all of the Republicans in the Senate are in favor of giving any employer who provides health insurance, or any insurance company, the ability to deny coverage for contraception or any other kind of procedure if the employer had a “moral” objection to it. That is unacceptable.” If our country defunds the foundation that gave women everywhere her rights, what have we become? In our nation people care more about the N.R.A and the right to have unneeded assault rifles in an attempt to preserve their supposed second amendment right than to protect a group of people who have been fighting for their rights since this nation was founded. In her blog, women’s right advocate Amanda Klasing sated her opinion on the matter, “Make no mistake about it. An attack on Planned Parenthood will not just make it harder for women to get abortions – it will imperil many women’s access to a whole range of important health care services. Planned Parenthood is a system of health facilities throughout the United States that provide health services to at least 2.5 million people, the vast majority of whom live at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. Planned Parenthood does provide abortions, but never with federal funds, and they make up a tiny fraction of the services it provides.” Klasing, who recently had a cancer scare, has said multiple times that using Planned Parenthood facilities was the best decision she has made. In the time period we live in, the agenda of our predominantly male government is to protect their own rights. They have blatantly

ignored the civil rights that women need, in the legal system, the work force, and now in our own lives. Women need to feel comfortable in their own bodies, and if they don’t have the control over what they feel is best to do with them, realistically women’s rights are the same as they were in the 60’s. Women deserve these rights that they have been given in the past, Planned Parenthood is trying to support these rights as we have had them and caught for them for years. We have fought for minorities and gay rights, now Planned Parenthood is fighting for the



rights of current and future women of America by giving them the rights and services they deserve. If funding is cut by our Government, women will suffer across the country. Planned Parenthood should not be defunded in order to protect women’s natural rights.

Planned Parenthood continues to operate today in its 650 national branches. If our government cuts its national funding for something so vital to health, civil rights, and knowledge, our country will have to worry not only for our future in maintaining the freedom America offers, the thousands of unprivileged children who need services, but we will have to suffer knowing we couldn’t provide for someone’s mom, sister, friend, or wife. America needs Planned Parenthood, and Planned Parenthood needs mandatory funding.

Care. No matter what

The fight for control over women's reproductive rights.

By Isabelle Stupar

Since they first opened their doors by their founder Margret Sanger, Planned Parenthood has been constantly threatened and under fire for even existing. Access to health care for women in the early 20th century greatly had to do with wealth. However this organization that started with one clinic grew to international and revolutionized women's health care forever. Without Planned Parenthood's services, important for the government to continue to fund Planned Parenthood because if they women across the country will lose access to affordable healthcare. This is why it is so dont the organization wont be as affordable, have to close down countless clinics and will not be able to help the millions of people they service each year.

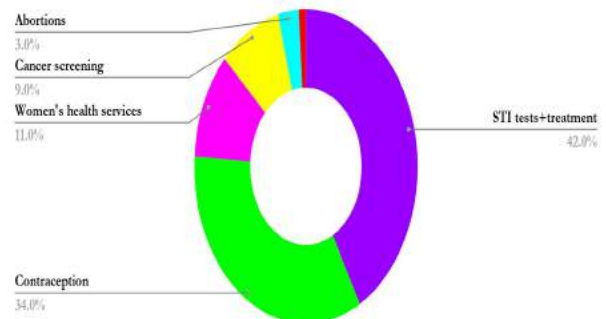
It's been a 100 years now since the first clinic opened and Planned Parenthood has expanded and thrived. With that they have expanded to include men's health as well as women's health. With huge threats of federal funding going to planned parenthood being cut, people are realizing how crucial it is to have. Daya Evans from The Cut said "Over 40 percent of Planned Parenthood's funding comes from federal, state, and local funds." If that was taken away than there would be no way for them to continue operating as they have. Especially since "private donors account for only \$353 million a year out of Planned Parenthood's budget of \$553 million a year."

Without federal funding, Planned Parenthood would have little chance of survival in communities where a large

majority of patients rely on the government's Medicaid and Title X grants. In fact Debra Goldschmidt and Ashley Strickland from CNN said "Nearly 80% had incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty level" and also "found that 62% of Planned Parenthood health centers also offer same-day appointments, and 78% offer extended evening or weekend hours for those who have a hard time accessing care due to work or family responsibilities." This is a huge reason why it is important the organization's funding is not stopped. These low income households greatly rely on the organization services that they would not be able to have access and afford the services they provide.

Planned Parenthood is so much more than an abortion clinic. The majority of people they serve dont come in for an abortion. The most popular services are STI testing and treatment along with contraceptives. Which make up the majority of the annual amount

Planned Parenthood Services Breakdown



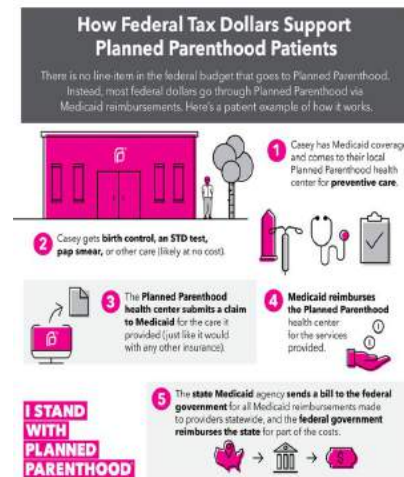
of services performed nationwide. Planned Parenthood also does preventative services like screenings for different cancers like ovarian, breast and prostate cancer. By offering these services at their clinics planned parenthood have saved countless

peoples lives with early diagnosis which are crucial to survival of this scary disease.

Planned Parenthood has saved the lives of not only early diagnosis but through access to safe abortions. Before planned parenthood offered safe abortions thousands of women would die annually from home abortions or back alley abortions. These abortions were sometimes sticking a coat hanger up them to break the embryonic sac which often lead to the death of the women due to internal bleeding. And often if they seeked medical attention before the revolutionary court case Roe v. Wade they ran the risk of being arrested at the hospital for performing an abortion. Women having having easy access to safe abortions is critical to their careers, control over their reproductive health, financial position and mental and physical health. Having a baby when a woman is not ready could cause a women great emotional distress, having to give up their job to take carry of the baby which would cause her to plummet into financial troubles.

One of the biggest complaints of about federal funding going to planned parenthood is people stating that their tax dollars are going towards abortions which is something against their religion. However this is far from true as peoples tax dollars are not going toward abortions because it is illegal from them to do that. Planned Parenthood by law are only allowed to use the federal funding they receive towards non abortion services. So no one's religion is being affected by the federal government funding planned parenthood. Another argument that people for defunding planned Parenthood have is if Planned Parenthood were to be cut off from federal funding, America's taxpayers would benefit. But what they do not know is that without the necessary and

low-cost health care available at Planned Parenthood, Medicaid spending would actually go up for the federal government and taxpayers. Especially in low-income areas, where women depend on Planned Parenthood for Medicaid-funded contraceptive services. Not having access to it would mean unwanted pregnancies would rise, which would then put a much bigger and more long-term burden on Medicaid spending than it would if the government continued to fund planned Parenthood. In fact Bryce Covert, a journalist, said "that defunding PP would cause Medicaid spending to increase by \$650 million over ten years." this would cost american people so much more money in taxes which would affect and burden everyone to a certain degree.



Planned Parenthood has changed the lives of at least a billion people in the hundred years the organization has been around. Practically shutting down such a important organization would hurt more people than its worth. So overall everyone is better off agreeing the best option would be for the federal and state governments to continue to fund Planned Parenthood to make sure that all women and men have access to affordable healthcare no matter their income.

Breastfeeding: Anytime, Anywhere

Why women are ashamed too often and why they should not be.

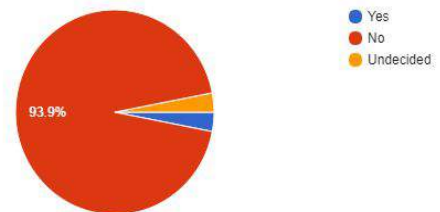
By: Josi Bridges

Imagine you are a brand new mother running some errands with your sweet, but hungry child. As you sit down and prepare to feed the starving baby, an older woman makes a snarky remark, “go home and do that, no one wants to see your boobs” You feel ashamed. You feel embarrassed. You do not feel like you can feed your child anywhere without being judged. Too many women nowadays are abashed for simply providing their children with natural nutrition. Mothers should not be verbally punished and everybody should be respectful of public breastfeeding.

In 1867, parents were introduced to infant formula, a powder mostly made of cow's milk whey and casein, which provides protein, and DHA which is a fatty acid found in breast milk. Before then, all mothers supplied their offspring with nature given nutrients, breast milk. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services of January 2018, breast milk lowers the risk of illness in babies. It has reduced the infants chance of receiving asthma, leukemia, childhood obesity, ear infections, eczema, lower respiratory infections, type II diabetes, and more. Not only does breastfeeding reduce risk in babies, it is also beneficial for mothers. It decreases the probability of breastfeeding women to obtain type II diabetes, ovarian cancer, and specific types of breast cancer. The U.S. Department of Health and Human services also states, “for most babies, especially premature babies (babies born before 37 weeks of pregnancy), breast milk substitutes like formula are harder to digest than breast milk. Formula is made from cow's milk, and

it often takes time for babies' stomachs to adjust to digesting it” Infants have small organs, therefore it is harder for them to digest their intake. Many babies have to drink soy formula because it is less harsh on their tiny bellies, but it is more expensive than regular formula. Breast milk is all natural and is less likely to upset babies stomachs. They lastly state, “physical contact is important to newborns. It helps them feel more secure, warm, and comforted. Mothers also benefit from this closeness. The skin-to-skin contact boosts your oxytocin levels. Oxytocin is a hormone that helps breast milk flow and can calm the mother.” Immediately after a baby is born, they are laid on the mothers chest to instigate a calm and comforting relationship between the two. There is no oxytocin or “love” hormone released with formula feeding, making breastfeeding more natural and sweet. It displays a close relationship between a mother and her child.

Are you bothered when women breastfeed in public?
33 responses



Most people are not offended if they notice a mother feeding their child in public as shown above. In the survey that was taken, one person said it does bother them, one person was not sure how they felt, and the rest do not mind public breastfeeding.

The average cost of infant formula per month ranges from \$70 to \$150. That means that parents spend an average of \$840 to \$1,800 per year. Breast milk is free. The only money invested in breastfeeding would be towards a breast pump. The Baby Center Medical Advisory Board from June 2015

says pumps are used to, “stimulate your milk production and increase your milk supply, to collect milk to feed a premature baby or one who can't latch onto your breast, and to relieve the pain and pressure of engorged breasts” Pumps cost anywhere from \$18 to \$360. That's at least \$18 and at most \$360 spent, depending on whichever one you choose. If you decide to have multiple children, that's \$840 to \$1,800 per kid each year! If you go down the instinctive path and breastfeed you could spend \$0 to \$360 no matter how many children you have.



Say it is a warm, sunny, summer day at the beach. There are women walking around in bikinis, even one piece bathing suits that show some cleavage. Not one lady is glared at or talked down to for wearing whichever swim apparel they choose. But when they are fully clothed and feeding their child somewhere else, it's unacceptable to some people. How much sense does that make? Women who breastfeed almost always cover themselves and their baby whilst in public. Humans see many things they do not support or agree with in public every day. For instance PDA. A couple kisses in public and someone may not like it but do they make a scene and shame the couple? No. They will look away or leave. People should use that same solution when it comes to public breastfeeding. If you are bothered by a mother's breast barely, if not at all showing, then look away.

An argument that could be said against public breastfeeding is why can't the mother just feed her child in private? She could go to the women's restroom and feed her child, or go out to her car and do it. Finding a private place takes time and more stress on the mother because her child is desperately crying for food, interrupting the public's peace. It is inconvenient. Most public restrooms do not have a safe and clean place for the mother to sit. So her only option left is a bench, or her car which is a 7 minute walk away. If you were a mother, you would choose the closest, most convenient spot for you and your baby. Not a filthy bathroom used by many strangers that is cleaned once a day.

Another opposing view is that mothers can bottle feed. The resources are available so mothers should use them, right? Even if she does breastfeed, she could pump beforehand and bring a bottle along with her. Nothing about bottle feeding is considered “inappropriate” or “promiscuous” because no skin is shown. If a mother can prevent health issues in herself and her child and save thousands of dollars each year, then why not breastfeed? Women who choose to bottle feed are just as smart as women who choose to breastfeed. Whichever you choose is completely fine. Nobody should be ashamed for their personal choices and preferences, as long as no harm is caused.

Women who choose the healthier, more natural path are guilted and women who bottle feed are not. Women who wear bikinis are not called out in public by strangers, so neither should women who breastfeed. No mother should be told that they cannot feed their child or even how to feed their child. Parents have the right to decide how they raise their children, and if breastfeeding is one choice they make then be respectful of their decision.

Sexism and the Wage Gap

Why All the Blame Shouldn't be Put on Sexism.

By: Andrew Ulaszek

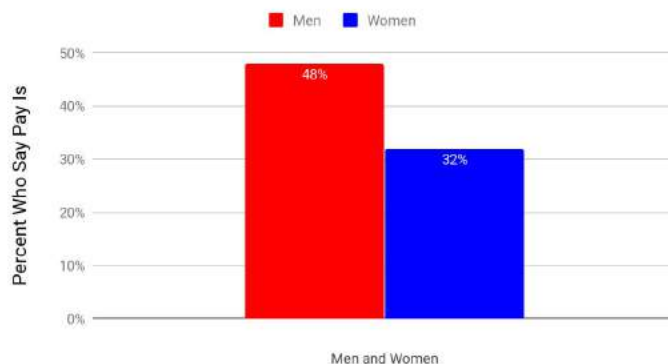


Women make only 80 percent of what men make. Statements like this get thrown around all the time on social media and in the news, but are these statistics really as accurate as they sound? The answer is no. Many people take these statements as facts without considering all of the causes. Have you ever wondered if the gap is caused by things such as happiness in the workplace? Probably not, or not in the way that it should be thought about. The truth of the matter, the wage gap is not only caused by sexism, but yet multiple factors.

First off, many people will claim that men are paid far more than women and that it will take women decades to catch up, for instance, the Institute for Women's Policy Research. While they do advocate for equal pay for women, they do say, "Reasons for the gender wage gap are multi-faceted. IWPR research shows that..." and they are right. One of the most forgotten about things when considering wages is how happy each gender is in the workplace. In an article written by a woman at Forbes, she stated, "Women's reluctance to negotiate for higher salaries has long been considered a major

factor in the gender pay gap." This is not just an opinion either. Later in the article, a reference was made to an experiment done to test this statement. Groups of men and women were paid \$3 to solve a word search game. "Male and female participants thought they did equally well... so there was no gender differences in perceptions of their performance." Now you may be asking yourself, how is this relevant? This matters because it helps isolate the issue pay versus quality of work. The subjects also had a chance to receive more money in the experiment. If they merely complained about the pay they still received \$3, but if they directly asked for a higher pay then they receive \$10 instead of \$3. The statistics are shocking, "men were *nine times* more likely than the women to directly ask the experimenter for more money." Nine times more likely! That is a huge difference. Why did this happen? No one really knows. The conclusion, on the other hand, is definite. Men are more likely to be unhappy with their pay for a job, and in turn, will ask for money. From this alone, the assumption that many people make about the wage gap being due to sexism can be disproven, but there's still more evidence.

Is Pay Negotiable? From a Survey of 4,600 Employees



Many people suggest that the best solution to combat the wage gap is more education for women or anti-sexism training in the workplace. However, there are flaws

with both of these ideas such as many men and women who share the same job field will do different work within that job field due to the preferences of men and women. To start, in an article Mark Perry, from AEIdeas, Perry made many great points about how the wage gap should be looked at as more of an earnings gap. Perry said that, "To close the gender earnings gap... it would involve closing lots of other gender gaps that do exist and lead to gender differences in earnings." According to his research, men take jobs that pay better because they are more willing to do jobs with higher mortality rates, less comfortability and work more hours. Perry stated that one thing women must do in order to close the gap is to be on par with the demands of jobs that men do or the tasks done by men in the same jobs. For example, women must "be willing to experience 50% of workplace fatalities instead of the current 7%." What this suggests is that the wage gap is all a perceptible lie that we have been conditioned to think is real.

Many people will tell you that the wage gap is a large issue that plagues America today. But how much does each of those people really understand the issue. Many will tell you that men and women do the same jobs and so they should be paid the same way. The problem with this is that men and women are just not the same. Men and women work through problems differently and see the world in different ways as depicted by the website Red Ventures. For instance, "Men are more goal-focused while women are more process-focused... the more unattainable, the more motivating it is to get there. Women are more motivated by what goes into the process of getting there. The path to get there is so much more exciting than the actual end itself." From this statement alone, which has been proven through countless amounts of research, we

can already see that men and women vary drastically. Another thing many people forget about or simply just do not know is that men are more willing to do dangerous and uncomfortable jobs even in the same field as women. If a man and a woman have the same job, they share the same qualifications but the man is willing to do more uncomfortable work and more dangerous work then he should be paid more. These statements are completely logical. If you were asked by an employer of a pizza place to work an oven, under some risky circumstances, it would seem fair that you would get paid more compared to someone who is working the register even though you are both working in the food industry. These are the conditions that many people overlook when assessing the "wage gap." Finally, increased education will not solve anything. According to statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment and pay of men and women with similar education varies little compared to the total population averages. When comparing the amount of men and women with high school degrees or less employed in similar jobs, the ratios when compared to the national population are within 6 and for higher education it gets even closer with the difference being within 2 or 3. To conclude, the "gender wage gap" is less of a wage gap and more of an earning gap.

In the end, comparing the statistics of earnings can be difficult as such things like job preferences, willingness to ask for raises and task preferences within similar jobs must be accounted for. Overall, men are indeed paid more than women, but not without just cause. Men are more likely to do jobs with higher risk, lower comfort, and to ask for pay raises. The "wage gap" can't be blamed on sexism because the "wage gap" is not caused by it. Take some risks in life, it could lead to a higher pay.

Another Teenager Who Can't Vote Telling You about Pot

More and More states are legalizing Marijuana should the federal government make it official?

By: Elise Nitz

Marijuana has been used legally for millennia, in fact, for almost all of human history people have been smoking marijuana without consequences. Many early civilizations grew marijuana for numerous different reasons. Some of the first evidence of pot use dates back to Asia around 500 BC. In the colonial U.S. marijuana was grown as hemp for use in textiles and rope in fact, Virginia, Massachusetts and Connecticut required that farmers grow hemp.

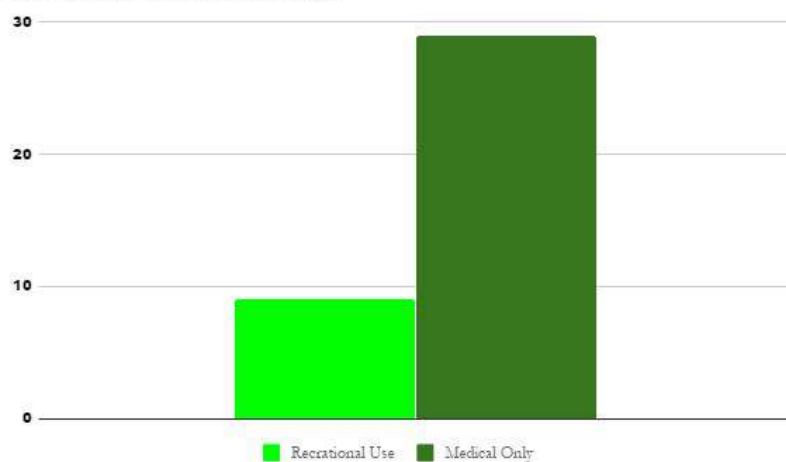
Weed has been used by medical professionals to treat a large range of ailments for large amounts of time as well. In the eighteen thirties an Irish doctor used it to help subdue nausea and vomiting in cholera patients, ancient Chinese Emperor Fu Hsi recorded it being used as medicine in 2900 B.C., according to ProCon.org. Recently in the United States the FDA has approved drugs with THC to lessen nausea in cancer patients and lack of appetite in individuals with AIDS. The latest fad in the medical profession involving weed is the treatment of PTSD for veterans, though not many studies have proven that it is helpful. While studies concerning PTSD continue, plenty of people believe that pot may be the answer to the current opioid epidemic.

Opioid withdrawal is a tortuous process. Receptors in the brain are so used to the opiates that they send signals of pain when they don't have the opiates, even if there is no reason for the person to be in pain. Sufferers experience extreme pains throughout their body as well as nausea and other symptoms. The introduction of marijuana to the body during such detox phases

provides relief from nausea and pain, two things the addict is experiencing severely.

In addition to helping the sufferers of opioid addiction by relieving their pain and nausea, marijuana is being looked at by a handful of pharmaceutical companies as an alternative to opioids. According to American Scientific, studies have shown that states which are pro-marijuana report lower numbers of death due to opioids. If manufacturers can find an alternative to opioids they would save countless lives, and marijuana is a great place to start looking. According to the CDC, opioids caused more than 33,000 deaths in 2015. Imagine if all of those people had been using a drug made from weed, they wouldn't have gotten addicted to opioids and most if not all of them would still be alive.

States in Which Marijuana is Legal



Opioid substitutes only scratch the surface of the medicinal possibilities weed has to offer. One of the main ingredients in cannabis is Cannabidiol or CBD. While the other main ingredient, Tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, gets users high, CBD has no psychoactive effects, and has shown positive effects on body systems that may affect seizures, suggesting that CBD may help reduce the risk of seizures in people with epilepsy. While some studies have been conducted successfully, researchers have run into road block

due to the fact that marijuana is illegal which makes one wonder why it's illegal even though it can help millions of people in more ways than we know.

There are copious benefits to legalizing pot nationally that very few people think about. If the national government legalizes weed they can then tax dealers and growers. According to a 2012 article from Huffington Post, legalizing weed will save the government \$7.7 billion annually due to the fact that the current prohibitions on it will no longer have to be enforced. The same article states that legalization of the plant would bring in \$6 billion in taxes. This totals to about \$13 billion dollars the government could have. If we legalized pot and allowed the government to tax it, we could potentially lower taxes elsewhere, which no one would complain about. Economist Stephen Easton estimates that if weed were legal the plant would bring in \$45 to \$100 billion each year. That's a lot of money!

Lots people like to complain that there are not enough jobs available currently; if pot was legalized lots more jobs would open up. Jobs as guards, growers, trimmers, distributors, and countless more. According to The Washington Post in 2015, the cannabis industry brought more than 18,000 new jobs to Colorado alone. If the cannabis industry created this many new jobs in every state that would be a total of 900,000 new jobs nationwide. That may not seem like an abundance of new jobs for a country of millions, but don't forget about all the people that will benefit; growers need space to keep plants, which they often find by renting houses or even storage units. Growers must buy soil, pots, fertilizer, and sophisticated lights to keep their plants healthy and happy. Humidity and temperature stabilizers and monitors are needed, shears and steaks must be purchased to care for the plants. Shipping and packing methods must be bought to get the

product to consumers, employees must be paid and everyone in between.

Numerous people and organizations claim that marijuana is a gateway drug, or a drug that leads people to do other 'harder', more addictive drugs. It is time to put that rumor to rest because that is exactly what it is, a rumor. The National Institution of Drug Abuse has declared that marijuana is not a gateway drug.



Even though marijuana could be beneficial in a multitude of different fields and literally save lives, it is considered a schedule 1 drug and therefore, illegal. Stop and think for a minute, drugs that can't save lives, and infact take lives are legal but a drug that is capable of saving lives is not even allowed to be used to study. Does that make any sense to you?

Free the Grass!

Legalization of Marijuana

Drew Barterian, 3rd Hour

Cannabis, mary jane, ganja, or simply weed is a drug that is most commonly known by people with the name of Marijuana. A naturally growing plant on this earth and happens to be illegal in most states. The legalization of marijuana has been considered as one of the controversial issue that is prevailing all over the globe. In United States, a lot of debate keeps focusing on the issue whether Marijuana should be legalized or not. The history provides evidence that the drug remained in use as medicine for many years in a number of countries all over the world. Furthermore, many states in the U.S. have legalized medical use of the drug but have yet to legalized it as a whole. Marijuana should be legalized because of all the social, medical, and economical advantages it brings if used properly.



Marijuana is a natural substance, like tobacco. In fact, the Chinese have used Cannabis throughout history, the earliest evidence being that of the attributed to Chinese emperor, Shennung (2,800 BCE). According to John Bachlor, written in the scriptures is a vast explanation of the use of plants and herbs regarding medicine and great detail was written about the preparation and purpose of marijuana. The Chinese used every part of the plant for healing purposes. The 2010 Congressional

Research Service report for Congress provided evidence that marijuana is beneficial to health and possesses significant medicinal value. The report mentioned that in certain States in the U.S. marijuana was proven to have a positive effect on patients with chronic illnesses. It was stated that the drug was and has been used to treat Cancer, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, sclerosis and glaucoma. The proponents of medical marijuana determined its therapeutic value in relieving varieties disease-related illnesses such as nausea, spasm, muscle spasticity, chronic pain and anxiety. Ultimately, the use of ganja recreationally would be harmless and acceptable.

Colorado was the first state to fully legalize weed both recreationally and medically and their whole economy has thus benefited greatly off of the change. As stated by Jeffrey Roberts, the whole legalization has been nothing but positive progress for the state. According to Uniform Crime Reporting data for Denver, the crime rate has seen a 10.1% decrease. Roberts adds that in the first four months, the state gained ten million dollars and has continued. It has created over 10,000 jobs. Also the Colorado government estimates a gain of 12-40 million dollars when marijuana-related crimes are removed. The economy is content and the states continues to thrive because of its choice to legalize weed.

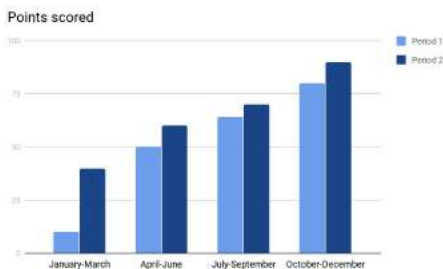
The main problem with the population and their views on marijuana is that most people's perception about it is only locked down to the negative distortions on health implication or concentration impairment. What those people fail to comprehend is that, in fact, cannabis is a potential drug that offers more beneficial effects than negative. Marijuana has been labeled as a gateway drug, that simply is not

true. According to Seth Millstein, people often confuse weed as a gateway drug because it can be associated with alcohol or tobacco; when in reality, alcohol and tobacco are the gateways themselves to more dangerous, possibly lethal, substances. Millstein also adds that members of society treat mary jane as an addictive substance. Addiction is a broad term that can be associated to several things. Tobacco for example is also addictive, yet it is legal. In addition, the percentage of people being addicted to marijuana is a lot less than those of tobacco and alcohol. Research has indicated that only 9% of marijuana users become addicted while 32% of tobacco smokers and 15% of alcohol drinkers actually become addicted. Therefore, the odds of a person being addicted to marijuana is lower than the legal substances. Furthermore, people say “You shouldn’t legalize this horrific drug! It’s BAD for you!” So are cheeseburgers, cake, candy, donuts, etc; so should we ban those as well? It may also be true that unregulated marijuana can potentially be dangerous because anyone supplying it is able to put whatever they like into it. With the drug regulated, the product will only be natural

hemp, can be used beneficially in the economy. With the the legalization of marijuana, manufacturers would be able to create more eco-friendly materials of the public to take advantage of. Hemp can produce products such as clothing, construction materials, paper, biofuel, plastic composites. Also, hemp oil has been used for treating cancer. When talking about the clothing industry, if marijuana becomes a nationwide legal substance, we could be talking about a huge shift in our nation’s economy. According to Joe Martino, when compared to cotton, about half as much water is needed when it’s produced. Aside from cotton, hemp doesn’t require pesticides to keep it growing, it’s all natural. Also, the material over time will continue to soften and not wear out like cotton will do.

In a nutshell, marijuana is only illegal because the lawmakers misunderstand marijuana and its beneficial properties are neglected in favor of the negative perception. There are several things that the government has to see clearly to realize that marijuana is not so different from the legalized alcohol and tobacco. Fighting marijuana only creates tension in the economy. There is more in marijuana than what common people think. The cost of fighting it could actually mean billions of dollars in federal savings. That legalizing the market for marijuana means billions of dollars in additional tax revenues. Ultimately, marijuana is not just about health risks because it has significant properties that could be the key to the medical mysteries that scientist are still in pursuit for answers. The public is becoming more open to the idea of legalization and so should the government, otherwise the problem of fighting marijuana would remain a problem with a never ending search for resolution.

Not only is marijuana able to be used as a recreational activity, but its other form,



Cultivated retail plants percentage (out of 250,000)

Pray the Gay Away?

Is conversion therapy the correct way to go about handling LGBT children and teens?

By: Zach Young

In recent years, the growth of controversy between religion and the LGBT community has become rather intense. Put yourself in this situation: You're sitting with your family and tell them you're gay, and they all give you a blank stare, say "it's okay," and continue along, but later finding out you are being sent to a church to have you converted back to "normal". How would that make you feel as opposed to being shamed, shunned, or denounced from the family altogether? Now think about the same scenario except, "I'm straight," no reactions because it's normal and always has been. If it were the same in both situations, life would be simpler, but due to many factors it isn't. Acceptance is the main issue in today's world and being different from everyone else, especially in sexual preference, it becomes much worse.



Recently, conversion therapy has been a large topic, as a new weekly line of protests

have started in the downriver area of Michigan. If you're unaware, conversion therapy is the process in which churches hold camps that parents sign children up for, and over the course of these camps pastors and other church volunteers teach that being gay/bi/etc. is sinful and being that way goes against the teachings of god. But that they will still be "accepted" in society if the process is unsuccessful and as a tactic to get into the children's heads. This spark in the city of Southgate, has stemmed a movement from the state of Michigan to different portions of the country. This movement started here because the pastor of a families church attempted to "pray the gay" from a couple's daughter. The protests that followed the event have thus been peaceful and aired on newscasts with interviews from some of the many people that attended. While it is obvious that everyone has opinions on different matters, using religion as a crutch against another belief is flat out incorrect and indecent.

Some people believe that since someone isn't straight that they are of a different breed and consider them inhuman "a sinister form of perversion," stated Billy Graham. While it is supposedly stated in the bible, that it is "wrong" that philosophy is incorrect, as there are references to same-sex behaviors in many places in the text. But, this being said even with the belief that the bible says it's wrong, doesn't give anyone the right to force change upon an adolescent. This leads to many teens regretting their decisions and themselves, sometimes leading to them committing suicide, like a young girl did after being shamed and

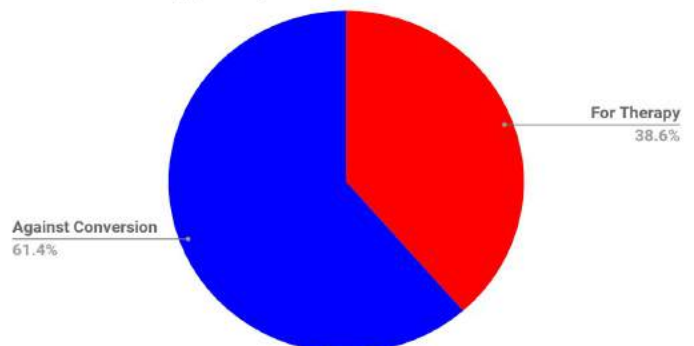
forced into conversion therapy. Thus followed the response from now former President Obama, "We share your concern about its potentially devastating effects on the lives of transgender as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer youth," the statement, written by Valerie Jarrett, a senior adviser to Mr. Obama, says. "As part of our dedication to protecting America's youth, this administration supports efforts to ban the use of conversion therapy for minors," this makes for the people forcing conversion in the wrong as it is not their choice in the matter. Obama and the administrator are simply saying that in the effort change the upcoming generations, they are in fact destroying what would be the change in the world.

But, the point the church is making is that there are some that are being influenced by those around them to change or do things that may not be what they completely agree with, and are using this as a form of choice. This puts them in a good position to make their own decisions as the churches are promoting choice in the change in some cases. This being said, for many younger children being put into these "programs", are unaware of what is going on due to the sheer fact of their age and obliviousness. As a result, society has conditioned people to think that being different is wrong and that it is shameful, while this may be true in some cases, being yourself isn't wrong. It's perfect. Society has gone to great lengths to change how people are through judgement and hate. More recently old forms of comprehension have resurfaced and brought back largely frowned upon ideas. But, the

idea of trying to conform everyone to societal norms isn't a terrible idea, since everyone would be generally the same when it came to thinking and sexual agenda; however that situation is almost impossible to achieve. Recently, the rise of LGBT community has surpassed, bring along an age of color and freedom.

Everyday, more and more children and adults come out to friends, family, etc. and it seems like it may be no big deal but it is tremendous. For someone to hide from who they really are for a great portion of their life is hard and to finally be rid of the awful weight on their shoulders makes it even better. As someone who represents the LGBT community and has friends that also represent, it seems very offensive to attempt and pursue children and teens to change who they are do to sheer disagreement belief . The people know that this is going on and those who are afraid don't speak up in fear of judgement from friends or family members. The LGBT movement is made to help those in search of help and relation, not to sway and oppose the beliefs of those who do follow societal norms. Everyone just needs to work together for acceptance and situations like these will have no reason to arise.

Conversion Therapy Survey



Conversion Therapy; Legal Torture Conversion Therapy Causes More Harm Than Good

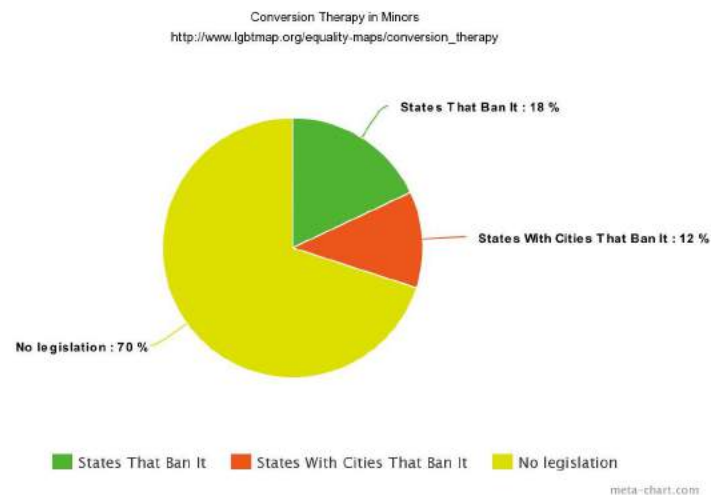
By Dyllan Portnoy

Being a member of the LGBT+ community is hard enough as it is. With a “president” whose views are conflicting at best, a “vice president” who openly opposes LGBT+ rights, and peers who are less than accepting, people who identify with the LGBT+ community can struggle fitting in. One place you should feel free from the pressures of society should be your home, but for some people, even that is unattainable. For those with numinous guardians, coming out is easier said than done. Many religious families resort to sending their children to conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is abusive and it causes more harm than benefits. Conversion therapy is degrading, it can ruin relationships, and demolish lives.

Conversion therapy, sometimes called reparative therapy, originated in the early 20th Century, and multiple procedures have been tested, including castrations, beatings, lobotomies, bladder washing, hypnosis, and most notoriously, electroshock therapy, none of which have a high success rate, Moira Donegan explains in “The Abominable Legacy of Gay-Conversion Therapy”. Recent procedures to “convert” people in the LGBT+ community include “inducing nausea, vomiting, or paralysis while showing the patient homoerotic images; providing electric shocks; having the individual snap an elastic band around the

wrist when aroused by same-sex erotic images or thoughts; using shame to create aversion to same-sex attractions... and, but not limited to, satiation therapy,” according to the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Non-profit groups are allowed to expose minors to reparative therapy legally because there is very little regulation regarding it.

Conversion therapy allows for state-licensed therapists to inflict physical and mental anguish upon minors. Minors do not have a say on whether or not they will



attend conversion therapy. According to LGBTMap.org, in 41 states, a minor’s guardian can force them into conversion therapy, since only 9 states, and Washington D.C. have legislation that bans conversion therapy of minors. Of those 41 states, 6 states have multiple cities that have legislation banning conversion therapy in minors. Conversion therapy has devastating effects on those exposed to it, yet there is minimal regulation concerning it. Since there is no federal law regarding reparative therapy, organizations and facilities who focus on conducting reparative therapies are

allowed to run rampant. Without regulation, organizations, like the National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) and Exodus, can conduct virtually any form of conversion therapy, with no input from the government.

Instead of turning a blind eye to organizations like both Exodus and NARTH, the government should crack down on them. Congress should ban all forms of conversion therapy for all unconsenting minors and regulate all forms of conversion therapy for consenting adults and pass a law that protects minors from being subjected to conversion therapy. Even if Congress does crack down on conversion therapy, it would most likely continue under the table, like the drug market. In response, Congress should create a law against practicing conversion therapy. Practicing conversion therapy should be punished by a minimum of a two year jail sentence in addition to paying restitution to the minor affected because of the damage and mental anguish conversion therapy causes to those subjected to it.

Adolescents who come out to their religious parents often are forced into conversion therapy to turn them heterosexual. Conversion therapy is mentally damaging to those subjected to it. Erik Eckholm, author of "Gay 'Conversion Therapy' Faces Test in Courts" states, "The American Psychiatric Association warns that conversion therapies can lead to depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior--and notes that therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self-hatred already experienced by the patient." Reparative therapy scars those

subjected to it for years, due to the vicious methods utilized by those who conduct them. In lieu of helping someone overcome actual mental illnesses, the only job conversion therapy serves is to traumatize people of the LGBT+ community. Survivors of conversion therapy recount how they struggle pursuing relationships because the messages from their 'treatment'.

Homophobic messages, like, "gay people don't really exist," which is one of NARTH's mission statement, or, more commonly, "being gay is a sin," have been permanently ingrained in the minds of victims of reparative therapy. Conversion therapy does not work, it only torments people in the LGBT community further. Conversion therapy causes higher risks of mental illnesses in victims because of the disturbing and humiliating ways they were treated during conversion therapy. In addition to causing mental illnesses, survivors of conversion therapy often blame their parents or legal guardians for forcing them to participate in programs that try to destroy a part of who they are.

Conversion therapy creates feelings of resentment in the receiver, as well as leads to an increased chance of self-destructive and harmful behavior. "Young adults who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence were more than eight times more likely to report having attempted suicide, more than five times more likely to report high levels of depression, more than three times more likely to use illegal drugs, and more than three times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse



compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection,” Sam Brinton, a survivor of conversion therapy and the author of “Tortured in Gay Conversion Therapy” states. People turn to self-destructive habits--like doing drugs and having unprotected sex--as means of coping with traumatic events. Conversion therapy only causes mental illnesses and opens a gateway to self destructive habits, yet people still believe that conversion therapy works.

Many organizations, like NARTH and Exodus, who conduct conversion therapy, claim that conversion therapy can cure people of homosexuality, which is wrong. In order to cure someone, they need to have a disease. Homosexuality was removed from the DSM-II--a list of mental disorders recognized by the American Psychiatric Association--in 1973, and "sexual orientation disturbance", which alluded to homosexuality, was removed in 1987, according to Neel Burton, M.D., who authored the article “When Homosexuality Stopped Being a Mental Disorder”. The only reason homosexuality was considered a mental illness was because of how closely related the norm and religion were related. Homosexuality is not a disease. Exodus was formed because three doctors disagreed with the American Psychiatric Association on their decision to remove homosexuality

from the DSM-II, and no credible medical or psychological institutions recognize homosexuality--or other genders or sexualities that fall on the LGBT+ spectrum--as mental illnesses, according to the Palm Beach County Human Rights Council.

Conversion therapy is humiliating, ineffective, and abusive. In a world with so much hate, it is important to come together and support each other. It is hard to be involved with the LGBT+ community, but the one place everyone should feel safe in, is in their own home. It is 2018, people should stop torturing each other and start accepting others for who they are because someone’s sexuality will not matter when everyone is dead. Religious parents should work on understanding the viewpoint of their child who identifies with the LGBT+ community instead of sending them straight to conversion therapy. In addition to parents being more accepting, states need to have more legislation in place with regard to conversion therapy. Spread love, not hate.



Gay Adoption

Should Gays, Lesbians or Transgender people be allowed to adopt children?

By: Laura Korff

Adopting a child is one of the biggest decisions that many couples make. Does it really matter if the couple is gay or straight? There are around 500,000 children in foster care in the United States and of them at least 100,000 need forever homes each year. As shown by this data, there are many orphans in the United States, but a great solution for this issue is to allow gay adoptions, yet gays only make up 4 percent of the adoption community. Recent bans in Alabama, South Dakota and Texas are preventing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT), parents from adopting and fostering children. Gay adoption should be legal because of the great impact that the LGBT community can have on the rising population of orphans in the United States.

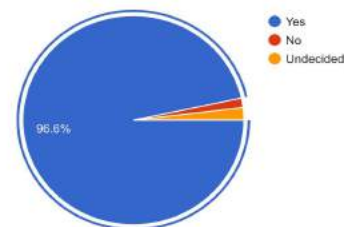
One major argument for the ban on gay adoption is the possible negative effects on the mental health of the children. A study taken at the University of Melbourne and published by the Boston Medical Center of Public Health proves that this is a myth. The study involved a large investigation of 500 children who were 18 and under and had same-sex parents. Researchers found that children with LGBT parents had the same amount of self-esteem and family time as those with heterosexual parents. Additionally, researchers found that children of same-sex couples had a healthier and stronger family unit. On the other spectrum many people are worried about the fact that children coming from LGBT families will experience more bullying and teasing throughout their childhood. This is true, however, children from same-sex homes are more likely to be impacted by bullying than

another child. Every child experiences bullying at some point in their life. This issue isn't isolated only in LGBT homes, there is no way to control this problem.

Another main issue is the shortage of adoptive and foster parents in the United States. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, there is an estimated 500,000 children in foster care nationally and 100,00 of them need to be adopted, but last year there were only qualified adoptive parents for 20,000 of them. Many children become victims of the “foster care shuffle” which is when they are moved from temporary home to temporary home. Most children stuck in permanent foster care have been through at least 20 homes by the time they are 18. This causes increased emotional and behavioral issues, delinquency, substance abuse and academic problems in kids. This number could be greatly decreased if the ban on LGBT adoptions was lifted. Being an eligible parent of an adoptive foster child should not be based on sexual orientation, it should be greatly based off of how stable, devoted and the able to provide a loving home the couple is. I surveyed 412 people, and these are the results:

In your opinion, should Gay Adoption be allowed?

412 responses



Based off this outcome, a considerable amount of people believe that sexual orientation does not matter when it comes to adoption. If a same-sex couple can provide a

loving home for an orphan child then here should be no ban against it.

Furthermore, an argument against gay adoption is that gays and lesbians don't have stable relationships and are not able to be good parents. Like heterosexual couples, homosexual couples are in stable and committed relationships. Every couple has problems. Evidence from the American Psychological Association states that, "not a single study has found that children of gay or lesbian parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents... home environments provided by gay and lesbian parents are as likely as those provided by heterosexual parents to support and enable children's psychological growth." This indicates that gays and lesbians should be evaluated just like any other adoptive applicants.



Moreover, Arthur Dobrin a professor at Hofstra University, states that the main opposition to gay adoption is that children are entitled to parents of the opposite sex. The argument claims that since children are conceived by a man and a woman than they are entitled to a mother and father figure in their life. I can see both sides of this statement. Gays are not able to provide the "normal" lifestyle for a child. Children will not be able to experience the two figures in their life within a LGBT family. Some children may be impacted by this but there are many other ways to fill those roles within a "non-traditional" lifestyle. We all have aunts, uncles, cousins, and close family friends who can fulfill that role through being around for a child. The other side of

the argument is that some children have a parent who is a single mom or dad, should they be allowed to adopt even though they don't have a mother and father figure for the child? Legally a single parent is allowed to adopt in the USA. This is a double standard, saying that homosexuals can not give a loving and stable family structure for a child but a single parent can? It doesn't matter the lifestyle that you live, whether you are gay, straight or single, no child should be left without a home when there are plenty of qualified parents waiting to give them one..

People with opposing views of gay adoption argue that children who are raised in a LGBT households are more likely to become homosexuals or transgenders than those who have been raised in a heterosexual family. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "The gender identity of preadolescent children raised by lesbian mothers has been found consistently to be in line with their biological gender. None of 500 children studied have shown evidence of gender identity confusion or wished to be another gender." This evidence shows us that there is no harm to a child placed in a homosexual home, and that there is no reason for a ban against LGBT adoptions..

All in all, there is plenty of evidence supporting the claim that gays and lesbians should be allowed to adopt children to decrease the amount of children without permanent homes. Many major points should rule out a ban against gays among them are the impact the LGBT community can have on the orphan population, the ability to provide a stable and loving family for a child, the difference in gender roles, and the effect that gay adoption has on a child's mental well being and gender identity. In conclusion, there should be no ban on gay adoptions. Love is love.

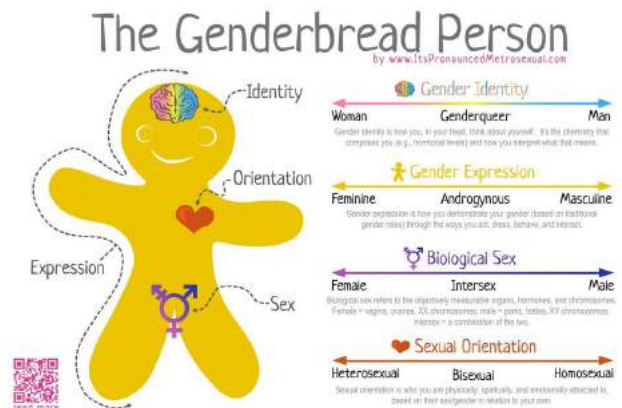
WE'RE HERE. WE'RE QUEER. GET OVER IT.
100% real. 100% queer. 100% human.
The case for disposing of the gender binary.
By: Olivia Melville

Of all the classic opposites, there are a few that stand out. Good versus evil: the eternal struggle. Black and white like an old-time film. Sweet against salty, chocolate or vanilla, and, the deal-breaking question, whether or not all of our favorites deserved better. But the most famous juxtaposition? Female or male. We know the story; we hear it, all the time. *This is female. This is male. There is no in between.* It's familiar, and sickening. Why, exactly, does everything come in pairs? And why has gender become a rigid box of expectations that only encompasses two options? The concept of a gender binary alienates and completely ignores entire segments of populations who do not conform to society's strict, antiquated ideas of gender; insisting upon the use of one, out of both malice and puerility, leads to abhorrent treatment of those who identify as genderqueer, and wretched results when a binary is enforced. In order to reduce the misery and tragedy our current gender binary leavens, it needs to be abolished.

The discussion of disposing with the gender binary is neither as new nor as clear-cut as its opponents make it out to be. Instead, it is simply misunderstood, and the main misconception in many people's minds is the disconnect when faced with the fact that gender and sex are not synonymous. Sex is the "the sum of the structural... characteristics of organisms that are involved in reproduction",+ as described by Merriam-Webster, and gender, as defined by the World Health Organization, "refers to the socially constructed characteristics" that people choose to conform to. Those do not refer in any case to the same thing; both are ideas, but one is a scientific classification based upon genetics, and the other is a social construct. The argument to dispose of the gender binary, thus, revolves around changing societal attitudes and stereotypes

of what gender constitutes of- not what's between someone's legs.

Rather than describing gender as a linear model, it is far more accurate to describe gender as a spectrum, which allows for greater diversity and exploration of three different components that roughly make up what we know as gender: gender identity, gender expression, and gender socialization. The most integral part of someone's gender is their gender identity, which is how they view their own self. This often influences how they outwardly express themselves, which is rightly known as gender expression, and how they act in social situations, known as gender socialization. As such, adopting a system of organization for gender that is nonbinary makes sense, because gender itself is nonbinary and held within a person's mind.



Of course, the fight against nonbinarism relies mostly upon the idea that a person's sex is the determining factor in their gender, not their mind, and since sex is binary, gender must also be; but even that "clear-cut" category of two is a little fuzzy. Nature is not always perfect, and it provides many examples of people who do not fit into expected roles of "female" or "male" due to genetic mutations, disorders, or mishaps. As explained by Dr. William Reiner of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, the line between XX and XY begins to blur with disorders known as DSDs, or disorders of sex development.

Scientists, while not absolutely certain of the cause, believe that DSDs result

most often because of one of several things: either over- or undervirilization of a child with 46 XX or 46 XY, respectively, among other mutations on the sex chromosomes such as sex chromosome mosaicism; congenital adrenal hyperplasia; and/or an insensitivity to androgens or hormones (as stated by the University of Michigan's Michigan Medicine Hospital). The overvirilization of a child with 46 XX creates the appearance of ambiguous genitalia and phenotypic traits of XY individuals with varying severity, and the undervirilization of a child with 46 XY forms anything from typical XX external to ambiguous genitalia and degrees of phenotypic XX traits in 46 XY individuals, much as an insensitivity to androgens or hormones in both 46 XX and 46 XY can cause atypical characteristics or genitalia in the same manner. Sex chromosome mosaicism can also cause similar results, but it results from having partial copies of sex chromosomes in some cells of the body and complete copies in the rest. The final presumed cause of DSDs, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, interferes specifically with the production of one of three steroid hormones: cortisol, mineralocorticoids, or androgens. The imbalance of hormones can cause several symptoms, ranging from ambiguous genitalia, facial hair, excessive body hair, and deepening of the voice in XX individuals to rapid growth and severe illnesses relating to a lack of cortisol and/or aldosterone.

These irregularities in genetic makeup and chemicals may seem like unnecessary complexities in a tangent of the argument of gender, but for many who believe in a gender binary, their basis for reasoning is the existence of a sexual binary. All of the disorders previously mentioned create characteristics not found within the expectations of a binary, and via science, prove that at the very least, a third sex medically termed intersex has to exist, completely refuting the claim of two sexes

within humans. Clearly, there is something more complex than a simple yes/no, male/female paradigm present, and scientists have openly admitted that they are still learning about the intricacies of our biology—so why should we aver the static boundaries of a divergent concept we have created inside of our heads, let alone limit it, especially when one considers the fact that scientists are also still studying the depths of how gender is created and perceived by individuals' selves? *But that's a genetic fluke*, the critics and nonbelievers cry. Fine, then. If science does not persuade you: history, enter the stage and proceed to prove them wrong.

Many people believe that nonbinary and genderqueer individuals are part of a passing fad, a trend in recent years that is just waiting to go out of style. Try again. As far back as recorded history can prove, cultures have had concepts and names for individuals who broke the gender binary. According to a PBS map created by Independent Lens about the history of nonbinary gender systems, in the Pacific, there are Aboriginal sistergirls and brotherboys, Maori whakawahine and whakatane, Samoan fa'afafine, and Hawaiian mahu; in Asia, there are the waria of Indonesia, Thai kathoey, acault from Myanmar, Filipino bakla, Siberian chukchi, Nepalese metis, the hijra and aravani of Southeastern Asia, xanith from Oman, and the Bugi people who recognize three sexes and five genders; in Africa there are the sekrata of Madagascar, Kenyan and Tanzanian mashoga, ashtime of the Maale, and mino from what is now Benin; in Europe, there are Turkish köçek along with Albanian burrnesha and the femminiello of Italy, and in the Americas, gender variance is represented through the Travesti, Inca quariwarmi, guevedoces of the Dominican Republic, muxe in Mexico, Mohave alyha and hwame, Zuni lhamana, Navajo nadleehi and dilbaa, Lakota winkte and the ninauposkitzipxpe from Canada.

Each of these beautiful cultures hold their own idea of who their third gender is, does, and means. All are different from each other, and all are, incontrovertibly, nonbinary. Some are healers; some are blessed; some are scorned; some live in fear and silence, but around the world, gender variance is the link between cultures. Irrefutably, it is not existence that is the new trend, but rather the visibility. In recent years, LGBTQIAA+ people and issues have gained a spotlight in the mainstream that, while not nearly large or powerful enough to solve all of the challenges and discrimination they face, creates exposure and a platform for those who do not conform in all aspects to finally be heard. This small flame in a world of darkness is not, however, enough.

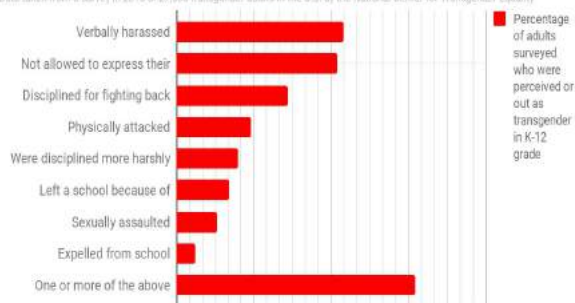
Despite scientific and historical evidence to the contrary, the majority of society still insists upon conformation to a gender binary. While not only close-minded, the force-feeding of binary culture and media can have disastrous effects on the psyche and overall health of individuals who identify within the gender spectrum. By not acknowledging their existence, it marginalizes them as a community and denies them any form of rights or dignity in the eyes of the law, and in the eyes of bigots. Violation of trans and gender nonconforming individuals is disturbingly high, and violent hate crime homicides towards LGBTQIAA+ communities totaled 77 deaths in 2016, as recorded by the NCAVP- 21 of whom were transgender or gender nonconforming individuals.

Physical attacks are still not even half as common as the subtle harassment and battery genderqueer individuals face every single day. The ignorance to someone's gender and assumption of a gender binary can break someone far more cruelly than a physical attack, and individuals who face this discrimination are often more at risk for serious mental health problems, including gender dysphoria and depression. The most serious, and most tragic effect of this, is suicide. 41% of transgender and gender nonconforming individuals reported having attempted suicide in an NTDS survey in 2014; the number of people who have succeeded, unknowable. This incredibly high suicide risk is directly linked to "minority stress", which stems from the cultural and social prejudice attached to minority sexual orientation and gender identity", as found by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The blame for the suffering and desperation of genderqueer individuals should be completely placed upon the society that makes it acceptable for them to be degraded and invalidated on the deepest possible personal level. How can we continue to murder them by refusing to believe in something that it should not be a choice to believe in?

In the end, gender is, and will always be, a concept. You cannot kill an idea, or hide it away; the only way out is through. To abolish the gender binary, we must, as a society and as individuals, change our perceptions. It begins with the smallest step, easy but often overlooked: respect the pronouns and identities of people, gender variant or not. Because no matter what you believe, how you perceive, or what you try to argue, humans are humans. These individuals are here. They are queer. And you need to get over it.

Experiences of transgender adults in 2015*

*Data taken from a survey in 2015 of 27,000 transgender adults in the U.S. by the National Center for Transgender Equality



LGBT Adoption:

The Answer to the Adoption Crisis

By Andrea Fredriksen

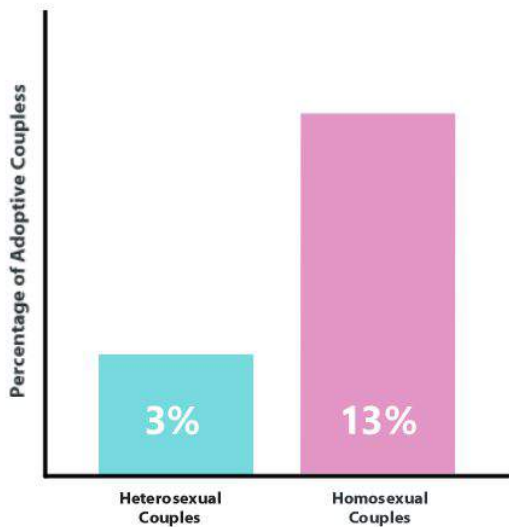


In the summer of 2015, same-sex marriage was finally established in all 50 states after the long battle for LGBT equality. Although this was a victory for the LGBT community, they still face numerous barriers of discrimination that inhibit them from living a life free of inequity. Currently, gay couples still face discrimination in adoption centers across the country due these facilities often being based heavily on Christian religious values. In most instances, adoption agencies turn down same-sex couples early in the adoption process, usually right after they find out the couple is homosexual. This bias is a critical issue because there is a scarcity of eligible parents to adopt children in foster care, the adoption discrimination violates Constitutional rights, and many of the negative beliefs regarding LGBT parents are false. To be in the best interest of the children in need, adoption agencies should not have the right to reject couples based solely on their religious criteria.

In the U.S., there is an epidemic of vast amounts of children living in foster care that need to be adopted. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU),

over 500,000 children are in foster care nationally, and last year there were only 20,000 qualified adoptive parents to take in these children. Children have to wait years, living in foster care, until eligible parents eventually come around to adopt them. State foster care does not always offer the best living conditions for their children; in fact, ACLU has stated that the foster care system in Arkansas does such a poor job of taking care of their children that it has been placed under supervision by the courts. Most foster care systems are not insufficient to this extent, but most children who are in foster care still face emotional insecurity and are even likely to be diagnosed with PTSD. Mary Lee, a former foster care child, explained how children face this emotional trauma because they are placed in temporary homes that often change within months and they are forced to adapt each time around. Furthermore, she described how children who were taken from abusive or neglectful families, only to be placed with a new family every few months, tended to build up walls to protect themselves from further feeling hurt and rejection. Not only is the severely uneven ratio of children in need of adoption to qualified adoptive parents a critical issue on its own, but due to this problem, each year over 20,000 of these children age out of the system as well. This means that over 20,000 children enter adulthood each year while they were still in foster care and have to face life without ever having a real family or the support of a family. Without this support, these young adults are left with a higher risk of failing high school, being involved with crime, unemployment, and homelessness. The need for more eligible adoptive parents is more crucial now than ever, and the LGBT community is full of untapped potential to help give loving homes to children who need it.

Even though there is a shortage of eligible adoptive parents, many LGBT couples are finding it increasingly difficult to seek out an adoption agency that finds them suitable enough to adopt children. This is due to many adoption agencies, who are often based in Christianity, enforcing their religious values that are prejudiced against gay couples. Despite the blatant need for more families willing to adopt, these agencies more often than not will refuse to let a gay couple adopt solely on the basis of their sexuality. They completely disregard the actual ability of the couple to be suitable parents.



Gay couples are even more likely to adopt than straight couples. According to the 2010 Census, same-sex couples are 4 times more likely to adopt children than opposite-sex couples; while only 3% of heterosexual couples adopt children, 13% of homosexuals adopt children. This percentage has the potential to grow immensely if homosexual couples could be treated the same as heterosexual couples. Couples Kristy and Dana Dumont and Erin and Rebecca

Busk-Sutton have experienced this discrimination first hand. The Dumont's explained how they were moved upon seeing children in foster care and felt that they could provide a child with care and a loving home. However, when they contacted a state-contracted agency, they were turned down as the representative explained that they did not work with same-sex couples. The couple contacted a different agency and received the same rejection. The Busk-Sutton's experienced similar treatment. The ACLU stated that in numerous states, such as Michigan, Texas, Arkansas, and South Dakota, these agencies have been publicly funded by the state by tax dollars and have still been able to discriminate against LGBT couples. According to Rev. Stan Sloan, the Chief Executive Officer on the Family Equality Council, in 2017, Texas signed HB 3859 into law, which permitted publicly funded adoption agencies to bar gay couples from adopting on the basis of "any sincerely-held religious belief or moral conviction." In the same year, South Dakota passed a similar law which also gave child-placement agencies the ability to discriminate against LGBT couples. The sponsor of this bill, Sen. Alan Solano, even co-wrote it with Catholic Social Services, a religious adoption agency that is severely anti-homosexuality. These laws that have been enacted are unconstitutional; they violate the First Amendment's Establishment Clause, which prevents the government from enforcing any sort of religion in publicly funded agencies and companies, such as state foster care in this instance. These laws also violate the Equal Protection Clause, which protects all citizens, including LGBT citizens, from discrimination. Therefore, not only are these agencies illegally enforcing their religious prejudices on the LGBT

community, but also due to this discrimination, many children are barred from being adopted into loving families and must unjustly remain in foster care.

There are many misconceptions about gay couples about how they raise children; many of these ideas are rooted in religious beliefs, but not all of them. Many religious people feel that children raised by same-sex couples are growing up in immoral households. One's judgement of morality is subjective, however, many of the same religious people feel that parents who are not religious or parents who drink are also immoral. Factors such as these do not disqualify couples from being eligible to adopt, despite being seen as immoral to many religious people. Due to morality having such subjective qualities, even regarding like-minded people, it should not be considered when assessing a couple. A couple should be judged based on their ability to create a safe and loving home for a child, not a fickle concept that ranges so widely between individuals.

Non-religious people often believe that children of gay parents will be subject to bullying. But, according to ACLU and other studies, it has been concluded that more often than not, children will be bullied anyways, and usually not because of their parents. Children are most often bullied due to weight issues, anxiety or other social issues, clothing choices, or their wealth. It is true that teens and young adults who are LGBT are also subject to bullying, but contrary to popular belief, the sexuality of a parent has no impact on the sexuality of their child, as plenty of LGBT children are raised by straight parents. Children of LGBT parents have no greater or less chance of being bullied than a child of heterosexual parents.

One of the most notable reasons why, often religious, people feel that same-sex couples wouldn't be good parents is because they feel that children have the right to both a mother and father, and that they need one of each to have as role models. However, studies by the ACLU have concluded that children create role models out of numerous people, not just their parents. Yes, parents are crucial role models, but children also get their role models from other family members, teachers, and friends. Furthermore, gender has less to do with a role model than their character. Children do not need to have both a mother and a father to grow up with adequate role models as children look up to many different people besides their parents.

State funded adoption agencies should not have the right to reject couples based on their religious prejudices. Adoption agencies should have the children's best interest in mind, not their religious agenda. Half a million children are in foster care in the U.S., not nearly enough couples are even eligible to adopt them, gay couples are unconstitutionally barred from adopting children, and numerous conceptions of gay parents are false. If same-sex parents were accepted by these adoption agencies, as they should be legally, then the pool of adoptive parents would increase tremendously and help lessen the huge amount of children in foster care. Gay parents should be judged whether they are fit to raise children just as every other heterosexual couple is; there should be no religious criteria that keeps them from adopting children. Although same-sex marriage was legalized in 2015, homosexual couples still face discrimination. However, adoption discrimination is yet another battle that the LGBT community will eventually come out as victorious in.

Vaccines

How to Save the World, One Shot at a Time

By: *Jessica Beaudoin*

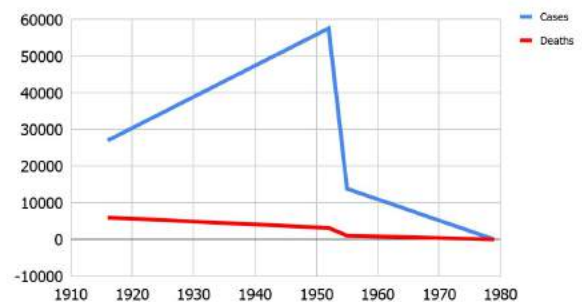
According to The Immunization Partnership, vaccines save an average of forty-two thousand lives every year in the United States alone. That is three times more than child restraints and seat belts combined. Parents are always adamant on confirming that their children are always wearing their seat belts, so why don't all parents ensure that their children receive vaccinations on the schedule they're supposed to? Staying on a timetable with receiving vaccinations starting at birth is a crucial part of keeping children healthy. There is no question that the ingredients used in vaccines are completely safe. They can also save thousands of dollars and lives.

First off, what is a vaccine? A vaccine is an implant of a substance, like a disease agent or antigen, to build up immunity in the body. However, it would be assumed that injecting someone with a disease would be dangerous. But, all vaccines that are available to the public have to be approved by major medical organizations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that vaccines are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and they are tested extensively by scientists in order to protect the idea that they are effective and safe. Vaccines are the best defense we have against diseases because it injects a small, safe amount of the virus, allowing the body to slowly develop an immunity to it. By inoculating diseases into the bloodstream of a patient, it grants the body access to be acclimated with the disease, allowing the body to create antibodies to know how to fight off the possibility of a much larger dose of the disease that the body could come in contact with. This would result in more

people being affected less by a disease. By having a declining number of cases and problems with a disease, eventually, the virus would no longer be able to harm anyone because it would be nonexistent. Major medical organizations are just the beginning of what vaccines can do to help the world. They are the introduction to saving thousands of lives.

Another reason why vaccines are important to society, is that they save lives. With citizens getting vaccinated, it significantly decreases the recurrence of the disease itself. Not only do vaccines lower the number of cases with incurable diseases, in some cases they can completely exterminate viruses from an entire population. According to ProCon, poliomyelitis (commonly known as polio) is a virus that attacks the body's nervous system, and in some cases can cause paralysis, but thankfully, it is nonexistent in the United States and has been since 1979. The largest polio epidemic in the history of the United States happened in 1952, with almost sixty thousand cases reported. Also shown in the graph, 1979 was the first year reported when the polio virus was eradicated

Cases and Deaths of Polio in US



Data from ProCon, Polio Cases, Deaths, and Vaccination Rates.

from the U.S. Polio is not the only virus that vaccines have aided. Smallpox has also been exterminated in the United States. There are

many vaccinations for many life threatening diseases. There is no question that all vaccines available to the public have helped decrease the existence of diseases. By having a population work together by all getting immunized, diseases can be prevented thus saving lives.

Not only can vaccines save lives, they can also save money. This is a huge deal for parents who are questioning vaccinating their children because expenses are always an issue. Comparing the costs of getting vaccines on schedule, and the costs of hospitalization from an untreated disease. According to Berkeley Wellness, being hospitalized with an infection from haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib), resulting in meningitis can cost at least \$43,000. The Center of Disease Control and Prevention suggests to receive four doses of the HiB vaccination from birth until around fifteen months of age. Depending on the brand of the vaccination, the Center of Disease Control's price for one dose of an HiB shot ranges anywhere from \$9.46-\$12.79. Using the most expensive price, the hospital bill mentioned previously is over 800x the price. With the \$43,000 for the hospital bill, you could purchase and vaccinate eight hundred people, four times each. That could decrease the chance of the HiB virus infecting eight hundred people. Comparing the prices of a hospital bill and average vaccination costs, it is obvious that vaccines are the money saver and can overall help people in everyday life, people who need to spend money on other things.



There has been lots of discussion about how vaccinations are linked to ASD, or Autism Spectrum Disorder. History of Vaccines explains in an article titled, “Do Vaccines Cause Autism?” about how this argument initially came about. In 1995, a gastroenterologist, Andrew Wakefield further studied a possible link between the MMR (mumps, measles, rubella) vaccine and bowel disease by speculating that a vaccine virus caused bowel disease and autism in patients. In 1998, Wakefield and twelve other doctors co-authored a study on linking ASD with the MMR vaccination. However, in 2004, Dr. Richard Horton claimed that Wakefield's work was “fatally flawed.” eventually all of the authors retracted their work in the study linking ASD with the MMR vaccination. In following years, the study was proved falsified because it was discovered that Wakefield tampered with the research he collected. When this study was introduced to the public, most that heard the shocking news believed it. Without regard to researching other studies that additionally proved the point, this was the major study done on links between vaccinations and autism. All evidence in the work was proved to be incorrect in the end, therefore there is no link between autism and vaccinations.

Vaccines are a critical part of ensuring the safety and good health of a population. They create a safer atmosphere for people to live in. Vaccines can help people economically with only spending a fraction of the money, with better results in the end. It makes complete sense to prevent a large event that can have horrible consequences. Keeping up with vaccinations definitely saves lives, can make it easier on the household by paying only a small fraction of a hospital bill, and eradicating horrible diseases.

Vital Vaccinations

Parents need to vaccinate their children for the good of everyone.

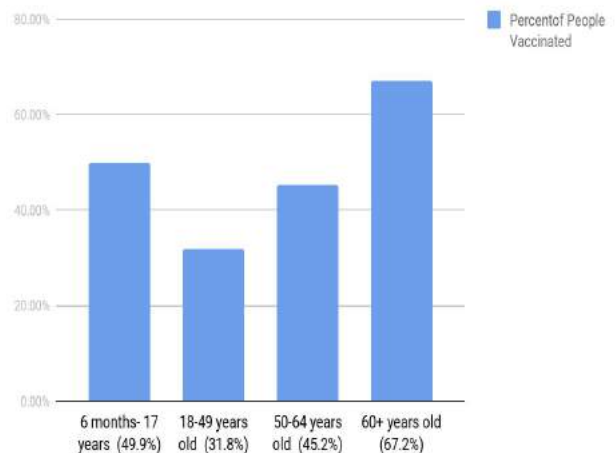
By: Christianna Benson

Innocent elementary school children go to school each day coughing, sneezing, and spreading deadly diseases like wildfire on light switches, desks, playground equipment. Children in the 21st century world should not have to suffer from 19th and early 20th century diseases that can be easily prevented through a vaccination. Vaccines are touted as one of the most successful advances of modern medicine, yet an increasing number of parents choose not to vaccinate their children because of rare possible side effects. Vaccinations need to be required among all children to protect them, as well as their communities, from exceedingly preventable illnesses and diseases.

Vaccinations can save a child's life. According to The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children, have been eliminated completely and others are close to extinction— primarily due to safe and effective vaccines." An example of the great impact that vaccines can have, is the elimination of polio in the United States. Polio was once America's most feared disease, causing death and paralysis across the country, but today, thanks to vaccinations, there are no reports of polio in the United States. Because of advances in vaccines, children can be protected against more diseases than ever before. It would be foolish of a parent to sacrifice their child's life by not immunizing them. Vaccine's are the best defense a child can have from these deadly diseases.

A vaccination protects more than just the person receiving the immunization. According to the Economic Evaluation of the 7-Vaccine Routine Childhood Immunization Schedule in the United States, "If a critical number of people within a community are vaccinated against a particular illness, the entire group becomes less likely to get the disease. On the other hand, if too many people in a community do not get vaccinations, diseases can reappear." Preventing a child from being vaccinated is selfish. Imagine if everyone stopped immunization, there would be serious and deadly ramifications around the world. The extermination of these deadly diseases comes with everyone doing their part and receiving the vaccination. An example of this is the influenza vaccination. The statistics below, provided by CDC's website, show the percent of people that received the influenza vaccination in 2017.

Percent of People with Flu Vaccination in 2017



As shown, three out of four of the age groups less than half of the people received an immunization, and in result, 4,605 people died of the flu in 2017 alone. People that refuse immunization aren't just jeopardizing themselves, but the general public as well. Immunizations protect the one vaccinated, along with those around them.

Vaccinations are safe and effective.

According to Vaccines.org, before a vaccine is recommended for use, it's tested in labs, which takes several years. FDA uses the information from these tests to decide whether to test the vaccine with people. It is very clear that the benefits of vaccines outweigh any potential risks. A study by John Hopkins University, states that, "The effectiveness of vaccines routinely used in the U.S. varies, but for most vaccines, 80-99% of vaccinated people are protected." It is far safer to immunize a child from a disease that could kill them, than to not. Vaccines go through years of testing to be ensured safe and effective to the public.

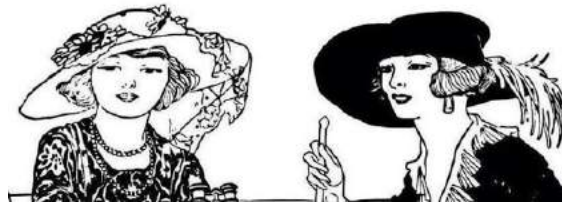
Vaccinating can protect future generations. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations ago. For example, the smallpox vaccination eradicated that disease worldwide. Your children don't have to get smallpox shots anymore because the disease no longer exists." This disease no longer exists because after a serious outbreak in the United States, almost every American decided to get immunized because they never wanted to see the damage that the disease could cause again. Many practicing physicians today have never seen a case of the measles, due to the developing science and life saving technology- vaccines. The world no longer sees some 19th and early 20th century diseases because of vaccinations. People today can do their part to combat these diseases by vaccinating children to ensure future generations are protected as well.

Some people may believe that due to potential health risks associated with vaccinations, parents should be permitted to opt out of vaccinating their children. They believe that it is part of a "patient's treatment

refusal rights" to opt out of taking a vaccine. According to The Healthy Home Economist, "Vaccinated children are more chronically ill than unvaccinated children with rates of ear infections, ADHD, asthma and allergies as much as 30% higher than unvaxed children." However, this point is invalid because had a child not received these vaccines, and was diagnosed with mumps, measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, etc., the effects of these plaguing diseases are far worse than an antibiotic treated ear infection. CDC's website refutes these statements by saying the symptoms are usually not correlated and that any type of vaccination that poses a threat to other potential health risks is not recommended for use by healthcare providers. By refusing immunization to a disease, people are not only refusing the treatment and immunity to themselves, but they jeopardize everyone around them.

"I hate the term anti-vax.
It's so negative."

"How about pro-disease."



In an effort to protect children and the public from incredibly preventable diseases, vaccinations need to be required. Vaccinations are safe, effective, save children's lives, protect entire communities, and protect future generations. Now imagine, a healthy classroom of vaccinated children, that never have to see the horrors of deadly diseases- just because their parents decided to vaccinate them. These vaccines have the potential to make the world a healthier place and should be taken advantage of by citizens who have the opportunity to spread good health.

Man's Fur-Ever Friend

No other animal can compete with man's best friend.

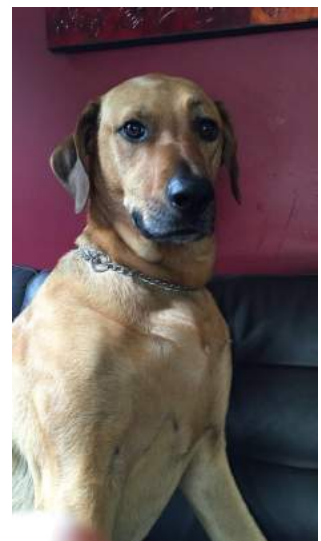
By: Allyson Stabler

Imagine coming through the door after a hard day, there stands a four legged animal with a wagging tail and big eyes looking up at you. It wastes no time to run up to you and give you all the love it has in its body. If you are not familiar with this situation this is what it is like owning a dog. No matter who you are, where you live, or what you do, there is a dog out there for you. There are so many benefits that come along with being a dog owner, including helping your physical, emotional, and mental health. Big, tiny, or anywhere in between dogs are truly one of the best animals you can own.

Dogs are a great way to improve your physical health. According to Purina.co.uk owning a dog can help lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol levels as well. This is important because these two factors can decrease a person's chances of having a heart attack. If a person with a furry canine pal does end up having a heart attack they are more likely to survive and their recovery rate is often better, as Animal Planet's, Sarah Mccandless, states in her article "Top 5 Health Benefits of Owning a Pet". Thinking about just how much animals can impact your health in a positive way is tremendous. There are a lot of people who tend to think that dogs are not good for families, and they will either give kids allergies, or hurt kids. What these people fail to realize is the fact that having a pet in the house may lower a child's chances of developing an allergy to animals by 33%. Pediatrician James E. Gern has conducted many studies to prove this, and

his research has also shown that children who have animals also tend to develop stronger immune systems overall. Although this is not true for adults with these allergies, there are medicines designed to help with the reaction of cuddling up next to a precious pooch. According to the article "The Many Ways Kids Benefit from Having a Dog", having a dog is very beneficial for kids. Kids who have a dog in their life can be improved cognitively, and emotionally. The cognitive aspect comes into play when kids talk, or even babble, to their pets. This little action impacts their development in a positive way. Kids may also be affected by their animal emotionally. Research has found that when kids read to an dog the stress they experience is decreased. As long as families do their research and find a dog that is best suited for them, having a kids around should not be a problem.

Dogs not only benefit you physically, they can also help you emotionally. Taking your pup on a walk frequently not only decreases your chances of developing obesity, but also helps get you socialized, according to Mccandless. When owners take their dogs to the park or to training, or even to a outdoor cafe they automatically see that they have something in common, their love for dogs. Everybody who owns a tail-wagger has at least one or two unforgettable stories that make for great ice breakers when talking to others. There are so many who truly have a love for animals, which can keep us all connected. Even if you are not an



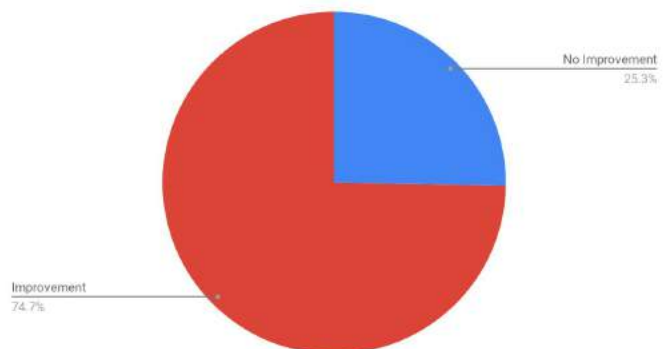
extroverted person, and you do not care about socializing with other people, dogs can still help you emotionally. In an article written by the American Kennel Society readers can see that just playing with your precious pup can increase the serotonin and dopamine levels in your body, this will then boost your mood and make you feel happy. Such a simple act can have a tremendous impact on your overall emotional health. As seen in the article “Why Dogs Make Good Pets” the unconditional love they give dogs can help provide a sense of emotional wellbeing and fight off feelings of loneliness. In a dog’s eye everybody, especially their owners, are perfect. Even if you are having a terrible day and the whole universe seems to be against you, your dog will be there waiting and wagging its tail just because you are with them. Petting a dog lowers cortisol levels in the body, cortisol is a hormone that is linked to stress. By petting your dog you are not only helping your own wellbeing, but you are also showing them the love and attention they crave. The big debate of this topic is that cats are better than dogs, while cats do possess some of the same benefits, dogs are still better. This is because cats tend to be more independent than dogs, most of the time cats just do their own thing, and pay no attention to anyone else. Most dogs however, love to put the spotlight on their owners.

Owning an animal can also benefit mental health. Having a pup around you can give a boost to your sense of purpose in life, according to Mccandless, because without you they really can’t do a whole lot, they need you for in order to perform the many activities that they love. Without a person around your furry little pal would not be able to take walks, or play with the ball that

they adore. As found in “Why Dogs Make Good Pets”, if people have suffered a trauma having a tail-wagger in their life can benefit them recover from their troubles. The graph below shows that 74% of people who own animals have seen improvement in their mental health, as seen in the article “How Pets Help Manage Depression”. Just being with your pal can relieve stress, which is why they make such great therapy animals. Having a dog in life is also important for those with mental health issues because they help in recovery. There is always the concern people have about money. Of course owning a dog is somewhat expensive, according to The Spruce it costs anywhere between \$115 to \$350 a month for all of the basic necessities like vet visits, food, and toys, but for all of the unconditional love they give it is so worth it. Your furry friend will spend its whole life trying to do anything in its power to please you and make sure you know you are loved, and that is truly worth more than money can buy.

They do not just hand out the title, “Man’s Best Friend” to any animal. Owning a dog is such a great experience. There is so much you can gain from owning a pooch. They can benefit you in numerous ways. Whether it is your physical health, mental health, or even your emotional health, your pup will make you better no matter what the circumstances are. They will always be there for you on your worst and best days and will stand by your side.

Affects Animals Have on Mental Health



Home on the Open Range
*The Modern-Day Struggle of the Wild,
Wild, West*
By: Lydia Wilson



“Make healthy choices-” we hear this constantly throughout our society. Some choices you make might be to eat fruits and vegetables. Another thing you might do is eat meat from grass-fed animals, rather than typical grain-fed ones. But, how much better are these meats? Sure, the quality of meat is partly determined by what it is fed, but it is equally important to understand the farm environment and the controversial laws that enable some cattle, horses, sheep, and goats to be “grass-fed.” Open range laws endanger life and property, and fail to hold ranchers accountable for their livestock.

Typical fence laws require the property owner to control their assets, and will be held responsible for any damage caused by their animals, but open range laws are quite different. Rusty Rumley, from the University of Arkansas stated, “Open range laws reverse the duty to fence in livestock, and allow livestock to roam in certain remote parts of the state while requiring other landowners to fence off their land if they wish to keep livestock off of their property.” This means that if a family would like to keep their garden or pond to themselves, they must fence in their property to keep animals from

destroying their possessions. The rancher is not at fault for any damage caused by their livestock. In one case from Idaho, the landowner was immune from liability in a wrongful death action when a motorcyclist collided with a loose calf along the roadway in an “open range” district and was killed. The family did sue the calf’s owner, but the court could not rule in their favor because of the owner’s rights, which were commonly exercised by many farmers in that area. Many public roads have fences to protect motorists from these tragic accidents. Fences are very expensive to put in, as well as maintain. This is an unnecessary expense that could be corrected by altering open range laws and place the liability on the livestock owners, rather than the people who do not want cows eating their grass and goats eating their lawn chairs in the first place.

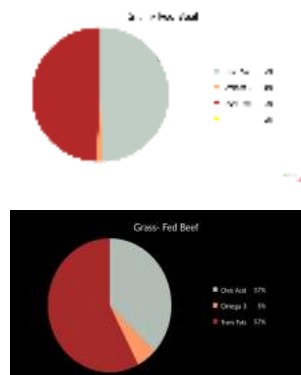
Most eastern states require owners to fence in or herd their livestock. These are known as herding districts, which means ranchers must keep their animals on their own property, and place all liabilities on the owner of the animal. By doing this, neighbors save money because they no longer have to put in fences to keep out the wildlife. Counties do not have to worry about the constant repair of fencing around public highways. “Some states require ranchers to use lights and signals to warn drivers of livestock on the road but others require the driver to pay attention,” said Marissa Ames, a

rancher. Be careful, because even states that require animals to be contained give cattle drivers the right to do their job without being held responsible for any accidents that occur on the roadway. Herding districts protect livestock from wildlife and motorists, and protect motorists from wandering livestock.

However, the laws that result from herding districts cause much controversy because of animal rights activists, who argue that animals kept in confined spaces have a lower quality of life and meat. Not only that, the land itself becomes depleted faster, leaving cows and horses with little to no nutrients. Farmers then have to feed their cattle grain, which is commonly misconceived as being unhealthy for consumers. Willis Lamm, another rancher, strongly believes “If ranges were left undeveloped, unfenced and un-intruded upon by man, these free-roaming populations would return to their self regulating symbiotic relationship with the land. Mother nature would apply its age old formula of keeping everything in balance.” These open range activists believe that human intervention only harms the earth and disrupts the natural relationship between the animals and plants (grazing patterns). This is where open range laws impact our society’s food chain. Studies done by Texas A&M University prove that ground beef from grass-fed cattle naturally contains more omega-3 fatty acids than from grain-fed cattle (three times as much), but is higher in saturated and trans fat. Grain-fed cattle may contain less of the healthy acids, but with

that, they also have significantly less unhealthy fats, and more oleic acids (monounsaturated, which is healthy).

Contention to open range laws is a significant component in the devolution of ranching. In the new swell of homesteading today, people do not want to wait for anything, especially reeking cattle that take up the road. They do not want to fence in their properties, and they are quick to blame the ranchers for damage. This cultural divide broadens the further people’s understanding strays from the old “normal.” Ranchers are the last of the original homesteaders, their lineage lives on the land their great grandparents claimed before the territories became states. Modern times are pushing them out of the business because they feel their rights are being compromised. Lack of cooperation and willingness to work within the established system create legal troubles and a fight to change open range laws. Open range laws are no longer accepted in this rapidly evolving nation because they cause only strife among farming communities and threaten the safety of the fellow man.



Do Endangered Species Just Not Take Good Enough Pictures?

The Wrongs of Trophy Hunting

Written by: Emma Linton



There are many ways to look at trophy hunting. Its given definition is, “trophy hunting is the selective hunting of wild game for human recreational purposes.” Meaning that one of the world's average, everyday person will take a trip to Africa with the sole purpose of wanting to spend a day hunting big game, just so they can say that they did. That is probably the most common thought when trophy hunting is involved. However, trophy hunting isn’t just killing big game for fun. Some people go out and kill wild animals so that they can stuff them and hang them on a wall. Others kill big game so they can sell the body parts for profit. It doesn’t matter if trophy hunting is done in a humane fashion. That, in no way, makes it right.

Not only is killing an innocent animal morally wrong, but big game trophy hunting is one of the major wildlife conservation setbacks. The fact that most trophy hunters hold auctions and pay to kill a selected animal has shed light on the issue that there

is more money going towards trophy hunting auctions than wildlife conservation causes that fight for the protection of our worlds beloved, beautiful, exotic creatures. As stated on africanskyhunting.co.za, there are several different fees that must be paid in order to hunt big game in Africa. There are daily rates that differ with the number of hunters that accompany the professional. There are trophy fees, which are the prices that must be paid in order to kill a certain animal in a certain country. For example, as of 2017, it costs 38,000 dollars to kill an elephant in South Africa. In addition to the trophy fees and daily price rates, there are prices for the number of guns taken on the expedition, a price if the hunt wishes to be videotaped, and a price for observers or those coming to watch, but not participate in, the hunt. As utexas.edu states, African sport hunting generates approximately \$200 million annually since 2014. According to annualreport.nwf.org, in the year 2015, the National Wildlife Federation's revenue totaled to \$73 million. \$73 million is only 36.5% of \$200 million. That is less than half of what hunting big game makes each year. Sport/ trophy hunting makes 63.5% more money each year than what is raised to protect said animals. There are more people spending money to kill an animal than save that animal. This clearly proves that trophy hunting is a major reason wildlife conservatives aren’t as successful as they could be.

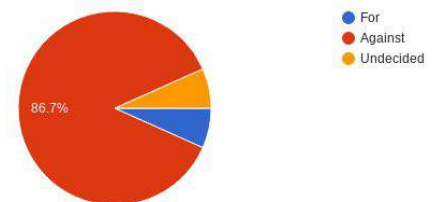
Some people may argue that trophy hunting is beneficial for the conservation of African animals because it is thought to prevent the

problem of overpopulation. Unfortunately for those in favor of trophy hunting, the paragraph above proves one of the two recent statements to be false. The paragraph above gives specific evidence that sport hunting is falsely thought to be beneficial to the conservation of African wildlife. Also, while many people will themselves to believe that recreational hunting isn't wearing away at the population of countless African animals and that they are doing more to help the wildlife by continuing their sport than not, it isn't true. Every time a man (or woman), decides to spend money on the opportunity to kill an animal and follows through with what they have paid for, animals will continue to become endangered and have population decreases. In 2017, cnn.com said that in the last twenty years the number of lions in Africa has halved because of trophy hunting. In just one decade, more than 7,245 African rhinos have been lost to sport hunting. According to nationalgeographic.com, there has been a 60% drop in the African elephant population since 2009. With the number of animals becoming endangered and the amount at which wildlife population are decreasing, overpopulation will never be a problem. If anything, under population of wildlife on earth is the problem. No matter what people may think, hunting recreationally is wrong on so many levels.

In the pie chart above, it shows the approximate percentages, out of 61 people, in Livonia, Michigan, who are for, against, and undecided on a stance for trophy hunting in Africa.

86.7% of the people surveyed voted against trophy hunting. 6.7% voted for it and another 6.7% voted saying they were undecided on a stance. Most of the people surveyed were against such a form of hunting which is how it should be. Trophy hunting is not beneficial to conservatives, overpopulation issues or for the animals themselves.

What is your stance on trophy hunting?
60 responses



Trophy hunting is morally and statistically wrong even if it is done with possible good intentions. These African animals don't deserve to be hunted just so they can be stuffed and shoved in a room that is already crammed with other animals. Nor should they be a symbol of dominance or superiority for those who hunt them. They shouldn't be killed so that their body parts can be sold for profit. Earth has been blessed with these magnificent creatures and people feel the need to go and kill them like they didn't have a life at all. Is the ability to visit these animals and see their majesty in their natural environment not enough? Can people not appreciate the gift of life and admiring from a distance? Life comes in all shapes and sizes, as humans and as animals. A life of a human should be just as valuable as the life of an animal.

The Case Against Net Neutrality

Net Neutrality for the best of everyone

By Bradley Thomas

The United States Of America, a symbol of freedom, democracy, progress, and the latest in technological advancements. For a long time since the 1940's, America has symbolized in all of these traits but since 2015 has fallen behind in one of these traits. America has fallen behind in technological advancements, especially in advancements of the internet and infrastructure for the internet. This can be attributed to two words, Net Neutrality. Net Neutrality posed, and continues to pose, a serious problem to the development of new technology and expansion for internet providers and the internet as a whole.

Before any argument can be made, it is important to understand how Net Neutrality came into being and its immediate effects. Up until 2015, Internet providers improved and expanded their networks and infrastructure for their companies. They could have charged any price, but typically kept their prices low because they had competition. At the start of the internet, technology hadn't really developed too much so when YouTube rolled around and online streaming, the infrastructure almost couldn't afford it as a video takes up a lot of bandwidth to watch. As a result the internet provider's servers were being used ten times more than what they normally were being designed for. This caused a spike in maintenance costs and led to bandwidth developments such as 3G, 4G, and LTE for customers. Internet providers still had to make up for the spike in maintenance costs and rather than raise their prices for customers they started charging the websites

such as YouTube and Netflix for using their network. Eventually this resulted in Netflix or YouTube not being able to pay the internet providers enough for their maintenance cost and as a result, the internet providers "throttled" their sites. In 2015 the Federal Communications Commission enacted Net Neutrality to stop this.

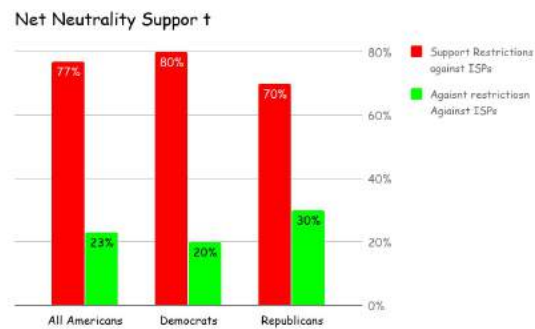


Net Neutrality changed the whole game for internet providers. What Net Neutrality did was make the internet "a 2015 FCC order regulating the modern internet as a "Title II" service in the same manner as the telephone monopoly of the 1930s" says Brian Paul in "Net Neutrality Is Important, but Regulating Internet As Utility Is Too High a Price," from August 2017. The immediate effect crushed internet providers income. While it also made bandwidth available at a very low price for consumers it also immediately increased the amount of usage already on the internet provider's Networks because more people could access the network. Since Net Neutrality caused all prices to be made the same, internet Providers had to cut development of new technology and for some companies that still wasn't enough. Ajit Pai saw this and wrote an article entitled, "Why I'm trying to change How the FCC Regulates the Internet," "Because of Title II regulation, fewer Americans have high-speed broadband access, fewer Americans are

working to build next-generation networks, and fewer Americans have competitive choice than would have been the case had the FCC not gone down the Title II path,” in August 2017. For the larger companies such as Verizon, AT&T, and Sprint they were typically better off and didn’t need to shut down servers due to costs because they have a large reserve, while smaller Internet providers don’t. Again Ajit Pai wrote that, “Among our nation's 12 largest Internet service providers, domestic broadband capital expenditures decreased by 5.6%, or \$3.6 billion, between 2014 and 2016, the first two years of the Title II era,” in his article. For the smaller companies that provided internet it was a fatal blow as they couldn’t afford it. “One group of 22 small ISPs confirmed this in a letter to the FCC in April stating that Title II, "affected their ability to obtain financing" and "slowed, if not halted, the development and deployment of innovative new offerings which would benefit our customers,” as said by Paul Brian in his article. This led to them selling their servers to the bigger companies to make the last profits they were going to make. Thomas G. Dolan wrote in may 2017, entitled “Net Neutrality Is Anything But,” “Supporters of net neutrality regulation say that only the government can prevent internet service providers from offering content or services at different prices. But it's far from clear that (multi-tiered) pricing is a bad idea. Finding customers who will pay more for better service is properly known as "progress"”. This is unacceptable for America and should be prevented. Had Net Neutrality not been repealed it would have led to a large monopoly down the line which is the very thing Net Neutrality was enacted to prevent.

When Net Neutrality was repealed in late 2017 it was not about to make the internet terrible as so many people mistakenly

believe,



it was about letting the internet progress again. Support for Net Neutrality has become a large topic since it had been alienated by Ajit Pai in some controversial videos. These videos had clearly alienated a large portion of the populace to come into support of Net Neutrality and did not at all work in his favor. What many people fail to consider is the fact that Net Neutrality has only been around since 2015 and as a result of this, those in support of Net Neutrality believe that Net Neutrality has always been apart of the internet and that the internet would be utterly destroyed without Net Neutrality. These assumptions are completely untrue as Net Neutrality has been around for nearly two years and was largely a mistake for the internet.

Had Net Neutrality not been repealed, the internet could have spiraled down into an abyss that would not represent American Values of progress. Those in line with Net Neutrality have a fatal flaw in that they do not believe in the progress of our nation and instead wish to hinder it behind the face of ignorance. Had people learned about the internet before and after Net Neutrality, as well as its effects, the populace might not be so large against it. When people allow ignorance and apathy to judge their lives, it will not only ruin our American symbols of progress and technological advancement. It will also spread and destroy our value of freedom and democracy.

Privacy Rights

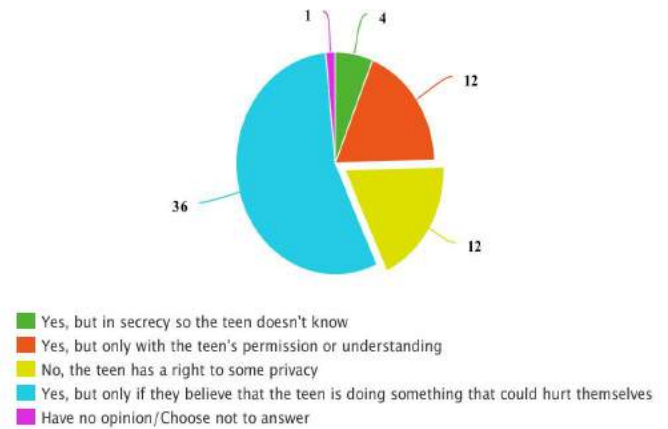
Is monitoring your teen's internet activity detrimental to their growth as an individual?

By Ashley Carneseccchi

Imagine yourself as a teenager. One with a normal life, many friends, and trustworthy parents. Then, imagine your reaction when your parents tell you that they are going to be monitoring your every move on the internet. To most, the internet is just another meeting place for friends to talk and share ideas. To teens, having their parents watch their internet activity is like keeping a GPS on them that alerts their parents whenever they make a move. It feels like their parents don't trust them, which in turn makes them not want to trust their parents. To parents, they're just making sure their child is being "safe." But what does that entail? Because these teens feel their privacy is being stripped, they no longer want to share information with their parents, of even minimal things, in fear of them overreacting. It is wrong for a parent to monitor their teen's online activity when privacy and trust is what adolescents need most to grow.

I collected information from a specific survey to see what the general public's view on internet monitoring of a child. 55.4% of respondents agreed that monitoring a child's internet activity is acceptable only if the parent believes that their child or teen is doing something or being exposed to something that could hurt them or others. The next closest opinion was a tie for 18.5%. The first group of respondents believe that a teen's internet access should not be monitored under any circumstances, and the other group believe that they should be monitored only if given permission from the teen or child.

Do you believe that parents should monitor their child or teenager's activity online?
Data collected by Ashley Carneseccchi



meta-chart.com

Only very few people believed it to be okay to monitor their child's activity without their permission. Out of 65 people that surveyed, the majority of them believed that regular monitoring was not acceptable.

Kirsten Weir of the popular research and reporting website, The Pocket explained that, "There's a fine line between protection and obsession." She continued to explain that the time of an adolescent is when they begin to become an individual and pull away from their parents' ideas and thoughts. She illustrated that kids begin asking for privacy, and that is their first step to their own individuality and adulthood. Many parents find the adolescent stage in their children the easiest time to spy on them, especially with easy spyware apps like mSpy and MamaBear that can be installed on their children's phones that gives phone call information, shows text messages, reports the sites they're on, and even keeps snapchat just for the parent's peace of mind.

This amount of monitoring, or spying, is easily classified as obsession. "An adolescent's main job is to individuate, to move away from being controlled by the

parent. One very clear way to do that is in their demand for private space,” Conveys Sandra Petronio, a professor of communication studies and director of the Communication Privacy Management Center at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis. Sandra claims that giving kids their space when they begin to grow is of the utmost importance, because without space, will they not only lose trust, but also never grow any individuality. Children who know they are constantly being spied on will never take any risks- which is what a parent wants- but not what is needed for the child to grow into a healthy adult. Without allowing the child to develop this type of independence, there will be bumps and problems every time from then on when the child takes another leap into individuality- like being able to drive, getting a car, moving to college, getting their first apartment and dealing with their own finances. These big steps in a child’s life will need to be slowly introduced to them with their parent, because of a dependency problem they developed when their parents would spy on their phone. Not every case will be this dramatic, but there have been people with dependency problems due to lack of trust with them and their parents on a strong level in their adolescent years.

Though many would say what they don’t know won’t hurt them, they could just as easily find out about their parents spying on their phones as the parents could find hidden information about them. Finding out about a parent spying is almost worse than already knowing a parent monitors your phone. The child will feel betrayed and not trusted when they find out they’ve been spied on for an unknown amount of time. This will make them believe that their parents do not trust them, and in turn help them trust their

parents much less. Since adolescents demand privacy in that stage of their life, it is not odd for them to explore ideas of themselves and others. A New York Times reporter named Nick Wingfield expressed his opinion on privacy matters for children. “If you’re doing it for verification purposes instead of safety and convenience, then maybe you need to rethink why you’re using it,” he explained, referring to monitoring people’s whereabouts and online activity. Most parents are uneasy during this stage in their kid’s life, but it is overall better to let the child know you will be there for them and won’t be mad if they have something to confess, over telling them you will be watching what happens on their phone, not because you don’t trust them, but because of what could happen. Most adolescents believe in this stage of their life that they can control everything, so they believe they can prevent any problem from arising on their phones, so this lecture would just feel like a breach of trust to them.



When it comes to establishing healthy boundaries, psychologists say, good communication trumps snooping, and kids who choose to share more with their parents tend to be better adjusted. It is better to be trustworthy with your children rather than undependable. Adolescents need their

Stay Out of My Safe Space:

The problem with PC Culture

By: Matteo Stanchina

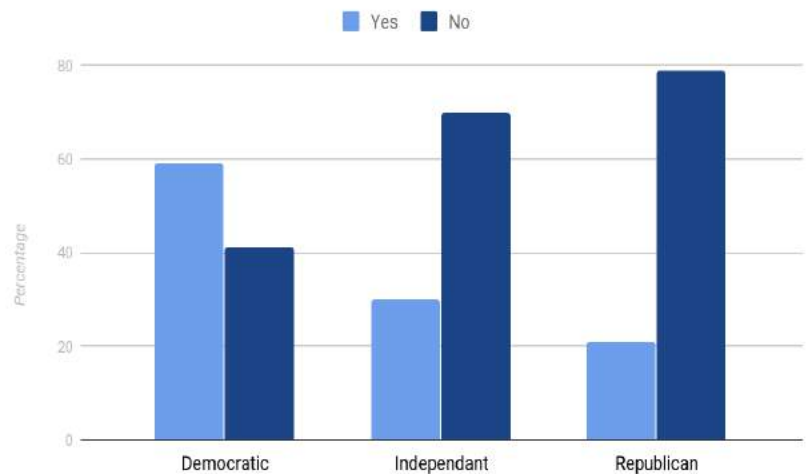
Political Correctness, (abbreviated as PC for the rest of the article) the avoidance, often considered as taken to extremes, of forms of expression or action that are perceived to exclude, marginalize, or insult groups of people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against. The idea behind PC is one that many can support, but some of the extremes that members of PC culture go to make it seem more occult than originally intended. As the severity of PC culture increases, there is a very important question that needs to be asked, with the creation and adoption of certain words, and the common and hypocritical idea that everyone's opinion matters is there such a thing as too much political correctness?



With the current modernization of PC culture came the creation of different vocabulary in order to reflect that modernization. Words such as triggered, safe space, and microaggression entered the lexicon and with the creation of these words

came the over saturation of these words. The word trigger went from something a person who has experienced significant psychological trauma/ and or abuse in the past can suffer from, to any action can cause someone to become triggered, and even people who have not experienced deep psychological trauma can now define themselves as “triggered”. The oversaturation of these words has led the words to become less effective and meaningful.

Political Correctness: Should We Change The Way We Talk To Be More Sensitive?



A common idea behind the mindset of political culture is that everyone's opinion matters and is valued in any conversation, yet any controversial idea that even remotely conflicts with the message that is trying to be said is immediately considered to be null. An example of this is that before Halloween in 2015, the college of Yale sent out a mass email to all of its students setting limits on

what is okay to be dressed as during halloween. A lecturer named Erika Christakis replied to the email saying that it is okay for students to be controversial with your halloween costume. The response to this reply was that of outrage and inconsideration. Students wanted both Mrs.Christakis and her husband to be removed from the school environment. Mrs.Christakis and her husband were screamed at, attacked, and shamed at their workplace by students. In the face of hateful personal attacks like that, Nicholas Christakis listened and gave restrained, civil responses. He later magnanimously tweeted, “No one, especially no students exercising right to speech, should be judged just on basis of short video clip.” (He is right.) And he invited students who still disagreed with him, and with his wife, to continue the conversation at a brunch to be hosted in their campus home. In “The Coddling of the American Mind,” Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt argued that too many college students engage in “catastrophizing,” which is to say, turning common events into nightmarish trials or claiming that easily bearable events are too awful to bear. After citing examples, they concluded, “smart people do, in fact, overreact to innocuous speech, make mountains out of molehills, and seek punishment for anyone whose words make anyone else feel uncomfortable.” What Yale students did next vividly illustrates that phenomenon. According to *The Washington Post*, “several students in Silliman said they cannot bear to live in the college anymore.” These are young people who live in safe, heated

buildings with two Steinway grand pianos, an indoor basketball court, a courtyard with hammocks and picnic tables, a computer lab, a dance studio, a gym, a movie theater, a film-editing lab, billiard tables, an art gallery, and four music practice rooms. But they can't bear this setting that millions of people would risk their lives to inhabit because one woman wrote an email that hurt their feelings?

Political Correctness is a well thought out and civilly respectful idea that has been mutated and malformed to the form that it is now currently in. A bloated mass of overreaction and oversensitivity. Yet the idea behind PC is a just one. With the increased amount of exposure to people of different sexualities, genders, and races, their needs to be a barrier to help not marginalize certain groups. Yet the way current PC culture is going about this process is by being intolerant to differing opinions, and plugging their ears to differing opinions even if they are intelligent and well thought out, and that is not the way to win the fight against hate and bigotry. With this I leave you with a quote from the late and great George Carlin “Political correctness is America's newest form of intolerance, and it is especially pernicious because it comes disguised as tolerance. It presents itself as fairness, yet attempts to restrict and control people's language with strict codes and rigid rules. I'm not sure that's the way to fight discrimination. I'm not sure silencing people or forcing them to alter their speech is the best method for solving problems that go much deeper than speech.”

Ignorance is Bliss

Can we be influenced by matters unknown?

By: Daniel Oberman

Censorship has existed throughout human society since prehistoric ages. The use of censorship is present in nearly every civilization including modern superpowers such as the United States. Both dictators and elected leaders alike have used this tactic of censorship to prevent their citizens from knowing too much or causing trouble over variables in a tense situation. Censorship can have positive effects on the lives of everyday people and these effects are clearly shown throughout history. The lack of censorship used in America as a result of the first amendment has led to, and continues to lead to, constant conflict. The unrestricted freedom of the media and Americans to show and speak about anything they wish gives rise to opposition; both against the government and against other citizens, and is therefore a danger to the American people and way of life. When a media outlet or individual is allowed to say what they please or show something unfiltered it can lead directly to mass hysteria, violence, or numbness. If the U.S. were to utilize censorship, these conflicts would be easily resolved and prevented. Therefore, censorship's ability to curb desensitization and violent misinterpretations is a direct confirmation that it is effective and as a result, appropriate for use in America and worldwide.

Desensitization has begun to become somewhat of an epidemic in today's generation. Since the development of camera quality, video games, and live television capabilities, the amount of gore and violence seen in daily life has skyrocketed. Because of the media's ability to freely broadcast and show such violent images and videos, they are seen by everyone regardless of age or mental stability. According to a study conducted by

the National Institute of Mental Health, "...research has found that exposure to media violence can desensitize people to violence in the real world and that, for some people, watching violence in the media becomes enjoyable and does not result in the anxious arousal that would be expected from seeing such imagery." As proven by medical research, people are already becoming immune to seeing violence whether computer generated or in the real world. Not only are people becoming numb to these sights but are even beginning to enjoy them. This has a great effect on the developing minds of children and teens who often are fully immersed into social media and video games. It is no surprise that violent crimes

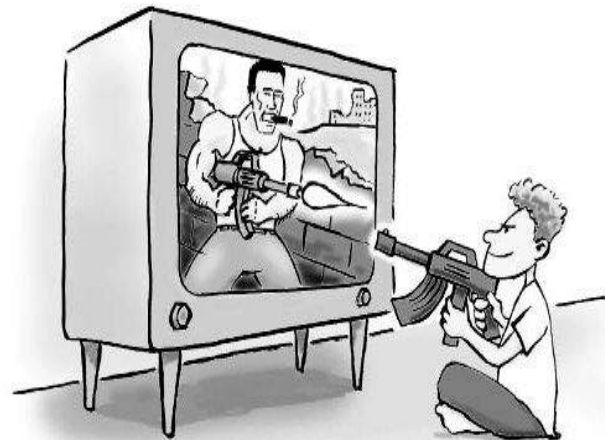


Figure 1

have also been on the rise, especially among teens and young adults. From school shootings to suicides, the effects of uncensored media has begun to show. As depicted in *Figure 1*, many times these children take after what they see on television, whether it be a war hero or a maniac killer. The types of violence that

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children are exposed to due to lack of censorship is harmful both to the child and potentially to others around them. Censorship is therefore needed in order to stop the corrupting effects of violence in the media, and in turn to protect the future of the U.S.

Censorship can defend against many large-scale issues affecting the world today, one such problem facing the U.S. is the presence of misinformation and falsified facts or opinions also known as “fake news”. The ability for quite literally anyone to create a story based on little to no factual evidence has become a danger to the public. Many people who read articles online believe exactly what they see and often times do not check the credibility of the source. These articles are often times written by individuals with a strong opinion on a matter that skew the truth and warp facts to produce a completely different story than that of the original. But this is not always the case. Sometimes even credible and official news sources will display skewed facts and change a news story to support the opinions of their viewers or to attract a larger audience. As said by Oswald Mosley, a British politician, “Newspapers are not made any longer by news or journalism. They are made by sheer weight of money expressed in free gift schemes. They serve not the interests of the many, but the vested interests of the few.” News and the way by which it is presented is no longer intended to inform the public of actual facts but rather to persuade and manipulate people. Misinformation has affected the U.S. in countless aspects, from sparking race riots over an exaggerated story, to swaying voters towards a candidate based on false statistics. This could be easily avoided with the use of censorship to block all media coverage and

opinions unless proven factual. Many people have noticed the destructive capabilities of fake news articles and realize that something needs to be done. As seen in *Figure 2* as much as 83% of voters see a problem with the amount of fake news being projected. Censorship is the only guaranteed way to prevent false stories from influencing the minds of the public and therefore must be instituted in America to avoid further turmoil and destruction.

How Concerned Americans are About Fake News Affecting the Country

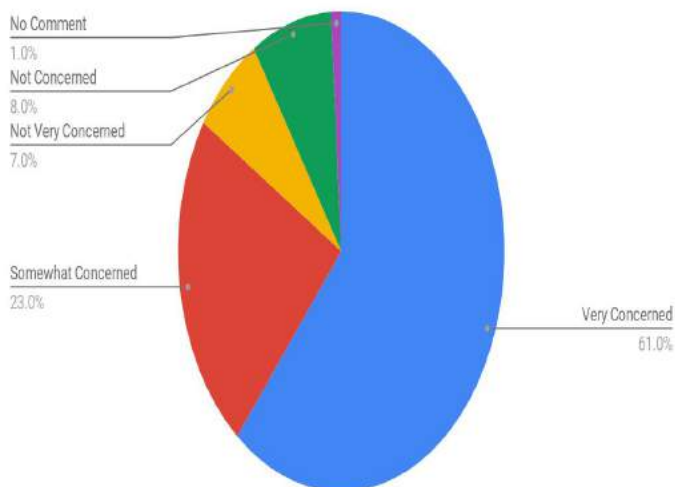


Figure 2

Many argue that censorship is not helpful to society but rather harmful. Some say that censorship keeps people from progress and development. However, this argument fails to see all the progress that comes as a result of censorship. For example, China is the world's most populated country and some even say the most rapidly developing place on earth. China is a world superpower and is often associated with success and innovation. It is so successful that some do not know that the Chinese government

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heavily censors the public. China's success is directly derived from the use of censorship in their country to avoid conflict and to keep its citizens content and calm. Even today China continues to break through barriers some thought to be humanly impossible. Another example, while quite grim, was Nazi Germany. The Nazi's innovated military technology to a point unthinkable by many. They created weapons and machines years ahead of their own time. Not only did they excel in inventions of machines but also in all other aspects of society. The only reason that the Nazi's were able to progress so effortlessly was through the use of censorship. The government kept most of their plans from the people and as a result were able to complete them without interference from others. While the Nazi regime was a dark era in human history, none can deny their success in development of weapons and technology without which life today would be completely different. All of this was a result of the simple use of censorship to support progress.

redirected onto a path of blissful success for ages to come.

As seen throughout human history, censorship can do marvelous things. It can solve nearly any problem that society may face. It can determine the success or failure of entire countries. Censorships unique ability to foster the young while simultaneously giving hard facts to the rest of the population, allow the country to prosper and grow without the corruption of violence and misinformation. Countries without the ability to use censorship will eventually spiral into chaos and disorder while countries that are able to use it will excel greatly. America has begun down the path of chaos, but this can be easily fixed. Through the adoption of censorship America and the rest of human society can be

Pro-Technology

Is Technology Advancing Too Quickly?

By Kayla Wizinsky

Everyday many people of all ages debate whether or not technology is beneficial or is making a negative mark on society. The difference in opinion is usually based on age. The common factor is that the younger one is, the more pro-technology they are. When it comes down to it, the use of technology helps the world in many ways no matter what age someone is such as helping people with medical issues, getting people to interact with others, and even helping people adjust to modern day society.

It is often that the older generations try to stick to traditional methods and use as little technology possible. They see technology and think of phones and things of that sort but the term technology is very broad. Technology can also mean things like hearing aids. For the elder, technology can be extremely beneficial towards them because it can save their lives. Even things like heart rate monitors are helpful to everyone. An article written on January 27, 2018 by The Economist says that because of the growth in technology, livers can be kept alive to use for a transplant. This shows that the use of new technologies can help keep people alive. In this case, people who are in need of a kidney transplant. The elder do not realize how technology helps their lives everyday because electronics are commonly referred to as cell phones and computers, leading into what the vast majority of teenagers use.

It is a battle that many parents of teenagers struggle with everyday trying to get their

teen to go outside and stop playing video games.

Although addiction is possible, video games are proven beneficial. An article written by Reference Point Press, states that Games not only give people the opportunity to meet and interact with others, but they also can help players learn many important social skills, such as interacting and cooperating with other people. Many teenagers do find friends through gaming. On consoles such as Xbox, there is a feature that allows people to search for other gamers to join together and play a game. This allows for a teen to interact and talk to others with a common interest. The most common assumption when it comes to video games is that gamers don't interact with others and they need to be more social. In reality, this is actually the opposite. When gaming, gamers are given the opportunity to interact and socialize with people outside of their own community and broaden their social spectrum to many communities.



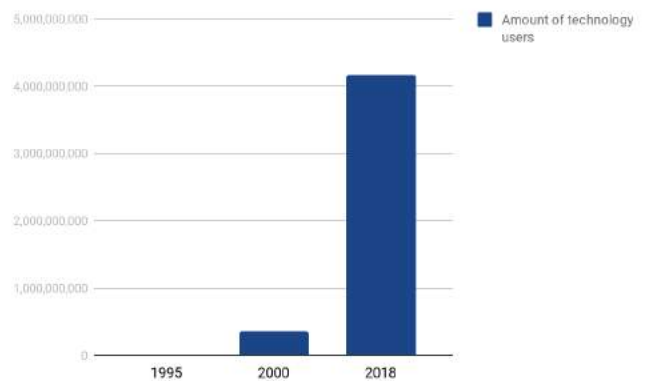
Not only does technology help teens interact, it also benefits prisoners. When people who have been in prison for several years, they are

unaware of real world situations and how to interact. A recent study by VICE showed prisoners who were soon to be released using virtual reality systems. Some inmates are clueless to what self-checkout is and how it works. Using the virtual reality technology, it can help prisoners adjust using real world situations to teach them how modern society operates and help them use things such as a credit card or a phone. It also helps them react to encounters. They are put in situations where they are put in various situations to accommodate to how they should react and interact with other people. Furthermore, proving that technology has to ability to impact lives everyday and will continue to do so.



When it all comes down to it, Technological advances are constantly being made. As this happens, the amount of people using their resources to their advantage exponentially grows. In 1995, roughly 16 million people used electronics which is only 0.4% of the world's population at the time. Over the next 5 years that number grew to 361 million. Records show that the amount of people

who use electronics have skyrocketed to 4,157 million people. That is 54.4% of the entire worlds percent. One may ask what about the other 45.6% of the world. There are many reasons but the main one is poverty. In places that are less fortunate they do not have access to electronics. Although this may be true, many associations have been dedicated to help these regions. With the use of technology, the world is now able to reach out to other areas and help them.



Technology makes an impact on every live, every day. Without these resources, it would be impossible to have made so many advancements in many fields. When most people think of the word technology, they think of computers and cellular devices, when in reality it is much more broad than that ranging from simple heart rate monitors to artificial intelligence. Technology is a thing that helps people in various ways and will continue to do so.

Post, Like, Retweet, and Screenshot

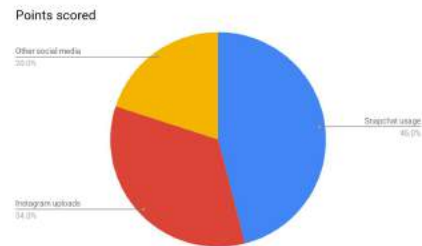
How social media continues to negatively impact our lives on a daily basis.

By: Adriana Ufferman

Social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat have created a whole different way of connecting with friends and complete strangers. They have also found a way to manipulate the time and lives of thousands of people. Inappropriate pictures, rude comments, and the major distraction associated with these applications are exact reasons why they are producing negative results in the lives of many.

Social media applications consist of many avid users leaving no room for mistakes. Once you post a picture, like a tweet, retweet a tweet, or send a risky snapchat, there is no going back. The freedom given through these applications is a privilege, yet is abused by so many. According to Molly Mulshine in an article from 2015, over 100 million people use snapchat on a daily basis, resulting in the overwhelming 8,793 snapchats sent per second on snapchat. Out of those 8,793 snapchats sent per second, half of them have been categorized as inappropriate. In a 12 hour period on instagram, if you would stack up the amount of photos uploaded, it would reach taller than Mount Everest. Mount Everest is 20,029 feet tall. Out of these photos, less than a fifth were categorized as inappropriate. With each application the freedom varies, as well as the vulgar pictures associated with it. Not only is it disgusting, but idiotic as well. The human body is not suppose to be manipulated and sent around, but once you make the mistake of sending

that improper photo, it can change your life and not for the better.



Distractions vary for many people, but a major distraction is social media. Social media distracts kids and adults from their everyday life and ambitions. We may feel as though we have never been more connected, when in reality we are less connected than ever before. With social media it gives opportunities for us to connect with numerous people. Social media was created to give us a way to spread news and connect to the world, yet it connects us in a different way. With the continuous use of these applications such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, it leaves us absent when trying to connect in real life. The current generation is absorbed in technology and social media, leaving communication skills at an all time low. The ability of connection through social media is another privilege taken too far, leaving many unable to keep a relationship or a simple conversation in person. This results in a false sense of connection, meaning it is easier to make relationships work online and harder to transfer over the same energy and time in person. It is easier for people to stay covered behind a screen and say whatever they please, rather than saying it face to face. This also contributes to the active cyberbullying. The cowardice ways online bullies use by abusing the power given to them, results in terrorized individuals with mental scars and in worse cases thoughts of

suicide. These online attacks leave many feeling lonely and horrified, considering the entire world can now see the hurtful comments posted about them through these applications. Not only does, social media leaves us disengaged from reality, but can also lead to social anxiety and in some cases cyberbullying.



A major problem that tags along with the wonderful social media applications we have today, is addiction. Being addicted to social media can be just as bad as being addicted to drugs or drinking. For example, according to the American Marketing Society, when smoking weed, your brain's production of dopamine (the neurostimulator responsible for desires) is raised tremendously, but when on social media it reaches another level. When you post a picture on Instagram, you have the ability to view how many people have liked the photo or who has commented on it. When in real life we do not receive a "like" everytime we walk in the hall. Feeding into the addiction is the usage of the applications when bored. After using them so often there is no hesitation to open up one of the many applications when bored and like a photo or retweet an image. The constant use becomes uncontrollable and turns into an addiction. According to the Paw research center, this addiction is serious and can result in stress, decline in school or work, and lack of attention span. The best way to try to break the addiction, is to slowly give your brain a

chance to relax. By relaxing your brain, it can also leave you happier and less stressed about the day ahead.

However, it has been said that social media has made a positive impact on our lives by giving us the opportunity to connect with people such as distant family members and friends we do not see everyday. Along with connecting with family members and friends, it gives people another resource to find information, such as school closings that can be found on the schools twitter or facebook page. Giving us the chance to communicate in such a way is great, but still can not make up for actual human interaction. It is nice to be able to tweet to a cousin who lives in Georgia, but wouldn't you want to hear their voice? According to the Office of Adolescent Health, a high population of Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram users consist of teens and young adults, using the social media to connect with friends or classmates seen earlier in the day. As social media gives us the possibility to interact with far away family members or friends, it is not a substitute for actual human interaction and the ability to hold a conversation or relationship in person.

Social media is a resource that has been idolized as something that improved our lives, when really it has had more of a negative affect. By giving us applications that keep us in touch, it managed to draw us further apart than we ever have been. Social media has been a distraction to many, a way to easily make mistakes, a mainstream for cyberbullying and causing addictions, leaving our human interaction skills weak. Posting, liking, retweeting, and screenshotting, is it really worth ruining your life?

Social Media Medley

The benefits social media brings to society
By Joanie Evans

A family could face a situation where they have to move away from their friends and other family members. This affects everyone in the family and presents them with huge changes. The friendships that the family had with people don't have to become a thing in the past. With the help of social media, these relationships can be maintained. Social media is only going to become more popular and should be accepted rather than turned down. Social media is a great asset to society because it spreads information quickly, increases positive moods, and prepares children for the technological world.

Because social media spreads information quickly, it is a valuable tool for society. In 2011, the news story about raid that killed Osama bin Laden broke via social media. In April 2016, Kristin Marino revealed, "The first person to tweet about the Osama bin Laden raid was a neighbor who, while complaining about the noise next door on Twitter, unknowingly tweeted about one of the biggest news stories of the decade." This event was extremely significant to Americans and the fact that they heard about as soon as possible exemplifies the positive effects social media has on society. In this particular event social media was faster than news stations. In a survey conducted in 2011, the International Business Machines Corporation found that out of one thousand people, "49% revealed that they were looking to stay connected to relevant news and information." The reason they use social

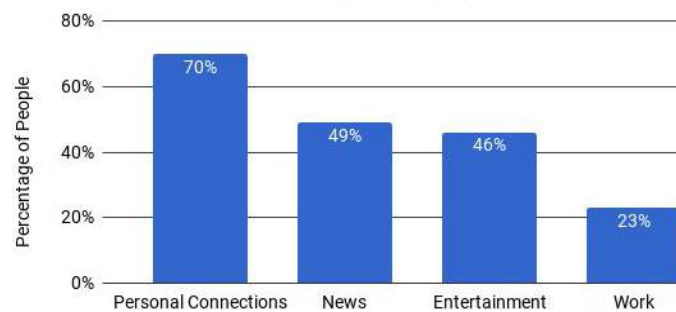
media to stay updated is because social media provides an efficient way of staying connected with the world around them. Even at Franklin High School, Twitter is the main source to spread news among students. Without social media the school would have no effective way of spreading information about events, like spirit week. Social media allows quick communication so people are able to stay updated in their lives and the

news around them. Social media is advantageous because it increases people's positive mood. The International Business Machines Corporation organized a survey of about 1,000 people. When asked

why they use social media, according to Brian Solis in an article from September 2011, "70% ... was the aim of connecting with family and friends." Talking to a family member or a friend when someone is upset can instantly make them feel happier. However, if a family member or friend lives far away, that person would not be able to communicate with them without social media. Social media helps maintain healthy relationships with family and friends even if they live far away. The fact that people use social media to connect with their family and friends emphasizes that they want to keep their relationships up-to-date. When people have healthy relationships it can make their mental health better because they have the peace of mind knowing that they always have someone to talk to at the end of their day, no matter how far away the two people live from each other. In October 2014, Kelly Wallace, from CNN, interviewed Eileen Masio, a mother of a 13-year old, who mentioned that

Social Media Uses

Each column of data represents a percentage of 1,000 people



“it [social media] can help build self-confidence.” A mother of a teenager knows what it’s like to see their daughter not like themselves. When their daughter has confidence it not only makes the daughter live a happier life, but it also makes the mother happy to see their daughter liking the way they look. Teenagers struggle with their self image all the time and posting a picture of themselves on a social media site with comments noting their beauty can instantly boost their self esteem. Social media has positive effects on people’s moods.

Another great aspect of social media is it prepares children for the technological future.

In 2016, Karen Goff, from the Washington Times, stated, a study, called the Digital Youth Project, looked at over 5,000 hours of online observation and “found that the digital world is creating new opportunities for young people to grapple with social norms, explore interests, develop technical skills and work on new forms of self-expression.” Children and teenagers being connected with the digital world around them is extremely important. Social media allows them to be able to keep up with the latest developments in technology by adjusting to updates. Children that are growing up with technology have the advantage because they are growing at the same time that technology is. Goff also interviewed Mizuko Ito, the lead author of the study, who “found that spending time online is essential for young people to pick up the social and technical skills they need to be competent citizens in the digital age.” Technology is only going to get more and more advanced from this point forward. Being encouraged at a young age to pick up the technical skills should be a normal occurrence. Parents should not shield their children from social media. Many people are



aware of how easy it is for children and teenagers to pick up technical skill, but without social media it would not be possible for teenagers to connect and share information among one another. Becoming familiar with technology at a young age prepares children and teenagers for the digital world ahead of them.

It is not uncommon for many people to reach the conclusion that social media is a distraction. They assume teenagers are on their phones, tweeting all the time. The most popular example is in school. The image of a teenager in class glued to their phone is engraved into their minds. However, this

conclusion does not take into consideration that social media provides students with a helpful tool in school. Edmodo, for example, is great for teachers to let their students know questions on an upcoming quiz. Social media also presents as helpful tool for teachers to notify students of homework, what to bring to class, and where to meet for class. Remind is another social media platform that plays a role in the communication between teachers and students. It makes students better equipped for class. Social media does not distract students from school, it is a useful tool in preparing students to further their education.

Social media should be a positive part of people’s lives. These media networks help people live their lives with a better mindset by making them more confident and maintaining friendships. It provides a source for people to stay updated with the latest news by dispersing information quickly. Social media also provides an efficient tool for children to become better prepared for the technological world ahead of them. Social media should not be resented by society, but embraced because of its positive effects on people’s lives.

Social Media: Friend or Foe?

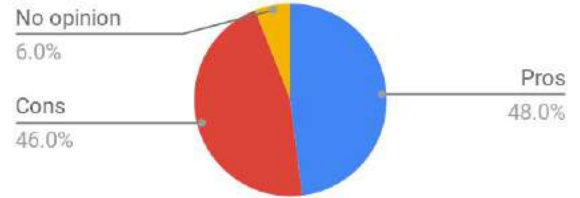
Do the benefits of social media outweigh the consequences?

By: Haley Bennett

How does one event have national recognition in a matter of a few seconds—more specifically, in a matter of a few clicks? The answer is predictably, social media. Social media, in its most simplistic form, consists of websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. All it takes is one appealing picture and a well-typed caption for a national movement to take root. According to statista.com, as of the 4th quarter of 2017, Facebook alone had over 2.2 billion active users. In the world today, there is only about 7.5 billion people, which includes young infants who do not have any social media. A little over one fourth of all the people on the globe have some form of social media. Social media is a massive industry and there are no signs of it shrinking anytime soon. One major question is, does social media contribute more harm than good? Despite all of the controversy, social media's benefits such as the ability to come together as a whole nation, the capability of accessing personal medical records, and allowing fellow human beings to discover themselves and one another outweigh the cons social media can bring.



Does social media have more pros or cons?



How do people living on a different continent find out about natural disasters that did not happen nearby? The answer used to be, “Wait for the newspaper.” Well, nowadays the answer is, “Open up Facebook and instantly have all questions answered.” Social media acts as a virtual port for the world to connect, grieve, grow, and inspire. In the article, *6 ways social media is changing the world*, by Alejandra Guzman, number five states that social media is helping humans better respond to disasters. In the article, Heather Leson of the Qatar Computing research institute said, “In fact, more and more of us will be using social media to contribute to disaster relief from wherever we are...” Ms. Leson is right, social media provides the opportunity to help desperate people who are struggling and in need of saving. Organizations such as, “Bell Let’s Talk” and “Penn State IFC” pledge a fixed amount of money towards a fund so long as they get a certain number of shares/retweets. All over the globe, people can donate or at the very least raise awareness to a national problem with a few taps of the thumb. With Americans getting increasingly lazy, it appears that social media is the perfect solution as it requires no searching for a credit card, no envelope needs to be shipped out, just the guts to share the post. Another beneficial upside to social media is the ability to easily access medical records and medical advice. Several

hospitals, including Henry Ford Health System, have devised an app called "My Chart," that allows a patient to have access to all sorts of information including: test results, health reminders, and even includes an option of setting up or adjusting an appointment without going through the hassle of calling and being put on hold or forced to deal with a grumpy operator. Social media does not stop there though. Not only does social media make it easier on the patient, but also on the doctors and scientists who are constantly looking for more efficient ways of treating an illness. According to *Mediabistro*, 54% of patients are comfortable with their providers seeking advice from online communities to better treat their condition. Doctors are constantly learning from one another and social media gives them the platform to do it.

With social media being the largest populated society, it allows for people to be discovered, whether they are the next Justin Bieber or OJ. Starting off on a sad note, had authorities listened to and acted on all of the warning signs the school shooter in Florida had displayed on social media, perhaps there would have been seventeen less funerals this week. The social media accounts one has is a true glimpse into the real side of them. Taking it to the positive side of things, several talented people have been discovered through social media, including the lady-slayer himself, Justin Bieber. One day Justin Bieber was a fourteen year old average teenager who had shaggy hair and a passion for singing and now he is every teenage girls heartthrob. Without the help of youtube, the world would never know what a good "Boyfriend" looks like. Justin Bieber was not and will not be the last celebrity to be discovered by social media though. The

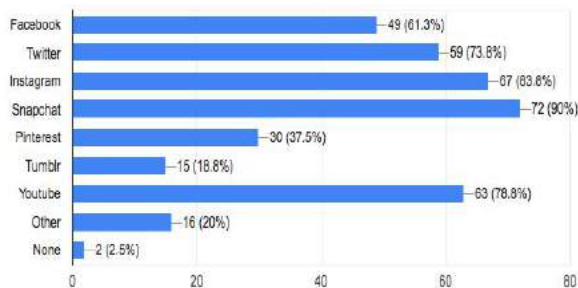
online world allows for a variety of people to get discovered for whatever their particular talent may be.

Even though social media has the potential to be a world of light and positivity, it comes up short. Perhaps the biggest negative side of social media is that it is accessed through a screen; and dealing with adversity on a phone is much different than dealing with issues in person. Social media allows for a place of temporary escape, a trip to the moon, but at some point, the rocket returns back to Earth. Lindsay Williams, author of the article, "6 Ways Social Media Is Ruining Our Friendships," hit the nail on the head saying, "Yet, it's only in our mess, in our brokenness, when we can become fully known. The friends who know us best are those who have seen us at our worst—and loved us any way." Social media distorts thinking and draws time away from face-to-face interaction. However, even though social media can falsely lead one to poor interactions skills, no matter what hurdles must be jumped, social media will always be there when needed most.

Social media has many paths that can be taken, and it is true that some are more dark and twisted than others. If one chooses to live their life only seeing things in black and white, then social media can be a dangerous place. However, if one chooses to look inbetween the lines, social media has the potential to change lives for the better. With the click of a button and the tap of a thumb, social media can inform masses of people, allow patients and doctors the opportunity to better their hospital experience, and the discovery of a whole new world. Social media, if treated properly, has the potential to be not only an ally, but a friend.

Love Yourself(ie), Well at Least Try Why social media is doing more harm than good in society. By: Sage Ryland

Why don't I look like her? Why don't I have a body like hers? Her life is so much better than mine. And so many more are thoughts by social media users, especially teenagers, asked everyday. Social media has taken over society and not in a good way. In a survey conducted we asked different people of varying ages if they use social media and if so what platforms do they use. Out of every teenager and adult asked they all used some sort of social media from (graph shown below). From data collected it's obvious that everyone is connected online in some way by the time they are a teenager. Many people all over the world, especially teenagers are always connected and, although convenient, it seems to be doing more harm than good. Social Media has decreased productivity of users, ruining self confidence by encouraging depression and anxiety and is ruining face to face communication as we know it.



Teenagers have busy schedules with school, extracurricular activities, friends, family and homework. Teens seem to always be on their phone, keeping themselves busy until way after bedtime online even with their busy schedules. Common Sense Media reported that teenagers spend on average nine hours on social media daily, and tweens will spend on average up to six hours on social media. In perspective, teens spend more time on social media than they do sleeping. On

average a teenager sleeps for about seven hours even though they should sleep for at least nine. That means social media users are spending more time scrolling, posting and liking than they are sleeping. Teenagers could devote those nine hours to much more productive uses of times such as studying, spending time with friends and family or getting enough sleep. Social media is a huge distraction for teenagers and causing a decrease in productivity.

Social media is a toxic mirror, platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and others create an online world filled with pictures of “perfect people” with “perfect bodies” and “perfect faces” making it impossible for teenagers not to compare themselves to these perfect expectations, ultimately destroying confidence in oneself. Teenagers are in a part of their life where everyone is changing, hormones are everywhere, and people can be vicious. Social media users use social media to try and improve their confidence and boost their self worth by posting pictures, and once they post it, they wait for the approval of their peers when they double tap their screen and like the picture. Whether teenagers realize it or not they subconsciously look at how many likes they get and use those likes as confidence that their peers approve of them. *Time Magazine* pointed out that before the internet and social media teenagers had to buy magazines or steal peeks at moms magazines to see these perfect bodies and ideal humans. But now, since the internet and social media people have access to all of these pictures of inhumane and impractical expectations for people where they have been edited and perfected to fit the impossible expectations of the “perfect person”. In *Time magazine* they discussed how early in 2016 psychologists did a study where they researched how social media affects adolescents and they found “cross-cultural evidence linking social media use to body image concerns, dieting, body surveillance, a

drive for thinness and self-objectification in adolescents”. Although social media is not causing and creating depression in teenagers by themselves, but they are proving to be encouraging the negative behavior. In a study professors at the University of Buffalo discovered how female college students admitted that they were more likely to link their self-worth to their looks ever since using some form of social media. Teenagers, boy and girls, are using social media and seeing these perfect and ideal people and realizing they aren't like them and hate themselves for being “ugly”, “fat”, and “never good enough”.

Social media is also destroying communication by ironically causing people to be too connected. Remember the last time you went to a restaurant and either you and your table just sat there and instead of talking just scrolled on your phones, and if your group didn't do that at your table another group at another table was guilty of ignoring each other as they scrolled, snapchatted, tweeting and



texted. Friends don't need to talk to each other anymore to know what's going on with their life, they update their Snapchat story so we know where they are and who they are with, or they post pictures with that special someone and now we know they are officially dating. Now if friends want to talk they can just text from the comfort of their bed. What's the point in face to face communication when there is texting? People barely call each other anymore because they don't have to, instead they can easily text, snapchat or DM each other. People are so connected through social media that there isn't a point in face to face communication anymore.

Those who believe that social media has improved our society usually argue that social media is a good way to become informed by spreading news on different social media platforms. Through surveys, Social Networking ProCon learned that 64% of twitter users read news story on Twitter that they later find out were false. 16% of Twitter users admitted they shared a news article only to find out that it was false. Twitter is not the only place where false news articles are being spread. In a survey I conducted I found that many Facebook users admitted that they have had news stories that turned out to be fake pop up on their feed. Also people who tend to believe Social Media is improving our society usually believe Social media sites help employers find employees and job-seekers find work, but in a study conducted by Social Networking ProCon they found that recruiters reported negative reactions to profanity, poor spelling or grammar, sexual content, and references to illegal drugs, and alcohol on potential employees' social media. 55% of recruiters report reconsidering hiring applicants based on social media activities, resulting in harming people's chances of finding a job.

Social media, although convenient, is causing more harm than good, teenagers are lacking in productivity by procrastinating by scrolling, tweeting and snapchatting which means students are wasting time. Also social media is destroying users self confidence by creating an image of a perfect person with the perfect face and body spreading the idea that everyone else is ugly and not good enough even though they are. Lastly Social media is causing people to be too connected so much that real communication has been destroyed. So next time you are scrolling through your phone think about what else you could be doing instead of being apart of the problem.

College Student, Not College Employee

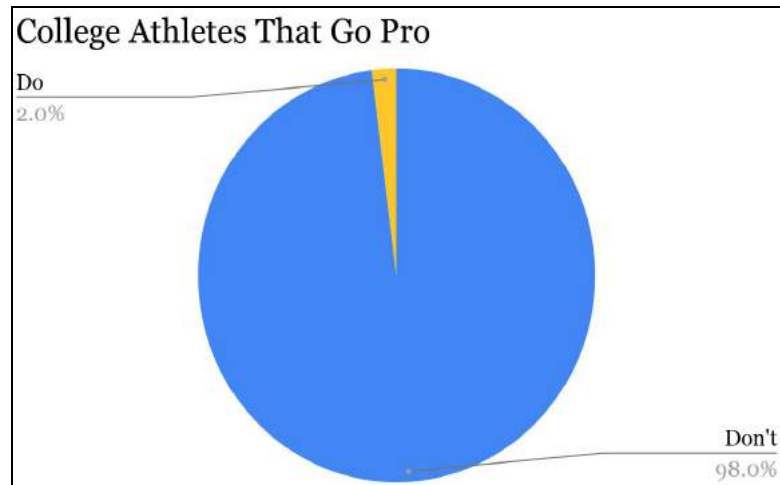
College Athletes Should Be Furthering Their Education, Not Making Money Off Their School.

By: Kate Brennan

The Cambridge Dictionary defines college as “Any place for specialized education” and that is what college is, for most people. But for about 400,000 students each year, college is less about learning and more about games. Sports, to be more precise. College athletes are still students, but how much of their time is actually spent on their education? College athletes should not be paid for playing sports because schools don’t have the money to pay them, their main focus should be learning, and scholarships are payment enough.

Student athletes should not be paid by their schools because there isn’t money to pay them. In the USA Today article *Colleges are spending more on their athletes because they can*, it states that in the 2015-16 school year, the University of Arkansas “\$1 million in expenses to take advantage of a new NCAA rule that allowed scholarships to cover the full cost of attending college” and that didn’t include the \$7 million they spent on building a new sports nutrition center or the \$1.5 million spent on providing athletes with meals and snacks, also newly allowed by the NCAA’s rules. This money was not displaced, it was added to the budget entirely. To pay students for playing sports the school would either have to somehow bring in millions of more dollars a year to create a salary fund or get the money from somewhere else. The option that is more realistic is moving the money from somewhere else. Then the decision would have to be made: where

would the money come from? Books and supplies, nutrition, dorms? That would not be fair to the non-athlete students. They shouldn't have to suffer from budget cuts because some nineteen year old basketball player wants to make money even though they most likely won't become a professional.

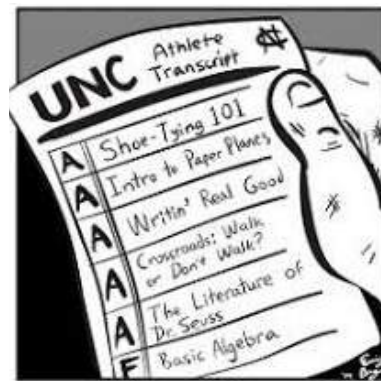


While there is no problem with college students participating in sports at school, a problem arises when the passtime becomes more important than learning. In the CNN article *CNN Analysis: Some College Athletes Play Like Adults, Read Like 5th-graders*, learning specialist, Mary Willingham, recalled her time working at the University of North Carolina. She told CNN’s Sara Ganlm that during her time at the school, her job was to assist student athletes who didn't have the academic skills to do the work at the university. When she met a basketball player who couldn't read she was, understandably, shocked. “What do you do with that?”, she remembers asking herself. After some time, she discovered this problem was “not an anomaly.” She went on to say that in 2014, 60% of the football and basketball players that came to her were only able to read between a fourth and eighth grade reading level. And between 8% and 10% could only

read below a third grade level. “You cannot come here with a third-, fourth- or fifth-grade education and get a degree here,” Willingham added in disbelief. Not to mention they are not getting the help they need to fix their reading issues; according to the article, students miss 2.3 classes per week on average during their sport’s season. Those skills might not seem important to the athletes now because they are focused on their sports careers, but you need basic reading skills in everything that you do. And what about after their career is over? Will they be 30 years old and still not be able to read multisyllabic words? Students should spend their time preparing for their future in the long run and less time worrying about the fifteen minutes of fame they may or may not get from being a professional athlete.

Another reason college athletes should not receive a paycheck is because they are already being paid in the form of scholarships. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association “more than \$2.9 billion in athletics scholarships [are given out] annually to more than 150,000 student-athletes.” But what are those scholarships really paying for? In 2012 the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill was hit with a huge scandal involving some 3,000 college athletes. A New York Times article, entitled *U.N.C. Investigation Reveals Athletes Took Fake Classes*, reported that “the players and others had been receiving A’s and B’s in nonexistent classes” and this had been happening over the course of several years. These classes only required the student to turn in one paper and “The papers were often largely plagiarized or padded with ‘fluff.’” Also, the article states that the classes did not require the students to: show up to the classes, take notes, meet with professors, pay attention, or “necessarily engage with the material.”

That means the immediate purpose of these scholarships is paying for athletes to take fake classes so they can continue to be eligible to play. The long term effect is, more often than not, not what the players were hoping for. As stated in the Business Insider article, *Here Are The Odds That Your Kid Becomes A Professional Athlete (Hint: They're Small)*, only baseball had more than 2% of its NCAA players became professional athletes. So the question arises: where are they going to get a job with the reading skills of a ten year old?



One of the biggest arguments made in favor of student athletes receiving a salary from their school, is that colleges make money off the games the students play. However, what those people might not know is that, of all the proceeds made from those games, the NCAA gives 43.4% of the money back to the student in the form of scholarships, academic enhancement, and student assistance funds.

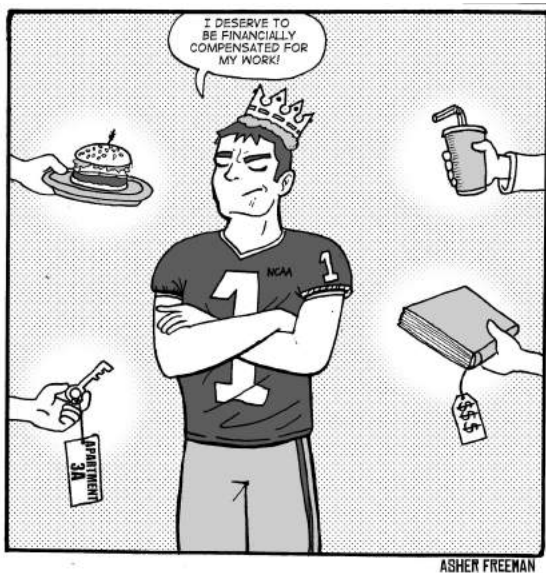
Students who play sports in college should not be paid because they need to focus on academics, they are already being paid in the form of scholarships, and because schools don’t have the budget to pay them anyway. All college students should be focusing on preparing for a future in which they have a stable job, even student athletes.

Don't Pay College Athletes

Why pay college athletes when they already receive enough.

By: Marino DiPonio

In college athletics today, there is an ongoing debate on whether college athletes should get paid or not. Although it may seem like they have it rough and deserve more for what they do, they are a lot better off than it appears. The life of a college athlete can be very giving and the athletes don't need a paycheck to add to what they are already receiving. College athletes do not need to get paid because playing college athletics is a privilege, scholarships are payment enough, and because the best players eventually get paid in the pros.



College athletes shouldn't be paid because not many people have the same opportunity that they do. Listland.com stated that about 7% of high school athletes go on to play athletics in college, and only 2% play in a D1 school. There are few athletes that get the opportunity to play in college, so those who are talented enough are already being awarded by getting the opportunity to play.

In an article from Swimsam.com Kevin Malone told that when athletes sign the line on the National Letter of Intent to play a sport at an NCAA sponsored college, they know what they're signing up for. If an athlete is going to play in the NCAA, they are required to sign the NLI. The document specifically states that an athlete playing in the NCAA is not allowed to get paid under any circumstances. When athletes sign this document they agree with the terms of being unable to get paid. What's the point of signing it if athletes are unhappy with what the document states? The individuals that get the chance to play in college need to understand that they are given something that isn't just handed to everyone, and that they do not need any money to go with that.

College athletes don't need to get paid because they get paid a substantial amount of money through scholarships. Listland.com told, "The average in-state tuition at Ohio State University is just over \$10,000 a year, yet the average athletic scholarship is \$17,856 a year, for male athletes." Scholarships can already pay for all four years of athletes academics, and give them extra money for other school related matters. Jeff Dorfman from Forbes magazine stated, "Student athletes on athletic scholarships are essentially paid because they receive free tuition, room, meal plans, and some money for books and miscellaneous expenses". The athletes get all the great things that were listed above just by signing to play a sport, so it would pretty much be useless to add money to that list considering that all the money they earn in these scholarships would be more than what they'd get paid. Putting it into a larger perspective, college athletes do not need to be paid because when they receive a scholarship they already have all of college

paid for, and extra. Paying them any extra is just a waste of money.

Some college athletes have incredible talent, and just by watching them on T.V. it's apparent that they are going on to play professionally. That's just another reason why college athletes shouldn't be paid, because they have the opportunity to get paid in the pros. Kieran McCauley stated in an article, "Last

year first round pick Jadeveon Clowney signed a four year contract that included \$22,272 million guaranteed, and a \$14,518 million signing bonus. The point is, the players who are so good and

entertain us in college will eventually get paid". She also went on to explain that the NBA's average player salary clocking in at \$5.15 million, \$1.85 million more than players in Major League Baseball who average close to \$3.2 million a year. College athletes are extremely talented, and yes they do deserve some kind of reward for the extensive work they put into their crafts. Signing these big contracts for millions and millions of dollars is their reward but all they need to do is go through four years of college, for some athletes even less. College athletes eventually get paid in professional sports so why pay them while they are in college when they can get paid so much more afterwards.

Many people argue that college athletes should be paid because they dedicate most of their time to athletics. In fact, The typical Division I college football player devotes

43.3 hours per week to his sport -- 3.3 more hours than the typical American work week.

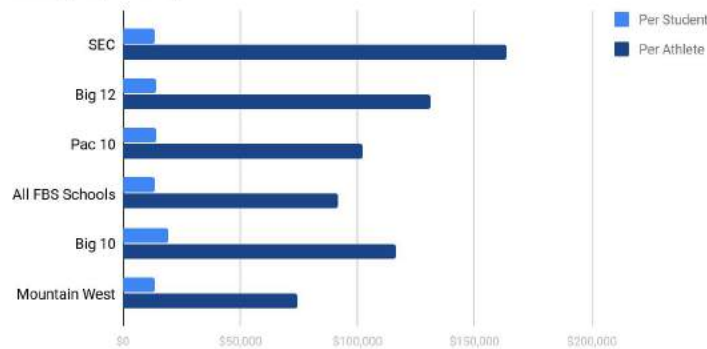
Although these hours spent take up most of the players days, people still fail to see that college athletes do get paid for this time through scholarships. These scholarships pay for the students academics, meal plans, and other school necessities. If schools pay college athletes it would be wasting money,

cause the athletes already get enough money from their scholarships. Paying college athletes may seem like a good idea but with all they are getting from the scholarships they do not need the

extra pay. This goes to show that paying college athletes is not a good idea.

Although college athletes work hard everyday and give up most of their time for sports, that still does not mean they should get paid. They should not be paid because they are privileged by being able to play, they get paid through scholarships, and because some of them will get paid in the pros. Paying college athletes is still an ongoing debate, and it will continue for a very long time. But college athletes already get so many rewards for what they do and for everything they Not only that, but just being able to play college athletics is a privilege enough. College athletes should be grateful for all the things that they have and they should realize that they don't need the money to add to what they already have.

College Spending

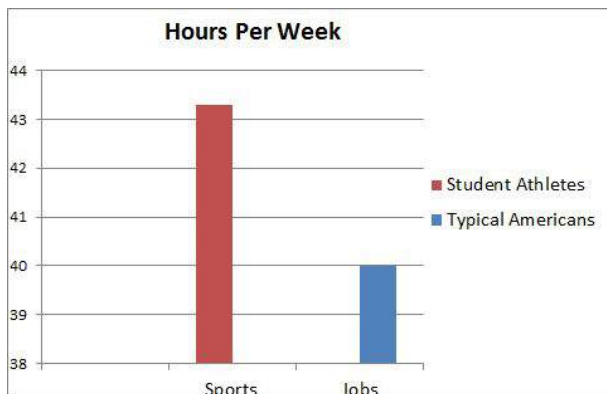


Not Paying College Athletes: What a Mistake!

Athletes Must Deserve Pay

By: Cal Fournier

One of the most debatable topics in sports today is whether or not college athletes should be paid. There are many different arguments for this topic and many different ideas about how to deal with this subject. Some people say that it is wrong, others say it is right. But what is the real answer? College athletes deserve to be paid, period. In theory, college athletes are very hard working and deserve to be paid because being a player is a full time job, apparel market takes advantage of the athletes, and the NCAA makes enough money to pay them.



A main reason why college athletes should be paid is because it is a full time job. How is being a college athlete a job some may wonder, well college athletes are so devoted to their "work" that "the typical division 1 college football player devotes 43.3 hours per week to his sport-3.3 more hours than the typical American work week" (Forbes Magazine). These players work more than the typical American, and when you add school into the equation, the time changes dramatically, "College Athletes have to work 90 hours per week just to remain in

school on their scholarship" ("Shouts From The"). Adding school and sports to a player's time can easily overwhelm them. If people say that the athletes don't deserve to be paid because they don't put in enough time, they are absolutely wrong. These athletes put nothing but time and effort into school and sports, they are putting in more work than average workers. 90 hours between school and sports is enough time and effort for these athletes to be paid.

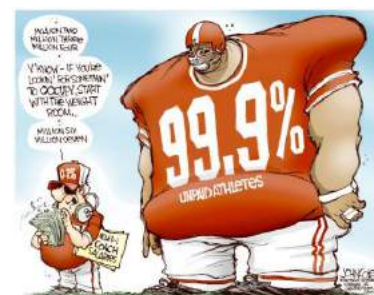
Also a big reason why college athletes should be paid is because the apparel market takes advantage of the players. The NCAA makes money off the players by selling apparel with their number on it. All the time at sporting events around in the crowd people are wearing jerseys, and t-shirts with the popular player numbers on them. One thing that can be seen right away though is that there are no names on the jerseys, that is because putting the name on the jersey would mean the NCAA would have to pay the player. but those diehard fans all know who the number really belongs too, because "When universities sell jerseys and T-shirts with popular numbers on them, they are literally selling the personhood of the person whose number is on the jersey" ("top 10 lists") by doing so, the NCAA is making money off the players and they don't get any of the profit made from the apparel. It is unfair to the players to be making money off them and not pay them. This is unfair to the players because the NCAA prohibits players to sell things to make money "Not only is the university allowed to capitalize on the celebrity of it's players; but the players are contractually; not allowed to do this themselves" ("top 10 lists"). Players get the short end of the stick because there are so many rules that prevent the athletes from making money. On ESPN news pops up all

the time about allegations of players selling things to make money, but the university can sell things all they want and not a single dime they make goes to the players making them money.

Also a reason why college athletes should be paid is because the NCAA makes enough money to pay the players. The NCAA brings in tons of money off of sports alone, in fact “the NCAA currently produces nearly 11 billion dollars in annual revenue from college sports” (Forbes Magazine). The NCAA makes all this money off of the success from the many college teams and keeps it all for themselves. Even video games played a part in it. EA sports used to make a video game of college football, and basketball but later discontinued the making of the games because they would have had to pay the players that were featured in the game. Plus to go along with that “scholarships do not pay for the full cost attending college” (“shouts from the”). Sure, the scholarship pays for most of the athletes tuition but anything else they school wise, they don't have money to pay for. This is due to a lack of employment caused by the 90 hours of school and sports a week. There is no time in their schedules to be able to work. It is also already hard enough to to obtain a full time job in society today. These kids would be working a part time job, going to practice, film sessions, team road trips and are still gonna have to pay for the necessities of living on their own? Impossible. No student athlete should have to overload their schedule like that just for them to pay for the necessary items they need for everyday life. An easy solution to this is to give the players part of that 11 billion dollars the NCAA is making so that these kids don't have to worry about finding the extra money they need. Many people may think that college athletes should not be

paid because they receive scholarship money to help pay for the extreme cost of being a college student. Yes, it is true these student athletes receive their money through scholarships, but what these people fail to see is that everything is not paid for by a scholarship. All that extra money that these athletes need for other school materials and can not receive from a scholarship can be hard to come by. Many of these kids don't have jobs because they spend so much time on sports and school. It is hard to find ways to make money when you are spending so much time at school activities or at sports. In the news, people hear about the athlete that came from nothing. The athlete who came from the streets, and grew up providing for their family on their own. Even though this is the extreme case, it still happens. There is no way that the kids in this scenario can juggle both a job and their dream. Parents cannot pay for everything, and they should not have to either. In conclusion, the scholarship received is not enough money for these kids to get by with and since this is the case they should be paid.

College athletes work way too hard to not be paid. For these kids it is like having a job because of all the work they have to do for the sport they play, they also have to sit back and watch the NCAA make billions of dollars off them. How is this fair? It's not! College athletes work hard to be able to receive at least a little bit of money from the NCAA to help pay for some of their school supplies. Just a little bit of money can make a big difference to help with the high price of a college education. The NCAA should stop using the the success of athletes as profits for themselves. The players deserve a cut of the money they helped create, therefore these athletes should be paid.



The Cost of a Free Education

An honest argument against pro-free college tuition advocates.

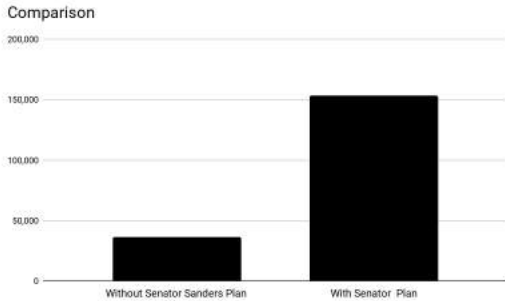
By: Devin Reynolds

As of recently, there has been a great amount of debate on whether education should be a right in the United States. With that being stated, one of the most popular initiatives among young Americans and liberals is for the government to provide free tuition for public university, for everyone. All of which will combat the declining standard of education in America. Although many, including myself, believe that free college tuition would provide a comfortable financial cushion for college students, I do not believe it would achieve the fundamental goal that advocates for education reform set to accomplish; drastically improving the standard and quality of education for students, regardless of age. Therefore, I reject the notion. Free college tuition would be demoralizing to the average American taxpayer and there are better alternatives in which hard earned tax payer dollars can be spent in order to improve future generations of young Americans.

In general, one can conclude that people dislike paying into programs that yield little to no benefit to the people, collectively. So, would it not be cruel to raise the people's taxes in order to benefit a fraction of the American population, while they receive little to no benefit? Yes! No person should ever be robbed of their wealth with no feasible return. In other words, why would Americans want to pay for an anonymous student's college education? One may argue that if there are more college graduates, then our society will inherently be more educated. Independent Senator, Bernie Sanders, is the most prevalent in terms of popularity on this issue on Capital

Hill. Last April, he proposed a bill, according to the USA Today, "...which would abolish tuition and fees at public four year-year colleges and universities for students from households making \$125,000 or less per year." At first glance, many young Americans, including myself, rejoiced; someone is finally making college education a serious initiative. While a college education will be free for the student, it will still cost the Americans money. That is why a proposal of that magnitude should scare the taxpayer, chiefly due to the Senator's plan. He also proposed a speculation tax on Wall Street, which would cover his \$70 billion budget. Now, that budget figure seems astronomically low. If the Senator's plan were to be implemented this year, taking into consideration data from the National Center for Education data on students enrolled this past fall, 14.9 million, and average cost of a college tuition, \$9,000, and that only 80% of the students would be impacted by the plan. The total, following the deduction of the tax on Wall Street would total \$64.1 trillion, annually. But, that rate will only continue to increase, assuming that the plan does not change. 359.1 trillion would be the benchmark after four years, because of the new students entering the program. So, by that time, all 122 million taxpayers will be contributing towards another entitlement program, costing the average American \$3,822.95, annually. That is not the most disturbing figure, however. The average person works until they are around 65. Let's assume you go through college tuition free and you are out debt free, but now you are stuck paying this fee for the rest of your life. During that 40 year time span, you will have paid \$153,000 in college tuition that might have otherwise cost you \$36,000. Above all, are you willing to pay into a system that may not even apply to you? I believe it

would be a resounding no. In short, although free public college and university may be beneficial with regard to educating the population beyond high school, ultimately, it would be a significant burden to the purchasing power of the average citizen.



One of Senator Sanders arguments in favor of free college tuition is that it would make young Americans more academically and economically competitive. He believes that if there are more college graduates, then our society will be more educated and financially sound. However, will free college education really help young Americans? From an economic perspective, we do not know if there is a positive correlation between obtaining a college education and economic benefits, because there has been no conclusive evidence published that proves either side of the argument. So, that leaves us with academics. When reviewing nations around the world that have scored higher than the United States on standardized testing, there is one common factor among the best countries; they all have stellar education systems. Even when reviewing the states within our country, the scores vary drastically across the board. Massachusetts, for example, has a rating of 527, the international average is 501. The sad truth, however, is that they are the most educated state in the United States, based off of those rankings. Hong Kong, which is currently ranked first, is beating

Massachusetts by 53 points. Is that not sad? We live in a country that once prided themselves on being the most educated in the world has fallen behind countries that we deem as lesser. From the perspective of an American who truly wants to see America reign as the greatest country in the world, I believe the necessary steps that will help regain that seat revolve around education. Handing out a free college education will not fix the problem, fixing the public education system in the United States will help us achieve that feat. If we are to improve as a nation academically, we must devote time, money, and effort into public schools to improve the methods of teaching fundamental subjects to ensure that no child feels completely disadvantaged to the point where they that their education system is doing a disservice to them. All in all, the key to improving our education system is to begin improving the foundation of children's education, while emphasizing community and competitiveness.

Education is something that we, as a society should further cultivate. It is one of the cornerstones for improving the future of America. That being said, however, despite education being of great importance it should not be a right, it should be a privilege that everyone has a shot at using it to their advantage. As previously stated, handing out free college tuitions will not solve the problems that we face as an academically challenged nation. It will only burden taxpayers and hurt the potential education standards for America's future by not improving education at its core.

