

The Fairfield Prep Political Awareness Society presents:

# Zeitgeist



**Spirit of the Times**

**November 2017**

## **The Fairfield Prep Political Awareness Society**

President: Michael Cardona, Class of 2018

Editor: Robbert van Batenburg, Class of 2018

### **About the Society**

In a matter of years, our generation will be the status quo. We will be running the businesses and casting the votes and contributing to the culture that will serve to identify our country for decades to come. As such, it is our duty to cultivate a devotion to political curiosity and vigilance so that we can shape this future in the most well informed manner possible. The Political Awareness Society is a part of that cultivation, providing an environment for students to discuss and debate what is going on in the world and develop their own unique perspectives that they can carry with them into the adult world. We meet every Thursday afternoon in Mr. Szablewicz's room (B407). All are welcome to attend.

**Note:** The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and are in no way intended to reflect those of Fairfield Prep as an institution.

# Table of Contents

Page 3 – **Election 2017: Warning Signs for Republicans** by Robbert van Batenburg ‘18

Page 6 – **The Case against Roy Moore** by George Seyfried ‘18

Page 8 – **The Future of DACA** by James Paul ‘19

Page 10 – **Why Passing the Tax Bill is Crucial for Republicans** by Aryaman Sharma ‘20

Page 12 – **The Catalanian Conundrum** by Adam Julio ‘19

Page 13 – **Naming the Radical Left** by Matthew Howard ‘18

Page 17 – **America’s Invisible War** by Michael Hoben ‘18

Page 19 – **Can Hate Speech be Free Speech?** by Ian Greenawalt ‘18

Page 21 – **College Tuition and Loans: The Heist of my Generation** by Sean Lynch ‘18

Page 23 – **The Great Blessing of American Geography** by Jason Palladino ‘20

Page 26 – **Fairfield Prep Student Body Poll Results**

Robbert van Batenburg '18

## **Election 2017: Warning Signs for Republicans**

Despite its victories in 2016 and the hubris that abounded afterward, to even a casual observer, the Republican Party still looked like it wasn't totally resting on firm ground. Going beyond even their three million vote loss in the presidential popular vote, Republicans gained mostly in shrinking states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Meanwhile their leads in growing states like Arizona, Texas, Georgia, Nevada, and Virginia, previously states they could call safe, diminished or evaporated completely.

Coincidentally, Election 2017 centered around one of these very states: Virginia. With the help of the state's northern Washington D.C. suburbs, Democrats easily kept the governor's mansion and gained fifteen seats in the state's House of Delegates, just one shy of a majority. After three consecutive Democratic victories in presidential elections and this resounding victory on the state level, the once conservative stronghold of Virginia is now an all-but blue state. Outside of Virginia, urban

and suburban municipal nationwide voted similarly Democratic. One of these suburbs is my hometown and that of our school, Fairfield, Connecticut.



Two key demographic trends have proven the bane of Republican strategists, both in Virginia and nationwide. The first is the growth of minority populations, specifically those who identify as Hispanic. In 2000, Hispanics comprised 4.7% of the Virginia population. Ten years later, that figure doubled to 7.9%. Similar increases have occurred across the country and some demographers predict that the nation's current Hispanic minority of 16.3% could grow to almost 30% by 2050. While the total share has slightly decreased over time, voters of Hispanic and immigrant origin overall tend to vote overwhelmingly Democratic. In 2016, 66% of Hispanics voted for Hillary

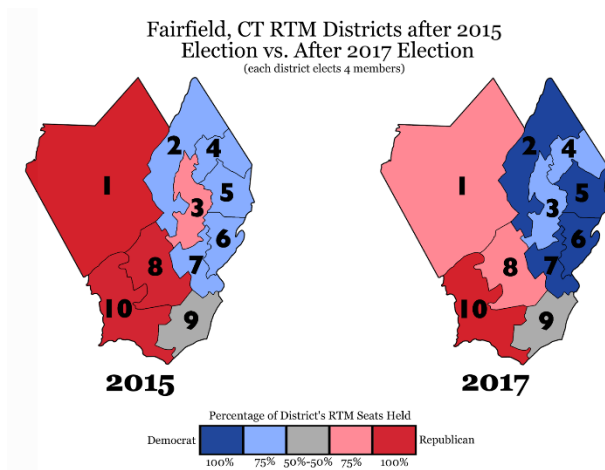
Clinton, while just 28% voted for Donald Trump. Similar splits have been observed in previous elections.

The second is the suburban turn from Republican to Democrat. This trend appears to have begun much more recently, however, it's part of the longer-term political movement of college-educated Americans. Data from Pew has shown that voters with a bachelor's degree or higher have turned from an evenly split group to one firmly left-of-center. Reasons for this aside, the result is that the suburbs of the growth-heavy Eastern metropolises such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C., have turned from red to blue. This presents a problem for Republicans of all levels. 53% of Americans say they live in suburbs. These Americans clearly comprise the largest electoral group, based on geography, income, and education. It will be the suburbs in every area of the country, not just the "swing states", where the political battles of the future will be fought.



Tip O'Neill famously quipped that "all politics are local," and it appears that this saying will only become increasingly true. One of these bellwether suburbs of the future is Fairfield, Connecticut, where voter registration is currently split almost dead even, and prior to this year, it had maintained a narrow Republican majority in the Representative Town Meeting (RTM).

That majority came crashing down in spectacular fashion this year when Fairfield Democrats scored a resounding victory. Fairfield is divided into ten voting districts, each of which elects four representatives to the RTM. Democrats picked up seats in almost every one of these districts, taking a net eight and turning a 21-18 Republican majority into a 26-14 Democratic. In addition, Democrats won most town-wide offices that were up for grabs.



This year's election in Fairfield was especially significant because it marked the first year in which Democrats outnumbered Republicans on the voter rolls. This shift in political leaning is the result of city-dweller immigration into suburbs like Fairfield for tax, financial, and educational reasons. Much like our corner of Connecticut, Northern Virginia, where the recent gubernatorial contest was won, is home to these same individuals who work in or around the big city. As these areas nationwide become wealthier, more urbane, and more diverse, Republicans will only continue to lose ground in some of these hardest fought states and districts.

Not only is it fallacious to blame such a loss in Fairfield, and likewise the Republican losses in Virginia, on the unpopularity of President Trump, but for Republicans, it's dangerous. The longer we fail to truly confront the long-term trends that threaten the health of the party, the more Republicans will founder in the nation's most important areas. If the GOP wants to prevail in the long-term future, it will have to make itself appealing to city transplants coming to the suburbs. The party as a whole must find a way to balance the concerns and preferences of both its rural, white, working-class base and the burgeoning diverse, educated, upper-middle-class suburbs. Local and state parties need to be given more control over messaging and focus, and the national party needs to shift away from hot-button social issues like same-sex marriage while clarifying its stance on unifying aspects such as fiscal responsibility, law and order, global security, and economic freedom. Otherwise, the results this November will come to foreshadow extreme Republican difficulty in Connecticut, Virginia, and the other states turning blue with the rise of a new suburbia.





George Seyfried '18

### **The Case against Roy Moore**

On December 12th, Alabama voters will go to the polls to replace Jeff Sessions, who resigned as U.S. Senator from Alabama in February to become U.S. Attorney General. This special election currently pits Doug Jones, a Democratic former Federal District Attorney, against Roy Moore, the Republican former Chief Justice of Alabama's Supreme Court.

Moore decided to run for Alabama's Senate Seat primarily because he lost his job as Chief Justice of Alabama's Supreme Court, and wants to continue his career in public service. Moore, seemingly a devout Christian, has been suspended from his role as Chief Justice twice; once for his refusal to comply with an order to remove a statue of

the Ten Commandments from the Alabama Supreme Court, and again in 2016 for refusing to comply with federal orders on same-sex marriage.

In many ways, Moore's campaign has successfully appealed to Alabama voters. Moore has a record of shielding a staunchly conservative state from federal regulations at odds with the moral beliefs of many Alabamans. While it is alarming that Moore has violated his Oath of Office on numerous occasions, it appears Alabama's citizens largely excuse this, and instead focus on Moore's aspect of being a 'common man'. Moore holds the same religious, conservative values as his base, and he has shown he will protect these values at all costs, even at the cost of his job. Disobeying federal orders as a State Chief Justice should be disqualifying, yet these actions only serve to solidify Moore's chosen persona. If elected, Moore would easily become the farthest-right senator, however, in the eyes of prospective constituents, this offers little to no detriment to Moore's electability factor.

However, early this November, Moore was accused of five different incidents of sexual assault by women who were teenagers at the time, the youngest of these girls being just fourteen-years-old. Moore has not only vehemently denied such accounts but additionally has alleged his accusers of trying to divert his campaign from its self-proclaimed God-oriented purpose. Moore's doing so is detrimental to Christianity and conservatism as a whole.



Moore's campaign is an affront to the moral case for conservatism, the very aspect of the conservative movement that must be restored in political campaigns and issues if the Republican Party wants to retain its congressional majorities in 2018. Conservatism as a whole has become plagued by populist, xenophobic campaigning, in the face of growing wealth inequality and global instability. Thanks to candidates like Roy

Moore, conservative principles such as limited government, religious freedom, and equality of opportunity have gone overlooked by voters who have instead come to associate conservatism with sexism, xenophobia, and elitism. The Republican Party will not succeed in the future unless it unequivocally disavows the despicable actions of candidates like Moore, actions such as sexual assault and disobeying federal orders as a civil servant.

In regards to sexual assault allegations, Moore is innocent until proven guilty. However, Moore's own defense should be considered disqualifying. Moore responded to these allegations by claiming that they were attempts to smear his self-proclaimed Christian campaign. As a result, Moore claims that any accusers and anyone who disagrees with him are not Christian, which does not answer his sexual assault allegations and only further divides our nation. If these sexual assault allegations are proven true (one of Moore's accusers is a Trump supporter, so it is unclear why these claims would have been fabricated), citizens will only become more frustrated with



candidates who utilize faith to cover up for their immoral practices.

In the past couple years, many Republican candidates have abandoned the tenets of conservatism. Candidates like Roy Moore offer the Left opportunities to espouse conservatives as racist, sexist, and xenophobic (all of which are untrue). Moore broke his Oath of Office as Supreme Court Justice twice, and these new sexual assault revelations only further demonstrate that Moore is too divisive to serve in the United States Senate. Our country is already divided along racial and political lines, and the baggage candidates such as Moore carry only deepens these wounds. In order to heal a divided country, and ensure prolonged success, the Republican Party must disavow Moore and focus on restoring a moral political order committed to Constitutional principles and respect for all.



James Paul '19

### The Future of DACA

Since his very first speech as a candidate, Trump made anti-immigrant language a hallmark of his campaign, characterizing Mexicans as criminals,” “job thieves,” and “bad hombres.” As President, Trump has turned this rhetoric into legislation, putting into action executive orders like the Travel Ban, and now, the repeal of the Obama-era DACA Program. But what is DACA, and is it actually detrimental to our economy and nation like many politicians claim?

DACA stands for Deferred Action for Child Arrivals, nicknamed the “Dreamers Act.” This program has allowed children brought to this country illegally to remain in the place they call home, receive work permits, and, essentially, live as a legal American would. The policy was created by Former President Obama in 2012 and expanded in 2014.

The main opposition to DACA stems from the idea that these illegal immigrants are hurting the economy and taking jobs away from US citizens. In 2014,

several states, including Arizona, Iowa, and Michigan, unsuccessfully challenged DACA in court. Notwithstanding, these states implemented policies that served as a backdoor way to burden those in the DACA program. With Trump as President, this sort of anti-DACA legislation and sentiment has gone national.



As justification for this administration's repeal of the program, Attorney General Jeff Sessions said that the program costs hundreds of thousands of American workers a chance at a job. According to Fortune, however, cancelling the program would hurt the economy as a whole, costing American jobs and shrinking the economy by over \$200 billion.

Another talking point of President Trump is that the program has provided a haven to criminals. Although DACA

immigrants have committed crimes, there evidence shows that, in fact, those in the DACA program commit crimes at a much lower rate than other immigrants as well as Americans as a whole. Additionally, the program does not shield criminal aliens from deportation. When a program recipient is arrested, their DACA status can be revoked even without a conviction, opening them up to deportation when necessary.

In September, President Trump's Department of Homeland Security stopped accepting DACA applications and the program will end once each individual authorization ends, the last of these being in 2020. The goal of this was to try and spur negotiations with Democrats on a long-term immigration bill aligned with the position of the Trump base. He tweeted: "Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military? Really! ...They have been in our country for many years through no fault of their own - brought in by parents at young age. Plus BIG border security"



However, nothing was agreed to at the time, and the President has subsequently returned his focus to heightening border security, this time without the Democrats. President Trump's change of tone, who told the DACA immigrants not to worry about deportation, makes it unclear as to whether there will be a deal. The future of is now in the hands of Congress, where the spotlight has shifted to health care and tax reform.

Support in cities across the country for the expansion of "sanctuary cities" has shown that there is significant constituent support for DACA. Nonetheless, the clock is running out for Congress and if the body does not act, the futures imagined by hundreds of thousands of Dreamers will be lost.

Aryaman Sharma '20

## Why Passing the Tax Bill is Crucial for Republicans

During Obama's presidency, the GOP repeatedly tried to repeal and replace Obamacare. But the Democratic-controlled White House prevented them from reaching their goal. Last November, however, it seemed as though the path had finally been cleared after Donald Trump emerged victorious in the 2016 election and the GOP retained their majority in both houses of Congress.



But having a majority just isn't enough. It took the House of Representatives months of revisions, including a withdrawal before voting, to get their bill into the Senate. Eventually, President Trump lost his patience and decided to take matters into his own hands. Last month, He signed an

executive order that began the dismantling of Obamacare. However, the order did not fulfill his campaign promise of improving the country's healthcare system as it loosens regulations on states and corporations. Critics worry this could cause premiums to rise for those still in the exchanges. Now, after Congress' failure on health care, the GOP is under immense pressure as they try to get their bill on tax reform passed. Nearly ten months into Trump's tenure as president, Republicans still haven't managed a single legislative achievement.

Not only has Congress failed in making any major legislative achievements, but the body has also been at the heart of the investigation into the Trump campaign's ties with Russia. Along with Robert Mueller's Special Counsel investigation, which began last June, numerous Congressional committees have been tasked with hearing the evidence offered to launch a full Congressional investigation. The Special Counsel investigation intensified this October when Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates were indicted on twelve counts,

including conspiracy against the US. Additionally, news surfaced at about the same time that a foreign policy advisor for the Trump campaign, George Papadopoulos, had lied to the FBI about his contacts with Russia during the 2016 election. These revelations continue to raise questions about Russian meddling in last year's election and whether or not the Trump campaign colluded with Russia.



Burdening congressional Republicans even further, the 45th president's first ten months in office have been plagued by political hurdles outside the legislative sphere. When the president partially fulfilled his campaign promise of imposing a travel ban on six Muslim-majority countries through executive order, critics on both sides of the aisle, including a number of congressional Republicans such as John

McCain, raised objections due to its anti-Muslim nature. Not only did the ban incite political criticism, but after the executive order was signed on January 30th of this year, a number of courts struck down the ban, citing unconstitutionality. It was not until six months later in June, when Trump's ban was finally upheld by the Supreme Court.

On Election Day this year, the party of Lincoln and Reagan lost the gubernatorial elections in Virginia and New Jersey. These defeats should serve as a signal to Republicans that they have to get back on track. Their tax reform bill has already raised concerns. If it becomes a law, there will be tax increases for middle-class families. They need to close out a tumultuous year with a victory on tax reform. Or trouble will be headed their way in next year's midterm elections.

Adam Julio '19

### **The Catalanian Conundrum**

The Spanish region of Catalonia has received much attention as of late due to its recent independence referendum, as well as the resulting discourse and controversy. Most

Catalans seem intent on full sovereignty, with 91% voting to become independent in this year's October referendum. However, the Spanish government has maintained their past positions on Catalanian independence movements, decrying the referendum as illegal and even sending in police in an attempt to prevent voting from occurring. The strikingly high percentage of Catalans voting in favor of independence suggests a great deal of motivation for full autonomy, and in fact, there is a lot of incentive for Catalonia to vote in favor of independence.



The Spanish-Catalonian divide can be traced to the Middle Ages, when a multitude of kingdoms, including Catalonia, ruled a divided Iberian peninsula. Due to its regional independence, Catalonia developed its own unique culture, language, and overall identity. Eventually, Spain united under a singular government in Madrid, however,



these distinctions between Catalonia and Spain remained. For example, you will find neither flamenco nor bullfighting in Catalonia, yet these are often thought of as staples of Spanish culture. This gives many native Catalans deep-rooted feeling of identity, one inherently distinct from Spain.

In addition to the deep-seated Catalan sense of separation present in the minds of many Catalans, there are numerous economic incentives for Catalan independence. Catalonia is the wealthiest of the Spanish provinces, and thus is taxed heavily to subsidize the Spanish national government. The amount of money Catalonia is forced to pay puts strain on its own government, which itself is still recovering from the 2008 world financial crisis. In addition, Spain refuses to grant the Catalonia even the most basic fiscal autonomy, unlike what it has granted to the Basque Region. An independent Catalonia would thrive financially, finally able to shed the burden of the Spanish government. The Catalan government, meanwhile, has expressed desire to remain in the Eurozone and European Union, things which could be

easily achieved should Catalonia obtain full sovereignty.

Ultimately, peaceful Catalan independence comes down to the Spanish government, which is unlikely to change their stance. Voting on October 1st was met with violent crackdowns from national police, and more recently the Spanish parliament has invoked Article 155 of the Constitution, federalizing Catalan government. But in the face of this harsh suppression of Catalan spirit, many in the region are growing increasingly tired and frustrated with a government for whom they have little connection and seems to not always have their best interest at heart.



Matthew Howard '18

### **Naming the Radical Left**

Burning the books contrary to their viewpoint, shutting down a gay blogger's speaking tour, inflicting violence on political



opponents, destroying and looting entire city blocks, and even attempting to assassinate U.S. Congressmen. Undoubtedly, these actions sound akin to those of a dangerous terrorist organization, or at the very least, a radical ideology intent on destroying the basic order of society. Perplexingly, many on one side of the political spectrum seem to think otherwise.

On reading of the aforementioned description of extreme political intolerance and violence, you might have thought of the so-called “Alt-Right,” a collection of radical individuals on the far-right that has meteorically risen to prominence over the past two years. The Alt-Right generally refers to those who hold beliefs far outside the bounds of typical conservatism, such as ethnic-nationalists, white-supremacists, and neo-confederates. While most active online, the Alt-Right has occasionally taken to the streets, where they’ve both attracted and instigated violence. January’s Inauguration Day, February’s violence on the UC Berkeley Campus, and most notably August’s ‘Unite the Right’ rally in Charlottesville, Virginia all demonstrated the human presence of the alt-

right and other right-wing groups. However, there was another group in attendance to these events, one that has proven even more dangerous.



Masked, black leather-clad rioters armed with improvised weapons are the ones responsible for the unacceptable dogmatism, mayhem, and political clashes voiced in the first paragraph. In stark opposition to the polished but deadly aura of the polo-sporting, tiki-torch carrying Alt-Right in Charlottesville, these militants on the radical-left exude thuggery, ferocity, and pandemonium. A loose collection of anarchists, communists, and other far-left agitators, these political bullies have organized under the moniker “Antifa,” short for Anti-fascist. Most of us can probably agree that, by name alone, anti-fascism sounds like a worthy cause. Unfortunately, members and allies of Antifa have perverted

the term to serve simply as a guise for their unchecked radicalism.

Antifa, like much of Left at large, has employed the term “fascism” freely and as a result, the term now refers to any of their political opponents, actual fascist or not. In the minds of Antifa, though, it was fascism they were fighting when they senselessly beat numerous individuals after the 2016 Election, just for expressing support for Donald Trump. Apparently, they were also fighting fascism when they set cars alight and attacked law enforcement after the 2017 Presidential Inauguration. They were fighting fascism even when they shut down and burned the books of conservative blogger Milo Yiannopoulos when he tried to speak at the UC Berkeley campus last March. It’s worth noting that Yiannopoulos is a gay, Jewish, immigrant. If anything, in these instances it was Antifa who acted the most like true fascists with their violent response to political opponents and commitment to silencing those who seek to exercise their right to free speech.



We are all aware of the inhumanity suffered at the hands of the Alt-Right in Charlottesville when a supporter of white-supremacist group Vanguard America rammed and murdered non-violent counter-protester, Heather Heyer. This event and all that occurred on August 11th and 12th were tragic, and we must not only condemn the violence of the Alt-Right but also its unjustifiable ideology. The perpetrator’s background and political motive were covered clearly and truthfully as soon as related information became available. But were we made similarly aware of the motives of James Hodgkinson, the man who attempted to assassinate multiple members of the Congressional Republican Baseball team in June? The shooter was reportedly a member of Antifa-affiliated Facebook groups ‘Terminate the Republican Party’ and ‘Our

Revolution Street Team’, and had been quoted online stating “It’s time to destroy Trump & Co.” Clearly, he had a left-wing political motive when he sought to target only Republicans in his act of terrorism.

After the devastating violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, prominent members of the Republican Party, conservative personalities, and news organizations were called to distance themselves from the actions at the ‘Unite the Right’ rally, and the Alt-Right movement as a whole. Aside from the President’s initially confusing delivery, Trump, Republican members of Congress, and members of outlets such as Fox News and the National Review disavowed the Alt-Right and, in the end, did so clearly. This is crucial, since disavowal by figures of the “mainstream Right,” comprised of Republicans, conservatives, classical liberals, etc., differentiates between normalcy and the extremism of the “Alternative-Right.”



Charlottesville provided the impetus for the Right to denounce its ultra-radical wing, but even after left-wing violence on the streets of major cities nationwide and a political assassination attempt, no comparable denouncement has emerged from the Democratic Party, nor any other high-profile left-wing figure or group, even after organizations within state and federal governments classed the actions of Antifa among those of domestic terrorists. The Left preaches tolerance and acceptance, yet fails to disavow the violent organizations like Antifa that represent its most reproachable elements. Until conventional liberal or left-wing figures forcefully denounce the senseless violence and reprehensible views of these so-called “Anti-fascist” thugs, no distinction can be made between the “Left” and “Alt-Left.” Antifa and the other groups and individuals that rank among the Left’s most radical will

simply be considered part of the wider left-wing movement due to the lack of separation initiated from within the mainstream Left itself.

Michael Hoben '18

### **America's Invisible War**

As we speak, the United States Government is waging the longest war this country has ever seen. This war costs the United States billions of dollars every year, thousands of American lives, and frankly the patience of the American people.

Your first thought may have been the War in Afghanistan, but it is the so-called "War on Drugs" that has spanned close to forty years, and yet produced little to no positive outcomes. We as a people have tried harsh punishment, education, and even decriminalization, but to no avail. Crime continues, and the lives of many are ruined by a failed strategy employed by many presidents with the same outcome every time this been tried. Under President Trump, it looks as though this this series of policy failure will only continue. However, this can be changed with a new strategy: legalization and

regulation. With these two components, it is possible that there can be an end to the costly battle between drugs and the public.



An unlikely example of the positive effects of drug legalization can be found in the country of Portugal. In 2000, Portugal cracked down on drug dealers and users, and only managed to hike up its death toll and incarceration rate. It also made very little impact on the number of users in the country. After a year of fruitless efforts, Portugal tried the revolutionary concept of total legalization, and it worked spectacularly. Portugal's drug-induced death rate dropped to just three per million residents, more than five times lower than the European Union's average of 17.3. Instead of punishing users, Portugal decided to help them receive treatment, benefitting national health as well. Portugal's rate of new HIV infection fell

precipitously starting in 2001, the year its law took effect, declining from 1,016 cases to just 56 in 2012. Access to affordable treatment without the risk of legal consequences, as well as clean drug paraphernalia, improved overall health, lowering costs both economic and human.

While Portugal continues to see clear success with their programs, things seem to only worsen in the United States. Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., claiming 60,000 lives last year alone. Dirty drug paraphernalia also represents a major health crisis in this country, with an estimated 360,836 people acquiring AIDS/HIV from soiled syringes (30 percent of all people diagnosed).

People will continue to fall ill, die, and use these types of illicit substances if our current draconian policies remain in place. Simply put, a nation cannot arrest its way out of a drug problem. Like drinking alcohol or using tobacco based products, drug use is a personal choice, made on one's own body. Additionally, the forces of addiction are often so strong that knowledge of a drug's negative effects, even the threat of prison, will not

ween any drug-user off without medical treatment. In fact, it teaches people to become craftier with their drug use, and fade even further into the shadows. Punishing those who use drugs simply leads to a vicious cycle where those who need help will not try to get it, nor make it known that they even have a problem in the first place.



The War on Drugs is a tried and failed experiment that is proven to lead to more harm than good. What this country needs now is reform, and a new strategy to try and change how we as a society think about drug use and addiction as well. If we are able to change the state of affairs on drug use in this nation, the future of some of America's most vulnerable may become just a little bit brighter.



Ian Greenawalt '18

### Can Hate Speech be Free Speech?

The first amendment states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” This concept, central to the American vision, was created out of our founding fathers’ yearning for a nation of intellectual autonomy and political freedom.

In the two-hundred-odd years since, though, the idea of speech without limit has run into a number of challenges which we face even to this day. Radicalization has seeped into our politics, drowning out logical and composed voices. To examine the role of free speech in modern America, it is crucial to identify the very nature of language. Humankind owes its progress as a species to our ability to converse thoughtfully. While we certainly have the power to turn words into the language of hate and intolerance, speech and the freedom of it is what has allowed us to grow, solve problems, and strive

for a more just world. Even so, some believe that censorship is how society ought to deal with hatred and conflict. A question then arises: is some speech more worthy than other speech, and in what way is hate speech, free speech?



Free speech is not only a human right but a prerequisite in a functioning civil society. The question for the United States and all Western democracies is what constitutes free speech? Free speech should be defined as speech that has the intent of informing positively, while hate speech is the opposite. True hate speech is dismissive, and insubstantial, and exists only to incite a reaction. The unfortunate part is, this distinction is impossible to identify objectively.



This question of free speech was one of many posed after events that transpired in Charlottesville, Virginia in August of this year. Hundreds of Confederate supporters, white-nationalists, and neo-Nazis marched, chanting racial rhetoric such as “you will not replace us” and the Nazi-based “blood and soil.” While nearly everyone denounces this language and the ideology behind it in all forms, even these veiled threats of violence fall under the umbrella of free speech. These chants are the rallying cries of a political ideology, albeit an extremely contemptible one, and both constitutionally and on principle, we all must understand the rights of these individuals to espouse their beliefs.



The right to expression is something that everyone, even ideological minorities deserve. While there might be a line between

hate speech and free speech, as of yet that line remains abstract. Expression of language cannot be stripped from even the smallest minority to appease the masses, for when the rights of one man are suspended, the rights of everyone are put in jeopardy.

Sean Lynch '18

### **College Loans and Tuition: The Heist of My Generation**

This year, over twenty million students will partake in an American postsecondary education. As the jobs market becomes increasingly competitive, more and more high school students are striving to receive a college education and develop “real world” skills. But while a degree undoubtedly enhances a person’s resumé, it can also leave a student in serious debt. Today, the ramifications of misguided policies in the world of higher education have left forty-four million Americans trapped in a trillion dollar financial crisis of student loans.

Over the past thirty years, the average sticker-price of attending a private college has increased from about \$10,000 to \$50,000, a staggering 500%, and the tuition at public

universities (for in-state students) has risen from \$2,000 to \$20,000~~6~~. However, in the same time, the U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI) as a whole has only increased 115%. This indicates that college tuition in the U.S. is inflating at a much higher rate than any other service, such as food, housing, and transportation. But why?

The University of Southern California, America's seventh most expensive university, offers an explanation. The school's provost, Michael Quick, claims that "[they're] competing with the Stanfords and Ivy League schools of the world, and when you're competing for best faculty in the world, that's expensive." Still, this reasoning doesn't explain why tuitions at less prestigious or competitive universities have soared at similar rates.



I believe that that there are two specific factors contributing to this drastic inflation. The first is the substantial increase in the administration to faculty ratio in many universities. Recently a professor at California Polytechnic University evaluated that in the past thirty years the university's number of full-time faculty members has only grown from 11,614 to 12,019, while the number of administrators soared from 3,800 to 12,183. Whether this considerable growth in administrators was actually needed, I don't know. However, it's highly questionable as to whether presidents at average universities deserve high six to seven annual figures, free housing, transportation, country club memberships, and exorbitant severance packages.

The second factor causing this calamity is the housing, dining halls, and facilities that colleges are now offering their students. When my parents attended college, their dorm buildings were former World War II military barracks with a single thermostat for the entire building, no air conditioning, and of course no internet. Their dining halls provided fast-food quality meals which made

them yearn for home cooking. Now, there are universities like ASU whose modern dorm buildings resemble summer vacation resorts and whose dining halls serve lavish meals. At Bowdoin College in Maine, students are frequently served gourmet dishes, for example mussels with garlic and white wine or Asian-style pork with duck sauce and julienne vegetables, while also having the option to eat at on-campus restaurants, such as “Jack Magee’s Pub and Grill.



Currently, solutions such as online courses, lower interest rates on loans, and even decreasing the standard four-year program into a three-year degree are being seriously suggested. Unfortunately, these all represent flawed attempts that evade the detrimental problems in the U.S. college system. Online courses lack a vital element of

education - the engagement and interaction between teachers and students. Lower interest rates should raise eyebrows because they could potentially encourage students to borrow even more money. As for three-year degree programs, they could interfere with students’ part-time jobs and internships. So, instead of changing the system, we need to work towards fixing it.

The first step should be instructing our adolescents that a college education is not necessary for everyone. Yes, an education is essential for developing skills and relationships with others, however the traditional four-year bachelor’s degree is not necessary for every line of work. There are several jobs ranging from plumbers to electricians to air-traffic controllers where this sort of education is permissive. If a student falls under one of these categories, then perhaps an associate degree from a community college or a certificate from a technical school is the most cost-efficient and beneficial route for him or her.

Secondly, to bring down the cost for those students whose professions require a

four-year degree, we should model the higher education systems of Norway or France. Both countries have all-but eliminated tuition fees both through federal taxes, and because their universities provide students with nothing more than an education, and leave the living and dining expenses up to the students.

There is no easy solution or fix-all that will cap or reduce the spiraling tuition and debt of America's graduates. Even after all of the government and private initiatives to make college affordable for the average family, for many, the cost of a degree is more expensive than ever. Students, parents, and policy makers must collectively make a concerted effort to reign in college expenditures.

Jason Palladino '20

### **Exploiting America's Geographical Edge**

Geography impacts the politics of every nation and the geography of the United States gives it significant advantages on both the global stage and in domestic affairs.

The first advantage lies in the land. The United States has a self-sufficient and impenetrable core. The nation has expansive

plains in the central United States and the eastern coast. 44.5% of the nation is arable meaning that food is abundant and as a result, cheap. The price of food is also significantly reduced because of transportation. One of the most beneficial facets of possessing the central North American continent is that, by extension, a nation controls one of the largest navigable river basins in the world. The Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin includes 1,151,000 square miles of a slow river perfect for easy transport. This river is one of many that includes the Connecticut, Hudson, Potomac, and Sacramento Rivers. These rivers, in addition to the country's 165,000 miles of freight railroads and canals have facilitated quick and efficient transportation of amenities and food throughout the contiguous United States.



The United States is the world's second largest exporter. The nation's

geography benefits America again with access to the two largest oceans and possession of islands such as Guam, the Hawaiian Islands, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa. These islands serve as both mercantile and military bases. Islands play an even larger role in the mainland, with barrier islands that stretch from Nantucket to the southern border. Barrier islands are essential to protect trade from the weather and surf of the open ocean. Ports and harbors all along the East Coast are protected by these islands, allowing the ports of many major cities to be much smaller than their foreign counterparts. The amount of capital saved by these barrier islands save allows the government to spend those resources on other vital institutions, chief among them is the military.

America's superlative geographical advantages and its powerful military have put the country among the most defensible nations on the planet. Our neighbors pose no threat. A war with Canada is impossible, due to the economic interdependence of Canada and the United States. Additionally, Canada is much weaker logistically than the United States, preventing the former from initiating

an attack. War from the south would also be a challenge, with most American cities separated by miles of inhospitable hot desert, in addition to the similar interdependence of the Mexican and American economies. The geographic isolation posed by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans also make the country nearly impregnable from a military perspective. Maintaining transoceanic supply lines against the U.S. Navy would be nearly impossible, thus the strength of an invading force is significantly reduced.



The United States has the geography to maintain the status quo that a large and stable nation requires. The primary focus of the United States going forward should be maintaining the infrastructure that has allowed us to gain mastery of our natural resources and position. The U.S. is faced with contaminated water in cities like Flint, an aging highway system, and public transit

systems that simply don't work. But most worrying is the seeming lack of initiative from our nation's political leaders and public servants on the pressing issues of infrastructure reform. In order to assure a successful, safe, and exceptional America for our nation's future generations, our leaders today must understand the unique value of the geography our nation has been given, and how it shapes our position in the world.



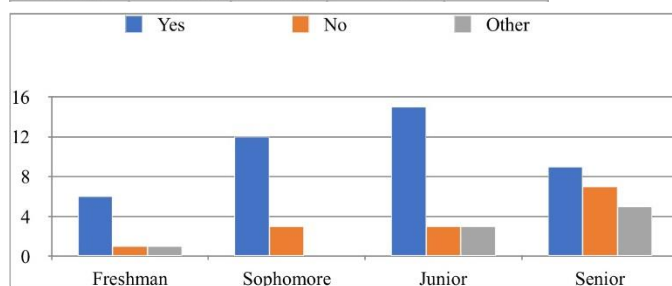
## Fairfield Prep Student Body Poll Results

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, members of the Political Awareness Society set up a booth at both lunches where students could make their vote count on some of the day's most relevant issues.

The question posed at Berchmans Lunch was:

“Should the U.S. preemptively strike North Korea to destroy their nuclear program?”

|             | Yes   | No    | Other | Total |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Freshman    | 6     | 1     | 1     | 8     |
| Sophomore   | 12    | 3     | 0     | 15    |
| Junior      | 15    | 3     | 3     | 21    |
| Senior      | 9     | 7     | 5     | 21    |
| Total       | 42    | 14    | 9     | 65    |
| Percentage* | 64.6% | 21.5% | 13.8% |       |



The question posed at Xavier Lunch was:

“NFL players who kneel during the National Anthem should be...?”

|             | Fired | Suspended | Fined | Unaffected | Other | Total |
|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|-------|
| Freshman    | 6     | 7         | 5     | 13         | 2     | 33    |
| Sophomore   | 5     | 4         | 1     | 12         | 6     | 28    |
| Junior      | 2     | 0         | 5     | 7          | 3     | 17    |
| Senior      | 7     | 3         | 5     | 15         | 6     | 36    |
| Total       | 20    | 14        | 16    | 47         | 17    | 114   |
| Percentage* | 17.5% | 12.3%     | 14%   | 41.2%      | 14.9% |       |

