

# The Masthead

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# The Gavel's Echo: Trump's Supreme Court Decision

*Chloe Crowell '25*

In December, the Colorado Supreme Court made a landmark decision declaring Donald Trump ineligible to run for president in the 2024 presidential election. The 4-3 vote in favor of removing Trump from the ballot has been appealed by Trump and will be contested in the United States Supreme Court. Trump's campaign for reelection is contingent on the Supreme Court's decision for his case expected in February. Having faced two impeachments and four indictments on 40 counts, including election interference, conspiracy to obstruct justice, and various other offenses, Trump seeks to challenge Colorado's decision for a return to the White House. Whatever the Supreme Court decides applies not only to Colorado but the 49 other states' ballots as well.

The legal challenges for Trump's case are based on if and how a state can determine whether Trump is in violation of section three of the Fourteenth Amendment. This section, classified as a civil war amendment, bars anyone from holding federal office that has "engaged in an insurrection or rebellion." Trump's actions during the January 6th riot, where he seemingly incited his supporters, form the basis of his opposition's argument. However, Trump's lawyers argue that the amendment does not apply to his case. His lawyers argue that taking Trump's name off the ballot would disenfranchise voters across Colorado and potentially Maine, another state looking to remove Trump from the ballot. His lawyers also argue that because the amendment does not explicitly state that it applies to the presidency but rather to electors, senators, and representatives, Trump is not guilty.

This is the first court case in United States history where the fourteenth amendment has been used to eliminate a presidential candidate from running for office. Donald Trump is the current front-runner for the Republican nomination in the primaries. Courts

in other states have dismissed attempts to remove Trump from the ballot. If convicted by the Supreme Court, former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley could emerge as the Republican nominee against the incumbent Democrat, Joe Biden. This introduces not only the possibility of the first female president in United States history but for a swerve away from another Trump vs. Biden showdown.

While Supreme Court cases typically last for four to twelve months, starting on February 8, the Supreme Court plans to resolve the matter with an expedited trial to ensure the 2024 presidential race remains on schedule. Removing Trump from the ballot could cause trouble for the Republican party, as he is the front-runner nominee of the party. According to CBS news, Trump called on the Supreme Court to revert the Colorado ruling and "'put a swift and decisive' effort to keep him off the ballot." However, Trump has supporters including the Republican National Committee, nearly 30 red states, and over 175 members of Congress. If he is declared ineligible to run for presidency, the outrage of his supporters may come at a cost to national security.

Ultimately, the Supreme Court's decision holds great implications on the 2024 presidential election, introducing untried legal questions. Beyond determining Trump's eligibility to run for president, the Supreme Court's decision may change the course of American politics and history. Colorado's ruling prompts a thorough examination of the nation's ever-changing political landscape.

# US Defense Against Houthis

*Savannah Emery '26*

The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, are a rebel group in Yemen that gained prominence in 2014 when they took control of the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, leading to a complex and ongoing conflict with regional and international implications. Due to their ongoing hate speech and violence, the US and several other countries have deemed the Houthis as a terrorist organization.

Iran funds the Houthis, and the terrorist group acts as proxies for them. In exchange for funding and resources, the Houthis act under the Iranian government's wishes. The Houthis have launched several missiles at southern Israel, but other countries got involved when they launched among international waters. The Houthis launched attacks on more than two dozen ships transiting through commercial lanes in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden that supposedly had links to Israel. However, many of these launches were seemingly random, and ships completely disconnected from Israel were hit. They ended up damaging US and UK army ships traveling through the area, as well as major container-shipping vessels. About 12 percent of all international trade passes through the Red Sea, but now major container shipping companies are seeking alternative routes for transportation.

On January 3rd, the US gave the Houthis a "final warning," but they responded by detonating a naval drone near US warships. The Houthis have stolen food aid, increased taxes for funding, and relied on Iran for military support; coalition raids from the US were unlikely to deter them anyway.

In response, the US partnered with a few other places like the UK and the Netherlands launched airstrikes in Yemen. In total, the U.S. has used over 100 guided precision bombs against the Houthis. Although the Houthis have not had a successful attack launch since January 18th, The U.S. struck more Houthi missiles as they were being prepared

to launch over the weekend. In the process, five soldiers have been killed. These attacks are not close to eliminating the Houthi arsenal but have successfully diminished some of their power.

The Israel-Palestinian conflict triggered this outburst of attacks, but the deep-rooted rivalry of Iran and Israel will continue. In turn, the Houthis will not stop their attacks until they stop being funded by Iran. The actual solution to their siege of power is being debated amongst countries all over the world, but the US government undoubtedly doesn't want to get involved with these conflicts in the Middle East and is keeping their defense of the trading routes minimal and quick. The conflict involving the Houthis in Yemen, intertwined with regional tensions and international implications, remains a complex challenge. Despite airstrikes from the U.S. and allies, the root causes persist, and a resolution is still elusive. Global debates on solutions continue, with the U.S. adopting a cautious stance, emphasizing limited involvement in the intricate Middle East dynamics.

# The Election of DPP's Lai Ching-te Fuels Cross-Strait Tensions

*Jason Cao '25*

On January 13th, 2024, Lai Ching-te, the candidate for the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected as President of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Receiving a plurality (over 40%) of the votes cast, Lai triumphed over Hou You-ih, the Kuomintang candidate, and Ko Wen-je, an unexpected third-party challenger from the Taiwan People's Party. The current Vice President, Lai inhabits the more radical wing of the DPP, once calling himself a "practical worker for Taiwan independence." His election will likely exacerbate cross-strait tensions and enhance the looming prospect of a Chinese invasion.

Politics in Taiwan have historically been dominated by two major parties, the Kuomintang (KMT), or Chinese Nationalist Party, and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Founded by Sun Yat-sen in Republican Era China, the KMT opposes de jure Taiwan independence and maintains its claim over the mainland. Party leaders generally accept the 1992 Consensus, which the KMT understands as the principle of "one China, different interpretations." As a result of the KMT's willingness to accept a broad unified Chinese identity, the party has generally enjoyed closer relations with the mainland. In contrast, the DPP favors Taiwan independence and self-determination and opposes the 1992 Consensus. Founded by pro-democracy activists in the 1980s, the DPP has no interconnected history with the mainland and rejects a shared Chinese identity. As such, they are vehemently opposed by the Chinese Communist Party, which views the DPP as a separatist organization.

A potential Chinese invasion in the next four years is a growing possibility for several reasons. First, China sees peaceful reunification as becoming increasingly unlikely, given growing animosity towards the

CCP and support for independence in Taiwan. The electoral success of the DPP in the past three presidential election cycles signifies a broad societal trend in favor of independence, especially among younger Taiwan residents. Much of this animosity is self-inflicted, as China's increasingly aggressive foreign policy stance and the political repression in Hong Kong have turned many residents against the prospect of reunification. The lack of a societal and cultural connection with China, however, also contributes to the growing aversion and indifference towards cross-strait dialogue among Taiwan's youth.

In addition, Taiwan is an integral part of China's broader geopolitical goals. Taiwan is of key strategic importance to the national interest of the United States, acting as an integral link in the first island chain and in the broader plan to contain China's expansion. As China furthers its geopolitical ambitions, Taiwan is an unavoidable obstacle. Taiwan is also an integral player in the semiconductor industry, producing over 60% of the global supply. Hence, political turmoil and uncertainty in Taiwan yields great benefits for Chinese firms, the rising player in the global AI and semiconductor race.

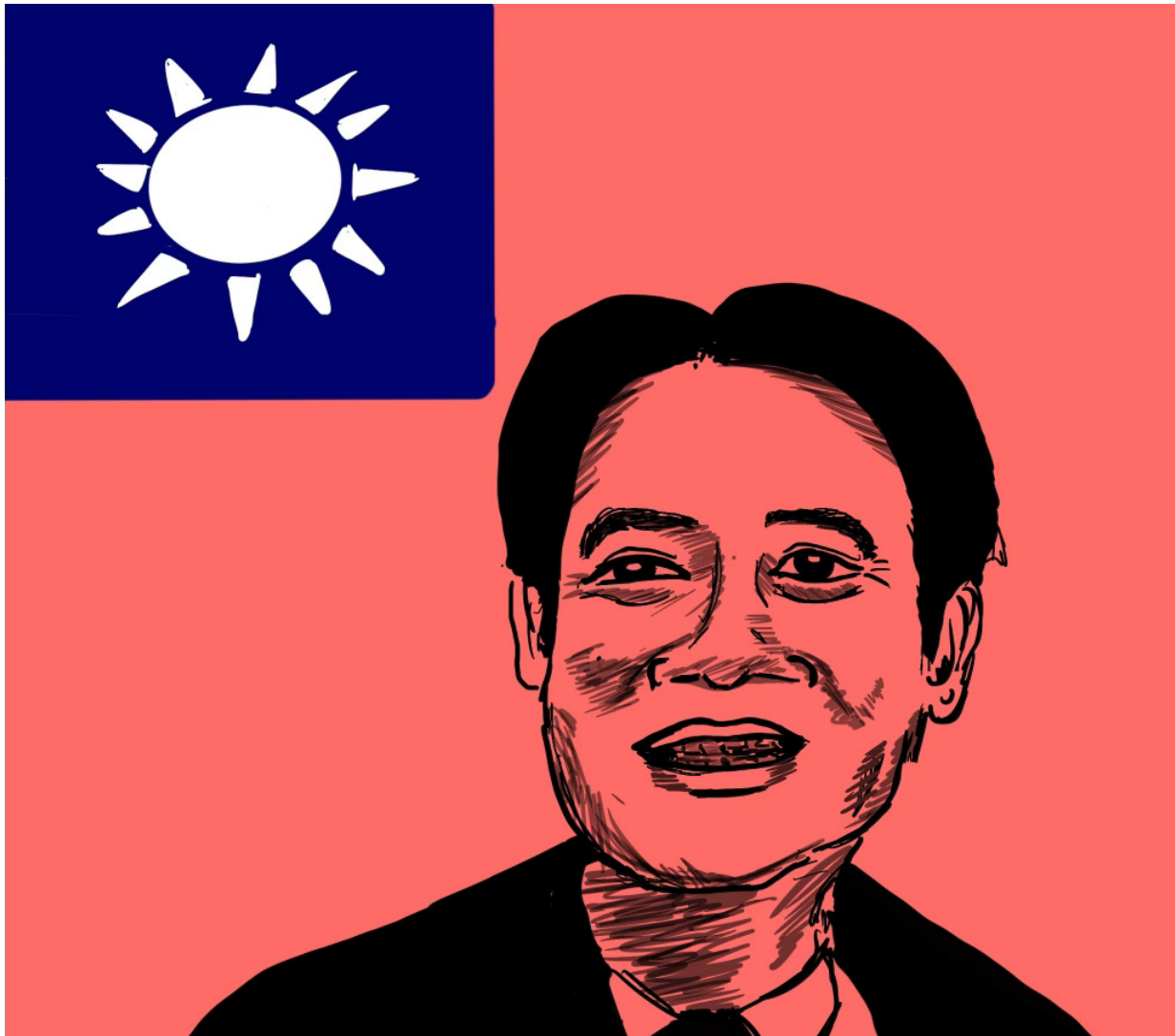
Apart from strategic concerns, Taiwan is also a symbolic objective for Chinese political leaders. The current leader appears intent on enshrining his status as a national savior in Chinese history. Achieving reunification, which he dubs as a "historical inevitability," would provide him with that opportunity. The CCP establishment is also in a desperate search for foreign tensions that would divert citizens from internal woes like unemployment and housing. A long-awaited invasion of Taiwan appears to be the perfect diversion.

The election of Lai Ching-te would at best exacerbate cross-strait division, and at worst provide the perfect casus belli for a Chinese attack. First, Lai's campaign runs on thinly-veiled pro-independence beliefs. While Hou You-ih is generally viewed as a more moderate and localist candidate of the KMT, Lai has historically aligned himself with the "deep green" faction of the DPP, meaning unconditional support for independence. In the general election, he has moderated his stance, stating that "Taiwan is already a sovereign, independent country called the Republic of China" and therefore has no need to declare independence again. These word games have helped him win over moderate voters but are unlikely to placate mainland China. Beijing's response simply states, "[Lai] has betrayed the totality of the Chinese nation."

More importantly, Lai's foreign policy has been consistently pro-Western and antagonistic towards China. Unlike Hou and Ko, Lai Ching-te's platform

does not emphasize cross-strait dialogue, but rather prioritizes defense spending as a deterrent to Chinese aggression. This policy is likely to alarm China and prompt more military exercises in the Taiwan strait. Lai's affinity towards Japan, a long-time geopolitical foe of China, is also likely to draw the ire of top Chinese officials. His policy of decoupling trade with China in favor of further integration with the West would sever the tenuous cross-strait connections that still exist.

Regardless of your preferences on Taiwanese politics, the election of Lai Ching-te should alarm you about the prospect of a Chinese invasion. Lai's policies would deepen the rift between mainland China and Taiwan and end all hope for compromise. With Lai's triumph in the presidential election, the potential for a major cross-strait conflict in the coming decade has evolved from a wild fantasy to a real possibility.





# The Flaws of Ranked-Choice Voting

Xiu Lim '25

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) has been heralded as a progressive solution to many of the shortcomings of traditional voting systems. By allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference, RCV promises to deliver more representative election outcomes and eliminate the ‘spoiler effect’ often associated with third-party candidates. However, beneath its appealing surface (which I discussed in *the Choate News* roughly a year ago), RCV harbors significant flaws that raise concerns about its efficacy and impact on the democratic process.

One of the most glaring issues with ranked-choice voting is its inherent complexity. Unlike the straightforward ‘one person, one vote’ approach, RCV requires voters to understand and engage in a more complicated process of ranking candidates. This complexity can be daunting, especially for those less familiar with the electoral process. Studies have shown that RCV can discourage voter participation, and this might be particularly true among groups that are already underrepresented in the electorate, such as young voters and non-native English speakers. This complication not only undermines the principle of democratic accessibility but also raises questions about the accuracy and legitimacy of election outcomes under RCV.

Ranked-choice voting, while designed to offer a more nuanced representation of voter preferences, also inadvertently opens the door to tactical voting. This is a strategy where voters do not necessarily rank candidates based on their genuine preferences, but rather in a way that they believe will strategically benefit their preferred candidate. This tactical approach can manifest in several ways. For instance, voters might rank a less preferred but more popular candidate higher to prevent a disliked candidate from winning. Alternatively, they might purposely rank a perceived weaker candidate higher to eliminate stronger opponents in the early rounds of tallying. Such strategies can distort the intended purpose of

RCV, which is to capture sincere voter preferences. The potential for tactical voting isn’t just theoretical. Political campaigns may start to focus on educating voters about strategic ranking methods, further complicating the voting process and moving away from the principle of sincere preference expression. This shift could fundamentally alter the nature of election campaigns and voter decision-making, potentially leading to election outcomes that don’t end up accurately reflecting straightforward preferences of the electorate. Moreover, tactical voting can lead to unexpected and sometimes counterintuitive election results. In some cases, a candidate who appears to be less popular initially could win through strategic elimination of stronger candidates. This outcome challenges the core democratic principle that the most preferred candidate by the majority should prevail.

Additionally, the system of redistributing votes from eliminated candidates can create paradoxical situations. For example, a candidate who is broadly acceptable to most voters but not the first choice of a strong majority could be eliminated in early rounds. This could lead to a final comparison between two polarizing figures, neither of whom represents a broad consensus of the electorate. Another aspect to consider is the ‘exhaustion’ of ballots. In cases where voters do not rank all candidates, their ballot may become ‘exhausted’ if all the candidates they ranked are eliminated. This means their votes are not counted in the final stages of tallying, potentially leading to a winner who does not represent the majority of all cast votes.

While ranked-choice voting presents an innovative approach to electoral reform, its significant flaws cannot be overlooked. The complexity and potential for voter confusion, especially among underrepresented groups, raise serious concerns about democratic accessibility and the accuracy of election outcomes. The likelihood of tactical voting and the

questionable reflection of true voter preferences challenge the core principles of democratic elections. These challenges highlight the need for a

thorough and critical evaluation of ranked-choice voting as a solution to the limitations of traditional voting systems.

# How effective are carbon taxes in reducing carbon emissions?

*Sophie Li '26*

The recent exacerbated effects of global warming has led to an ever-increasing focus on the reduction of carbon emissions. Of the policy tools used to control such emissions, carbon taxes is a debated subject amongst lawmakers. This carbon pricing tool is a tax imposed on the amount of carbon emissions, like carbon dioxide, an entity emits. An obvious consequence is an increase in the cost of doing business. As such, the aim of the tax is for businesses to consider environmentally friendly alternatives for their operations. However, this idea, on its own, throws up a number of challenges, in particular carbon leakage, regressive effects remain a useful tool to combat carbon emission, but this has to be complemented with various other policies for it to truly be effective.

Carbon leakage is when a business relocates from a carbon tax country to another that does not have such a tax. In general, Southeast-Asian countries like China, India, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia have less stringent environmental regulations, and therefore businesses from jurisdictions which have carbon taxes, like Sweden, Finland, Canada and France, might relocate their operations there to remain competitive. What can be done to mitigate this? A universal carbon tax may be the answer. In any case, international cooperation is crucial for a carbon tax to be effective, to ensure a level playing field for industries across borders.

The regressive effects of carbon tax is another challenge. When faced with a carbon tax, a business

may, instead of finding alternative energy sources, simply pass it down the supply chain. Unfortunately, it is usually lower-income households who have to bear the higher burden. For example, heating bills take up a higher proportion of the income for a working class individual compared to a billionaire. Similarly, electric cars are expensive, and so those who cannot afford a Tesla will have to pay for higher petrol costs. An approach to mitigate this would be revenue recycling - redistribute the revenue from carbon tax to lower income individuals or households in the form of tax rebates or subsidies, to help them cope with increased energy costs or support energy efficient upgrades.

Because the collection of carbon taxes is dependent on how businesses run their operations, there exists an uncertainty in actual emission reduction. If they decide to simply pass the costs on, this defeats the purpose of the tax. Similarly, carbon leakage would mean no overall reduction of carbon emissions, which might even increase. One possible mitigation would be the cap-and-trade system, whereby the government sets a cap on the total amount of emissions allowed, and issues a quantity of allowances consistent with that cap. Emitters must hold allowances for every ton of greenhouse gas they emit, which they may buy and sell. Entities that can reduce their emissions below their allocated allowances can sell their excess allowances to those who need additional allowances to comply with their emission limits. The overall cap ensures that emissions stay within the predetermined limit, while en-

uce emissions and rewardings those who can do so at lower costs. Examples of cap-and-trade systems are the European Union Emissions Trading System, California, and New Zealand. In fact, the cap-and-trade system could be used in conjunction with a carbon tax, with the latter setting the floor in terms of price.

As can be seen, carbon tax should be used with international cooperation, revenue recycling, and cap-

and-trade systems for it to be effective. In particular, in terms of revenue recycling, not only should revenue received from the carbon taxes be used to subsidize the lower-income sector of the population, it should also be used for investing in energy efficiency programs, research and development for low carbon technologies, and education of the public. Only then can a carbon tax be a truly effective tool in the reduction of the carbon footprint.

# Universal Basic Income: What Is It, and Could It Work?

*Levi York '26*

You may have heard Andrew Yang talk repeatedly about Universal Basic Income (UBI) during his bid to gain the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, but what actually is it? Universal Basic Income is an unconditional payment system from a government to its people, regardless of their salary, family structure, or even employment status. However, UBI can look very different from case to case. It can be a yearly or monthly cash payment, and the amount of money can be drastically different as well – anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars each month. UBI also does not entail a particular way to finance the program; rather, the financing can vary from program to program. That may partially explain why only talking about UBI without specifying the details can lead to so much polarization on the topic, regardless where one is on the political spectrum.

People argue that UBI is more of a “floor to stand on” as opposed to a safety net. Because UBI is universal, it is a benefit for all, and it is not only there for people to fall back on in times of trouble and need. Instead, it raises the poverty line and can help families meet their basic needs. If UBI were to be funded through federal income tax – just one way it

is proposed to be funded – the distribution of money would be more equitable. This is because the top earners would contribute more to the program monetarily, while those making less would contribute less, while still providing sums similarly proportional to their respective incomes. While the money distributed from UBI in this case would be equal, it would also be equitable. People in the upper class would end up losing a bit on the program, people in the middle class would break even, and those in the lower class would benefit the most.

So, could it work? Those on the right often say that implementing a welfare program like UBI would reduce incentive to work and contribute to higher unemployment. However, this isn't necessarily true: in trial cases of UBI, the incentive to work did not overwhelmingly fall and or contribute towards unemployment. And even those who might not be employed and still reap the benefits of the program and arguably contribute to our society in different ways – for example, through their role as parents. Some conservatives do support the project, however. Some believe that the floor that UBI provides for citizens to stand on can reduce the need for other forms of social safety nets and welfare programs,

reducing the need for government intervention. This is where many liberals start to disagree, believing that the addition of UBI should not be mutually exclusive with the existence of preexisting welfare programs.

UBI is a broad and unspecific term and a program that could be implemented in a myriad of ways. But at the end of the day, it is a program that can help support people in hard times both individually and sometimes collectively as a nation. UBI could help families more reliably afford their rent and food. It could also provide people with financial independ-

ence and give them agency in difficult situations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, if UBI had already been implemented, people would have been less reliant on the government to act quickly to approve economic assistance.

UBI is an added layer of support for everyone in society, which at its core is not a very radical idea. In a time of great technological advancements and the fear of the loss of jobs to automation, UBI is just one more thing that could help people vulnerable to the change we are experiencing.

# Current Trends and Predictions of the Federal Funds Rate

*Ming Qin '25*

At the core of the Federal Reserve's mission, the dual mandate guides its monetary policy decisions to foster maximum employment and price stability. Maximum employment means the Fed aims for as many people as possible to have jobs without the economy becoming overwhelmed and causing inflation. Price stability involves keeping inflation at a manageable level, ideally at the Fed's target of 2%. This ensures that the dollar's value remains steady, preserving the purchasing power of consumers and businesses.

Balancing the dual mandate is similar to walking a tightrope; the Fed has to constantly adjust its policies to keep the economy growing at a healthy pace without letting prices spiral out of control or letting too many people be out of work. The dual mandate acts as the North Star for the Fed, directing how it manages the U.S. economy's thermostat — the federal funds rate. The federal funds rate acts as a tool to help the Fed nudge the economy in particular directions. Increasing the federal funds rate is a con-

tractionary policy that tends to increase the unemployment rate but curb inflation rates. Conversely, decreasing the federal funds rate may increase employment, but can also lead to higher inflation rates.

In July 2023, the Federal Reserve increased the federal funds rate to a range of 5.25 to 5.5 percent, marking the year's final hike amid recovery efforts from the post-pandemic boom. By December, the unemployment rate had dropped to a historic low of 3.7%, and inflation only rose slightly to 3.35%. The indicators showed no sign of recession; in fact, job growth and consumer spending have been much better than expected. Despite positive indicators, however, the Fed chose to maintain the current rate again. In its December press release, the Fed concluded that economic growth was solid, job gains were decent, but inflation, although not as bad as it has been, was still higher than the 2% goal. However, the biggest news from the meeting wasn't just about the Fed's decision to keep the rate steady;



it was also about their future plans. Indeed, as 2023 wrapped up, the Fed forecasted cutting rates three times for a total of 75 basis points (0.75%) in 2024.

Speculation about the timing of these cuts grew, with some anticipating action as early as March. However, comments from several policymakers in January, including Federal Reserve Governor Christopher Waller and Atlanta Federal Reserve President Raphael Bostic, stifled these expectations. They stressed the importance of being methodical about changes to the federal funds rate, suggesting we might not see rate cuts until later in the year. With its hard goal of 2% inflation and a six-month to a year-long time lag following each policy decision, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell claims he would like to see more evidence of inflation reaching the target before any cuts are made. The chance of a rate cut in March, which seemed pretty likely before, has dropped significantly.

So, what's likely to happen in January 2024? I think the Fed will maintain its current rate, upholding the conservative stance they have adopted in the face of ongoing inflation concerns. They've been justifiably cautious, and with inflation still being a bit of a headache but the job market holding up, it makes sense not to shake things up too much right now. As

for when we will actually see those rate cuts, I believe that policymakers will take their time and likely start in the late second half of the year. January is improbable, and March is a long shot — the Fed has been clear that they want to move slowly and make sure they're not making decisions too hastily. In the long run, I think that exercising caution will prove to be the correct decision.

Everyone wants to know if the Fed can pull off a “soft landing,” where they manage to get inflation under control without sending the economy into a recession. From what we've seen, the Fed's taking a very cautious approach with slow, deliberate moves, hoping to cool things down just enough without causing a recession. It's a tricky balance to strike, but if they stick to the current path of stability and predictability, there's a good chance we'll see the soft landing everyone's hoping for, albeit much later than some may hope for.

Navigating the choppy, uncertain waters of the U.S. economy in 2024 presents a formidable challenge for the Federal Reserve. As it seeks to fulfill its dual mandate, the Fed's overarching strategy appears to be cautious and gradual. It's up to anyone's guess how it all plays out in the end, but for now, the Fed's message is clear: slow and steady wins the race.

# Everything is Horrible: The Case for Antinatalism

*Elle Hardy '26*

If your life is full of suffering and pain, why would you bring children into the world? This is the question posed by the famed antinatalist David Benatar. Antinatalism is the belief that it is morally wrong or unjustifiable for people to have children, with a diverse philosophical group of ideas with a wide intensity range. The principles behind antinatalism are that regardless of the joys in life, the suffering presented ultimately outweighs the benefits of human existence. While antinatalism might seem overwhelmingly depressing and pessimistic on its face, the philosophy is rooted in preventing suffering.

Many people are deeply unhappy, and some are more than they even realize. Benatar explains in his recent interview with *The New Yorker*, stating that “life is a procession of frustrations and irritations.” Additionally, in the 2022 World Happiness Report, participants were asked to rate their happiness on a scale of one to ten. The highest rating country, Finland, scored 7.8 out of 10. On the contrary, the lowest-scoring country, Afghanistan, scored 2.4 out of ten. Antinatalism seeks to combat this widespread unhappiness. However, it does not preach for the eradication of already existing life forms, as death is also pain, but instead preaches for the prevention of life in the first place. Benatar states that “both life and death are, in crucial respects, awful.” Therefore, he suggests “not to enter into the predicament in the first place.” This notion that to prevent suffering one must not have children is perhaps extreme. However, consider the idea that if someone decides to have a child, that child is destined to experience some degree of unhappiness that could have been avoided by not being born.

There are many joys in life. Finding love, happiness, and success are all beautiful things that come with living. All of these things that one cannot experience without being born would cease to exist. When Benatar is asked if life is worth living, his response is yes, but only because death is also pain.

While this is not the positive answer many are seeking, Benatar’s reasoning is sound. When asked, Benatar replies, “Pain is worse than pleasure is good. Pain lasts longer: There’s such a thing as chronic pain, but there’s no such thing as chronic pleasure... It’s also more powerful: would you trade five minutes of the worst pain imaginable for five minutes of the greatest pleasure?” This response suggests that while it is true that there are many good things in life, none outweigh the negative of unavoidable pain. Benatar suggests that essentially, should the person have never been born then no suffering would ever occur. Even though in this scenario, no one would experience joy, there wouldn’t be anyone missing out on the lack of that joy because that person never existed to miss it in the first place. Benatar and his theories are extreme, dramatic, and incredibly depressing. While this category of philosophy is widely unpopular and seen as unreasonable, Benatar and his theories propose interesting ideas about the value of pain versus happiness in life.



# The Right To Be Forgotten

Katie O'Meara '26

Can you remember the last random thought or question you searched up online? Can you remember the last thousand? You probably can't, but companies like Google, Microsoft, and Apple, can. From the very first thing you looked at online, to the very last thing you just did on your phone, computer, or iPad, the actions you do on your electronics are monitored, cataloged, and used by companies to help profile you as a consumer. Whether you like it or not, when you decide to go online, the things you search for, the pictures you post, and the messages you send aren't private data.

For a lot of us, the idea of a permanent digital footprint has been normalized, so much so that we usually don't even think about it. However, this isn't the case for everyone. Mario Costeja González, a Spanish citizen, began the first widely successful legal fight for digital privacy. In 2010, González went to court to file a complaint against Google and a Spanish magazine named *La Vanguardia Ediciones* after he discovered that the private ads he had posted decades ago were still available online. He deemed this to be a violation of his privacy, and the court agreed. His case was then sent to the European Union's Court of Justice, and the EJC agreed with González as well. Following this, in 2018, The Right To Be Forgotten was put into action in the EU.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for the EU explains that The Right To Be Forgotten guarantees that any data user has the right to have their data erased if they don't give consent for companies to use it, they retract the consent given to use it, or the data is no longer needed for the original processing purposes. This completely changes how users interact with the internet, and vice versa. Without being able to keep a user's personal data, websites can no longer use someone's digital footprint to personalize content, marketing, ads, and overall online experience.

Unsurprisingly, tech companies have pushed back against The Right To Be Forgotten. One of the most

frequent arguments in favor of retaining data is that it can be used for innovation. Technology's growth relies on user data, and some companies that invested in creating and improving tech solutions are concerned that erasing data will inhibit technology's advancement. Now, with the use of AI becoming increasingly prevalent, the boundaries of where users' privacy is being violated or used for growth have become gradually blurred.

Though the government might want to restrict access to data, and tech companies might want unrestricted access, both can argue that their side will ultimately contribute to the good of society. These ongoing conversations and arguments are the reason why many countries, the US included, have not yet adopted The Right To Be Forgotten.

While The Right To Be Forgotten gives users more rights, privacy, and protection of their personal data, there are still many important concerns to consider. Where is the line drawn for the use of personal data by tech companies? Who gets to decide how that data is used? While giving companies free range over users' data curates a tailored, customized online experience, is it morally correct to use that information? With many factors like AI, profit incentives, and the logistical challenges with erasing data, it's likely we'll be navigating the complexities of digital privacy for years to come.

# Help or Hindrance?: Western Aid in Developing Countries

Quinn Farmer<sup>25</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, Western nations ramped up their involvement in developing African nations. As the level of aid soared through the 1980s and 1990s, the continent's growth per capita was not improving, in many cases doing worse than before. Over the past 50 years, Western nations have poured billions of dollars of aid into the African continent, but the inverse relationship between the amount of aid contributed and the resulting economic growth is a pattern not limited to Africa. Whether the reason for giving aid comes from the hopes of ending epidemics, slowing mass migration, strengthening security, a humanitarian obligation, or a potential opportunity for economic growth, large amounts of foreign aid can have a negative impact on developing nations.

Economists argue that attempts to help developing countries may actually further corruption in those nations' governments and, ultimately, slow their growth. Wealth from foreign aid can increase the incentive for political conflict within weak governments. In order to run a nation effectively, a government must receive funding in the form of taxes from its people, meaning a government is liable to the people to produce a certain level of security and basic services. Economists like Angus Deaton, a Nobel Prize-winning economist at Princeton University, argue that countries that receive enormous amounts of aid relative to their own economy weaken this relationship and lessen a government's accountability to its people.

Foreign aid has grown to be a necessary force in geopolitics, but it does not always work for the long-term benefit of countries on the receiving end. Oftentimes, giving aid is a common tactic for Western nations to expand their sphere of influence. The United States is a prime example, using aid to support allies, protect economic interests, or further a

geopolitical agenda rather than out of an express humanitarian interest in the affected people. Even when aid is dedicated to humanitarian causes, it can unwittingly cause harm to the people receiving it. Often, to get to the powerless, one must first go through the powerful, even if that means inadvertently extending conflict.

In critiquing the power of foreign aid, it is necessary to point out that there are effective aid practices. Many specifically targeted forms of foreign aid, such as financing local businesses or building wells, are very successful in helping a local community through investment and by singling out a certain cause. However, on a larger scale, foreign aid should be analyzed in terms of the state. It does not matter how much the money is spent if the system it is spent on is dysfunctional. Fundamentally, the corruption in government and the lack of security, health care, and education systems can all be exacerbated by extreme amounts of Western aid. The heart of the problem is a failing state, and foreign aid does very little to address that systemic problem.





# Boeing Mechanical Failures

*Kaylin Lam '27*

On January 5, 2024, Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 encountered a harrowing incident as a 60-pound door plug forcefully blew out from the emergency exit, sparking concerns about the safety of Boeing planes. The incident, widely circulated on social media platforms, revealed the alarming power of the vacuum effect, snatching items from passengers and causing a panic. Boeing's CEO, Dave Calhoun, reassured the public, emphasizing transparency and a commitment to addressing the causes of such accidents.

This event, however, is not an isolated incident but rather part of a series of issues plaguing Boeing, particularly its 737 MAX aircraft. Since its delivery on October 31, 2023, the 737 MAX has faced a cascade of problems. Investigations unveiled missing bolts and improperly drilled holes on certain fuselages of other 737 MAX planes in late January. The root of the issue wasn't in the aircraft's design but rather traced back to Spirit AeroSystems, the supplier responsible for the faulty door, facing criticism for severe quality control deficiencies.

The troubling trend extends beyond this recent incident, marking a six-year saga of mechanical failures since the 737 MAX's debut. The most serious incidents were the Lion Air Flight 610 in 2018 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 in 2019, resulting in a combined death toll of 346. These tragedies led to massive financial setbacks for Boeing, with canceled orders and global grounding of the 737 MAX by aviation authorities, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Despite bans being lifted after a few years, the FAA opted to ground 171 Boeing 737-9 MAX airplanes post the Alaska Airlines incident.

Delving into Boeing's history reveals a transformation marked by corporate restructurings, mergers, and changes in leadership. The merger with McDonnell Douglas in 1997 signaled a shift in focus from

engineering excellence and safety to a culture seemingly more concerned with profit maximization. Former McDonnell Douglas personnel took prominent leadership positions, prioritizing cost-cutting measures, reshaping Boeing's ethos.

The 737 MAX's origin stems from a competitive race with Airbus in 2011, where Boeing faced a setback as American Airlines considered a substantial order from its rival. Boeing, in response, abandoned plans for a new aircraft and opted to modernize the 737 model to stay competitive. The relentless pace of work on the 737 MAX, driven by tight deadlines and strict budget constraints, led to a chaotic project environment. Despite challenges, employees claimed confidence in the aircraft's safety upon completion.

The constant shadow of Airbus, outperforming Boeing in deliveries, loomed large, making the American Airlines contract crucial for Boeing's survival. The repeated mechanical failures underscore a complex interplay between external pressures, financial considerations, and corporate culture. Boeing's journey from an engineering-focused company to one grappling with safety compromises demonstrates the delicate balance required between profitability and quality to ensure passenger safety and true reliability in the aerospace industry.

# Investing in the Future: The Impact of Green Bonds

*Maya Moorthy '25*

In a world where environmental concerns are at the forefront, individuals are increasingly looking for ways to align their investments with their values. One avenue gaining significant attention is the realm of green bonds – a powerful tool in financing environmental and sustainable projects. A green bond, simply put, is a fixed-income investment channeling funds into initiatives such as renewable energy, recycling, clean transportation, and sustainable forestry. But why should one consider investing in these eco-friendly financial instruments?

First and foremost, green bonds allow investors to put their money where their values are. Much like Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investments, green bonds carry a mission built into the investment itself. It's a tangible way for investors to contribute to the betterment of the planet while still seeking financial returns.

Moreover, green bonds come with enticing tax incentives, offering exemptions and credits that make them an attractive choice for both issuers and investors. This not only benefits the environment but also provides a financial advantage for those committed to tackling climate change and promoting renewable energy.

However, understanding green bonds goes beyond their financial benefits. These designated bonds aim to encourage sustainability and support projects ranging from energy efficiency to pollution prevention, sustainable agriculture, and clean transportation. Verified by third parties like the Climate Bond Standard Board, green bonds ensure that the funds are directed towards initiatives with genuine environmental benefits.

The rise of green bonds has been remarkable, with

global interest reaching new heights. The 2010s witnessed a surge in green bond issuance, growing from \$2.6 billion in 2012 to a staggering \$270 billion in 2020. Notably, institutions like the World Bank have played a pivotal role in promoting green bonds, issuing \$14.4 billion from 2008 through 2020 to support 111 projects worldwide.

Various types of green bonds exist, each with unique characteristics, catering to different investor preferences. Whether it's "Use of Proceeds" Bonds, Project Bonds, or Securitization Bonds, the diverse options allow investors to choose instruments aligning with their risk appetite and environmental priorities. For those interested in joining the green bond movement, there are accessible avenues, such as ETFs like the iShares USD Green Bond ETF. This investment vehicle offers exposure to a portfolio of green bonds, allowing retail investors to participate in the environmentally conscious movement.

As green bonds become a driving force in socially responsible and ESG investing, it's crucial to recognize their impact on financing projects that shape a sustainable future. The bottom line is clear: green bonds are not just financial instruments; they are a commitment to a greener, more sustainable tomorrow. Investors, now more than ever, have the power to drive positive change through their financial choices.

# What is Social Impact Investing?

*Judah Brecher '25*

You may have heard the term “Social Impact Investing” before and been confused on what it meant. Social Impact Investing has become a practice popularized in recent years, inspired by social problems like racial injustice and climate change. My goal is to give you some familiarity with what this investing is and how it may impact your life.

The Global Impact Investment Network defines Social Impact Investing as “investments made with the intention to generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.” The GIIN estimates that the size of the current impact investment market is around 1.1 trillion dollars as of 2022, with considerable growth in recent years. Investors and investment have always been focused on returning positive returns, and while impact investment still does, it marks a shift in mindset as investors try to not only increase their bottom line, but improve society as well. Increased investment has happened in sectors like renewable energy, social enterprises, and education initiatives. Impact investing has happened at a global scale, as companies have supported environmental or social projects in various regions that they believe can make tangible change.

Much of the move towards social impact investing in recent years has been from pushes from consumers. There are very few goods or services that are only produced by only one company, and many consumers don't want to buy from companies that don't share their values or actively support causes they disagree with. Think about it in your personal life. All other factors being equal, if you have the chance to buy clothes from a business that supports social causes you agree with, versus a company who doesn't, the choice is obvious. Companies want to attract as much market share as possible, so they choose to support causes that will incentivize people to buy from them. For example, both Target

and Walmart have invested millions of dollars since 2019 into causes advancing social justice.

Venture capital firms have invested money for years into small, budding companies that have positive social impacts. In the US, one of the most famous of these firms is the Investors' Circle, a “angel network” that has gotten in early on major, sustainable brands like Zipcar and Honest Tea. Banks like Morgan Stanley have in recent years opened entire divisions focused on finding and investing in companies with profit potential focused on sustainable and ethical business practices. More and more investment firms have started to focus on finding budding companies that can become big while also bringing positive social or environmental change.

Social Impact Investing tries to combine returning a profit and having a positive social impact. As more people try to support ethical businesses and social causes, Social Impact Investment has increased as companies try to put their money where their mouths are, and that investment looks to continue to increase. As it continues to grow, Social Impact Investing has the potential to make tangible progress on many of the pressing issues of our time.

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