The Masthead

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Should America Adopt the Nordic “Democratic Socialist” model?

Levi York ‘26

Scandinavian countries are often hailed as exemplary nations that continuously rank as places with some of the best quality of life. This high quality relies on many factors, such as trust between citizens leading to social cohesion, quality of public, institutional services, and equality in income and work. So, the question that is often considered is should the U.S. consider taking a page out of these countries’ books? Democratic socialism is a social and economic framework utilized by Nordic countries including Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Denmark. Nordic economics is focused on strong social welfare systems supported by high taxes. The idea of such a high degree of government intervention in daily life often faces disdain by some of the more economically conservative, but the system isn’t all that radical – in fact, in recent years countries which have adopted the model are leaning more towards the center of the political spectrum than many may think.

Built on free-market capitalism, the Nordic countries encourage the development of private institutions through taxation policies while reserving some sectors to be publicly/governmentally controlled. Areas like education, health care, and elder care, which have historically been “state monopolized,” have in the last decades been controlled by private, for-profit companies. In addition to the increase of privatization in these sectors, Nordic countries have become increasingly centrist in regard to their welfare systems too. Nordic countries have recently had to clamp down on their welfare in response to overuse of the programs. Some people have grown accustomed to misusing these programs, with a 2002 survey showing that 60% of Swedes thought it was acceptable to claim sick leave when they were not sick. With instances like this where generous welfare programs are abused, Nordic countries have been forced to limit them. While these changes certainly diverge from how these countries have operated in the past, the move toward more centrist policies is in no way a threat to the model’s existence.

While the Nordic model is fairly flexible, it does have two mandatory requirements to guarantee its continued existence: trust and cooperation. Without citizens’ trust in the government, neither the implementation nor preservation of high taxes is possible. The preservation of social welfare systems is why cooperation is necessary. The downfall of the democratic socialist model comes when members of society abuse the systems through overuse and lose the risk-sharing mindset.

It is certainly hard to reject the success of the Nordic model and the happiness and security it has guaranteed to many. While it may be beneficial to look towards these countries as leaders in some capacities, Nordic countries do have shortcomings too, and that should be kept in mind when looking for policy inspiration. When looking at the U.S., a full adoption of a democratic socialist model simply is not a possibility in the current era of American politics. The system has been seen to work better in smaller countries with more culturally homogenous populations.

Many people still see the Nordic model as a better alternative to “winner takes all” capitalism in America. Therefore, whether the U.S. should or should not adopt tenets of the democratic socialist model is a question that citizens of the U.S. should ask themselves regarding the direction they hope to see the country move in the succeeding decades.
U.S. Sues Apple Over Monopoly on Phones

Ebihonmi Oshe ‘26

As technology constantly evolves, Apple stands as an emblem of innovation and influence in the field. However, recent legal actions have thrown the company into the spotlight, with the US Justice Department filing a lawsuit against Apple for monopolizing the smartphone market. This legal battle is significant and has a myriad of potential repercussions for the technology industry.

Apple’s ascent in the smartphone industry began in 2007, with the introduction of the iPhone. The company has completely redefined consumer expectations and set new industry standards. With its seamless integration of hardware and software, Apple created an ecosystem that has enthralled its users worldwide. Apple has asserted its dominance over the App Store, the primary marketplace for smartphone applications. This was done by regulating app distribution and imposing harsh guidelines, which allowed them to have a major influence over app developers and consumers alike. This exercise of power over the market has ignited concerns about antitrust violations.

In response, The Justice Department, along with 16 states and the District of Columbia, chose to file a significant challenge to the reach and influence of Apple. The centerpiece of the Justice Department’s lawsuit against Apple revolves around allegations of excessive dominant behavior, primarily within the realm of the App Store. At the heart of the matter are Apple’s policies, including its mandatory use of its payment system and the imposition of a 30% commission on app sales. Critics argue that these practices stifle competition and innovation, ultimately harming consumers. Furthermore, the lawsuit highlights the restrictions Apple enforces on alternative app distribution channels, such as third-party app stores or direct downloads. These limitations are believed to reinforce Apple’s dominance and limit consumer choice, thereby perpetuating its monopoly in the smartphone market.

Considering these factors, it is also important to note the possible repercussions that could be faced. If the Justice Department prevails in its lawsuit, the ramifications for Apple and the broader tech industry could be profound. A ruling against Apple may compel the company to reassess its business practices, potentially paving the way for increased competition and innovation.

One plausible outcome is the mandated inclusion of alternative app stores on Apple devices, permitting users greater freedom in-app acquisition. This shift could cultivate a more competitive marketplace, driving down prices and enhancing the quality of available applications.

This legal case could have a significant impact on the smartphone industry and shape the course of technological progress. The verdict could potentially pave the way for increased competition, expanded consumer options, and a reconsideration of the industry’s established practices.
The Future of Russian Political Freedom

Quinn Farmer ‘25

On February 16, Alexei Navalny died in a remote Russian penal colony. Officially, Navalny died of a blood clot. However, doctors said he did not suffer from any condition that would make this likely. Whether directly caused or simply allowed to happen, there is close to no doubt that Vladimir Putin’s regime orchestrated his death. The 47-year-old journalist gained his infamy as an outspoken critic of the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and by exposing corruption at the highest levels of the Russian government, thus creating tensions between him and the Putin regime.

What Navalny used against Putin was the ruler’s own systematic corruption that held Putin’s state afloat. In a country plagued with solely state-sponsored media, Navalny turned to a new form of journalism, YouTube. In long-form documentaries, he displayed oligarch corruption: his magnum opus was a film of Putin’s palace on the black sea, which received 130 million views. The accessibility to his content increased his popularity across Russia, exposing the corruption perpetuated within their own government.

His death, while shocking, is altogether unsurprising. The first attempt on Navalny’s life from the Kremlin came in 2020 when he was poisoned by a Soviet nerve agent called Novichok. After recovering in Germany, Navalny returned to Russia knowing that he would likely be arrested. The regime unsurprisingly tried to discredit him, then incarcerate him, sentencing Navalny to 19 years in jail on trumped-up extremism charges. Progressively, they worsened his conditions. Navalny was subject to forced labor, solitary confinement, and eventually passed away.

As an advocate for freedom, Navalny chose to return to Russia, knowing that he would be imprisoned. He will be remembered as a man of courage who spoke out against an oppressive regime. But what happens now that he’s gone? Russia is still under Putin’s absolute control. Navalny’s death comes at a time of worsened oppression in Russia. As the outcry against the Russia-Ukrainian war is violently repressed, any political prisoner could be the next target. Russia is experiencing non-violent resistance like it has rarely seen before. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, 1,305 men and women have been prosecuted for speaking out against the war. About 200,000 men fled Russia instead of reporting for the draft in the first few weeks of the war. However, as repression increased, millions of Russians have turned to Navalny’s allies for news and information.

Navalny told a team of American documentarians that “[If I get killed] the obvious thing is: don’t give up,” he says, “All it takes for evil to triumph is the inaction of good people. There’s no need for inaction.” What Navalny did was open the eyes of many Russians to the system that they live in. Right now, the terror of Putin’s regime may silence dissent, but killing Navalny has made him a martyr, giving him credibility while simultaneously discrediting Putin’s regime.

Navalny’s death has only further galvanized Putin’s opponents. Navalny may be dead, but his ideas are not, and they continue to proliferate through his legacy. His work is opening up the media as a force that is now unleashed and cannot go away. For now, Putin remains virtually unopposed, but as the truth has become readily accessible, Putin’s carefully constructed castle of cards could fall apart. Perhaps not immediately, but the movement of opposition to Putin’s regime extends far beyond Navalny and will continue to spread, especially after his death.
Is Britain’s governance system a relic of the past, unsuited for the complexities of modern society? The United Kingdom, unique among modern democracies, operates without a single, written constitution. This reliance on traditions, statutes, and common law, while steeped in historical significance, increasingly poses challenges in today’s fast-paced world environment. The time has come to reconsider this foundation of British governance. Advocating for a written constitution is not just about embracing modernity but ensuring clarity and the protection of democratic values in an era of unprecedented challenges, and the benefits of transitioning towards a codified constitution for the future of Great Britain are preferable over the risks of maintaining an uncodified constitution.

The roots of Britain’s unwritten constitution stretch back centuries, with foundational documents like the Magna Carta of 1215 setting early precedents for legal and civil rights. Over time, this collection of statutes, court judgments, and conventions has evolved, guided by the principle of parliamentary sovereignty and the gradual development of democratic norms. Yet, this historical jumble of legal precedents, while rich in tradition, leads to contemporary challenges that are otherwise avoidable.

In the modern era, the absence of a single, consolidated document outlining the framework of government and the rights of citizens results in ambiguities and inefficiencies. For example, the Brexit referendum and its aftermath exposed the difficulties in interpreting and applying unwritten constitutional principles to complex legal and political questions, such as what the extent to which the government could negotiate and implement Brexit-related decisions without detailed parliamentary scrutiny and approval was. This lack of clarity can lead to governmental overreach, where the limits of executive power are not clearly defined, posing risks to the balance of power and the protection of individual rights.

Moreover, the rapid evolution of technology and global challenges such as climate change demand a governance framework that is both adaptable and clear. Britain’s current system, while flexible, often requires extensive legal interpretation and can be slow to respond to ever-changing societal needs. The debate over digital privacy rights and data protection is a case in point, where existing laws struggle to keep pace with technological advancements, leaving gaps in citizen protections.

In essence, the historical context that has shaped Britain’s unwritten constitution, while a testament to the country’s rich democratic evolution, now uncovers the limitations of such a system in addressing the demands of the 21st century. The complexities of modern governance, combined with the need for clear, accessible legal frameworks, make the case for a written constitution more compelling than ever.

A written constitution offers a blueprint for governance, providing codified guidelines that delineate the structure of government, the distribution of powers, and the rights of citizens. This clarity is invaluable, reducing ambiguity in the interpretation of laws and decreasing the potential for legal disputes. For the public, a codified constitution demystifies the complexities of governance, making the nation’s foundational laws more accessible and understandable. This transparency fosters a more informed citizenry,
enhancing civic engagement and participation in the democratic process. Countries like the US and Germany, with their written constitutions, exemplify the benefits of having a clear, accessible framework for governance. These nations enjoy high levels of legal clarity and public engagement, serving as models for how a codified constitution can contribute to a more informed and participatory society.

The most important capacity of a written constitution is its ability to safeguard the rights and freedoms of citizens. By explicitly outlining and codifying these rights, a written constitution ensures they are protected and understood by all. It also clearly defines the limits of governmental power, preventing arbitrary or oppressive actions by the state. The judiciary plays a crucial role in this system, interpreting the constitution and ensuring that governmental actions comply with these established rights and limitations. This mechanism of judicial review is a fundamental aspect of constitutional democracies, acting as a check on the powers of the executive and legislative branches and safeguarding individual liberties.

Much like the USA’s Constitution, Britain’s written constitution need not be a static document; it can be designed as a dynamic legal framework that evolves alongside society. Through mechanisms such as amendments, a written constitution can address emerging issues and challenges, whether that be digital privacy, environmental protection, or Britain’s relationship with its former colonies. This adaptability ensures that the legal framework remains relevant and responsive to the British populace’s needs, providing a sturdy legal foundation for addressing these contemporary issues within a constitutional framework.

By providing clear, accessible guidelines for governance, enhancing the protection of rights and freedoms, and offering a flexible framework to adapt to modern challenges, a written constitution can stand as the legal cornerstone of a more transparent, accountable, and dynamic Britain.
Transhumanism: Shaping a Path Towards a Better Future

Maya Garman ’26

In today’s fast-changing world, where technology is an essential part of our daily lives, the concept of transhumanism offers a pathway to a new and improved future. It advocates for the enhancement of human capabilities, mainly through the integration of advanced technologies into our lives, aiming to overcome our current limitations and attain new levels of human potential.

Transhumanism looks to use science and technology to enhance a regular human’s physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities. This allows us to envision a future where aging, diseases, and disabilities are no longer inevitable for most, a situation in which individuals can reach extraordinary levels of human performance. In essence, transhumanism guides the pursuit of progress and improvement driven by our human desire to overcome natural limitations, and create a better living existence.

One of the main arguments in support of transhumanism is its potential to improve overall health and substantially extend the human lifespan. Through advancements in biotechnology, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence, researchers have been exploring different ways to combat regular aging, and age-related diseases. By enhancing our biological systems and developing medical interventions at the molecular level, transhumanism offers the promise of a healthier and more fulfilling life for many individuals around the world.

Additionally, transhumanism has the potential to manage pressing social and economic challenges that face humanity. By using technology to enhance human abilities, we can create a more efficient workforce, stimulate economic growth, and reduce poverty. Imagine a world where individuals have access to cognitive enhancements for better learning and creativity, as well as access to physical augmentations which enable people to more efficiently perform tasks. Transhumanism opens up new possibilities for innovation, ultimately leading to a more prosperous society.

Critics of transhumanism often raise concerns about the possible risks surrounding its implementation. The more that we embrace and enhance technologies that can blur the line between human and machinery, the more we can confront questions of identity, equality, and autonomy. Critics are cautious of the unintended consequences of tampering with our nature, and of the potential inequalities which could be created through unequal access to such technology. However, advocates argue that individuals should have the right to enhance their bodies and minds as they see fit, free from societal or governmental restrictions. With careful regulation and ethical thought, we can steer away from these risks and ensure that the benefits of transhumanism are shared equally among all members of society.

Transhumanism offers a promising vision for the future of humanity, where both science and technology empower us to go beyond our biological limitations, and reach our full potential as humans. Once we embrace transhumanism, we can together move towards a world where individuals can lead healthier, more fulfilling lives; where social, economic, and political barriers are overcome through the power of human innovation. Standing on the brink of a new era of possibilities, by understanding the benefits of transhumanism, we can strive towards building a better and brighter future for all.
In the 21st century, we live in a time where innovators and entrepreneurs try to expand the limits of what we thought possible with technology. Recently, Neuralink, an Elon Musk venture, implanted the first human with a chip that can allow people to access computers through thought, among other things, leading to a renewed discussion of transhumanism. Transhumanism is negative for humanity for multiple reasons, both ethically and socially.

Replacing or changing the very nature of what it means to be human is an incredibly delicate ethical problem. Using transhumanist beliefs, humans can become the Ship of Theseus in a literal sense: if you replace each part of a human, is it still a human? I disagree, for part of what makes a person human is their imperfections. I believe that the minds of people are fundamental to who they are, and tampering with them is a terrifying endeavor that can only end poorly. Changing the way people think, taking away the things that make them inherently human, can permanently alter the human race. Technology can be successfully used to aid humans in various fields, but should not be used to replace or completely alter them.

The possibility of losing your humanity makes transhumanism at its very best an idea that needs more study, and at its worst, an existential threat to our collective future. The possible social consequences of full adoption of transhumanist ideas also makes it a risky idea. Considering the Neuralink chip’s implementation, Bloomberg estimates that the cost of the procedure would be $40,000 without any complications or future problems. Such a cost means that if usage of Neuralink and Neuralink-adjacent technologies were to become widespread, it would only be accessible to those already with means, and exacerbate inequality because the wealthy would be able to afford cognitive and physical changes that less privileged people could not afford. We are also still unsure of the environmental consequences and health risks that would come with fully embracing augmentations and transhumanism.

Not all instances of Transhumanism are bad. Examples like gene therapies, which could help to cure cancer, and organ cloning, which could help the many people struggling to find donors, could save lives. However, the possible lengths transhumanism could go, as well as the unknown consequences that more advanced implementations of transhumanist ideas and augmentations pose, prove that transhumanism is currently not a smart or good option for humanity.
Silicon Valley’s Remarkable Resurgence: Navigating Change and Championing Innovation Post-Pandemic

Maya Moorthy ‘25

Silicon Valley, the world’s innovation powerhouse, has been through a whirlwind of change in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Once booming with tech hiring and investments, the region saw a significant reversal as companies initiated layoffs. However, despite these challenges, Silicon Valley is showing signs of resilience and adaptation.

In a surprising twist, the exodus that Silicon Valley experienced has begun to reverse. According to a new report by Joint Venture Silicon Valley, the region, encompassing Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, added 2,700 jobs from June 2022 to June 2023. This comes after the valley’s 20 biggest tech companies laid off 7% of their workforces, totaling about 18,800 employees in the Bay Area. Interestingly, these companies still report having 37,000 more tech jobs than at the end of 2019, signaling a robust recovery and a potential recalibration rather than a downturn.

Despite a decrease in venture capital funding for the second consecutive year after peaking in 2021, Silicon Valley and San Francisco companies recently secured $30 billion in funding, matching the levels of 2016. The region also remains a leading recipient of venture investments in the nation, with a particularly notable 220% year-over-year increase in venture investment in generative AI companies.

The Silicon Valley Index simultaneously sheds light on the region’s demographic shifts. After a decline of about 79,000 people due to deaths and departures over the past three years, the population grew by 1,800 from mid-2022 to mid-2023. This growth, the first positive net migration in eight years for Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, signals a renewed attraction to the region’s opportunities.

Silicon Valley’s ability to adapt and evolve through economic fluctuations and a global pandemic underscores its enduring significance in the tech world. While the landscape of innovation and employment in the valley is changing, the fundamentals that make Silicon Valley a global beacon of technology and entrepreneurship remain strong. With its leading role in venture capital investment, particularly in rapidly developing fields like artificial intelligence, Silicon Valley is set to continue driving forward the frontier of innovation.

As Silicon Valley navigates these shifts, the implications for the global tech ecosystem, venture capital trends, and regional economic health are profound. The resilience and adaptability of the valley’s workforce, companies, and investment community point to a future where innovation continues to thrive in a field of new dynamics and opportunities.
What Happens When People are Capital: The Human IPO

Hannah Balmuth ‘27

Founded in 2020, Human Initial Public Offering or IPO is a fairly recent startup strategy that aims to invest not in companies, but rather in the future success of individuals. Although this financial instrument is not currently widely implemented, the concept has sparked both controversy and great interest.

“People are the best assets of the company,” stated cofounders Kirill Goryunov and Vlas Lezin. This idea of ‘investing in the person has been seen by many venture capitalists that choose to invest in the founder rather than just the company. Goryunov and Lezin realized human capital had much potential in the finance industry and perhaps even a possible prospect for a successful business; soon after, Human IPO was created.

Human IPO provides a marketplace where investors can make profits by buying, selling, and redeeming shares for new or struggling entrepreneurs, content creators, scientists, and more. As with other corporate IPOs, when there are more buyers eager to invest, the value of the creator increases creating an opportunity for profit. Unlike other companies that have attempted this concept, Human IPO does not invest in the individuals’ future incomes but instead in their time. Shares are redeemable through terms which the individual and buyers can negotiate; for instance, for a certain number of shares, buyers can collaborate with their creator on social media, review new products, and do more if approved.

In order for investors to buy time with their preferred creator(s), they must make sure that their balance is high enough. One creator has a maximum of 500 hours that they may sell as an IPO; typically one share equates to 1 hour. The same limitation applies to the number of total shares. Although it varies from creator to creator, the total number of shares per creator can be between ten to ten million, and once the creator sets these terms, it cannot be changed. This could present a future challenge for the creators as if they wish to leave or delete the app, as they must pay back shares that were distributed.

Although giving people in financial distress an opportunity to be provided with sufficient resources to grow and expand on their goals could be very positive, we cannot omit the many aspects of Human IPO that are biased, unfair, and flat-out ethically wrong.

The Human IPO app wrote that creators choose the price of their time; however, with the new machine learning algorithm that they are eager to develop and implement, the worth of someone’s time could change.
Through apps such as LinkedIn and Glassdoor, the algorithm will be able to estimate the creators’ initial price which, in reality, does not consider the potential of the person. This algorithm is very biased because in today’s world, men are paid more than women and race has an impact on this data as well. Although Human IPO claims that they are agnostic, this algorithm is bound to perpetuate existing racial and gender inequalities.

Many are also skeptical about the ethical implications of the concept of Human IPO, as creators could easily get exploited and even be coerced. Numerous flaws will be revealed; for instance, the potential conflicts the creator might encounter as they cannot change the amount of shares they want to sell. In the big picture, this whole concept is technically buying and selling human beings’ time, but what some don’t understand is that in the end, time defines what we can accomplish in our life.

How Influential Are American Political Dynasties?

Chloe Crowell ’25

Throughout the history of American politics, various families have woven themselves into the fabric of governance, creating what is known as political dynasties. American political dynasties have been around since the birth of the nation and have had lasting impacts on not only politics but American culture. A few illustrious families such as the Kennedy’s, the Bush’s, and the Clinton’s, have left an ineradicable mark on the nation’s political history, policies, elections, and public discourse. However, as time has progressed have these political “dynasties” begun to lose traction in society? This raises the question of really how influential are American political dynasties.

While some people may skepticize about American political dynasties, they have continued to thrive and make an impact on society. Not only are these families politically successful but economically and socially acclaimed as well. According to Forbes, “In 2020, America’s top 50 dynasties held $1.2 trillion in assets.” While these families may be products of nepotism and privilege, their impact on society and culture cannot be denied. These American dynasties not only possess the resources and name value to navigate politics but also a deeper conceptualization of the American political landscape because of their background. Dynasties’ heritage often provides a strong starting point for subsequent generations to enter the political field because of familial connections and resources.

For example, the Kennedy Family has made a name for itself not only nationwide but globally. The Kennedys are an emblematic example of enduring influence and legacy. Originating from Boston in the early 1900s, the family quickly acquired national prominence, propelled by their wealth, charisma, and strong political skills. John F. Kennedy (’35), is key to the family’s power and narrative. Kennedy’s presidency, tragically shortened by his assassination has left an even bigger mark in society and extended the allure surrounding the family dynasty. Most political dynasties, but specifically the Kennedy family’s influence
and power expand far beyond the presidency, including fellow senators, representatives, and state officials, who have left an indelible impact on civil rights, health inequalities, and other pivotal issues. While some of the Kennedys endured personal tragedies, the family, along with other dynasties embodied the quintessential American political ambition; confusing to inspire citizens everywhere.

Political dynasties are long rooted in the tradition of America and its culture. According to Brookings, “There have been some 700 families in which two or more members have served in Congress, and they account for 1,700 of the 10,000 men and women who have been elected to the federal legislature since 1774.” These families have maintained their influence through name recognition and loyalty. In certain families, such as the Kennedys, the name has become synonymous with fame, politics, and other ideologies generating automatic interest. The incorporation of the media into society has kept their legacy vibrant and alive and citizens continue to vote for American dynasties within the political sphere. Citizens continue to vote for dynasties because of a sense of familiarity and past success within families.

While some argue that political dynasties’ power is too concentrated within the government and political scene, they have nevertheless made a lasting impact on society. These families resent a unique phenomenon within the broader concept of democracy. While people argue that dynasties’ monopoly over the American government brings into question the legitimacy of the country’s democracy, the separation of these families from political power would be extremely difficult because of how entrenched they are in politics and the voters’ views. Through a combination of name recognition, wealth, and access to networks, dynasties have exerted significant influence over their constituencies and the general population. Thus, it remains clear that while some people may not support American political dynasties, they will continue shaping the course of American politics for generations.

The Feasibility of a U.S. Circular Economy

Katie O’Meara ’27

A circular economy exists when all existing products and materials are kept in a constant circulation of reusing, recycling, and refurbishing. It’s a model designed to limit biodiversity loss, pollution, and waste by reducing the amount of finite products we are creating and putting into the economy. Having a circular economy is becoming essential for fighting climate change, as it lessens the carbon emissions from non-reusable items significantly. Unfortunately, not many places have taken it on yet because of how expensive, time-consuming, and complicated it is. However, for the sake of our environment, we need to begin looking at how to make it more viable in the U.S.

In 2015, the first governmental circular economy plan was set into motion by the European Union (EU). Some of the leaders of this plan in the EU such as Finland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland are doing some exciting work to reduce raw materials usage, find substitute materials, and extend the life of products.
In 2022, 75% of the total packaging materials used in the Netherlands were recycled. While there are some signs of progress, no one country can point to full adoption of a circular economy.

In America, while some local municipalities have adopted circular economic practices like recycling, some of the most innovative initiatives are coming from companies. Patagonia is reusing waste and updating their materials in order to create more eco-friendly clothing and they are continuing to work towards using 100% reusable and recycled raw materials. An example of a smaller brand that’s also found new popularity is threadUp, an online used-clothing store which has recently surpassed a 1 billion USD valuation.

There has also been an increase in companies that have started to use plastic pollution in our oceans to make other products. Two examples are Norton Point, which uses it to produce sunglasses, and Unifi, which spins plastic pollution into yarn. Rothys, a clothing brand, has also made a number of different articles of clothing from marine plastic, ranging from bags to shoes. While it’s still early stage work for many of these businesses, some have begun to see a lot of popularity, like threadUp and Patagonia, showing that this business plan might not just be sustainable but profitable as well.

To make moving into a circular economy more feasible in the US, the government should both provide incentives for businesses to innovate and adopt sustainable practices and for the general public to recycle and reuse. This is very different from the current U.S. economy, but it’s going to become a necessary switch in order to preserve our climate. Many practices in the U.S. today, such as shipping waste into developing countries, fast fashion, and the general habit of using something once and then throwing it out, are short term strategies that will eventually fail. If we want to start saving our environment, policymakers may need to consider implementing penalties for waste as well as create incentives for businesses and people to adopt more sustainable practices in order to develop a circular economy.

The Supreme Court of the United States: in Need of Change?

Elle Hardy ‘26

“The highest court in the land.” “The final arbitrator of the law.” “The interpreter of the United States Constitution.”—this is how the Supreme Court is defined. Powerful, fair, and in charge of justice under the law in the U.S. However, following the election of Donald J. Trump in 2016, the Supreme Court has been skewed in a way that it has never been before. Now, in 2024, the ratio of conservative to liberal justices has been six to three, a hard right-leaning, biased majority. This ratio fails to reflect the slight statistical democratic leaning of the American population. But while the American population may lean left, in recent years, the decisions of the Supreme Court have leaned further right than ever. With the new extremely-conservative-leaning of the Supreme Court, many Americans have been questioning the legitimacy of the Supreme Court as the highest court in the land.
Distrust in the Supreme Court by Americans was spurred by Trump’s appointment of three deeply conservative Justices during his presidency. This sentiment has been further exacerbated by the reality of judges accepting arguably corrupt “benefits” of sorts. According to a 2023 opinion article in The Guardian, “Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito have taken lavish favors from rightwing billionaires with business before the court and then failed to disclose those favors.” As time continues, it seems that more and more concerns regarding the Supreme Court are being unveiled. The reality of Americans’ changing views of the Supreme Court offers an important question: What are alternative ways we can appoint Supreme Court Justices to reflect the best interests of the American people?

While, currently, the Supreme Court justices are appointed by the U.S. President and then confirmed by the Senate, it is clear that some citizens are not in favor of the current system. For one, the life-long term the Justices hold leaves little room for accountability. According to the White House, this is justified by the fact that “Justices do not have to run or campaign for re-election. They are thought to be insulated from political pressure when deciding cases.” In many ways, this is true. However, the life-long terms also mean that the Justices are protected from a sense of responsibility to protect the best interests of the American people regardless of citizens’ class or wealth. One alternative method of electing Justices would be implementing an election system to decide the Judicial representatives. This could be done in numerous ways, whether a nomination from each state or a federal election. This form of deciding Justices would allow the goals and interests of the American majority to be represented via election. This method of appointing Justices would limit the extreme amount of power that is placed in the hands of the President when appointing Justices. The significance of this lies in the fact that the power of the Court has the ability to greatly affect the lives of millions of Americans. For example, the recent ruling of Roe V. Wade impacted the lives of millions of citizens who will now have a harder time getting access to reproductive care. Trump appointed three of the five justices who voted to overturn the ruling. The power placed into the hands of the president when deciding the justices could be mitigated through the use of an election system to decide the court.

Another potential solution to the issue of Supreme Court representation is the implementation of term limits for Justices. This would introduce a sense of accountability, as Justices would be up for re-election. The possibility of re-election would act as a form of liability, ensuring that Justices act in the best interests of the people. This proposal could significantly alter the dynamics of the Supreme Court and enhance its representation of the American people. Additionally, term limits would ensure that no one extremely left or right-wing Justice would have a limitless term.

The Supreme Court is one of the most important and influential parts of the U.S. government. When a majority of the U.S. population identifies themselves as Democrats, it’s questionable why the vast majority of the highest court of the land leans so far right. To not just reflect and take into account, but to simply respect the views of the American people, reform is needed in one of the highest positions in our U.S. government.
Citations

Should America Adopt the Nordic “Democratic Socialist” Model?


US Sues Apple for Monopolizing the Smartphone Market


The Supreme Court of the United States: in Need of Change?


