LEGACY GAZETTE 2025

NOSTALGIA

A LOOK BACK

HEALTHCARE
Human Rights or Free-market Freakshow

America's Shooter: Behind the Support for Luigi Mangione
About the Baby
Climate Change and the Escalating Global Health Burden
Who's Profiting from Your Health?
The Unfinished Fight for Universal Healthcare in America
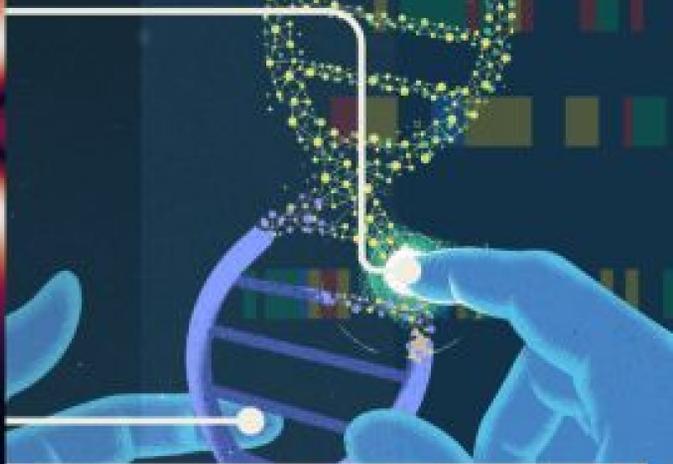AI in Healthcare
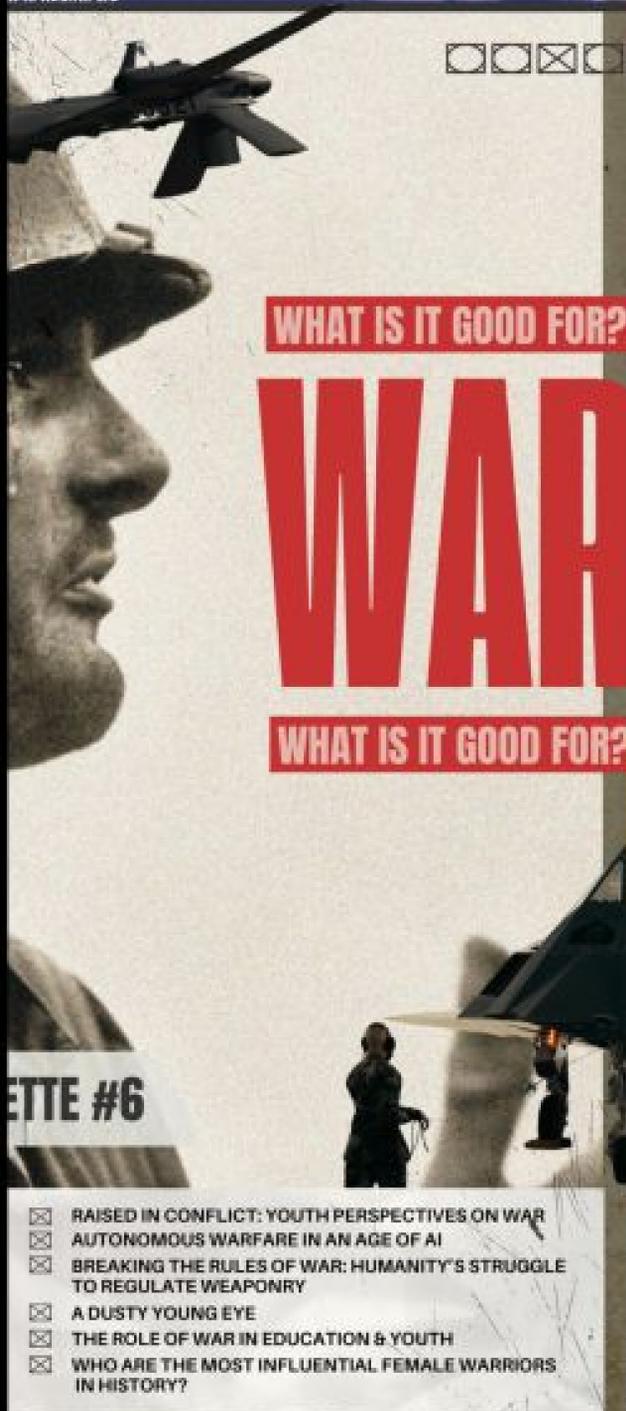
IMAGE: KOUZOU SAKAI

GENE EDITING

GENE EDITING: SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICAL FRONTIERS
ETHICS OF GENE EDITING: A PRIMER
MY DAD, THE BIOETHICIST
AN EXTINCT HUMAN? EXPLICATION

Taking the
Quantum
LEAP

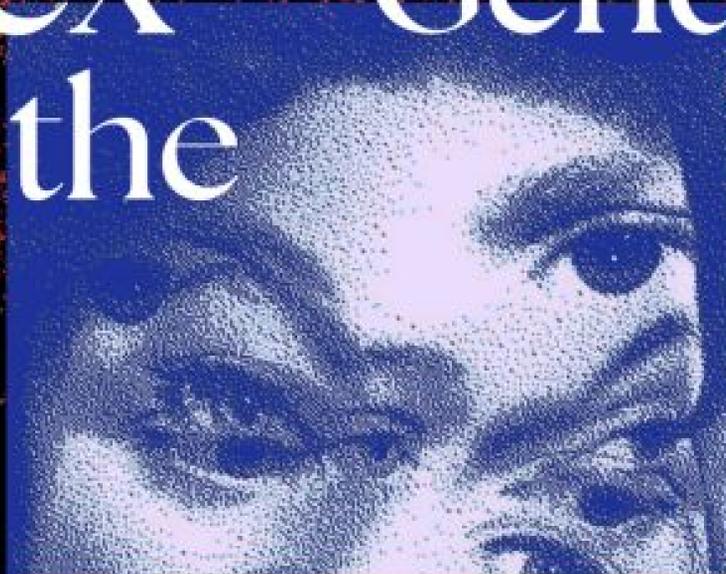#5 Legacy Gazette

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

WAR

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

...ETTE #6

☒ RAISED IN CONFLICT: YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON WAR
☒ AUTONOMOUS WARFARE IN AN AGE OF AI
☒ BREAKING THE RULES OF WAR: HUMANITY'S STRUGGLE TO REGULATE WEAPONRY
☒ A DUSTY YOUNG EYE
☒ THE ROLE OF WAR IN EDUCATION & YOUTH
☒ WHO ARE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FEMALE WARRIORS IN HISTORY?

Sex & Gender
in the

INFORMATION AGE

The State of Earth:
From Big Bang to Woeful Whimper

Jan 2026
Legacy Gazette

...ette

thank you to our 2025 editorial staff

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MY DAD, THE BIOETHICIST

CAITLIN LIAO

For as long as I can remember, I have associated family dinner with spirited debates over trolley problems and questions of consciousness. Am I a zombie if I don't experience consciousness? What *is* consciousness? Do I have rights as a child? To privacy? To love? Would you choose the track with one person, or let the trolley hit five?

My dad brought these questions to the table to encourage me and my brother to think and develop philosophical standpoints of our own. At some point, the nature of these questions shifted, growing centered around the field of bioethics — a study of the ethical implications of medical advancement and practice. Discussions went from zombies and brainteasers to whether it was okay to customize the genetic makeup of your child.

During these discussions, my dad — a bioethics professor at NYU — would say little but the prompt, occasionally interjecting to contribute an alternate point of view. Like he did with his college students, he wanted us to lead the conversation and formulate our own thoughts. However, in light of recent medical and technological advancements, I have watched our dinner debates appear in worldwide conversations over artificial intelligence and gene editing. So, I decided it was time to ask my dad what *he* thinks about all this.

Me: Can you give us a brief explanation of what gene editing is?

My Dad: Well, genes are the codes that determine who we are, how we think, how we look. Genetic engineering — gene editing — is the overall term for the selection and modification of genes. It has been going on for a long time, since people crossbred animals and plants to create more ideal species. More recently, we have developed technologies that allow us to go in and modify the genes as they are.

My Dad: (Cont.) There are two different targets of genetic engineering: the germline level — the gametes (eggs and sperm) — and the somatic level, which are the genes in any non-gamete cell. Engineering at the germline level can result in genes being passed on to the future offspring, while changes at the somatic level don't get passed onto future generations.

Most countries have banned germline genetic engineering due to the concern over passing on genetically modified traits onto future generations.

Me: Tell us about some techniques used in genetic engineering.

My Dad: Recently, we have developed a new technology called CRISPR gene editing. It's basically like cut-and-paste on a word processor— you can search for certain patterns of DNA, cut them out of the gene, and then replace them with other segments. That allows us to modify genes at both the germline and somatic level.
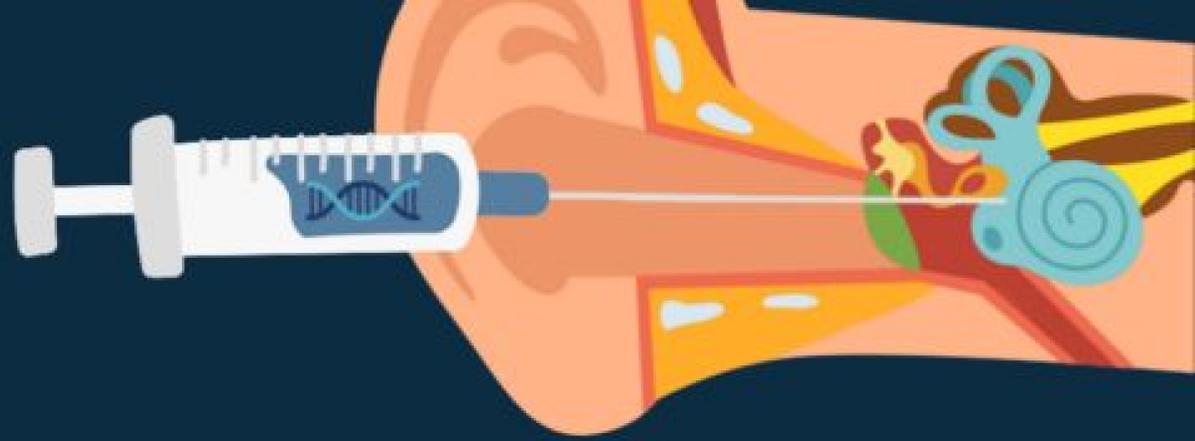
There's also something called in vitro gametogenesis (IVG). It allows a person to use their cells to create artificial gametes based on their own DNA. One of the controversies of IVG is the possibility of fertilizing an egg and sperm from the same individual, creating an offspring from the genes of one person.

Me: Do you have a specific stance on genetic engineering?

My Dad: Some ethicists argue that people and parents should be able to create whatever offspring they want. Others think it's unnatural, playing God, and that we should leave it to nature.

My view is somewhat in the middle. Being a human is about what we can do with our lives — whether we can do certain things — and in order to do certain things, we need to have certain "fundamental capacities." If there are genetic defects that are going to affect our fundamental capacities, then I think it would be permissible to modify these genes. For example, cystic fibrosis is a genetic disorder that causes brain damage and rapid deterioration. I think it would be permissible to use genetic engineering to correct this defect, given that a functional brain is necessary to exercise our fundamental capacities.

At the same time, there are things that don't affect our fundamental capacities. I think there is less of an imperative to say "we need to go in and change our genes" for something like eye or hair color. I also think there are some things that are impermissible. For example, imagine there is a healthy child with deaf parents, but the deaf parents want the child to also be deaf. I think it would be impermissible to go in and modify the gene so that the child can no longer hear, given that hearing is a fundamental capacity.

Me: What are the positive implications of genetic engineering, versus the negative?

My Dad: One positive aspect of gene editing is the possibility of fixing the genetic disorders that exist in the world, which could help parents have healthy babies. Another is the potential to assure the survival of the human species: The sun is going to die out and we need to get off the planet eventually. However, space is an unfriendly environment to our current biology. Genetic engineering could allow us to be more radiation or heat resistant, for example.

On the other hand, there are also many controversies. Here are three:

One controversial issue with germline editing is that modified genes could get passed onto future offspring and over time, eventually spread into large areas of the population. This could potentially decrease the reproductive fitness of the human species, and at the same time increase our susceptibility to viruses, diseases, and unforeseen environmental changes.

A second controversial topic is the problem of nonidentity. We can understand this problem by noticing a difference between genetic modification and genetic selection. In the case of modification, where the genes of an egg or sperm are edited, the future child could complain that they could have been different if the genetic modification had not taken place. In the case of selection, where a specific egg or sperm is chosen, the child could not complain because they would not have existed if an alternative action had been taken — specifically, if an alternate egg or sperm had been chosen.
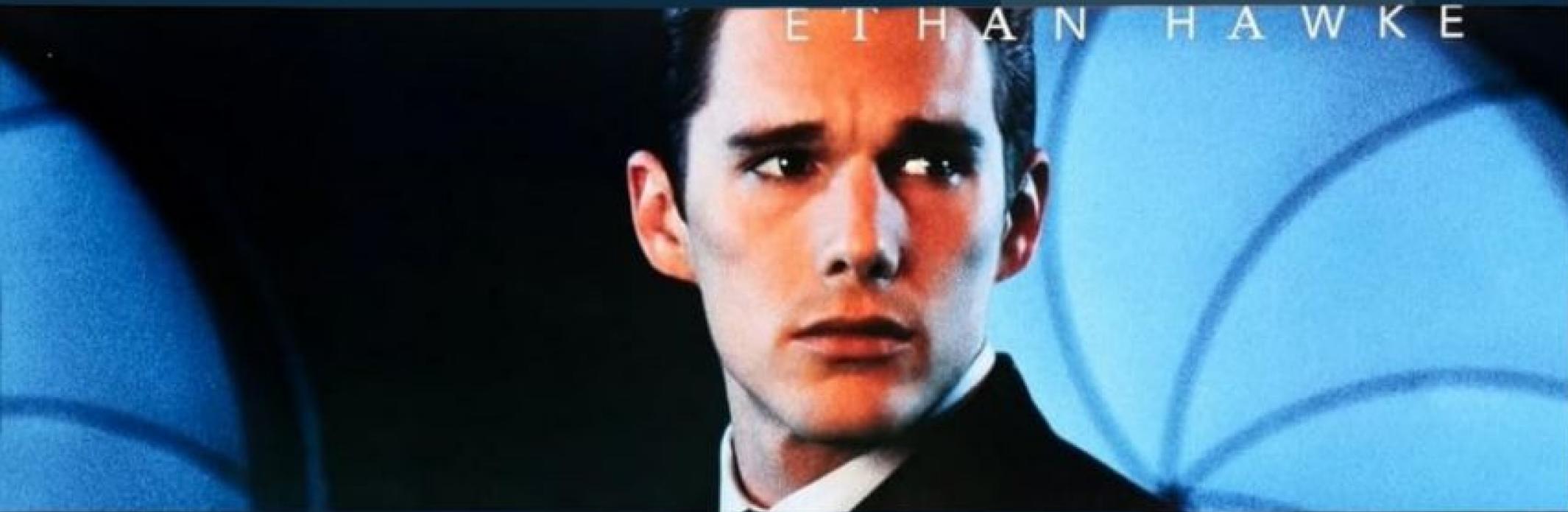
My Dad: (Cont.) A third, and significant, issue surrounding genetic engineering is the potential to increase inequality. Once gene editing becomes more readily available, the rich may have greater access to it than the poor. This could result in the wealthy modifying or selecting offspring with physical and mental advantages, creating a literal gap in capability between the rich and the poor.

Me: What is your favorite gene editing movie?

My Dad: Gattaca — it exemplifies the problem of assessing human beings and their worth based on their genetic makeup.

ETHAN HAWKE

GATTACA

Matthew Liao is a Taiwanese-American philosopher specializing in bioethics. He is the author of The Right to Be Loved, and has co-edited multiple others such as the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. He is the Director of the Center for Bioethics and Affiliated Professor in the Department of Philosophy at New York University, and he holds the Arthur Zitrin Chair of Bioethics.

The Unfinished Fight for Universal Healthcare in America

Sophia Zhang

Despite decades of debate and mounting evidence supporting healthcare as a fundamental human need, the United States remains the only industrialized nation without full universal healthcare coverage. This persistent absence shows not merely technical challenges in the nation, but political, economic, and social dynamics deeply rooted in past failures. The healthcare system in the US is dominated by private interests and excessively competitive market logic, raising critical concerns about whether such competition genuinely enhances care quality or primarily fuels inequality and profit-driven priorities, which often take the place of patient welfare. Understanding why universal healthcare remains unrealized in the US will unveil a world of intertwining relations and changes between politics, governance complexities, and broader consequences for social cohesion.

In the mid-20th century, as much of the industrialized world in Europe moved towards universal health systems, the United States remained entrenched in political resistance that would lead to a different tone for decades after. In 1945, President Harry Truman posited a national health insurance program that would provide comprehensive coverage for all Americans, directly financed through payroll taxes. In his proposal, he outlined five main goals, including addressing the lack of trained professionals in healthcare, as well as lowering the cost of individual medical care (Harry S. Truman Presidential Library & Museum, n.d.).

The plan however, was immediately met with fierce resistance from the American Medical Association (AMA) and the private insurance industry. Both organizations framed it as a dangerous step towards "socialized medicine", and called it "an incitement to revolution" (Palmer, 2009). According to historian Beatrix Hoffman in her novel *Health Care for Some*, the AMA launched one of the most expensive lobbying campaigns of its time, spending over $1 million to distribute pamphlets, radio spots, and even hiring a P.R. firm to spread the dangers of Truman's proposal (Eldred, 2019). It warned that the changes would strip physicians of autonomy and open the door to government control over patient care, which eventually convinced the public, leading to one of Truman's biggest failures during his term of presidency. This struggle only resonated further during the early Cold War years, when fears of communism spread across the United States. During the post-war era, the AMA and other allied private insurers recast Truman's plan as an alien, "foreign" ideology (Moore, 2025).

Throughout US history, powerful economic and political interests have strongly affected healthcare policy as well, constructing a major barrier to universal health coverage. The complexity of the US government, with its many veto points, including bicameral legislature, federalism, and a strong judiciary, creates obstacles. Well-funded interest groups are able to block or dilute reforms (Greer & Mendez, 2015). The power of veto points give private insurance companies, hospitals, and pharmaceutical firms exceptional leverage to oppose policies threatening their profits. Moreover, the United States' fragmented political institutions require large coalitions to pass health forms, making it harder for such programs to be approved.

By the 1960s, the United States had settled into a field of separate health programs; in 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Medicare and Medicaid Act (National Archives, 2022). Medicare would primarily benefit the elderly, Medicaid would help low-income individuals, and the rest of the working-age population would rely on employer-based coverage. These programs were born out of political compromise, each tailored to fit a specific "constituency" rather than form part of a centralized system. Over time, their existence began to harden the political and logistical barriers, driving the US further away from unification. As one analysis puts it, implementing universal healthcare in the United States requires integration across multiple systems, or Americans may face delays in receiving care from existing providers or receive timely care at all (Florida Healthcare, 2024). Any attempt to move towards universal coverage would now require the dismantling or complete restructuring of these pillars that continued to dig deeper; from this, a certain fear began to arise among beneficiaries, about losing the coverage they had.

Beyond the realm of policy, the US faces a uniquely American barrier: political culture. For much of the 20th and 21st century, the idea of government-run healthcare has collided with deeply rooted suspicion of centralization.

Even when polls and even politicians advocate majority support for expanding coverage, that very support also collapses when proposals are framed as government takeovers, or socialized medicine. Many Americans believe single-payer healthcare systems will increase the likelihood that "budget restraints would reduce individual choice in healthcare decisions" (MBA Healthcare Management, 2024).

As the Heritage Foundation puts it, government-controlled healthcare "imposes a high cost on patients and puts medical coverage decisions in the hands of the government bureaucrats" (Fishpaw & Paulton, n.d.). In this framing, the issue is not simply about who pays for care, but about who controls it, and in the American mindset, whether that control is compatible with the nation's individualistic ideals. Unlike in many European nations, the American political imagination remains anchored in the primacy of personal responsibility. As a result, centralization is often perceived not as a safeguard, but a constraint, and something that limits autonomy.

This long history of political resistance, structural fragmentation, and cultural distrust towards centralized healthcare has left the USA with a system in which private markets play an outsized role in determining who receives care, how it is delivered, and at what cost. Rather than functioning as a supplemental option alongside a more universal framework, private healthcare has become the backbone of coverage for much of the population—shaping not only patient experience, but the broader values of the industry itself. This raises an important question: in a country where access is so closely linked to market dynamics, does competition in the private sector of health care truly drive quality and innovation as it has promised to do, or does it only deepen inequality?

While competition in private healthcare systems may foster limited innovation and operational efficiency, there exists overwhelming evidence that shows how it often leans towards unequal access, fragmented care, and a prioritization of profits over patient care. Private care, which is often provided in the USA by "for profit" hospitals and self-employed practitioners (Basu et al., 2012), has been known to generate certain consumer-facing benefits.

In a marketplace model, where providers compete for patients, natural pressure exists on all to streamline services, reduce wait times, and adopt technologies as quickly and efficiently as possible. Private hospitals have also been shown to be more likely to offer better physical facilities, equipment, and overall environment; patients and recipients of private health service have stated that the quality of services provided was better than that of public hospitals (Alijanzadeh et al., 2016). However, these gains are often surface-level, and mostly, not evenly distributed. The ability to access private healthcare systems remains closely tied to income, geographic area, and insurance status (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2021), causing American society to be split into a spectrum when healthcare's goal is to provide "equal" service for all those in need.

Rather than leveling the playing field, competition often disproportionately disadvantages lower-income individuals, rural residents, and racial minorities. Hispanic populations face worse access than non-Hispanic Whites on over 79% of measures, while American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, and Black groups experience up to 53% poorer access (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2021).

Income is a major factor: households below the poverty line have 71–79% worse access, and among adults aged 18–64 with incomes under 100% of the federal poverty level, 26.9% are completely uninsured. Geography compounds these gaps, with residents of small or noncore areas—and even some large central metro areas—reporting 71% poorer access than those in large fringe metro areas. Insurance disparities persist as well: Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black people are less likely to have private coverage than non-Hispanic Whites, and coverage declines with age, from children (0–17) to middle-aged adults (45–64) in the same income brackets. In practice, high-income non-Hispanic White adults aged 18–44 in large fringe metro areas are the most likely to have private insurance—yet they represent only about 13% of Americans, leaving the remaining 87% at a systemic disadvantage in the private healthcare market.

In competitive private healthcare systems, the intense focus on market share and profitability often leads to an overall fragmented care experience for patients. In the USA, there is a lack of investment in primary care, which has resulted in a nationwide shortage of clinicians, particularly those playing vital roles in reducing need for some costly and sometimes unnecessary care services (Blumenthal et al., 2024). It has been said that the fragmented nature of the US's healthcare system makes it difficult for even many well-insured patients to access effective care. Additionally, thousands of health insurance products and a complex system of management policies has forced patients to navigate webs of disconnected providers. Aside from resulting in poor communication and coordination, this increases the risk of duplicated tests, conflicting treatments, and overall gaps in care that might be the determining factor in recovery.

The structural flaws in these systems were revealed most during the COVID-19 pandemic. While both the US and the United Kingdom experienced overwhelmed hospitals and resource nations throughout the nation, the US ranked last in a 2021 Commonwealth Fund analysis of 11 developed healthcare systems (Jacob, 2023). The UK's National Health Service, a single-payer system, ranked 4th overall; its centralized infrastructure helped greatly reduce preventable mortality compared to the US. 90% of Britons continued to support its core principles of free, tax-funded, accessible healthcare through the pandemic, while the US has remained deeply divided on system reform up to this day. MIT economist Jonathan Gruber noted "the importance of universal, non-discriminatory health insurance coverage in the United States." This was the gap that left millions more vulnerable during the 2020 job loss surge. Ultimately, while no system proved perfectly prepared for the pandemic, fragmentation was shown to exacerbate disparities in the US and undercut public health when it was needed the most.

In a system driven by profit, many private healthcare providers have become incentivized to prioritize high-profit services over long-term preventative care. However, when revenue becomes the central object, the lives of patients "lose". Studies have found that for-profit hospitals were associated with higher patient mortality rates (up to 2% higher risk) compared to their counterparts (Moszynski, 2006). Evidence from other studies have shown that private hospitals are more likely to "cherry-pick" high-income, well-insured patients, leaving those with chronic conditions or public insurance undeserved (Glynn, 2022). The same study also highlighted a process called "cream skimming", a practice where healthier or more profitable patients are selectively admitted. A meta-analysis revealed that the pursuit of profit may come at the cost of staffing levels, care quality, and patient safety. These systemic patterns of behavior demonstrate how vulnerable populations often face the steepest consequences when care becomes a commodity, and not because treatment is unavailable, but because it is unprofitable. The root of the medical field has been compromised by the greed of providers for money.

When profit becomes the compass of a healthcare system, it undermines the very foundation of public health. According to the National Institute of Health,

"The basic right of access to healthcare of appropriate quality is a fundamental humanitarian principle that should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries, and the international community should recognize the obligation to promote these ideals by any means available" (Nunes et al., 2016).

Apparent failure of this is nowhere more visible in the US than in the concept of medical bankruptcy. From 2013-2016, a national survey of bankruptcy filers revealed that 66.5% cited medical expenses or illness-related income loss as contributors to their bankruptcy, which is around 530,000 medical bankruptcies annually (Himmelstein et al., 2019). Despite the Affordable Care Act's implementation to expand coverage, the proportion of bankruptcies due to medical causes remained virtually unchanged from earlier years. In one case, a Nobel laureate was forced to sell his medal to pay medical bills, and over 250,000 annual medical fundraisers signal the widespread economic burden on GoFundMe. Even insured Americans face mounting deductibles, copays, and insufficient disability protections, which leaves them with few assets to protect, and, in the end, virtually no financial cushion in the event of serious illness. In contrast to nations where universal coverage helps insulate economic situations, the US system leaves millions vulnerable. The population is susceptible not only to illness, but to the loss of their homes and jobs as well. Treating healthcare as a business as private systems do only perpetuates inequality, exposing a deep moral failing of society.

The failure to implement universal healthcare in the United States cannot be distinguished from the country's unique political landscape. The system, characterized by entrenched, corrupt interests, multiple veto and power points, and a cultural commitment to market competition, has been shown to exacerbate equitable care. It simultaneously fragments access and further pushes disparities, particularly along racial and gender lines, challenging the ideals of healthcare as a right, rather than a commodity. Ultimately, any meaningful progress towards universal coverage must acknowledge that healthcare reform is as much a struggle over values and political power as it is about economics, and at its root, medicine.

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ANNABELLE LEI

TAKING THE QUANTUM LEAP

Quantum: The Buzzword Transforming Our World

You may have noticed the frequent use of the term "quantum" recently. Quantum technology is significantly influencing various fields, from smartphones to hospitals. But what does "quantum" actually mean, and how is it applied today? Let's explore this further.

1. Uses of "Quantum" Today

Cybersecurity: protecting our data

Quantum physics is transforming the methods we use to safeguard information. Quantum cryptography leverages the principles of quantum mechanics to establish highly secure communication channels that are exceedingly difficult to infiltrate (IBM, 2023).

Healthcare and Drug Discovery: Advancing Medicine

In the field of medicine, quantum computing aids researchers in simulating intricate molecules, thereby accelerating the development of new pharmaceuticals. Quantum sensors enhance medical imaging, resulting in improved diagnoses (Nature Medicine, 2023).

Space Exploration: Advancing Technology

Quantum technologies are crucial for space missions. Quantum sensors facilitate accurate navigation for spacecraft, while quantum communication guarantees secure data transmission between space and Earth (NASA, 2023).

Predictions and Models: Enhanced Forecasts

Quantum computers manage extensive datasets and intricate simulations, thereby enhancing weather forecasting and climate modeling. This assists scientists in making more precise predictions regarding natural disasters and climate change (Climate Science Journal, 2023).

2. Basics of Quantum Physics

Quantum Mechanics

Quantum physics examines the smallest particles in the universe, such as electrons and photons, and their behaviors, which differ from our everyday experiences.

Superposition

A fundamental concept is superposition, where particles can exist in several states simultaneously until they are measured. Imagine being in two places simultaneously!

Entanglement

Quantum entanglement occurs when particles become connected, causing the state of one particle to instantaneously influence the state of another, regardless of the distance between them. This is essential for technologies such as quantum computing and secure communications.

The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle asserts that it is impossible to simultaneously know both the precise position and momentum of a particle. This highlights the fundamental limitations of measurement in the quantum realm.

Quantum Tunneling

Quantum tunneling enables particles to traverse barriers that they would typically be unable to pass, playing a crucial role in technologies such as semiconductors used in electronics (Energy Research Journal, 2023).

Conclusion

Though quantum physics may seem complex, its applications are pervasive, enhancing our safety, health, and connectivity. Quantum technology is shaping a smarter and more efficient future, from safeguarding your data to advancing space exploration.

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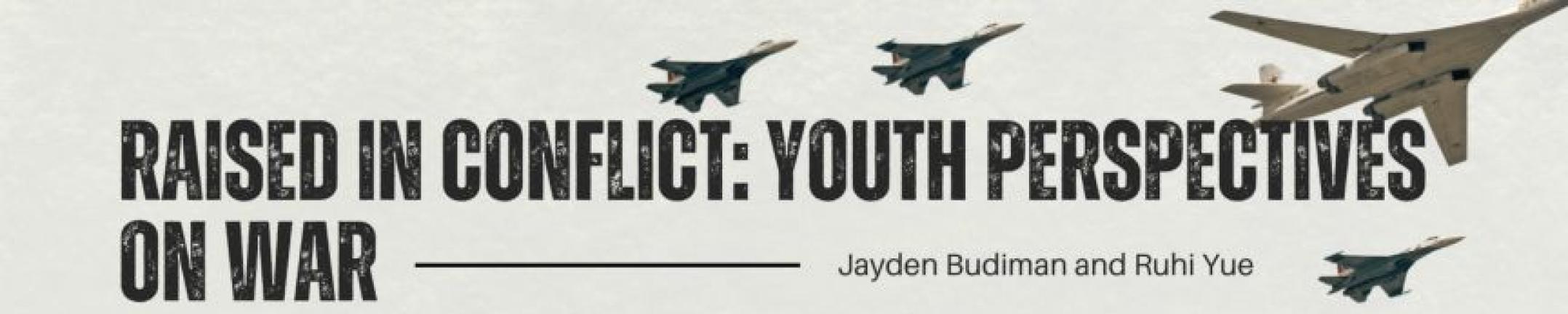IBM. (2023). Quantum Cryptography: Protecting the Future. Retrieved from https://www. ibm.com/quantum-computing/cryptography

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RAISED IN CONFLICT: YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON WAR

Jayden Budiman and Ruhi Yue

In today's world, the voices of young people are increasingly vital in discussions about war and peace. Their perspectives, shaped by personal experiences, education, and global awareness, offer unique insights into the impacts of conflict and the pursuit of a more peaceful future.

Understanding Youth Perspectives

Recent studies indicate that younger generations often exhibit uncertainty regarding international conflicts. For instance, a survey by Ipsos found that younger Americans are more likely than older counterparts to express indecision about their views on countries like Israel and Ukraine (Ipsos). This uncertainty may stem from a combination of limited exposure to comprehensive historical contexts and the overwhelming influx of information from various media sources.

Despite this uncertainty, many young people demonstrate a strong desire for peace and a reluctance to support military interventions. The same Ipsos survey revealed that younger Americans are less inclined to endorse U.S. involvement in international conflicts, even when other democratic nations are under attack. This trend suggests a generational shift towards prioritizing diplomatic solutions over military action.
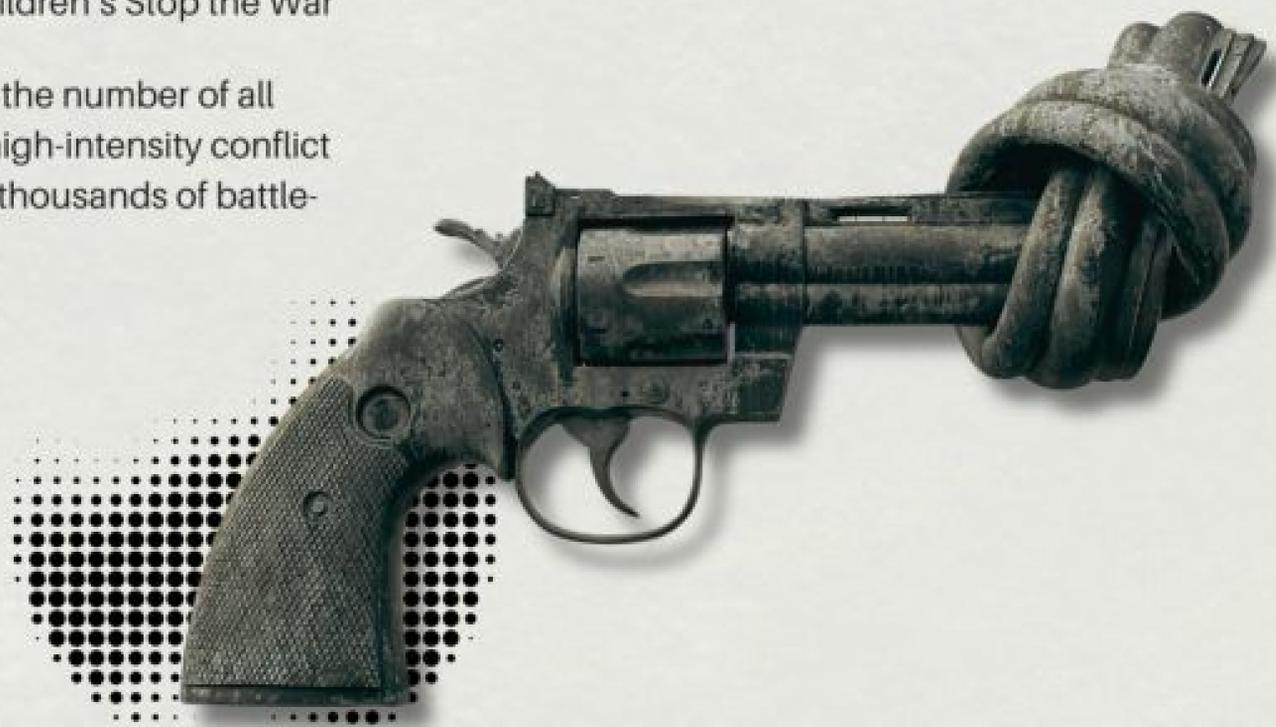
Youth as Victims of Conflict

According to Save the Children's Stop the War on Children Report,
- 149 million children, twice the number of all children in the U.S, live in high-intensity conflict zones, areas experiencing thousands of battle-related deaths each year.

- Since 2010, there's been a 34% rise in the number of children living in conflict-affected areas and a staggering 170% rise in the number of reported grave violations committed against children in conflict.
- This includes more child soldiers, as well as those more likely to be killed or maimed, abducted, sexually abused, see their schools or hospitals attacked, or have aid denied to them.
- Children in conflict are more at risk of harm now than at any time in recorded history (Stop the War on Children).

For many young individuals, the effects of war are not just theoretical but deeply personal. In regions like Gaza, children and teenagers have endured significant trauma due to ongoing conflicts. Reports have highlighted the devastating toll on young lives, with many children losing their lives or suffering severe injuries. The psychological impact is profound, leading to long-term mental health challenges.

Beyond the immediate dangers, war disrupts essential services such as education and healthcare, further hindering the development and well-being of young people. The destruction of schools and hospitals, along with the displacement of families, creates an environment where the basic rights of children are continually violated (The Guardian).

Youth as Combatants in War

Perhaps the most tragic aspect of war is the rampant use of child soldiers. Between 2005 and 2022, more than 105,000 children were verified as recruited and used by parties to conflict, although the actual number of cases is believed to be much higher. Recruited for their ease to indoctrinate, children in armed forces undergo unimaginable horrors including forced combat, physical and psychological abuse, and the loss of childhood that can never be reclaimed. Stripped of their innocence, these young combatants are often coerced into brutal acts of violence, leaving lasting scars that extend far beyond the battlefield (Unicef).

Even after the conclusion of conflict, former child soldiers become marginalized members of society. They are viewed with suspicion by their communities and even their own families. Many struggle with severe trauma, lacking access to adequate psychological support and rehabilitation programs. Without proper reintegration efforts, they face immense barriers to education, employment, and social acceptance, often finding themselves trapped in cycles of violence or exploitation (Stop the War on Children).

Youth as Agents of Change

Despite the adversities, young people have emerged as powerful advocates for peace and justice. Organizations like the United Nations have recognized the significant contributions of youth in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. From grassroots activism to participation in international dialogues, young individuals are challenging the status quo and demanding accountability from leaders.

In conflict zones, youth-led initiatives have been instrumental in providing support to affected communities. For example, in Myanmar, young activists have played a crucial role in documenting human rights abuses and offering aid to displaced populations amidst ongoing turmoil.

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping young people's understanding of war and peace. Open discussions about the causes, impacts, and consequences of conflict can empower youth to form informed opinions and engage in meaningful actions. Avoiding or censoring these topics may lead to misinformation and hinder the development of critical thinking skills.

Moreover, fostering environments where young people can express their views and concerns about war encourages active participation in peacebuilding efforts. By involving youth in policy-making processes and community initiatives, societies can harness their energy and creativity to promote lasting peace.

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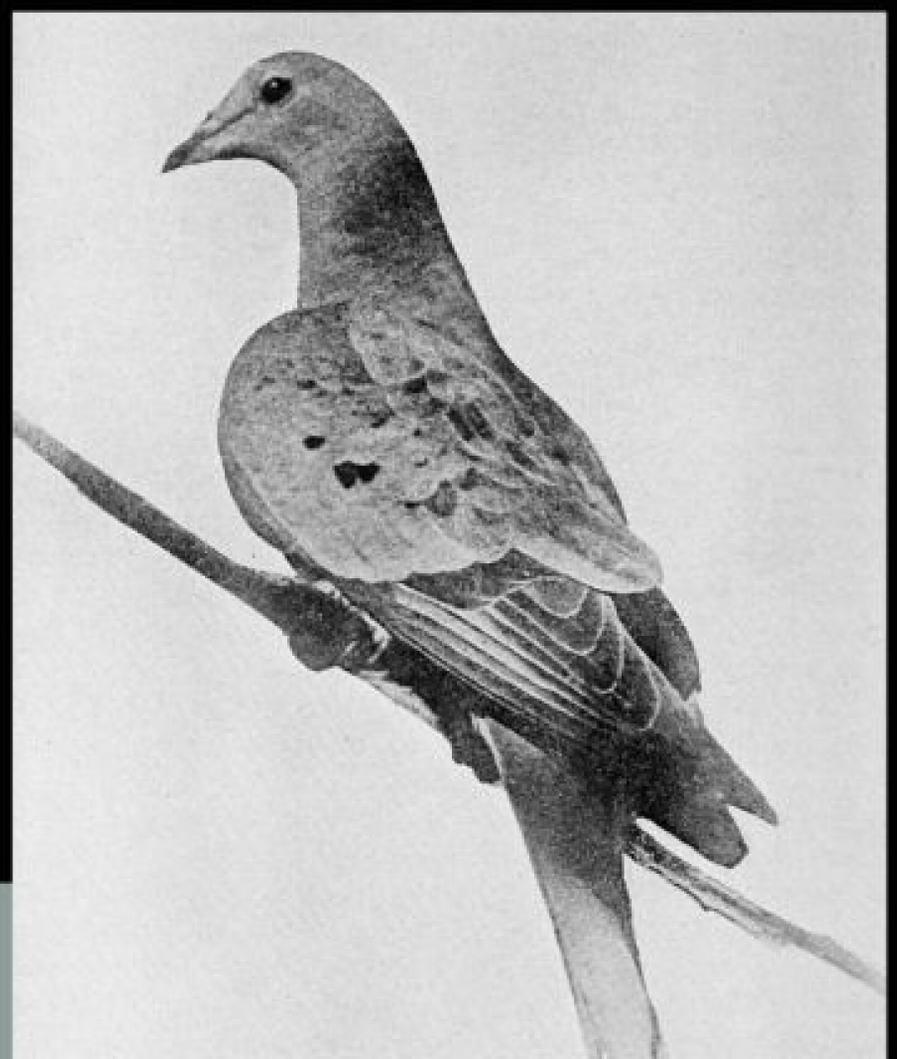
Which animals have gone **extinct** since the Industrial Age began?

Eric Zhou

Since the beginning of the Industrial Age, humans have reshaped the globe more rapidly than any other time period in history. Urban growth and mechanization placed an immense strain on ecosystems worldwide, leading to many species going extinct and many more being pushed to the brink of extinction. Human activity has caused irreparable damage to these species, such as the passenger pigeon, the Tasmanian tiger, and the Baiji river dolphin.

One of the earliest examples of a species being forced into extinction by human activity is that of the passenger pigeon. In the early 1800s, they were the largest bird species in North America by population. However, their large population made them vulnerable to changes in their environment and industrial expansion. As more and more deforestation occurred to clear places for farmland, these birds' natural habitats and nesting grounds were destroyed. Furthermore, with the expansion of railway networks and telephone lines, hunters could now easily track and hunt down these birds across the country. The last known passenger pigeon, Martha, died in captivity in 1914, marking the end of her species.

Another example was the extinction of the Tasmanian tiger, a carnivorous animal native to Tasmania. As European settlers expanded sheep farming in the 1800s, the Tasmanian tiger was often unfairly blamed for the loss of livestock. This led to the government offering bounties for each of these animals killed, which led to thousands of them being hunted down. Industrial expansion also destroyed its habitat, while disease and competition with newly introduced dog species worsened its decline. By the time people realised the species needed protection, it was too late. The last confirmed Tasmanian tiger died at Hobart Zoo in 1936, leaving behind a stark example of how misunderstanding can wipe out an entire species.

Pollution and industrial development has also had a significant impact on ecosystems and biodiversity around the world. The Baiji river dolphin, once found all throughout the Yangtze River, suffered due to China's rapid industrialization. As China industrialized, the Yangtze became one of the most heavily polluted rivers in the world. The large amounts of boat traffic also lead to increased collisions with the dolphins. By the early 2000s, scientists searching for the dolphin did not find a single one. In 2006, the Baiji river dolphin was officially declared extinct, one of the only marine mammals to be driven to extinction by human activity.

The losses of the passenger pigeon, Tasmanian tiger, and Baiji river dolphin reveal a stark, sobering truth: the Industrial Age brought unprecedented progress, but also unprecedented strain on the natural world. As the world continues to develop today, these stories serve as a stark reminder of the importance of protecting our planet and biodiversity.

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What are some of the biggest legal issues facing trans people today?
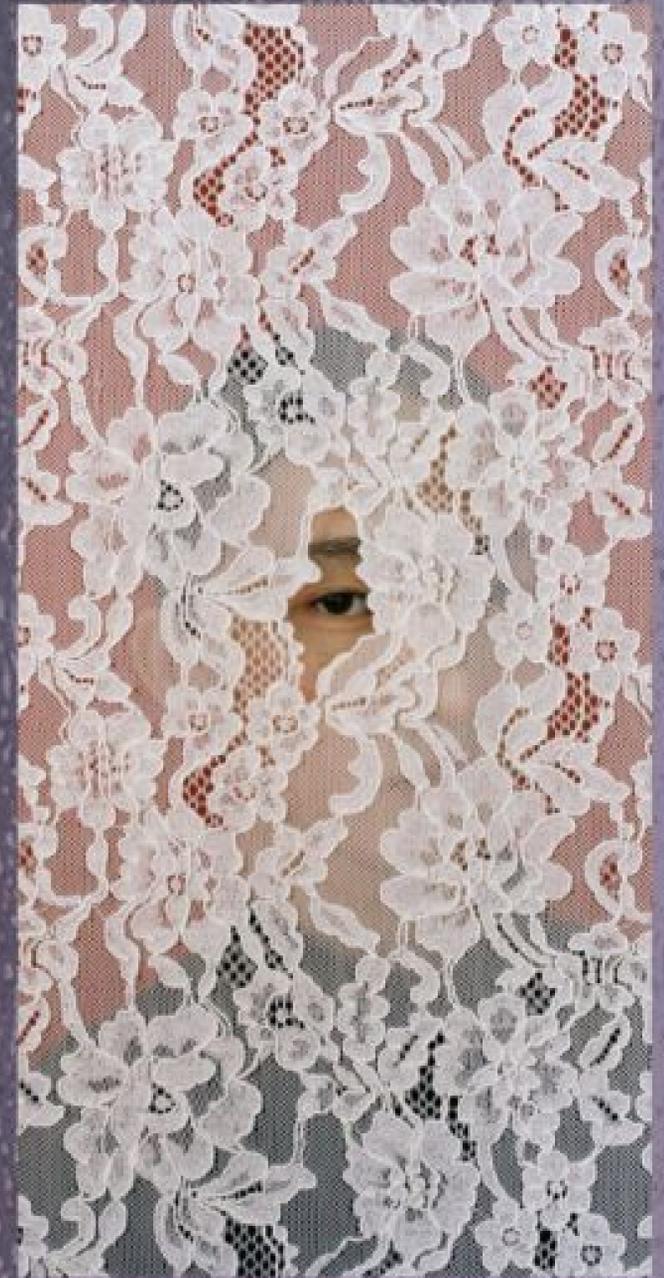
Fiona Wang

Legal issues for transgender citizens have always been a problem, but they are emphasized now more than ever before. Dissent from the public has increased in the past years due to a resurgence of anti-LGBTQ+ protests, but, in reality, legal decisions regarding transgender people have always been a topic of concern:

• Transgender Athletes: Many trangender athletes have been facing public scrutiny and discrimination due to the belief that they have an unfair advantage in sports. The most famous example of this is perhaps Lia Thomas, who had many students at her college protesting that she should not be allowed to swim and was subsequently barred from competing. Because of this, new NCAA regulations mandate that transgender athletes participate in the category of their assigned gender at birth (2025).

- *Adams v. School Board of St. Johns County:* This ruling happened when a student sued for not being able to use the men's bathrooms despite being a trans male. The court ultimately ruled in favor of the school, saying that they could separate students based on their gender at birth (SCOTUS, 2024). This was a major setback for legal rulings in regards to transgender students, despite the harm that bathroom bans continue to cause to this day.
- Gender reassignment surgery: In several states, doctors are barred from providing minors with gender reassignment procedures due to safety issues, which means that those who want to transition before eighteen are not allowed to. In certain states, adults also have restrictions on surgery, including needing a physician present.

The legalities affecting transgender people change everyday, but these are some of the most well-known examples to date. Each one represents the place America has become for LGBTQ+ citizens. They show a side of the legal system that many people are not aware of, and awareness is, in this case, essential.

References:

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Students in Grades 6-8
500-1000 Words

✅ **SENIOR DIVISION**

Students in Grades 9-11
500-2000 Words

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JULY 15, 2026

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1 💤	2 💤	3 💤	4 💤	5 💤	6 💤	7 💤
8 💤	9 💤	10 💤	11 💤	12 💤	13	14 💤
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- Spread the word about sports equity
- Collaborate with local schools, club teams, and organizations
- Help kids across the country to thrive through play
- Work with teens, coaches, and community leaders to make sports accessible to all

THE PROBLEM

- 1-in-3 kids stopped playing sports
- Equity gaps among families in affording sports gear, training etc.
- Importance of play is overlooked in our education system. Comes in last for state funding.

OUR MISSION

Youth-led initiative advocating for sports and play equity, ensuring all kids, regardless of background, have the right to play. We run equipment drives, offer volunteer coaching, and fundraise to reach those with the greatest needs and fewest resources.

www.andonesports.org / niam.taylor@gmail.com

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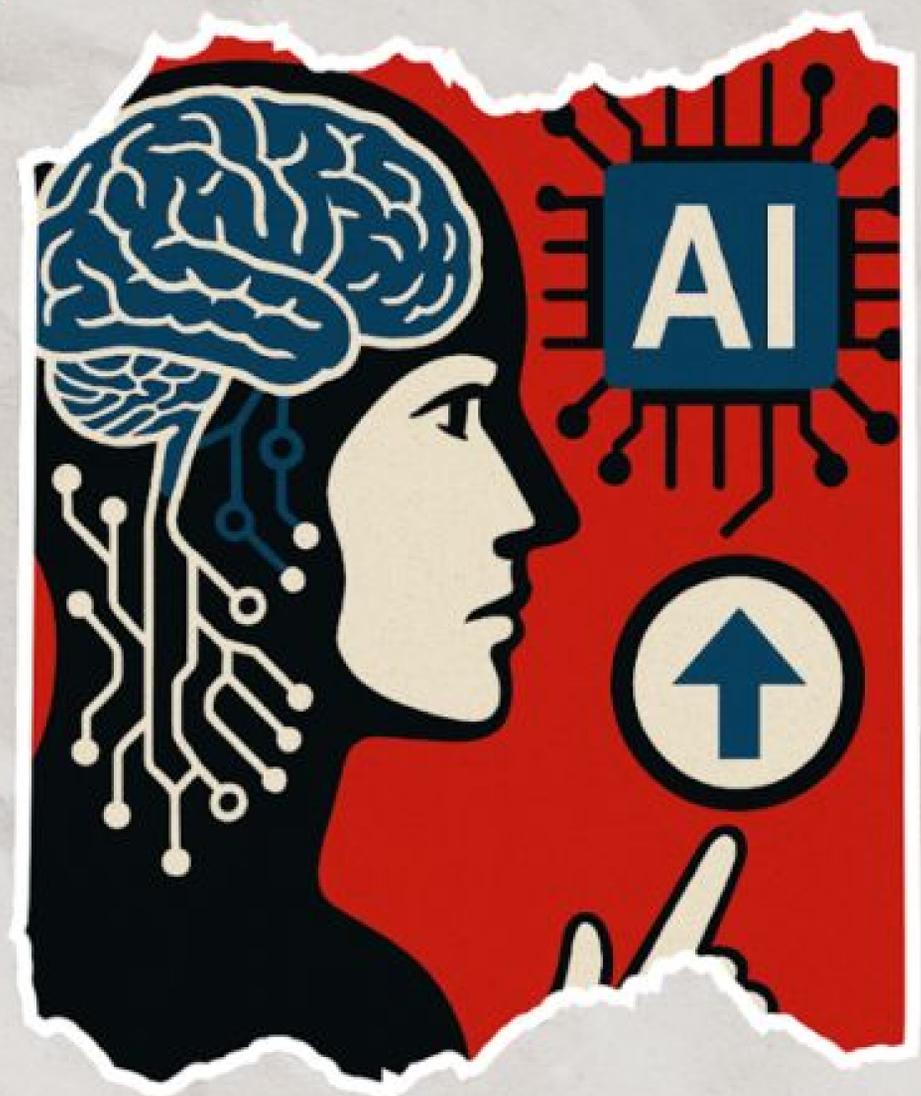

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THRIVE

A nonprofit focused on helping youth build confide- nce through public speaking.

To learn more, contact Cynthia Ma at cynthia.ma@ingeniusprep.com

EVERFEED

An organization providing solutions to helping animals in need. Seeking student collaborators to scale org.

To learn more, contact Raeka Ren at raeka_ren@outlook.com

LETTERS OF SOLACE

A student-led mental health organization that distributes letters to youth facing hard times. Seeking more student volunteers.

Apply here

FOLLIS

An online education initiative that strives to bring philo- sophical ideas into our daily lives through bimonthly seminars. Looking for several co-organizers to host online.

Apply here

YOUTH OF LETTERS

A writing collective devoted to redefining the human experience and condition. Looking for submissions from creatives aged 13-22.

Submit here

AND ONE SPORTS

Advocating for sports equity, providing all kids with what they need to actively participate in a sport they love or want to try.

Request gear

Join the roster

NFPW CONTEST

One of only a few nationwide communications competitions for HS students. Entries must have been professionally published and produced in the last year.

Deadline: Feb. 18

GREENSCIENCE

A group of dedicated students aiming to make an impact on the world with their voices. Welcoming all conservation biology-related art and writing submissions.

Submit here

HALF THE SKY

Committed to driving positive change in workers' rights by advocating for workplace reform and environmental sustainability.

Join here

QUEST4CLARITY

Dedicated to providing a safe space for your mental wellness. Platform offers articles, posts, guidance, and webinars.

Volunteer

BLUE OCEAN

Virtual entrepreneurship competition founded and supported by high school students.

Register ASAP

Submit pitch by Feb. 22

KENYON REVIEW

Summer Online Workshops provide young writers with an intimate setting for exploring ideas, producing fresh work, and discussing the craft of writing.

June 14-19 session

WATER RESOURCES CONTEST

NYC invites 2nd-12th graders from NYC and Watershed schools to submit artwork and poetry that creatively expresses their awareness of NY's shared water resources.

Submit here

THE BODY PROJECT

An evidence-based, youth-led initiative designed to help young women challenge unrealistic beauty ideals and build body acceptance thru activities.

Email Selina at selinaxi007@gmail.com

VIBRANT WAVES

A nonprofit focusing on youth mental health. Looking for online content creators and in-person NJ students.

Email the team at vibrantwaves23@gmail.com

INVENTOBLOOM

A youth-led organization that aims to design and manufacture low-cost engineering toy kits with standardized 3D-printable parts for young refugees.

DM @inventobloom on IG

SUNFLOWER PODCAST

An initiative of the Sunflower Project, a student-led NPO dedicated to preventing and spreading awareness of human trafficking. Seeking to grow the podcast.

Email Ruhi Yue at ruhiyue09@gmail.com

US AND TOMORROW

A science fiction podcast exploring how emerging tech impacts the human experience. Recruiting student collaborators.

Apply here

SEEDFEMS

A youth-led nonprofit bringing feminism back to its roots by leading interactive workshops on gender equality in primary schools.

Apply here

GUD MEDICINE

A youth initiative tackling complex healthcare issues and fighting for health literacy and justice. Leads US and UK campaigns.

Apply here

SQUASHBUDDY

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Email Albert at albertzhang8148@gmail.com

STEAMLABS

A student-led nonprofit bringing hands-on science nights to under-resourced elementary schools. Looking for chapter leaders, national board members, and web designers.

danielzhang427@gmail.com

MODERN ANTHOLOGIES

Looking for motivated people to start a chapter of their own. Boston-based organization, youth-led, striving to publish youth writing.

Join here

RUBE GOLDBERG

A STEAM competition that pits student teams against each other to create a Rube Goldberg Machine built from everyday objects that solves a common, simple task.

Deadline: Mar. 14

RESONATE

Provides students with resources in mental health research, music therapy, and therapeutic games. Looking for new members.

Email Athena at athenajiang18@outlook.com

SIDEQUEST

An app designed to get people ages 9-20 off their screens and back in the present. Looking for a backend developer.

dax.bernstein@gmail.com

MIAUPLANET

A 2D RPG pixel game with charming cat characters that explores heavy themes like addiction. Collaborator comfortable using Game Maker needed.

Email Jewel at jeweluxx@gmail.com

ELEVON EX

A youth-led nonprofit dedicated to making aerospace engineering education accessible. Recruiting team members.

Apply here

BRIGHT BEATS

Offers free, inclusive music sessions to children with developmental disabilities and special needs. Starting new chapters everywhere.

Apply here

OPENMIND PROJECT

A mental wellness initiative offering resources on mental health to teens. Looking for student volunteers.

theopenmindproject0@gmail.com

NIGHT BLOOM

Informing people about light pollution and ways to combat it in daily life. Recruiting new members.

Apply here

CYES

Chinatown Youth Engagement Society is an org for students who want to dispel misconceptions about Vancouver's Chinatown.

Join here

FEELUSTRATE

An emotional exploration platform that integrates science, art, and philosophy.

Website

YOUTH PROMISE COLLECTIVE

A youth-led think tank gauging youth opinions on youth issues. Looking for HS students with an interest in writing and research.

youthpromisecollective@gmail.com

FOUNDATIONMHE

Reducing the stigma around mental health while providing innovative resources to educate youth about mental health. Looking for blog authors and social media managers

Join here

DIGITAL DESIGN CLUB

Digital art and game design. Explore CapCut, iMovie, Adobe Premiere Pro, etc. No experience necessary.

Sign up

SHEGOLF

A blog that empowers female golfers to share experiences from life in a male-dominated sport. Looking for submissions.

Website

GLOMATERIALS

Educating young people who are interested in biomaterials.

Email Alisa Zhou at

alisatzhou@gmail.com

HARMOSHARE

Spreading the beauty of music and encouraging beginner musicians through a digital platform.

Email Wayne at

xzxwayne@outlook.com

PLASTICIZED

Raising awareness about the dangers of plastic products to our health.

Email Katherine at

ktcliang@gmail.com

The San Diego STEAMLabs chapter is currently working on an educational cancer card game called Tumor Tactics, and we're looking for artists to help with the logo and card art design. This is a paid position at $15/hour.

STEAMLabs is a student-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit that brings free, hands-on STEM workshops and activities to elementary and middle school students.

Our newest project, Tumor Tactics, is a cancer-biology card game for 3rd–6th graders, inspired by Exploding Kittens. The game is designed to be fun, non-scary, and educational, teaching kids the basics of how cancer evolves and how different treatments work. Players act as doctors racing to treat a cancer patient, and the first doctor to fully treat their patient wins.
The game is fully designed and playtested, with all cards and rules finalized, so we're currently focused solely on developing the visual art.

We're looking for an artist who can help with:
- Simple, minimalistic illustrations for 28 unique cards
- Simple icons for the 4 card types (cancer, treatment, utility, event)
- Designing the game logo / visual identity

We already have:
- A defined color palette and sample art
- Rough sketches and layouts for each card
- The full card list and a 1-page rulebook

If you're interested, please email me at danielzhang427@gmail.com with a short 3–4 sentence introduction (name, grade, and experience with art/design), along with any art samples or portfolio links.
Again, this role is compensated at $15/hour, via PayPal or Zelle.

ATHLETES FOR TOTS

Kids today are exposed to addictive social media earlier than ever—leading to insecurity, isolation, and serious physical inactivity. But this new world isn't going anywhere. So instead of trying to fight it, we're teaching kids how to live in this world in a healthy, balanced way.

Athletes For Tots is a youth-led program that helps students rediscover the fun in sports. It isn't just about exercise and physical health: we emphasize that it's about building confidence and friendships, feeling cool, and healthy habits that last a lifetime!

But what truly sets us apart? Our programs are led by top-performing teen athletes competing at national levels. Unlike typical adult coaches, athletes are role models kids can actually relate to. They don't just talk about healthy habits—they live them.

If you're an athlete passionate about sharing your story and inspiring the next generation—or a parent hoping to get your student involved—take the leap!

Apply here.

AMPERSAND QUARTERLY

Open to art and writing submissions for its first issue, "Bubble & Fancy"! Send your most genre-bending, weird, luminous, wild-with-life works. We are looking for writers from diverse backgrounds who share our curiosity for the Ampersand & the same fearlessness to explore the conjunction of wildly contrasting concepts.

Website

Global Financial Literacy Initiative

This global financial literacy initiative is dedicated to expanding access to personal finance education for underserved youth worldwide. As wealth inequality accelerates and financial systems become more complex, the program aims to "narrow the gap" by equipping students with practical tools to build credit, avoid predatory debt, and achieve long-term financial stability.

The initiative delivers a standardized yet locally adaptable personal finance curriculum through partnerships with public schools, NGOs, and community organizations. The long-term goal is to expand to 100 territories across 30 countries, creating measurable, scalable impact in youth financial education.

The organization is currently recruiting founding chapter leaders to help drive expansion. Open leadership roles include:
- Chapter President: Lead local implementation, partnerships, and chapter growth
- Curriculum Lead: Adapt and refine materials for regional contexts
- Outreach Lead: Build partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and sponsors
- Podcast Host / Media Lead: Host and produce conversations with finance professionals, educators, and community leaders for a global digital platform

This opportunity is ideal for students interested in finance, economics, education, public policy, entrepreneurship, or social impact who want to lead a real, scalable organization. Founding leaders will help shape the initiative's structure, strategy, and long-term vision, while contributing to meaningful global impact.

Interested students can reach out directly to Jonathan So (yso@taftschool.org)

Lawfully Speaking, designed in collaboration by the Sunflower Project and Exempli Gratia Law, is a free, self-paced course that takes a deeper look at sexual exploitation: how it happens, how it's been understood across history, how the law responds, and how both the exploitation and the legal system impact people. You'll explore key terms and concepts, hear stories about landmark legal cases, learn to differentiate and recognize types of exploitation, and examine global and local legal frameworks. Most importantly, this course aims to reframe outdated narratives and systems and provide ground for innovative thoughts and approaches to addressing these urgent social issues.

Come and check it out!

EXPOZURE

IGP student Philip Zheng established EXPOZURE, a non-profit that provides support to growing businesses in Manhattan by providing free professional photography. He currently requires support with outreach, and if you're interested in collaborating on this project, please contact Philip at philipzheng200929@gmail.com.
Students who would be a good fit for this may have an interest in business, communications, writing, social justice, and social media marketing.