



# YV REVIEW

DRIVING IDEAS FORWARD  
FALL 2024/WINTER 2025



HOW POLITICS AND SOCIAL  
MEDIA ARE RUINING YOUNG  
PEOPLE — AND FUELING  
HARASSMENT



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
SPENT MILLIONS ON DEI  
EFFORTS. THEY FAILED  
MISERABLY



DON'T STIFLE AI WITH  
REGULATION

# Letter from the Director of Content

Dear supporter,

Young Voices is wrapping up its 11th year of empowering upcoming leaders for liberty in the media — and what a year it has been! In 2024, we helped over 150 students and young professionals amplify the ideas of liberty to a culture that desperately needs them. I'm beyond proud of my team's success in this endeavor. Here are some highlights:

- Since January 1, 2024, Young Voices has averaged 157 media hits reaching an audience of over 6 million viewers every month.
- We regularly achieve media placements in top outlets including The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Newsweek, The Hill, and RealClearPolitics.
- We welcomed 15 talented writers to participate in two policy fellowships this fall: the Middle East History and Peace Fellowship, platforming nuanced commentary on the conflict in Israel and Palestine, and the Social Mobility Fellowship, promoting free market solutions to issues like poverty, homelessness and entrepreneurial freedom.
- We expanded our project in Europe, working with 40 writers across the EU to secure 233 media placements across 24 countries reaching over 1.17 million European readers with the message of liberty.

In the following pages, you'll see examples of

our contributors appearing in top media outlets standing up free speech, calling out destructive regulation, and leveraging their status as young voters to gain top tier media placements even in a tempestuous election season.

Who knows what new year will bring? I'm no fortune teller, but with a newly reelected president returning to the Oval Office in January, and with a media cycle that's finally coming down off of a myopic focus on the election coverage, I'd bet the opportunities to platform freethinking liberty lovers in the mainstream are about to explode. Here's to 2025!

Cheers!

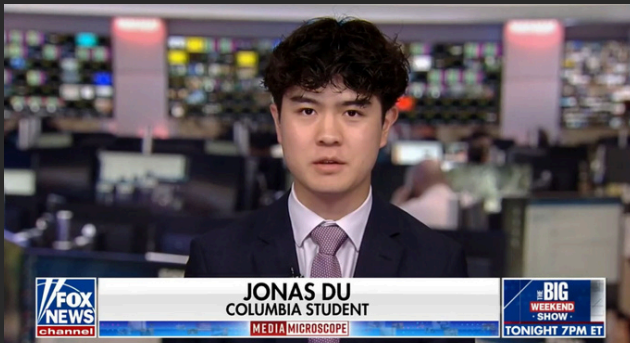
*Aaron Andrews*



*Editorial Note: As a nonpartisan organization, Young Voices does not endorse specific legislation or politicians. The views expressed by our writers in this issue and elsewhere do not necessarily reflect those of our entire network. In the spirit of free speech, Young Voices seeks to facilitate a healthy dialogue among our writers and the public.*

# Young Voices Broadcast Highlights

This year, we helped 70+ commentators share their opinions in top tier media outlets. For example:



Jonas Du appeared on Fox Mediabuzz (audience = 1.3M) on Fox News Channel to discuss the climate of fear and violence on the campus of Columbia University following the October 7th attacks on Israel by Hamas.



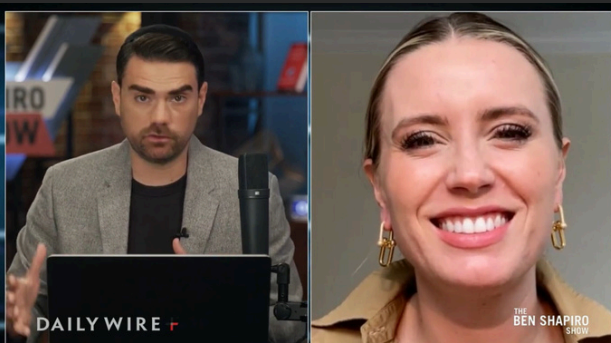
Young Voices UK commentator **Albie Amankona** joined Jeremy Vine on BBC Radio 2 (audience = 2.4M) to discuss outdoor smoking bans.



Young Voices UK commentator **Sophia Worringer** appeared on the breakfast show on Sky News (audience = 348k) to discuss the issue of school absences.



Dissident Project founder **Daniel Di Martino** joined Fox News Live (audience = 873k) on Fox News Channel to discuss the issue of Venezuelan gangs terrorizing a Colorado town.



**Alexandra Hudson** appeared as a guest on The Ben Shapiro Show (audience = 788k) on The Daily Wire to discuss her latest book on civility in politics.



**Jill Jacobson** appeared on Fox & Friends (audience = 711k) to discuss how rising illegal immigration has impacted the city of Boston where she lives.

We helped Syracuse University student Daniel Idresne leverage his status as an underclassmen to get published in the New York Post with an article explaining why young people were so unsurprised by the assassination attempts of President Trump. His article earned an estimated 185K views.

**NEW YORK POST**

## How Politics and Social Media are Ruining Young People — and Fueling Harassment

13 August 2024

After more than six weeks of investigating Thomas Matthew Crooks' life, the FBI remains stumped as to his motives for attempting to assassinate Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump in July.

The nation has moved on: President Biden dropped his re-election bid, Republicans and Democrats held their national conventions, and Kamala Harris turned around a presidential election cycle that Trump seemed almost fated to win.

Now students like me are heading back to colleges and universities, where the next round of campus protests are likely to be intensified by election fervor.

Little is known about why a 20-year-old kid like Crooks would try to assassinate the former president. But students my age don't need to wonder.

Like many Americans, I was horrified by Crooks' actions, but I wasn't surprised.

Between emotional appeals from teachers and extremist messaging on social media, my generation has been inundated with dangerous political rhetoric for almost half our lives.

We don't need FBI investigators to confirm what seems evident to us: Classroom echo chambers and social media are galvanizing disaffected young people toward extremist actions unimaginable a generation ago.

And more is almost certain to come.



I remember my first encounter with politics: I walked into an eerie classroom on November 9, 2016, just after Donald Trump became president-elect.

The teachers and principal hosted a “town hall” to give us — clueless Brooklynite 7th-graders — the microphone to voice our concerns.

The adults took turns bashing Trump before quietly sobbing into their tissues.

We didn't compare candidates' policy visions, or examine the electoral map.

We didn't so much as watch an informational YouTube video to learn about the political system now being framed as “broken.”

It was an emotional dumpster fire.

I'm not alone. Jahmiel Jackson, a 22-year-old from Philadelphia who is now studying at the University of Chicago, had a nearly identical experience. And he's a registered Democrat.

“I believe it happened in 10th grade,” Jackson said. “I remember my teachers coming in to cry. We didn't have classes that day. I knew that something like a bomb had just dropped, but no one ever explained . . . why.”

For Jackson, the anti-Trump rhetoric would continue into college.

He recounted his first day taking a race and politics

course: “We all had to go around and say, where were you the day Donald Trump was elected? As if this was 9/11 and we [were] saying, ‘Well, where were you when you saw the Twin Towers crash?’”

Kayla Hutt, 21, a student at New York University who considers herself a moderate, thinks professors have gone too far in promoting political awareness.

“We’ve passed the line where I’ve . . . heard of professors . . . offering extra credit to their students to go out and protest,” she said.

All the while, students proudly support “I’ve seen two professors who have created groups outside of the class to have these discussions,” Hutt said.

“That’s somewhat better because it’s outside the classroom, but at the same time, it’s an attempt to create an outside community of only like-minded people and trying to . . . push views on the students.”

Young people feel pressured to engage in this rhetoric both online and in casual conversations for fear of social consequences.

Jackson said at times he felt obligated or even bullied to appease his fellow classmates after he questioned their mostly progressive political narratives.

“A lot of the black students, especially the ones who were older than me said, ‘Well if you don’t stop talking about x problem, we’re gonna do this to you,’” said Jackson, who is African-American.

It’s not just Jackson.

Two in every three Americans under 30 have experienced online harassment.

Half of all US adults who have been harassed online say others have harassed them because of their political views.

Most of us use social media for mindless entertainment — we don’t care for colorful, virtue-signaling Instagram graphics.

But we also don’t want to be ostracized if our

politics fail to skew with our cohort or crowds.

Yet even though few of the 33% of Americans our age who value social media as a venue to express their opinions castigate others online, it only takes one to ostracize us from our peers.

This is the world Crooks seems to have lived in, and it’s the one all of us Gen Zers are wading through right now as we head back to the classroom.

The grown-ups I speak to lament the polarized nation we live in today.

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They recall an America without (or at least with far less) political animosity — where we can disagree and share a beer. That’s not the America my generation has known.

It’s true that the Secret Service failed on July 13, and the FBI isn’t informing Americans about the full extent of the Trump shooting.

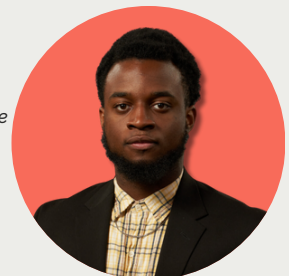
But we’re ignoring the greatest truth of all: Our leaders failed to curb radical rhetoric in our schools, teach my generation that politics in conversation is impolite, and address my fellow Gen Zers cries for help as we battle a mental health crisis.

Thomas Matthew Crooks didn’t cause this generation’s crisis — but he may very well have been the product of it.

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## Daniel Idresne

*Daniel Idresne is a junior at Syracuse University, a campus reform correspondent and a contributor at Young Voices.*



Connections made through Young Voices' mentorship program helped Manhattan Institute scholar Neetu Arnold make her debut in USA Today in October with an article dissecting the fall of DEI in American universities. Her piece earned an estimated 183K views.



# University of Michigan Spent Millions on DEI Efforts. They Failed Miserably.



25 October 2024

Divisive, extreme and intolerant. That's what diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts have become. And conservatives are no longer the only skeptics.

The New York Times this month uncovered that the University of Michigan's programs to promote supposed diversity and inclusion – at a cost of about \$250 million since 2016 – instead fueled campus discord. After years of a heavy emphasis on DEI, Michigan students struggle to engage with peers from different racial, political or religious backgrounds.

The Times' coverage is a turning point. For years, news outlets dismissed critiques of DEI as “racist dog whistles,” “slurs” and the new “Red Scare.”

Meanwhile, universities and corporations adopted racial considerations in hiring to meet equity goals. Universities established bias response teams to monitor speech, ostensibly to protect minorities from feeling excluded but often targeting views they simply disagreed with. And university faculty

recruiters used diversity statements to filter applicants based on their political commitments to progressive causes.

All of these decisions aroused ire from conservative media, but the opposition failed to deal a decisive blow to the movement. The debate around DEI was over values rather than facts, and few people in the mainstream wanted to challenge inclusivity as a value.

## **DEI industry built at least in part on false information**

So, an entire industry was quietly built by appealing to these values, consisting of DEI consulting firms, authors and workshops. Individuals like Robin DiAngelo, author of “White Fragility,” and Ibram X. Kendi, author of “How to be an Antiracist,” became famous as DEI gurus, charging five-figure speaking fees to prominent universities and corporations.

This past year, it's become increasingly clear that the DEI industry is built at least in part on false

information. Consulting firm McKinsey & Co., in a series of reports published since 2015, claimed corporations with more diverse executive teams are more profitable. Even the U.S. military cited McKinsey's results as a justification for investing in DEI.

But when the study was replicated in March with another sample of firms, it turned out that the original findings didn't hold up. In fact, McKinsey's methodology was flawed because it couldn't demonstrate a causal link between diversity and profitability.

Fundamental flaws have also appeared in research concerning DEI in health care.

The push for racial equity in the health care industry was based in part on a 2020 study that claimed Black babies fare better with Black doctors, attributing high mortality rates for Black infants to systemic racism and implicit bias among white doctors.

But the narrative was called into question when Harvard professor George Borjas and Manhattan Institute fellow Robert VerBruggen controlled for birth weight differences between infants, a variable that was not considered by authors of the original 2020 study. The results of the original study disappeared once birth weight was considered.

So what went wrong?

The intensity of the racial reckoning of 2020 pushed many corporate executives and university administrators to make hasty decisions about DEI initiatives. And the moral fervor surrounding the issue squelched any dissent.

Now that the haze has cleared, we're starting to see how individuals exploited the "DEI moment" for personal gain or to promote their political agendas.

### **Instead of politics of racial resentment, focus on diversity of thought**

As major institutions and large employers such as Ford and Lowe's begin to distance themselves from DEI, many will start to look for a replacement. DEI was born out of a general sense that our country's institutions hadn't yet reached the ideals of equality

and fairness characterizing the Civil Rights Movement, and that more needed to be done.

The DEI movement led people who wanted more fairness on an extremist path, promoting racial resentment and language policing instead of real solutions.

If we want our institutions to stay away from the politics of racial resentment as DEI wanes, we need other pathways to address real issues of unfairness and exclusion.

Academic and business institutions alike should focus on diversity of thought, teaching students and employees to handle disagreement in healthier ways.

We should eradicate unfair policies like legacy admissions at elite universities, which hypocritically claim to champion equity.

And government agencies should dismantle all race-based policies, which have fanned the flames of racial resentment for far too long.

The death of DEI isn't a tragedy – it's an opportunity.



## **Neetu Arnold**

*Neetu Arnold is a Paulson Policy Analyst at the Manhattan Institute and a Young Voices contributor. Her writings on education issues have appeared in publications such as Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, and RealClear Policy.*

We helped University of Miami graduate Sam Raus make his debut in Newsweek in November with an article warning about the dangers of overregulating AI. Sam's piece earned an estimated 111K views.

# Newsweek

## Don't Stifle AI With Regulation

8 November 2024

Since the public release of OpenAI's ChatGPT, artificial intelligence (AI) has quickly become a driving force in innovation and everyday life, sparking both excitement and concern. AI promises breakthroughs in fields like medicine, education, and energy, with the potential to solve some of society's toughest challenges. But at the same time, fears around job displacement, privacy, and the spread of misinformation have led many to call for tighter government control.

Many are now seeking swift government intervention to regulate AI's development in the

The problem is, the measures pushed by these lobbying campaigns favor large, entrenched corporations, sidelining smaller competitors and stifling innovation. If Congress moves forward with establishing a federal AI safety agency, even with the best of intentions, it risks cementing Big Tech's dominance at the expense of startups. Rather than fostering competition, such regulation would likely serve the interests of the industry's largest corporations, stifling entrepreneurship and limiting AI's potential to transform America—and the world—for the better. The unintended consequences are serious: slower product improvement, fewer



waning "lame duck" session before the inauguration of the next Congress. These efforts have been led by tech giants, including OpenAI, Amazon, Google, and Microsoft, under the guise of securing "responsible development of advanced AI systems" from risks like misinformation and bias. Building on the Biden administration's executive order to create the U.S. Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute (AIS) and mandate that AI "safety tests," among other things, be reported to the government, the bipartisan negotiations would permanently authorize the AIS to act as the nation's primary AI regulatory agency.

technological breakthroughs, and severe costs to the economy and consumers.

Allowing lobbyists from the largest tech companies in the United States—the players with the greatest computing and energy capacity to develop new AI software—to write the rules of the industry will result in regulatory capture of this emerging market. Cloaked by the promise of "safety" from election campaign deep fakes and inaccurate ChatGPT responses, the creation of an AI regulatory agency will only protect Big Tech while making it harder for smaller startups to compete.

This is not to demonize companies like Google, Amazon, and Microsoft in the way antitrust activists are actively doing through ongoing litigation. Big Tech companies have made substantial, positive contributions to American society, whether through Amazon Prime's same-day delivery or our everyday use of Google's search engine. But that doesn't change the fact that lobbying efforts to permanently establish the AI Safety Institute would allow well-funded major corporations to create rules they can easily follow while burdening smaller firms with high compliance costs.

To maintain America's lead in the AI race, tech startups—also called "Little Tech"—depend on a free market system open to continued innovation and competition. Such an environment requires a government that fairly applies the law to all people and companies. Instead of allowing Big Tech to write the rulebook, policymakers should focus on ensuring a level playing field where progress is spurred by an entrepreneurial spirit, not shut down by regulations that favor the largest corporations.

And let's be clear: This is not simply an issue for aspiring young Mark Zuckerbergs. Everyday citizens will be affected by regulatory barriers on tech startups. These barriers may impede AI's capacity to make life-changing improvements in sectors such as health care, housing, and energy. Overregulation will stifle our chance at improving the lives of millions of Americans by making essential industries more cost-effective and efficient.

The use of AI in medicine is already saving people's lives in the treatment of strokes and neurovascular conditions. Complex data-centric public policy problems, such as infrastructure development and environmental protection, could similarly benefit from AI tools. AI may also offer the capacity to personalize education for students' unique needs, interests, and learning styles.

Despite widespread alarmism in Washington, one senator has offered a sharp rebuke of the Biden administration's heavy hand in requiring AI "risk assessments." Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) has suggested lawmakers ought to focus on America's capacity for innovation. The senator's approach is right on the money. Creating a federal regulatory agency centered on disclosure and testing mandates would only discourage new startups and limit the

potential for the seismic progress that AI may offer.

Rather than heavy-handed regulations, America needs a free-market approach that encourages competition. Such an approach would lead to better products and services for consumers, fostering a dynamic marketplace. Congress should consider AI regulation with a light touch, leaning into the Department of Justice's role to enforce existing defamation laws and the intelligence communities' capabilities to combat the influence of foreign adversaries. A free enterprise system, protected against cronyism and excessive government intervention, is the foundation of prosperity.

Lawmakers should look to our close allies in the European Union for evidence that preemptive interventions in the tech sector restrain markets' potential to rapidly develop new products. Legislation such as the Digital Markets Act and ongoing antitrust litigation have left European AI scientists stuck in bureaucratic mazes when they should be building software for the future. On all accounts, the EU regulatory state places Europe squarely behind America's dominant tech sector. The United States cannot afford to fall captive to the same ills that plague its allies. Members of Congress must maintain America's longstanding commitment to human flourishing, entrepreneurship, and invention. AI offers many unique tools to solve some of the world's most pressing challenges. Maintaining an open and competitive market will be key to unlocking its full potential.

To ensure AI reaches its potential, Congress must avoid falling into the trap of overregulation. While safety concerns are valid, lawmakers should focus on empowering competition, not crushing it. If we overburden this emerging field with red tape, the innovation engine that drives America will grind to a halt. Let's not take our foot off the gas pedal.



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## Sam Raus

*Sam Raus is a nationally-published political analyst and trained public relations professional working across the private and public sector. He writes about various issues including tech policy, economics, foreign relations, applied history and culture.*

We helped UK contributor Oscar Gill-Lewis land in The Daily Express with an article calling on social media companies to stand up for free speech against overreaching government interference. His article earned an estimated 72K viewers.

# Collateral Keir Starmer's Heavy Hands Could Pose Serious Threat to Democracy

**DAILY EXPRESS**



11 October, 2024

Britain was on fire over the summer as race riots raged so hot they threatened to burn free speech as collateral damage. In the recent past, social media has been a bulwark against censorship and anti-free speech policies, but if Keir Starmer gets his way, they, too, will be lost to the blaze. Riots broke out in July after three girls were fatally stabbed and 10 other people, including eight children, were injured in Southport.

Disinformation and false news quickly spread on social media regarding the suspect's identity. This led to widespread race riots across the north of England. The police, along with many social and political elites, including some tech experts, blamed social media companies for the chaos.

In August, fuelled by the popular outrage, Starmer announced that he wants to strengthen the Online Safety Act (OSA), conflating individuals' social media comments and censoring hate speech. The Act has already been approved in Parliament and sections come into force now and in early 2025.

Before Starmer's intervention, Free Speech campaigners were already concerned about the approved Act's definitions of "legal but harmful" speech, "malicious communication" and speech "stirring up hatred." They now could quite reasonably fear an expansion of the content covered within those categories.

Given the failure of social media companies to accurately police and judge every instance of speech, according to these inflated definitions, they will likely censor by default in fear of the heavy sanctions that could be imposed on them – up to 10 percent of global revenue. This will lead companies to err on the side of caution and censor individual users' comments, opinions and views on their platforms.

And Ofcom, the UK's communications regulator, could also lose some level of independence. Ofcom will issue regulatory codes to manage the OSA's regulation. These codes are secondary legislation and therefore received very little

parliamentary scrutiny. Toby Young, of the Free Speech Union, warns it's a safe bet Starmer will give the Secretary of State the power to revise these codes, giving the any Government huge influence on online regulation of speech for individual users.

This level of regulation, by which the Government tries to influence how private social media companies censor speech, would set a dangerous precedent. In the future, there might be no distinction between "hate speech" and speech the current or future Government just doesn't like.



In pursuit of political righteousness, Keir Starmer may just destroy social media. Every topic worth discussing between individual users is divisive and contentious, and it's for that very reason that we must encourage lively debate online, not silence voices and ideas that could offend someone or stir up conflict. Starmer risks neutering a person's ability to talk and debate about current issues.

This will not only reduce the likelihood of resolving some of these issues or coming to a common understanding, but it will also detract from the original attractiveness of social media apps like X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp, Signal, and even Facebook. Individual users unable to talk about even the most vanilla political or social issues without being censored by moderators who have been whipped into a censoring frenzy by the fear of Keir, customers will most likely abandon these platforms entirely, seeking alternatives, even on the black market, where the discourse tends to be even more radical.

Social media companies need to stand up against this overreaching government interference. They

should threaten to remove their services from the UK market, much like Signal, which protested against the same bill for undermining encryption, one of its key selling points. Other examples include Apple protecting billions of its users' privacy from the FBI, bravely standing by its principles of user privacy, and against indelicate government interference.

Starmer's heavy-handed approach to the challenge of social media misinformation poses a serious threat to freedom of expression of individual users and the very survival of many

social media companies. Many of these social media companies that see freedom of expression as one of their key values need to protest this regulation as a matter of principle and for their very survival.



## Oscar Gill-Lewis

*Oscar is a Local Coordinator in the United Kingdom for Students For Liberty. He is one of the Bastiat scroll writers for the year 2024/2025 and the Correspondent Program Manager on the Speak Freely magazine editorial board. Oscar fights to make sure his generation's argument in favor of liberty is heard*

# Did you know?

- \$100 helps Young Voices reach 4,800 people with the message of liberty in op-ed, radio, TV, and public speaking
- \$500 funds a policy happy hour for our contributors to learn from top scholars
- \$1,500 funds an in-person Dissident Project talk to high school classroom across the country
- \$5,000 funds training and media placement for one participant in our programs for a year

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